

THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF
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CHRISTOPHER DINGLE is Professor of Music at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. In addition to research on music criticism, he has authored/edited five books on Messiaen, including the acclaimed *The Life of Messiaen* (Cambridge, 2007). His realisation of the orchestration of Messiaen's *Un oiseau des arbres de Vie (Oiseau Tui)* was premiered at the 2015 BBC Proms, and a critical edition of the score will be published in 2019. A book of conversations with the composer Julian Anderson is in preparation, and Dingle has also written for *BBC Music Magazine* for twenty-five years.

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University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314-321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi - 110025, India
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Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107037892

DOI: 10.1017/9781139795425

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First published 2019

Printed and bound in Great Britain by Clays Ltd, Elcograf S.p.A.

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

NAMES: Dingle, Christopher Philip.

TITLE: The Cambridge history of music criticism / edited by Christopher Dingle.
DESCRIPTION: Cambridge, United Kingdom : Cambridge University Press, [2019] |
Series: The Cambridge history of music | Includes bibliographical references.

IDENTIFIERS: LCCN 2019001094 | ISBN 9781107037892

SUBJECTS: LCSH: Musical criticism - History.

CLASSIFICATION: LCC ML3880 .C26 2019 | DDC 781.1/709-dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2019001094>

ISBN 978-1-107-03789-2 Hardback

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ISBN 978-1-107-03789-2 Hardback

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Acknowledgements

It is unsurprising that the gestation of this volume, a large book with an extensive number of contributors covering an exceptionally broad range of areas, has been lengthy. I should like to thank, first and foremost, the wonderful contributors, not just for their marvellous chapters, which have taught me so much in such an engaging manner, but also for their immense patience and understanding. Secondly, I should like to thank all at Cambridge University Press, notably Vicki Cooper, who first suggested the book, Kate Brett, her successor as Music Editor, Eilidh Burrett, her Editorial Assistant, Lisa Sinclair, Podhumai Anban and Lesley Hay, as well as various others who have assisted at different points in the book's gestation. I should also like to thank my colleagues at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire and Birmingham City University for their friendship and enthusiasm, and my institution for financial assistance with aspects of the project. Particular thanks should go to Sophie Redfern for her extensive ferreting, eagle eyes and insightful comments. Finally, nothing that I do would be possible without the love and support of my wife, Liz, and my sons, Wilfred and Nathaniel, who collectively enable me to remember what is truly important.

Introduction

CHRISTOPHER DINGLE

All histories are partial. All histories are simplifications. Anyone professing to write about history, to write a history, never mind writing or compiling *the* history of anything should be aware of these twin a priori limitations. Even before considering the prejudices, philosophy or political intent of the author, history is written from a particular perspective, at a particular time, with access to particular evidence. While such basic observations are readily apparent with any area of historical investigation, two factors make them especially pertinent for the study of music criticism. First, although music criticism has long been an integral aspect of musical life, and is an obvious source material for musicological areas such as reception studies, it is only relatively recently that it has been regarded as a field of study in its own right. Second, although this translates to a paucity of secondary sources compared to other subjects of musicological enquiry, there is a vast amount of primary source material.

It is true there have been many collections of writings by individual critics as well as compilations with a broader scope. Nonetheless, actual studies of criticism have been much scarcer, books such as those by Katherine Ellis and Sandra McColl providing notable landmarks in a largely barren landscape in the 1990s,¹ while the most extensive historical overview of music criticism was the article in the second edition of *The New Grove Dictionary*.² The past two decades have seen a flourishing of interest, not just with bespoke conferences on areas of music criticism, and numerous monographs and articles (many by contributors to the present volume), but also initiatives such as the Francophone Music Criticism project³ and, more recently, the Music

¹ Katharine Ellis, *Music Criticism in Nineteenth-Century France: La Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris, 1834–1880* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Sandra McColl, *Music Criticism in Vienna 1896–1897: Critically Moving Forms* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

² Fred Everett Maus, Glenn Stanley, Katharine Ellis, Leanne Langley, Nigel Scaife, Marcello Conati, Marco Capra, Stuart Campbell, Mark N. Grant and Edward Rothstein, 'Criticism', *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, available at www.oxfordmusiconline (accessed 4 September 2018).

³ See music.sas.ac.uk/fmc.html.

Criticism Network,⁴ the latter also hosting the *Journal of Music Criticism*. Nevertheless, even with this recent proliferation of research on music criticism, the secondary literature remains modest. This is reflected in the fact that several of the chapters in the present volume have no precedent. Even in areas that are reasonably well trodden, such as nineteenth-century British, French or German criticism, the primary sources are overwhelming in number and, even with ever-increasing amounts of material made available on digital archives, they are widely dispersed and often challenging to collate reliably.

As elsewhere, digitisation has transformed the possibilities for drawing on this vast wealth of material. In previous periods, scholars understandably tended to consult music-oriented journals rather than newspapers to seek contemporary views of musical events and developments. Such sources are invaluable, but it is also important to remember that, for at least two centuries, most people have received the majority of their knowledge about practical music-making, performers, current trends, new developments and significant new works not from the long-considered arguments posited in books and scholarly articles, but from the almost instantaneous response of music critics in newspapers, from the columns of *The Times* rather than *The Musical Times*. For this reason, what might be termed 'higher' criticism, the exploration of musical philosophy, aesthetics and analysis, gradually retreats from the story told in the later chapters. It is not that it is irrelevant, for such things form an essential part of the critical hinterland, but the focus tends to be on the evolution of the everyday discourse.

Critics make easy targets for scorn; their *raison d'être* is to have opinions, to raise their heads above the parapet and state what they think, within a very limited number of words. Indeed, the speed of reaction, allied to the need for some kind of value judgement, has meant that critics and their writings have often been dismissed as worthless ephemera. Like any evidence, the writings of critics are flawed and should not be taken as representative of the general thoughts of the age. There are good, bad and indifferent critics, though whether such assessments apply equally to their own time and our own perspective is often debatable. Regardless, music criticism essentially supplies a continuous contemporaneous record of what was happening in music, and how it was viewed by some. Far from a fatal flaw, its generally unguarded lack of consideration is often the prime value of music criticism. Moreover, music criticism frequently provides the only record of what actually happened and even how it sounded.

⁴ See www.music-criticism.com.

As a consequence, a history of music criticism itself becomes an alternate history of music, considering those who do the observing, chronicling and critiquing rather than the object of their musings. For recent centuries, such a history is generally concerned with those writing in newspapers, magazines and journals. It would have been easy in the present volume to start with the rise of the press in northern Europe, broadly coinciding with the Industrial Revolution, and concentrate on the principal centres of Western art music. This period and these areas are, naturally, central to this volume. However, they could only be countenanced as the exclusive focus if music criticism were to be defined purely by the media in which it appears and a closed perspective adopted on the genres or territory worthy of discussion. If instead music criticism is understood as the chronicle and discourse of music, then the potential scope of its history expands markedly in terms of period, geography and musical genre to cover all music, of all times, all places and all types where there is evidence of discussion and reflection upon it. While that inclusive view of music criticism underpins the approach of the following chapters, a full realisation of such a project is sadly beyond the confines of this volume and, for that matter, the state of the discipline at this time. Rather, while covering what is (currently) central to our understanding of music criticism, various chapters go beyond that, not in pretence of comprehensiveness, but drawing attention to the inevitable partialities and omissions.

Christopher Page's opening chapter on the discourse around plainsong in the Middle Ages starts the history several centuries earlier than might have been expected, but it would certainly have been conceivable to start with a much earlier period and in other parts of the world. For instance, it is clear that there was extensive discussion and debate about music in ancient cultures, with evidence of the outcomes, at least, in numerous theoretical writings from both China and Greece. If we might regard these as music criticism, it is important also to note that the purpose of and framework for debate were fundamentally different from discussion of music as an art form. Both cultures viewed music as embodying universal principles that were intrinsic to the well-being of society as a whole. In China, Confucius (551–479 BCE) 'promoted music as a means of governance and self-cultivation and denounced the use of music as entertainment'.⁵ The resulting proliferation of influence of Confucian texts (c. third and second

⁵ Joseph S. C. Lam, 'China: 11. History and Theory: 2. Antiquity to the Warring States Period (to 221 BCE)', *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, available at www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed 4 March 2018).

centuries BCE), including extensive theories of musical philosophy and practice, led to music being regarded as key to maintaining norms of behaviour and integral to government administration as part of the cosmological order.⁶ While the ancient Greeks were certainly not averse to *mousikē* being used for entertainment, it was also regarded as both an art and a means of scientific enquiry, an integral element of fundamental laws of nature as well as a catalyst for higher understanding and intrinsic to society. It also went beyond sound, incorporating aspects such as text and dancing.⁷ Indeed, the importance of music to the entire workings of society is one of the recurrent themes of Plato's *Republic*, with various passages reading, superficially at least, as a form of music criticism. It would be fascinating to see whether an examination of musical thought in these and other ancient cultures seen through the lens of music criticism would provide a distinctive perspective from that of music philosophy or theory. Sadly, such a venture was beyond the bounds of the present volume.

At the other end of the historical span, the chapters respectively exploring music criticism in Singapore and Alejo Carpentier's straddling of Cuba and France are not intended to stand in lieu of chapters on other countries and linguistic areas in Asia or Latin America. Rather, they show that there are distinctive histories to be explored. Similarly, it is likely that a significant number of Anglophone readers would not have noticed if there were no chapter on Norway, but its inclusion rightly raises the question of what the history of music criticism comprises in Sweden, Denmark or Iceland, or, for that matter, each of the Baltic states. There are chapters on music criticism in genres such as popular music, jazz and world music, but the absence of, for instance, folk music, musicals, film music or TV music is apparent. Less obvious, though noted by various authors, is that the chapters covering what might be viewed as the standard history concentrate primarily on dominant cities, such as Paris, London and New York, yet other provinces and regions also have their own distinctive histories that, for a variety of reasons, it was not possible to incorporate adequately here. Then there is the simple fact that the following chapters are each indicative of at least one, if not several, book-length studies. This litany does not indicate a lack of editorial confidence in what follows; the chapters are informative and remarkably diverse in

⁶ Alan R. Thrasher, 'China, People's Republic of: §1. Introduction: Historical, Regional and Study Perspectives; 3. Sources and Perspectives: i) The Imperial Period', *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, available at www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed 4 March 2018).

⁷ Thomas J. Mathiesen, Dimitri Conomos, George Leotsakos, Sotirios Chianis and Rudolph M. Brandl, 'Greece: 1. Introduction'; '3. Scope', *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, available at www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed 4 March 2018).

content and approach, as well as being thoroughly absorbing. Rather, it is to emphasise that, from its conception, the intention has been that, in going far beyond any previous overview, *The Cambridge History of Music Criticism* will make apparent the partialities and simplifications of current understanding. The hope is that the thirty-five chapters not only provide a substantial foundation for exploring music criticism, but will also act as a catalyst for a whole range of much-needed further study.

· PART I ·

THE EARLY HISTORY OF MUSIC CRITICISM

Speaking of Plainsong in the Middle Ages

CHRISTOPHER PAGE

Apparently the Middle Ages did not produce much music criticism. It could scarcely be otherwise if, as has been claimed, criticism as an institution, meaning ‘a specific discursive medium characterized by the controlled exercise of authority and judgment’ has ‘a history reaching back to the eighteenth century’ and seemingly no further.¹ Consider the substantial repertoire of Gregorian chant, once employed throughout much of the Latin West, and the plainsong that is principally evoked in the title of this chapter.² The monks, friars, nuns and clerics who sang this music in the liturgy were not required to *perform* in any sense of the word recognisable from many later periods of musical history, even when they were cantors assigned solo chants. Those standing near them in the choirstalls heard them sing, but we may suppose that they did not exactly *listen* for much of the time; plainsong was not designed to promote concentration upon an art of autonomous musical sound. Even if the music of a particular chant drew the ear of someone present, it was surely difficult to bring a varied discernment to bear upon material for which a pope, inspired by the Holy Spirit, was believed to be responsible. What could one do but receive and approve a canonical repertoire believed to have been variously edited and composed by a Father of the Church? Medieval commentators were often prepared to admire musical effects in chant, even to wonder at them, yet they often stopped short of offering a reasoned evaluation. The music theorist John of Affligem, one of the most articulate and engaging of the twelfth-century writers, sometimes praises chants for being beautiful (*pulchrum*), for giving pleasure (*jocunditatem*) or for being most comely (*decentissimus*) without substantiating his judgements.³

¹ Dana Gooley, ‘Hanslick and the Institution of Criticism’, *The Journal of Musicology*, 28/3 (2011), 290.

² Specialists commonly prefer the term ‘Frankish-Roman’ to ‘Gregorian’, but not when writing for a broader audience. It is of little account in this context that Gregory I (d. 604) was almost certainly not the fountainhead of the chant that is still popularly associated with his name. For valuable introductions to the Gregorian repertory see Richard L. Crocker, *An Introduction to Gregorian Chant* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000); and David Hiley, *Gregorian Chant* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

³ Joseph Smits van Waesbergh (ed.), *Johannis Affligemensis De Musica cu Tonario*, Corpus Scriptorum de Musica 1 (Rome: American Institute of Musicology, 1950). Translation by Warren Babb in Claude

Should we therefore suppose that Gregorian chant was generally perceived as a form of life by those who experienced it day after day, rather than as a separable concern which might invite judgements of value, or indeed of taste? There is some reason to take that view. Even after the dissemination of notational systems using a form of staff, which took place from the eleventh century onwards, plainsong melodies principally existed for many singers as an embodied practice, not a written deposit. A chant was a feeling in the throat, a sensation in the ear and a penumbra of associations created by years of repetition, by the lengthening and shortening of days and by the arrival and disappearance of seasonal fruits at the common table. Many could add associations that reached to the deepest layers of their childhood memory when joys and injustices were felt with an especial keenness: memories of teachers and the praise or blame that they apportioned, reminiscences of the stone spaces where they passed their boyhood learning the chants, receiving a beating when they were negligent. In the first half of the ninth century, when the repertory of Gregorian chant for the Mass was being consolidated and much still remained to be done for the Office, churchmen began to register the great amount of time required to stock the memory of a novice. In 838, Agobard of Lyons observed that ‘too many singers study from earliest youth until the hoariness of old age’ to learn their chants.⁴ A similar point is made in the *Dialogus de Musica*, probably compiled in the region of Milan around 1000; singers ‘devote fifty years of their lives in vain to the practice and study of singing’.⁵ A process of ear training, indeed saturation, with a profound psychological dimension, began early and long continued.

Those who lived that life often reflected upon musical effect. They were all singers in the sense that they were required to participate in some form of choral liturgy. Many were also literate in the modern acceptance of the term (‘able to read and write’) or even in the medieval sense (‘well read in Latin letters’). Some possessed the ‘innate skill in singing’ mentioned and perhaps

V. Palisca (ed.), *Hucbald, Guido, and John on Music: Three Medieval Treatises* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978).

⁴ L. van Acker (ed.), *Agobardi Lugdunensis Opera Omnia*, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Medievalis 52 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1981), p. 350. See Michel Huglo, ‘Les remaniements de l’antiphonaire grégorien au 1xe siècle: Héliaschar, Agobard, Amalaire’, in *Culto Cristiano: Politica Imperiale Carolingia*, Convegno del centro di studi sulla spiritualità medievale, Università degli studi di Perugia, XVIII (Todi, 1979), pp. 102–13.

⁵ Martin Gerbert (ed.), *Scriptores Ecclesiastici de Musica Sacra Potissimum ex Variis Codicibus Manuscriptis Collecti*, 3 vols. (St Blasien, 1784; repr. Milan: Bollettino Bibliografico Musicale, 1931), vol. 1, p. 251. On this text see Michel Huglo, ‘Der Prolog des Odo zugeschriebenen Dialogus de Musica’, *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft*, 28 (1971), 134–46.

even admired by the twelfth-century theorist Theinred of Dover,⁶ but had no theoretical knowledge of their art; others developed an aptitude for musical enquiry and scholarship. Their legacy is the extensive literature of musical teaching and codification that emerged in the ninth century and flourished throughout the medieval period. Some of their many treatises *de musica* are little more than abbreviated notices; others, such as the *De musica cum tonario* of c. 1100 by John of Afflighem, succeeded in accommodating the technicalities of musical art, decidedly prosaic, to the essentially literary tone of monastic learning.⁷ The technicalities in question were broached with sophisticated tools for discussing local and structural aspects of plain-song, painstakingly developed from a late-antique legacy, notably the *De Institutione Musica* of Boethius (d. 524) and then refined, from the Carolingian period onwards, by analytic listening and sheer pedagogical ingenuity.

The Latin manuals of plainsong are relatively well known, but there is another corpus of medieval commentary which has received less attention. This comprises letters, chronicles, *Lives* of saints, catalogues of 'illustrious men' and other literary documents composed from the tenth century onwards. The authors of this material found many opportunities to assess the qualities of plainsongs that lie, for the most part, in a significantly later chronological layer than the Gregorian music. They may praise the chant composed by some monk or cleric who was known to them, perhaps a member of their own house who became a bishop or abbot. We also find them addressing their superior or a colleague in urbane letters that introduce their own compositions in honour of a saint. The language of commendation that they employ is often frankly sensual, abounding in words like *dulcissimus*, *suavis* and *mellifluus*.⁸ There is often something leisurely about this material, especially when it takes epistolary form, and it may seem exaggerated to claim (should anyone be tempted to do so) that the Middle Ages produced *absolutely* no counterpart to the essay and review, genres associated with the rise of music criticism 'as a specific discursive medium' in a later age. The freshness of response these writers often bring to their task also provides a welcome corrective to the notion,

⁶ John L. Snyder (ed.), *Theinred of Dover's De legitimis ordinibus pentachordorum et tetrachordorum: A Critical Text and Translation with an Introduction, Annotations, and Indices* (Ottawa: Institute of Medieval Music, 2006), p. 140.

⁷ For an edition and translation of this treatise, see note 3. The outstanding guide to the theorists, showing exemplary sensitivity to their literary characteristics, is still Lawrence Gushee, 'Questions of Genre in Medieval Treatises on Music', in Wulf Arlt, Ernst Lichtenhahn and Hans Oesch (eds.), *Gattungen der Musik in Einzeldarstellungen: Gedenkschrift Leo Schrade* (Munich: Francke, 1973).

⁸ For such terms and concepts see Mary Carruthers, 'Sweetness', *Speculum*, 81 (2006), 999–1013.

perhaps widespread, that medieval musicians commonly ignored whatever a forensic method of enquiry could not elucidate.⁹

No apology is needed for making Gregorian plainsong the focus of this chapter. This large body of monophonic chant, developed between approximately 760 and 860 between the Seine and the Rhine, then supplemented with many later additions, was disseminated along lines of kindred and monastic alliance within the Frankish world, extended by conquest and (as in Spain and parts of Italy) by papal exhortation. By 1300 it formed the groundwork of compositional art throughout the greater part of Latin Christendom. How wide should the compass of a vocal melody be before it ceases to lie comfortably in the voice? How long should a musical phrase last before there is a pause for breath, and how should the arrival of that moment be signalled according to the weight of the pause? How should a melody set the balance between stepwise movement and leaps? Gregorian plainsong offered persuasive answers to these questions that anyone in the choirstalls might hear framed with conviction by proficient cantors. The ideal of choral blend was of some importance, for it could carry a measure of theological weight as an expression of Christian obedience, yet there was ample scope for such cantors to display a fine voice.

Neither Gregorian plainsong nor its many accretions can be viewed as straightforward examples of the anonymous creation sometimes uncritically associated with the Middle Ages. This music has by far the largest body of ancillary commentary and anecdote of any Latin chant repertoire, and it shows medieval writers distinguishing ‘ancients’ and ‘moderns’ in relation either to themselves or to chant-makers whose name they knew. This terminology, which one might readily suppose to be the invention of theorists from the fourteenth century onwards concerned with polyphony and measured notation, was in fact known to plainchant theorists and chant-makers at a much earlier date.¹⁰ Musicians of the period 950–1350 believed they had identified the principal features of the ancients’ manner and that they knew how to move forward in a confident fashion. The greatest of all the ancients was believed to be a named individual of great eminence, Pope Gregory I, and literary sources reveal that many chants composed for the liturgy of saints were associated with the names of their makers. They were not always correctly remembered, as far as we may now discern, and a celebrated name

⁹ For a conspectus of such texts, with illustrative quotations, see Christopher Page, *The Christian West and Its Singers: The First Thousand Years*, 2nd corrected ed. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012), pp. 429–41.

¹⁰ There are notable instances in the treatise of William of Hirsau (d. 1091). See Denis Harbinson (ed.), *Willehelmi Hirsaugensis Musica*, *Corpus Scriptorum de Musica* 23 (Rome: American Institute of Musicology, 1975).

could attract false attributions in a manner familiar from later periods of musical history, yet the effect was the same: the field of plainsong composition was crowded with identified persons. Some were of purely local fame, such as Balthar of Säckingen, Gerard of Corbie or Eberwin of Trier, but others were important or even great names of the universal church, such as Sigebert of Gembloux and Bruno of Toul, later Pope Leo IX (d. 1054).¹¹ Far from being anonymous, therefore, some layers of Latin plainsong were assumed to contain material that would reveal, to the discerning enquirer, the felicitous effects that its named creators had willed into it. The results inspired a rich and diverse affective vocabulary. They might be ‘sweet sounding’ (*dulcisonas*) or ‘most beautiful’ (*pulcherrimos*), composed with ‘correct music’ (*regulari melodia*) or with ‘choice invention’ (*elegans ingenium*).

At the beginning of the twelfth century one of these chant-makers, Sigebert of Gembloux, compiled a brief epistle to introduce his revised version of an old *Life of St Malo*. The letter is addressed to Thietmar, the abbot of Sigebert’s house. Capitalising upon the literary sensibility he shared with his superior, Sigebert ventures an extended metaphor. He says that he worked on the poor and antiquated text of the *Life* ‘like a country blacksmith’, pumping away at the bellows of his forge; he filed the corroded Latin until it all seemed new.¹² In one of his later writings, this time a catalogue of ‘illustrious men’ that ends with a fulsome account of himself, Sigebert relates how he also composed antiphons and responsories for St Malo to be chanted on his feast day; this time, however, he made his material like a bee ‘producing honey’.¹³ There is a marked contrast between the imagery he employs, for while text is like metal (solid, durable and malleable), the music resembles honey (fluid, evanescent and intractable).

Yet it would be easy to mistake what these metaphors imply. The allusion to making honey is designed to invoke a common figure of speech in monastic writings, namely the figure of the monk as an ingenious bee, *apis ingeniosus*, flitting between the flowers of the Bible and the writings of the Church Fathers to gather nectar for the good of the ecclesiastical hive. By using this image to speak of his chants, Sigebert is certainly claiming that they delight the ear as honey enraptures the palate, but he also implies they have been

¹¹ For these and other figures, see Page, *The Christian West*, pp. 429–41. For the music of Balthar of Säckingen, there is now the immaculate edition by Mechthild Pörnbacher and David Hiley (eds.), *Balthar von Säckingen, Bischof von Speyer, Historia sancti Fridolini* (ca. 970), *Musicological Studies* LXX/26 (Lions Bay, Canada: Institute of Mediaeval Music, 2016).

¹² *Vita Sancti Maclouii*, in Jacques Paul Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus Series Latina*, 217 vols. (Paris, 1844–5), with 4 vols. of indices (Paris, 1862–4), 160, pp. 730–1. Hereafter abbreviated *PL*.

¹³ Robert Witte (ed.), *Catalogus Sigeberti Gemblacensis Monachi De Viris Illustribus* (Berne: Lang, 1974), p. 104: ‘Arte autem musica antiphonas et responsoria de sanctis Maclouo et Guiberto melificavi.’

gathered from an extensive and abundant garden where many have laboured before him. To lift the veil of metaphor: his plainsongs draw upon a rich and self-conscious tradition of compositional practice and reflection.

A letter by Letald, monk of Saint-Mesmin de Micy, gives a sharper turn of phrase to what that sense of tradition means. Letald composed a *Life* of Saint Julian and dispatched it to Avesgaud, bishop of Le Mans (d. 1036) with a set of responsories and antiphons, as he had requested:

We have indeed divided the sequence of responsories and antiphons as you asked, in which, for the sake of avoiding prolixity, we have made each set from a single mode, nor in general did we wish to distance ourselves from the likeness of the old chant, lest we should produce barbarous or inexpert melody. The newfangled work of some musicians does not please me for they so abandon that guise they seem to be entirely contemptuous of following the old *auctores*. Those who are free to make marriages wish to produce children that resemble human beings, rather than to produce the form of some previously unseen monster.¹⁴

With its self-satisfied use of first-person forms in the plural, this passage shows a chant-maker discussing his craft with pride. Letald claims a place in a compositional tradition, for he speaks with assurance of the ‘old chant’, the Gregorian repertoire for Mass and Office. He does not wish to distance himself from that music in every respect lest he should commit the musical equivalent of a grammatical barbarism. His reference to ‘barbarous . . . melody’ (*barbaram . . . melodiam*) involves a transferred use of the term *barbarismus* denoting a fault in Latin grammar, orthography or metrics.¹⁵ The known composers of chant in the Middle Ages were erudite individuals whose understanding of what was correct in plainsong resembled (and was closely related to) their discrimination in matters of Latinity and prosody.¹⁶ That is why they were often inspired to compose chants for a saint: they judged the existing *Life* of that same saint to be unsatisfactory on literary grounds or even absurd.

¹⁴ *Vita Sancti Juliani* (PL 137, p. 784), reprinting the text in *Acta Sanctorum*, 68 vols. (Brussels and Antwerp, 1643–1940), 11 Januarius, 1152: ‘Sane responsorium et antiphonarum, ut petistis, digessimus ordinem; in quibus pro vitando fastidio de unoquoque modo singula compegimus corpora: neque omnino alienari volumus a similitudine veteris cantus, ne barbaram aut inexpertam, uti perhibetur, melodiam fingeremus. Non enim mihi placet quorundam musicorum novitas, qui tanta dissimilitudine utuntur, ut veteres sequi omnino dedignentur auctores: nam hi qui conjugii vacant malunt liberos hominibus similes gignere quam alicujus invisi monstri effigiem procreare.’ Compare David Hiley, ‘The Historia of St Julian of Le Mans by Létald of Micy: Some Comments and Questions about a North French Office of the Early Eleventh Century’, in Margot E. Fassler and Rebecca A. Baltzer (eds.), *The Divine Office in the Latin Middle Ages* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

¹⁵ Wallace Martin Lindsay (ed.), *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum sive Originum*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1911), vol. 1, p. 32.

¹⁶ See Calvin M. Bower, ‘The Grammatical Model of Musical Understanding in the Middle Ages’, in Patrick J. Gallacher and Helen Damico (eds.), *Hermeneutics and Medieval Culture* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989).

Gerard of Sauve-Majeure (d. 1095), for example, made plainsongs for Saint Adelhard when he found that his *Life*, written by a distinguished predecessor of Gerard's at Corbie, was 'so full of prolix lamentation, so lovesick with the language of the Song of Songs, it seemed more like an epithalamium than the text for a rhymed Office'.¹⁷ This quality of prolixity, perceived in essentially literary terms, is precisely what Letald seeks to avoid in his compositions; he wishes to avoid *fastidium*, often used for the weariness and distaste a reader may feel when a writer is unduly prolix or enters into an excessive degree of detail.¹⁸ Finally, Letald's somewhat disturbing comparison of poorly constructed chants to marriages that produce 'some previously unseen monster', or *invisi monstri effigiem*, clothes a technical and critical judgement in the material of an allusive metaphor. The source is the 'snake-tressed form of monster', or *anguicomam monstri effigiem*, of Statius' *Thebaid* (6.495) and it refers here to chants that begin in one plainsong mode and end in another, producing a musical chimera.

The plainsong modes offered a system of musical grammar designed to show whether a chant was an intelligible, rational and defensible composition.¹⁹ Each one of the eight modes defined a particular pattern of tones and semitones while identifying a core pitch in the set and its principal satellite pitches. A mode could guide the composer in the matter of how much (and how often) his melody should rise or fall below the core pitch, and it commended certain ways to begin, register an internal pause and close. In addition to the obvious mnemonic value of classifying chants into families on the basis of their most salient resemblances (an extraordinary feat of memory and analytic listening), the modes offered what the ninth-century theorist Aurelian calls the 'glue' which held composed plainsongs and chanted recitation formulas together in a harmonious whole.²⁰ Here were grounds for

¹⁷ *Alia Vita S. Adelardi*, in *Acta Sanctorum*, 1 Januarius, 111.

¹⁸ R. E. Latham, David R. Howlett and Richard Ashdowne (eds.), *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* (British Academy, London: Oxford University Press, 1975–2013), s.v. *fastidium*, sense 2; Johanne W. Fuchs and Olga Weijers (eds.), *Lexicon Latinitatis Nederlandicae Medii Aevi* (Leiden: Brill, 1977–2005), s.v. *fastidium*, sense 1.

¹⁹ For the modes and their history see Peter Jeffery, 'The Earliest Oktōchoi: The Role of Jerusalem and Palestine in the Beginnings of Modal Ordering', in Peter Jeffery (ed.), *The Study of Medieval Chant: Paths and Bridges, East and West. In Honour of Kenneth Levy* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2001); and Keith Falconer, 'The Modes before the Modes: Antiphon and Differentia in Western Chant', in *ibid.* The practice of distinguishing eight categories of modes, divided into four pairs and associated with Greek precedent, is by no means distinctively Frankish. What is more, relatively systematic and notated sources of the Gregorian music do not appear before c. 900, by which time the repertory they contain has probably undergone successive layers of independent redaction, in many points of detail, to make the chants accord better with modal doctrines that were the gateway to systematic classification, listening and memorisation. This further obscures the relation between theory and practice at the formative stage of the repertory.

²⁰ Lawrence Gushee (ed.), *Aureliani Reomensis Musica Disciplina*, *Corpus Scriptorum de Musica* 21 (Rome: American Institute of Musicology, 1975), p. 78.

correcting what was false, for constraining what was capricious and for condemning any mischievous attempt to create music that did not seek to make a ritual text reach a greater depth in the listener than the spoken voice could do alone.

There were many ways in which this system for analysing melody could become a preoccupation or be invoked. In addition to providing a technical language, the modes performed a fundamentally moral purpose which even those of modest musical gifts or interests might come to understand. The Latin manuals of plainchant reveal an acute interest in the subtleties of the human voice as a vehicle for melody but also for spoken prose and poetry, a legacy of Classical civilisation but one which could not be judged entirely benign. Its objects, like its appetites, called for scrutiny, not least because the ministers of the Christian religion were in the curious position of having to concede that the most eloquent homily might do less to induce piety than a melody. In the *Etymologies*, one of the foundational texts of the medieval experience, bishop Isidore of Seville (d. 636) observes that liturgical readers may ‘announce’ the teachings of Scripture when they declaim the lessons, whereas singers sometimes excite their hearers to compunction – the sharp reminder of sinfulness that softened the heart and was often accompanied by tears. In such cases the power of music was well and good, but viewed in general terms it was a potentially dangerous force. Isidore, alarmed by the possibility that he might be awarding the palm to music, quickly adds that some readers deliver their texts ‘so lamentingly’ that those present are overwhelmed.²¹

The question of whether a melody might kindle an especially ardent flame of piety in the listener precisely *because* it was irregular, and unusually arresting to the ear, was therefore a delicate one with considerable pastoral and even theological implications. The music theorists were prepared to recognise the principle, but it would undo their core project to commend it. John of Afflighem blames the moderns (*novi modulatores*) for jumbling different modal signals together in a single melody, cultivating what he calls a *pruritus aurium*. This is translated in the standard English version of John’s treatise as an attempt to ‘tickle the ears’, implying a pleasant sensation that might make one smile or laugh, but that may not be quite the sense that John intends.²² The term *pruritus*, ‘an itch’, has a long history in Christian Latin, with *prurio* bearing the metaphorical sense ‘to long for a thing, to be wanton’. John is

²¹ Lindsay (ed.), *Etymologiarum sive Originum*, bk vii, p. 12.

²² Smits van Waesberghe, *Johannis Affligemensis De Musica*, p. 96; Palisca (ed.), *Hucbald, Guido and John on Music*, p. 125.

making precisely the objection to improper and even perhaps mischievous use of musical resources that modal theory was in part designed to curb. His reference to composers in the new fashion who mix modes to satisfy the wanton longing of the ears for gratification probably alludes to the dire prophecy in 2 Timothy 4.3–4: ‘For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears (*prurientes auribus*), and they shall turn away their ears from the truth and shall be turned unto fables.’ A wrong or irresponsibly placed note could evidently be a serious matter.

The process of preparing for a choral liturgy of Gregorian or indeed any other form of chant, then carrying it through with a complex interplay between choir and soloists, might involve singers in some process of adjudication about the relative merits of competing versions, sometimes descending to the minor (or not so minor) variations of melodic detail that are richly attested in the manuscript sources. Such discussions were liable to be a fraught combination of modal reasoning (more or less correctly applied), personal preference and pure prejudice. The Italian ascetic Guido of Arezzo, who famously developed a form of staff notation in the 1020s, had observed the dissent that could arise among singers who had learned different versions of a chant and were prepared to defend their own with some tenacity, both as a mark of respect for their teachers and as a sonorous distillation, so to speak, of their monastic or clerical upbringing. Guido judged such arguments to be a ‘grave mistake’ and liable to promote a ‘perilous discord’.²³ John of Affligem had also seen these quarrels taking place. ‘If, as sometimes happens, a musician takes singers to task about a chant which they perform either inaccurately or crudely’, he says, ‘they become angry and make a shameless uproar and are unwilling to admit the truth, but defend their error with the greatest effort.’²⁴ Here the singer who makes the objection to what he hears is called a *musicus*, meaning one who is trained in the modal pedagogy and other aspects of plainchant theory. He criticises what is ‘not correct’ (*non recte*) or ‘poorly put together’ (*incomposita*), all terms implying unjustifiable departures from correct and enabling modality. John even ventriloquises three singers who are literally comparing notes in the midst of such personal and musical disharmony:

²³ Joseph Smits van Waesberghe (ed.), *Tres Tractatuli Guidonis Aretini*, *Divitiae Musicae Artis*, iii (Buren: Knuf, 1975), p. 62; and Dolores Pesce (ed. and trans.), *Guido d’Arezzo’s Regule Rithmice, Prologus in Antiphonarium and Epistola ad Michaelem: A Critical Text and Translation*, *Musicological Studies* 73 (Ottawa: Institute of Mediaeval Music, 1999), pp. 410–11.

²⁴ Smits van Waesberghe, *Johannis Affligemensis De Musica*, p. 66; Palisca (ed.), *Hucbald, Guido and John on Music*, p. 110.

One says, 'Master Trudo taught me this way'. Another rejoins: 'But I learned it like this from master Albinus'; and to this a third remarks, 'Master Salomon certainly sings differently' . . . rarely, therefore, do three men agree about one chant. Since each man prefers his own teacher, there arise as many variations in chanting as there are teachers in the world.²⁵

Around 1100 the abbey of Affligem was a new Benedictine house located on plains of northern Europe that had once been the heartland of the Carolingian dynastic power. It would not be unusual for such a monastery, in such a place, to receive new members from time to time who had studied with different choirmasters, for many things could impel a monk to wander. He might be searching for a community where the *Rule* was observed with a strictness that satisfied his aspirations, or wandering in exile after some contretemps (collegiate living easily gives rise to such conflicts). The creation of new monasteries as colonies from a mother house – common in this great age of monastic foundation – could also give rise to situations like the one described by John.

Arguments such as these may often have required each singer to defend, 'with the greatest effort', what he or she actually *preferred* on the grounds that it was *demonstrably the best practice judged in modal terms*. The disputes were conducted at the point where the ideal of regulated melody, so dear to the music theorists of the period because it was so enabling, met the creative profligacy of the actual music to which it was being applied and the sheer vagaries of taste. To judge by the manuscript sources, matters in contention might include the starting pitch and the initial musical gesture of any chant (the disputes could perhaps be especially fraught in this regard, given the especially mnemonic force of beginnings), the placement of a semitone step that could not be defended in terms of the traditional gamut, the number of notes in a melisma or perhaps its general curve, the melodic gesture used to precede a pause, the presence or absence of an ornamental neume at a certain point and the assignment of the melodic elements to the syllables of the text. That list by no means exhausts the range of variants that may appear in competing manuscript witnesses to the 'same' chant, and which might involve singers in a wrangle about what was *dulcissima*, *honestissima* or *melliflua* in the melody at issue between them.

John was an early champion of the notation using inked and dry-point lines that Guido of Arezzo developed from an existing bundle of graphic techniques, probably in the 1020s. Between the eleventh and the fourteenth centuries many centres faced the task of filtering their chant repertory, for the

²⁵ Smits van Waesberghe, *Johannis Affligemensis De Musica*, p. 134; Palisca (ed.), *Hucbald, Guido and John on Music*, p. 147.

first time, through the mesh of such notation. This could also promote disputes about local details and larger structures since the system required clear decisions to be made about the steps each melody makes. That always had to be someone's decision, preferably a reasoned one and in that sense critical. Should the version known to the younger members of the community, some perhaps newly arrived from other houses, be preferred to the versions sung by the aged whose tradition was in some respects demonstrably idiosyncratic or ungrammatical because it could not be notated on a staff? Which was best? Beyond that, the choice of what to record, like the arrangement of the liturgical calendar, represented a particular relationship between the entrenched localism of the house and its wider connections with the authority of a bishop that the monks might wish to affirm or contest by following or not following the usage of the cathedral or metropolitan church. Some scribes may have regretted the days when the older neumatic notations, without lines, did not compel them to record the melodies in a manner so legible and therefore so vulnerable to a contentious challenge in matters both large and small.

Despite its undoubted invitation to pedantry, modal theory could be used to express, and even in some measure to explain, the gratification that a particular plainsong could give when it was grammatically made. A particularly eloquent text in this regard is the work of the twelfth-century theorist commonly known as the Seay anonymous. In a short treatise on chant and polyphony this author observes that a well-composed chant in mode I should frequently rise to the fifth degree (D-a) above its home pitch in a 'joyful' manner (*hilariter*).²⁶ This proves to be a term of which the author is fond. He maintains that all the authentic modes (1, 3, 5 and 7) should linger on the fifth degree and 'often ascend to it' *hilariter*, while a chant in mode three should ascend *hilariter* to the sixth degree (E-c). There is not much doubt about the range of meaning *hilariter* may command in this passage. The Classical senses of 'cheerfully, joyfully, merrily' were retained in medieval Christian Latin. When the plainsong theorists step outside their standard technical vocabulary in this way the results are often arresting; in this instance the author appears to be identifying aspects of melodic motion in chant that the listener perceives as enlivened, and perhaps spiritually uplifting, because they give the ear the delight of having its educated expectations of the correct modal grammar artfully met. Although the author is referring to what may *often* happen in the course of a chant, the characteristic gestures of a mode are often already revealed by the beginnings of chants commonly cited as

²⁶ Albert Seay, 'An Anonymous Treatise from St Martial', *Annales musicologiques*, 5 (1957), 28.

diagnostic of its class; as a result, these openings offer not only a melodic ‘incipit’ but also a distillation of a chant’s wider properties, and one with a strong mnemonic force since the beginning is the leading edge, so to speak, of what is to be memorised.

In his consideration of polyphony, where a chant is decorated with a second voice, the Seay anonymous places the same emphasis on striking effects and sheer pleasure. The music should proceed with ‘a wondrous flexibility’, going forward ‘melodizing or in a pleasure-seeking way’ (*modulando vel lasciviendo*) where *lasciviendo* does not fail to acknowledge the moral ambiguity present in the Modern English expression ‘a seductive appeal’.²⁷ The author recommends that a section of note-against-note counterpoint may have more notes in the added part, at the end of a phrase, than there are in the chant, so that it seems ‘more beautiful and *facetior*’, which could imply an ‘elegant’ or ‘witty’ effect, but also an urbane and even a ‘courtly’ one to judge by texts which associate *facetus* with the schooled demeanour appropriate to the courts of spiritual and temporal magnates.²⁸ A chant-maker should cultivate such effects at cadences so that the result will be ‘more willingly heard by those who are listening’: a recommendation that recognises what a later age will call an ‘aesthetic’ purpose with the same candour as it identifies a constituency of persons listening and reacting to what they hear: the ‘listeners’ or *auscultantes*.²⁹

Some musicians responded to the moral and even pastoral need for grammatical chant by composing plainsongs which combined a more emphatic modality with new forms of musical and textual patterning. Their highly controlled and lucid techniques represent the art of the moderns in its most concentrated form. An example is provided by the Magnificat antiphon in mode II, *Ecce leti*, by bishop Radbod of Utrecht (d. 918).³⁰ Neither the general course and compass of this melody, with its adjacent falling fourths at *gloria Martini*, nor the way the tessitura allows the singer to seat the melody securely in the voice and negotiate from there, would cause any real surprise in a Gregorian plainsong. A moment of luxuriance at *Christe* magnifies the prayer for Christ’s intercession in a manner quite within the familiar Gregorian means of expression. Yet in other ways Radbod has already moved on some distance from the Gregorian repertory. The text is in accentual (or in medieval terms, rhythmic) verse; the lines have four beats each and eight syllables; their

²⁷ Seay, ‘An Anonymous Treatise’, 35.

²⁸ As in Lanfranc of Canterbury, *De corpore et sanguine domini*, PL 150, p. 414: ‘esse rusticus et idiota catholicus quam tecum existere curialis atque facetus haereticus’.

²⁹ Seay, ‘An Anonymous Treatise’, 33.

³⁰ Transcription from an antiphoner copied for St Mary’s Church, Utrecht, and facsimile of the original, in Page, *The Christian West*, pp. 416–17.

cadences, all save one with a terminal *-a* assonance, alternate between the cadential rhythm /x (as in *digna*) and /x\ (as in *gaudià*). This harmony of verbal sound is by no means native to the older chant, for Gregorian texts often recall the best rhetorical periods of Roman legal prose. The lucid modality of the melody also marks this as an example of a *modernus* at work. The music extends along the trellis of its mode in a highly controlled manner, virtually never failing to articulate the ends of poetic lines, and the caesuras within them when they occur, by pausing on either the final of the mode (D) or on the fifth degree above (a). This is presumably one kind of style – widespread in the ninth and tenth centuries – that composers regarded as a musical equivalent of what they accomplished when, often as part of the same project, they took the existing *Life* of a saint and made it ‘more schooled’, *cultius*, and ‘more urbane’, *urbanius*.³¹

There were other ways of broaching the effects of musical sound in plainchant which take the modern reader into much less familiar territory. To explore their sensations in writing, medieval authors possessed, in the tradition of Latin theology, a vast body of work which explored how a life of love and contrition could best be lived within the bounds of a body prey to temptation or suffering. The notion of ‘compunction’ proved especially potent in this context.³² The literal meaning of the word, as mentioned above, is a pricking sensation felt by the physical body; in metaphorical terms it meant a sharp and sudden realisation of sinfulness arising from a fallen nature that was mostly concealed from view by worldly preoccupations and hardness of heart. It is no surprise, therefore, that compunction was often associated with weeping, as when a sudden wound to the physical body induces a sense of trauma and compassion for self that may be accompanied by tears. Thus the Frankish monastic writer Grimlaic who flourished in the early 800s, gives this assurance to those intending to adopt an especially strict life of monastic seclusion:

Childish games and laughter do not delight us but holy readings and the spiritual music of melody instead. However hard-hearted we are, and unable

³¹ See Fabian Lochner, ‘Un évêque musicien au Xe siècle: Radbod d’Utrecht (+ 917)’, *Tijdschrift van der Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis*, xxxviii (1988), 3–35; facsimile of the source in Ike de Loos, Charles Downey and Ruth Steiner (eds.), *Utrecht Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit MS 406 (3.J.7)*, Publications of Musical Manuscripts 21 (Ottawa: Institute of Mediaeval Music, 1997).

³² P. G. W. Glare (ed.), *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), s. v. ‘compungō’. See also ‘pungō’, whose senses include ‘to break the equanimity of’. Compare Latham, Howlett and Ashdowne (eds.), *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources, Fascicule 1, A–B* (British Academy, London: Oxford University Press, 1975), s.v. ‘compungere’, sense (c), ‘to inspire w. compunction’; and Otto Prinz, et al. (eds.), *Mittelateinisches Wörterbuch*, Band 11, C (Munich: Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1999), s.v. ‘compungo’, 11. b. 2. For forms of compunction, see Sandra J. McEntire, ‘The Doctrine of Compunction in the West: Theology and Literary Implications’, unpublished PhD dissertation, Cornell University (1987); more recently McEntire, *The Doctrine of Compunction in Medieval England: Holy Tears* (Lewisham: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990).

to produce tears, our hearts are turned to compunction when we hear the sweetness of psalmody. There are many who are moved by the sweetness of chant to bewail their sins, and readily brought to tears, by the sweet sounds of a singer.³³

Grimlaic is referring to chants that achieved their effects because of their musical appeal, not in spite of it. He is not concerned here with *any* psalmody but only that which sounds the ‘sweetness of psalms’ (*psalmodum dulcedo insonuerit*), which strikes the listener with the ‘sweetness of its chant’ (*cantus suavitate*) and with the ‘pleasantness of its sweetness’ (*dulcedo suavitatis*). Those who reacted to such plainsong with tears enhanced their connections with others and found that their importance to the common project of worship was magnified. They would also know that they had experienced a reaction with a name, which was *compunctio*, and that a means existed to turn this experience of music into a form of spiritual nourishment and growth.

How was this tearfulness identified in the substance of the music? One answer can be sought in the inherently expressive properties granted to the plainsong modes from at least the twelfth century onwards. Mode VI, for example, was consistently admired for sounding with a ‘lachrymose note’ (*lacrimosa vox*) by which listeners could be softened (*mulcentur*). The implied context is certainly a softening of the heart which, in its most extreme form, brings tears of penance and a desire for a reconciliation. A late but especially explicit comment, by the Carthusian theorist Heinrich Eger von Kalkar (d. 1408), records that mode VI inspires minds to ‘sweetness and piety as in the Gregorian responsory *Videns Jacob*’.³⁴ It is a luxury to have a specific chant cited in such a context. The text is derived from the episode in Genesis 36 where Jacob sees the clothes of his son Joseph that his brothers have stained with blood:

Videns Jacob vestimenta Joseph scindit vestimenta sua cum fletu et dixit fera pessima devoravit filium meum Joseph.

Jacob, seeing the clothes of Joseph, rent his garments with lamentation and said: ‘A wild beast has devoured my son Joseph.’

³³ *PL* 103, p. 619: ‘Quapropter non nos oblectet puerilis jocus ac risus, sed lectiones sacrae et spiritualis melodiae cantus. Quamvis enim dura sint corda nostra ad lacrymas producendas, mox tamen ut psalmodum dulcedo insonuerit, ad compunctionem cordis animum nostrum inflectit. Multi enim reperiuntur qui cantus suavitate commoti sua crimina plangunt, atque ex ea parte magis flectuntur ad lacrymas, ex qua psallentis insonuerit dulcedo suavitatis.’

³⁴ Heinrich Hüschel, *Das Cantuagium des Heinrich Eger von Kalkar*, Beiträge zur rheinischen Musikgeschichte, vol. 2 (Cologne: Staufener-Verlag, 1952), p. 48: ‘Sextus lacrimosus est et pius, omnium tonorum dulcissimus, animos ad pietatem et lacrimas provocans sicut in responsorio gregoriano *Videns Jacob*.’

The theorists' assessments of mode VI especially invite comment, for this 'lachrymose' mode, considered merely as a ladder of tones and semi-tones, and without the discretionary flat that was sometimes required, is actually an extended form of what a later age will call the major scale: CDEFGAB \sharp cdef. In modal theory, however, the foundational tone of this mode is F, emphatically established in the opening gestures of *Videns Jacob*, so the ladder is actually structured as CDE–F–GAB \sharp cdef. This often gives chants sung with a B \sharp natural the pervasive sense of an F–B \sharp tritone. The extent to which this was an element in the tearful effect of *Videns Jacob* remains an open question, since there are some sources which impose a flat at certain points in this melody and others which do not. By the standards of a later age, the maker of *Videns Jacob* shows no interest in any conventionalised code whereby a particular musical effect may be heard as the sonorous correlate of an emotional state; the word *fletu* ('weeping') elicits no special response or ornamental neume, although the potently symbolic gesture of tenting garments (*scidit vestimenta*) is lifted high in the voice and textual repetition is answered with an answering melodic restatement: the name of Joseph, which appears twice, is set to essentially the same music each time. We may suspect that the lachrymose quality of *Videns Jacob* was perceived in terms that fluently compounded the subject of its text (a grieving patriarch), its modal properties, certain particularities of its word-setting, and the penitential Lenten liturgical context in which it was appointed to be sung.

Lives of the saints and chronicles contain many brief narratives in which a chant precipitates a supernatural event, such as a miraculous cure, or where a plainsong is sung by celestial voices that someone is privileged to hear. These stories reveal a medieval discourse about music that is as yet little known, and yet they represent a substantial body of literary material where specific plainsongs are embedded in a discursive context. These narratives invariably identify a chant by its textual incipit, sometimes noting its type (introit, gradual or whatever it may be), but the authors almost always take care to mention that the chant was sung, often in a ravishing manner, and not simply recited as a prayer or invocation.

What kind of criticism may such stories be said to offer? Since they take care to specify the plainsong at issue there is no reason to suppose that *any* chant would have served as well as the one actually specified in the story; there is choice and therefore there is a measure of discernment. Sometimes it seems that only the text can be confidently invoked to explain the selection made, as when St Vivian performed a miraculous cure when he heard his devotees sing the words *Homo iste fecit mirabilia*: 'this man has performed

wonders'.³⁵ Yet there are instances where it seems the music is also invoked, albeit at the level of the chant's modal class rather than of specific melodic or structural details in its own manufacture. Soon after 900, for example, a female recluse near the abbey of Saint Gall saw the abbey's patron saint singing the Introit *Ne timeas Zacharia* for the Nativity of John the Baptist. When he had done this 'with sweet music', the saint revealed that some members of the monastic household would soon be drowned in a shipwreck on Lake Constance.³⁶ Saint Gall presumably selected a chant from the liturgy of John the Baptist to interpret this imminent drowning as a form of baptismal cleansing (quite apart from the fact that the recluse would have heard the saint begin the chant with the welcome words *Ne timeas*, 'do not be afraid'). The melody is cast in mode VII, whose general tessitura is the highest of any in the modal set, issuing an implicit summons that a choir should sing the chant as high as they can sing it well. The story seems to translate a moment of supernatural epiphany into an almost synesthetic apprehension of high pitch and 'great brilliance of light' as *Ne timeas Zacharia* rises high in Romanesque arches of melody, the saint's radiance spreading through the solitary's cell. Yet there is not just pitch and luminescence; there is also movement and delight. The music theorists often characterise chants of mode VII in terms of their tendency to spring or bound (*saltus*), invoking a metaphor of bodily movement often associated with an exultant emotional state. They declare that the effect is heard 'joyfully' (*gratanter*) or 'with pleasure' (*libenter*) because it is itself inherently pleasurable and jocund, *lascivus atque jucundus*. This was a lived perception acquired by circling through the liturgical seasons year by year; it was not the response of an enquiring mind hovering over its materials and then moving on to more.

³⁵ Anon., 'Translatio Sancti Viviani Episcopi', *Analecta Bollandiana*, 8 (1889), 263. Such stories are almost never found in the Latin writings of the first millennium, for they reflect the rise of 'properised' chant repertoires where the texts appointed for the rite on any given day were not simply sung to music of the right kind, as in an extempore tradition, but were sung to the right music: to a fixed and indeed canonical melody.

³⁶ Walter Berschin (ed. and trans.), *Ekkehard 1: Vita Sanctae Wiboradae* (St Gallen: Historischer Verein des Kantons St Gallen, 1983), p. 56.

Music Criticism in the Late-Medieval and Renaissance Era

STEFANO MENGOZZI

In one form or another, a critical discourse on the merit, the emotional/moral impact and the structural coherence of the art of sounds in its manifold manifestations and modes of fruition (individual works, genres and their social affiliations, performance, musical taste, the act of listening, etc.) has existed in Western culture since the origins of Western music. As Fred Everett Maus points out, the very act of assembling tones to create a melody implies a conscious act of self-criticism on the part of the musician.¹ In this broad sense, music criticism is closely aligned to music theory: as early as in ancient Greek culture, the awareness of the affective power of organised sound upon listeners led to forms of musical ‘science’ that offered meticulous quantifications of the structures of musical pitch (such as scales, intervals, proportions, temperament, etc.) in conjunction with a consideration of the psychological and social effects of those same structures.

Normative, or prescriptive, forms of music criticism were not uncommon in the European Middle Ages. They were predicated on the widely shared argument that the meaningful ordering of sounds has a ‘grammar’ regulating its well-formedness, the harmonious disposition of its components.² Augustine’s famous definition of music as *scientia bene modulandi*, stated at the very beginning of his *De musica*, signals a grammatical approach to the art of sounds that remained widely influential throughout the pre-modern world. An harmonious disposition of parts, in turn, was regarded as the precondition for the unique forms of intellectual and sensorial delight that music delivers to

¹ Fred Everett Maus, ‘Criticism, §1: General Issues’, *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, available at: www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed 27 May 2017).

² For an overview of the significance of the grammatical approach to music in medieval musical treatises, surely a topic in need of further investigation, see Calvin Bower, ‘The Grammatical Model of Musical Understanding in the Middle Ages’, in Patrick J. Gallagher and Helen Damico (eds.), *Hermeneutics and Medieval Culture* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989). Engelbert, abbot of Admont (d. 1331) offers insightful ‘grammatical’ analyses of chant melodies in his *De musica*; see Sarah Fuller, ‘“Delectabatur in hoc auris”: Some Fourteenth-Century Perspectives on Aural Perception’, *Musical Quarterly*, 82/3–4 (1998), 466–81 (esp. 467–69).

its listeners and students. The quadrivial discipline of *musica* (music theory, from Boethius to the Renaissance and beyond) was dedicated to demonstrating the rational origin of those components (intervals, consonances, genera) by highlighting their direct derivation from the arithmetical proportions. Such overwhelming emphasis on the rational study of music in the pre-modern era is not per se evidence of a corresponding lack of interest in the ‘art’ of music as a sensorial experience, as Frank Hentschel has compellingly argued.³ Rather, throughout the medieval and Renaissance eras, musical experience played a marginal role in scholarly discourse simply because it was not deemed amenable to rational investigation. Yet, practical concerns are often just around the corner, as the following pages will demonstrate: after the quadrivial approach to music led to the formulation of grammatical rules of well-formedness (which most notably came to the fore on the subject of the diatonic modes), it was a short step to the emergence of a critical, music-analytic mindset that would single out either the occasional breaking of those rules (inevitably carrying moral as much as ‘aesthetic’ connotations) or their successful application (triggering pleasurable musical experiences). Inevitably, prescription calls for descriptive feedback to ensure its enforcement.

Two general observations apply to the critical discourse on music surveyed in this chapter. The first one has to do with the direct links that tie such discourse to the traditions of literary and rhetorical criticism dating back to Classical antiquity. As the following pages will show, the musical writers of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance mediated their terminological and conceptual tools (such as the oppositions *lascivia/iucunditas* and *dulcedo/duritia*) directly from the *auctores* of the ‘science of discourse’, such as Quintilian. Because they rely on fundamental categories of experience and moral judgement, such binary oppositions have naturally remained in place for centuries to come.

The second observation pertains to the specific object of criticism that is the exclusive focus of this chapter, namely sacred music. It seems that the question of how to articulate the sacred successfully through musical sound became increasingly urgent in the late Middle Ages. It was addressed not only through the new alliance of music and text pursued in new devotional genres such as the Italian *lauda* and the English carol, but also in musical writings that sought to protect the sacred from the intrusions of secular *lascivia* of various kinds. In this sense, music criticism of the late Middle

³ Frank Hentschel, ‘The Sensuous Music Aesthetics of the Middle Ages: The Case of Augustine, Jacques de Liège and Guido of Arezzo’, *Plainsong and Medieval Music*, 20 (2011), 1–29. The argument is fully developed in Frank Hentschel, *Sinnlichkeit und Vernunft in der mittelalterlichen Musiktheorie: Strategien der Konsonanzwertung und der Gegenstand der Musica Sonora um 1300*, Beihefte zum Archiv für Musikwissenschaft 47 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2000).

Agnes prolonged a debate on the role of music within the Christian church that was as old as Christianity itself. This is not to imply that there is no such thing as an incipient strand of criticism of secular music in the period under consideration, but only to alert readers that it will not be discussed in the present essay.

The Coming of Age of *Musica Humana*

The growing interest in the phenomenology and physical aspects of sound in the late Middle Ages – fostered, for instance, by Pietro d’Abano’s commentary on the pseudo-Aristotelian *Problems* – coincided with an increased focus on the effects of musical sounds on human minds and bodies, and with an interest in describing or representing musical sound from the perspective of its bodily experience – trends that have remained part of the tradition of music criticism ever since, in one form or another.⁴ As Bruce Holsinger has demonstrated in a groundbreaking exploration of music and corporeality in medieval culture, the intellectual primacy accorded to the Platonic-Pythagorean musical cosmology in the pre-modern era could not eradicate, or even marginalise, alternative epistemologies that highlighted the extent to which sound was ultimately irreducible to number.⁵ Indeed, the very proponents of Pythagorean rationalism ‘often return to the very flesh they purportedly transcend’ so that, according to Holsinger,

[a] useful way of imagining the relationship between classical music theory and medieval musical culture might be to envision their interaction as a kind of intellectual and theological plate tectonics, by which a dualist platonism hostile to the material world collides with an incarnational theology forced to account for the musical behaviours, pleasures, and desires of all-too-human bodies.⁶

Those ‘intellectual plate tectonics’ openly clashed in Augustine of Hippo, who at the same time embraced a Neoplatonic view of music as rooted in number while also experiencing the full force of musical delight on his body, as he

⁴ On Pietro d’Abano’s musical commentaries, see Claude V. Palisca, *Humanism in Italian Renaissance Musical Thought* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), pp. 51–66; and Letterio Mauro, ‘La musica nei commenti ai “Problemi”’: Pietro d’Abano e Évrart de Conty’, in Mauro (ed.), *La musica nel pensiero medievale* (Ravenna: Longo Editore, 1999), pp. 31–69.

⁵ Bruce W. Holsinger, *Music, Body, and Desire in Medieval Culture: Hildegard of Bingen to Chaucer* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 7. Along the same lines, Umberto Eco showed in his classic study on medieval aesthetics that authors such as Bernard of Clairvaux and Suger of Saint-Denis responded vividly to the refined beauty of the material objects around them, even as they wished to denounce its corrupting import. See Umberto Eco, *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*, trans. Hugh Bredin (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), pp. 4–16.

famously described in his *Confessions*.⁷ Yet, at times they engendered rather playful metaphors: for instance, a passage in several treatises of the *Ad organum faciendum* tradition anthropomorphise the relationship between the *vox principalis* and the *vox organalis* by describing their relative motions as the physical interaction between two friends (ending with a musical ‘kiss’, in the form of a cadential unison).⁸

It was left to the later movement of the *devotio moderna* – the affective religious practices of the late-medieval era, promoted by the mendicant orders and other reformist sections of the Church – to provide a theological justification of sensuous musical pleasure as a vivid sign of the human body redeemed by Christ’s resurrection. The late-medieval genres of the *lauda*, the carol and other popular religious songs were designed to impress their listeners with the gentle contours of their melodic lines and with the suppleness and sweetness of their harmonies – the musical equivalents of the deeper and more meaningful *dulcedo* ushered in by the Christian message of salvation. To the musical commentators of the time, such as Johannes Gallicus, the *dulcedo* of those devotional genres was evocative of the song of the angels, which centuries earlier had inspired the sacred chants of the primitive Church. *Dulcedo* implies *simplicitas* – also a key sign of humbleness – but also purity, as well as a form of musical pleasure that, albeit clearly rooted in a bodily experience, thoroughly pervades the mind, generating in the listener a desire for heavenly things and the Almighty (*dulcedo Dei*).⁹ St Bernard of Clairvaux gave perhaps the clearest formulation of sweetness as a powerful gateway for a new theology that exalts the human body as the perfect venue for encountering the divine (‘Jesus is honey in the mouth, melody in the ear, a jubilee in the heart’).¹⁰ Bernard’s theology of sweetness rests on the double meaning of the

⁷ Holsinger, *Music, Body, and Desire*, pp. 69–78. The author aptly observes that Augustine’s account is ‘ripe with the imagery of liquefaction’ (p. 71). On this topic, see also Christopher Page’s ‘Speaking of Plainsong in the Middle Ages’, Chapter 1 in this volume.

⁸ ‘Let us unite two friends conversing leisurely, for so great is their bond, so great their affection, that one conducts the other out of kindness, giving it the fourth and fifth in turn; and suddenly they are together at the octave or the unison’, *Ad organum faciendum et Item de organo*, edited with introduction, translation, and notes, by Jay. A. Huff (Brooklyn: Institute of Medieval Music, 1970), p. 48; for the original Latin text (Milan treatise), see Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht and Frieder Zaminer, ‘Ad organum faciendum’: *Lehrschriften der Mehrstimmigkeit in nachgotischer Zeit* (Mainz: B. Schott’s Söhne, 1970), p. 111. The full excerpt is discussed in Holsinger, *Music, Body, and Desire*, pp. 161–2.

⁹ Mary Carruthers, *The Experience of Beauty in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 89–99.

¹⁰ Cited in Carruthers, *The Experience of Beauty*, p. 91. Bernard’s contemporary, Hugo of Foulloy, flatly dismisses the sweetness of the senses as fruitless, when it does not come from the heart, in his passionate condemnation of the musical abuses in the church. ‘What good is the sweetness of the voice – he wonders – without the sweetness of the heart?’ (‘Quid prodest dulcedo vocis sine dulcedine cordis?’), in *De clastro animae*, bk 2, ch. 21, ‘De dissolution in choro’; see Jacques Paul Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, vol. 176 (Paris, 1880), col. 1081. Here and elsewhere in this essay, all translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.

Latin verb *sapio*, *sapere*, meaning both ‘to know’ and ‘to taste’, which the Cistercian father highlights in his landmark commentaries on the Song of Songs. If *dulcedo* regulated the personal experience of both God and material reality, firmly relating them to each other, its synonym – *suavis*, from (*per*) *suadeo* – had an unmistakable link with rhetoric: sweetness of expression has long been recognised as a highly *per-suasive* rhetorical tool. In a sense, the texts of these devotional genres themselves may be read as a form of music criticism conceived as a guide to listening. With their frequent references to the sweetness of the message of salvation, so unequivocally embodied in sound, they draw attention to the affective correspondences between text and music.¹¹

On the other hand, sweetness for its own sake, severed from the sweetness of the heart, may easily degenerate into *lascivia*, a licentious and effeminate form of pleasure that aims at titillating the audience rather than educating it. The Classical theory of rhetoric already deployed the term – perhaps from the Sanskrit *lāsati* (‘desire’) – in distinctively derogative fashion, the charge of lasciviousness being possibly the most damaging weapon in the literary critic’s arsenal well into the Renaissance. Quintilian famously found the modern rhetorical style to be *lascivus*, meaning effeminate, unnatural and overdone, singling out Ovid’s poetry for its lightness and sensuality – two essential attributes of *lascivia*. Later authors such as Giovanni Boccaccio, Ermolao Barbaro the Elder, and Battista Spagnoli Mantuanus continued to wield the term in their stinging critiques of either particular kinds of poetry and specific poetic works (such as Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*) or (in Barbaro’s case) of poetry *tout court*.¹²

Quintilian had also compared a poorly conceived *oratio* to the ‘most lascivious rhythms of castanets’,¹³ a significant parallel in the light of the fact that in medieval times the term *lascivia* was also frequently invoked in connection with aspects of rhythm (see below). Thus, the Carthusian monk Johannes Gallicus, a key figure in mid-fifteenth-century music theory and criticism, rejected mensural music not only on account of its contrived rhythm figures, but also, more significantly, because it does not conform to the modal norms

¹¹ See, for instance, the *lauda* texts by Florentine poet Feo Belcari (1410–84), surveyed in Blake Wilson, *Singing Poetry in Renaissance Florence: The Cantasi Come Tradition (1375–1550)* (Florence: Olschki, 2009), pp. 55–143. By the same token, the pain of Christ’s suffering on the cross was usually set to appropriately sombre *laude*.

¹² The observations on *lascivia* presented here are based on Cédric Vanhems, ‘La Preface de Josse Bade à son édition des œuvres de Paulin de Nole (Paris, 1516)’, *Bibliothèque d’Humanisme et Renaissance*, 73 (2011), 607–22 (esp. 609–13).

¹³ Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, *Institutio oratoria*, 9.4.142. I have consulted the edition by Harold Edgeworth Butler in the Perseus Digital Library, available at www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/collections (accessed 31 May 2017).

of plainsong. His lengthy discussion of this point highlights the use of *lascivia* as a failure to adhere to the natural law of the musical *constitutiones* (i.e. the species of the diapason underlying the modes that, contrariwise, manifest themselves fully in plainsong). In Gallicus's words:

I will demonstrate that the secular and lascivious songs, which the moderns call figured and measured discant, are not subject to the laws of church music, and cannot be known through them. These songs are not bound to begin or end in none of the appropriate notes, neither do they highlight the certain and pre-established species of fourths and fifths, since they rather unfold according to the whim and caprice of those who compose them.¹⁴

In other words, 'angelic' plainsong was to the pre-existent 'cantus seculares et lascivi' as the Christian faith was to the older pagan religions. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Christianity introduced a new style of singing, 'dignified, simple and plain' (*graviter, simpliciter et plane*) by strictly adhering to the modal laws.

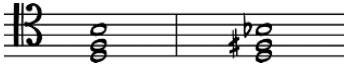
A song can be *lasciva*, then, not only because of its unnatural rhythms but also because it does not conform to the diatonic species that constitute the modes (the 'ecclesiastical laws'). It is not so much that such a song elicits an immoral kind of sensuous pleasure, but rather that it is not amenable to rational investigation, thus preventing the mind from experiencing intellectual *dulcedo*. By arguing along these lines, Gallicus is also implicitly stating that the ecclesiastical modes are *natural* laws by which to judge the well-formedness of musical works, and to discriminate between what is aesthetically and morally acceptable from what it is not. By contrast, he appears to suggest that plainsong approximates the *cantus angelicus* not only because of its moving *simplicitas*, but also because it is rationally conceived in accordance with criteria of beauty as well as truth.

A key characteristic of sweetness is softness (*mollicies* or *mollicia*), which medieval theorists often describe in opposition to hardness (*duricies/duricia* or *asperitas*) as an objective property of particular diatonic intervals: the tritone is consistently regarded as the ultimate *durus* interval, the semitone as *mollis*. Johannes Boen, a fourteenth-century Dutch cleric educated at the University of Oxford, applied this principle to construct a rudimentary grammar of accidentals by which flats and sharps may be used in counterpoint to temper the *duricies* and *mollicies* of the intervals, though not to enhance them beyond acceptable limits (thus, the G–c fourth cannot be turned into Gb–c because the *ditonus* G–b included in it is already *durus*).¹⁵ Yet, Boen also realises

¹⁴ For the original Latin, see Johannes Gallicus, *Ritus canendi vetustissimus et novus*, ed. Albert Seay (Colorado Springs: Colorado College Music Press, 1981), vol. 11, p. 41.

¹⁵ Wolf Frobenius, *Johannes Boens Musica und seine Konsonanzenlehre* (Stuttgart: Musikwissenschaftliche Verlags-Gesellschaft, 1971), pp. 63–4.

Example 2.1 Dissonances rendered acceptable by underlying consonances in Johannes Boen's *Musica*.



that hardness and softness are a function of musical perception. Although they may be associated with particular intervals, they are not inherent in them, as suggested in this excerpt (see also Example 2.1):¹⁶

The tritone, *stated by itself*, will greatly irritate the ears with its hardness; for that reason the ancients disliked the said tritone, and introduced a conjunct tetrachord in our diatonic system, also called diatonic, in which a fourth spans through two tones and a semitone. The hardness [of the tritone] is nevertheless tolerated when the interval occurs over a minor third, as here.¹⁷

The citation is of interest for its acknowledgement that the diatonic system was the product not only of materialist or mathematical considerations, but also of an aesthetic judgement rooted in musical perception.¹⁸

Sacred Music Defended Against Its (Poor) Practitioners

The often unsatisfactory quality of church singing appears to have been a major concern across Christendom in the Middle Ages, as reflected by the number of influential authors who exposed the many flaws in the singing practices of their time, foremost among them Guido of Arezzo. These writers, briefly discussed below, berate the singers' faulty execution in painstaking detail, occasionally with the help of musical examples comparing right and wrong performances. Their commentaries constitute a key chapter in the history of music criticism, not only for the subtlety of their analytic remarks but also for implicitly underscoring the broader musical and cultural values that gave rise to those remarks to begin with. As one of these illustrious critics, St Bernard of Clairvaux, points out, 'music is the accurate knowledge of singing' (*musica recta canendi scientia*), a knowledge that the *musicus* acquires through a careful study and observation of the 'natural' foundations of musical sound – such as the diatonic series of tones and semitones that gives rise to

¹⁶ After Frobenius, *Johannes Boens Musica*, second example p. 74. Only the first vertical sonority pertains to the textual excerpt cited above; the second one duplicates the earlier example in the passage on the diminished fourth.

¹⁷ Emphasis mine. For the original Latin, see Frobenius, *Johannes Boens Musica*, p. 74.

¹⁸ On listening experience in Boen as a 'faculty' for evaluating musical phenomena (such as consonance and dissonance), see Fuller, "Delectabatur in hoc auris", 473–7.

the ecclesiastical modes.¹⁹ Thus, Bernard upbraids those church singers who contravene the modal norms with their licentious behaviour (for instance, by beginning a melody on the wrong note, by improperly mixing modal ranges or, worse yet, by starting in one mode and finishing in another), thus introducing ‘falsity and filth’ (*falsitas, spurcitia*) that distort the natural order and the very notion of music:

By the same token, antiphons such as ‘Benedicta tu’, and other similar ones which can end on A, belong without a doubt to the first modal maneria, so that they must be ascribed to the second mode, not to the fourth. In fact, that antiphon in certain places is performed naturally with B \sharp , i.e., with the tone above the final followed by the semitone; elsewhere, however, the semitone comes before the whole tone, via B \flat . I wonder: by which discernment [*perspicacitas*] do we judge the mode of that song [*ad judicandum de cantu illi cuius sit maneriae*], when accident is preferred to nature, and when while belonging to the first maneria by nature, it is regarded of the second one by accident?²⁰

St Bernard’s critique of the plainsong practices of his time echoes other treatises from that period (such as the highly influential *De musica* by Johannes Cotto) which similarly expose the many ‘depravities’ singers introduce in chant performances through negligence, ignorance and deliberate misbehaviour: for example, by altering the modal profile of a melody or by unduly mixing plagal and authentic ranges.²¹

As amply suggested by this group of treatises, then, by the late Middle Ages the octenary modal system carried connotations that far exceeded the mundane goals of classifying chant melodies and providing guidelines for composing and performing them. As a paradigm of melodic well-formedness virtually as old as Christianity itself – or at least regarded as such – the modal system was the litmus test for conferring the authority of ‘nature’ or ‘the law’ onto church musical practice or, alternatively, for withholding such authority whenever that practice deviated from it. Music criticism requires a set of musical and cultural values, more or less explicitly set forth, in order to exist as a meaningful social practice. Arguably, the medieval modal system provided just such a set of paradigmatic values – in other words, it was deployed as a *de facto* musical grammar, at times explicitly compared with

¹⁹ See Galliano Ciliberti, ‘Rigor and Spirituality in the *De revisione cantus* of St Bernard of Clairvaux’, *Benedictina*, 39 (1992), 199–213.

²⁰ For the original Latin, see Francis J. Guentner (ed.), *Epistola S. Bernardi De revisione cantus cisterciensis, et Tractatus Cantum quem cisterciensis ordinis ecclesiae cantare* ([n.p.]: American Institute of Musicology, 1974), p. 29.

²¹ On Johannes Cotto, see the introductory notes to Claude V. Palisca (ed.), *Hucbald, Guido, and John on Music: Three Medieval Treatises*, trans. Warren Babb (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978).

the linguistic grammar – in that the incipient forms of what may be regarded as music criticism in the pre-modern era for the most part originated out of a sustained confrontation with it.

For its part, the short tract *De modo bene cantandi* ('On how to sing well'), by music theorist, priest and theologian Conrad of Zabern (died before 1481) provides a rare glimpse into the performance of liturgical chant in the pre-modern era. This influential text, which came out in several printed editions in Latin and German between 1474 and 1509, offers a vivid picture of the status of chant performance in mid-fifteenth-century Germany and offers practical steps for improving the quality of singing during sacred rituals, and for best integrating music within the devotional activities of the time.²²

In his tract, Conrad comes close to formulating a rhetoric of performance centred on the premise that plainsong is a critically important medium for communicating a spiritual message to the congregation. As such, it is imperative that the sacred melodies be projected to their listeners not only in a musically correct way, as the Bernards and the John Cottons of earlier times had demanded, but also with the affect and overall decorum that are commensurate to the underlying sacred texts and to the liturgical occasion. Thus, Conrad expects (1) that church singers perform like angels, in perfect unison and with the utmost rhythmic precision (*concordaliter* and *mensuraliter cantare*); (2) that the speed and the quality of declamation reflect the degree of solemnity of the religious feast (*differentialiter cantare*); (3) that sacred texts not be set to secular tunes; and (4) that singers choose correct pronunciation and keep appropriate bodily postures (*satis urbaniter cantare*). Conrad's occasional references to traditional liturgical chants as the 'melodies of the church fathers' are also worthy of notice. It seems that by the fifteenth century the venerable antiquity of chant (i.e. the realisation, or belief, that some melodies were as old as the Church itself) increased its devotional aura, at least among the most educated corners of Christendom.²³

By Conrad's time, however, sacred polyphony was receiving far more critical attention than chant. The bull *Docta sanctorum patrum* by Pope John

²² For a partial translation of Conrad's treatise, see Joseph Dyer, 'Singing with Proper Refinement from "De modo bene cantandi" (1474)', *Early Music*, 6 (1978), 207–27. A century after Conrad, the singers of the most prestigious musical chapel of Christendom often fell short of expectations, as shown in Richard Sherr, 'Competence and Incompetence in the Papal Choir in the Age of Palestrina', *Early Music*, 22 (1994), 607–29.

²³ Thus, Barbara Haggh has argued that Johannes Ciconia in his Paduan years sought to obtain some of the oldest chant melodies of Christendom from Portugal. See Barbara Haggh, 'Ciconia *Nova musica*: A Work for Singers in Renaissance Padua', in João Pedro d'Alvarenga and Manuel Pedro Ferreira (eds.), *New Music 1400–1600: Papers from an International Colloquium on the Theory, Authorship and Transmission of Music in the Age of the Renaissance* (Lisbon-Évora, 27–29 May 2003) (Lisbon and Évora: Editora Casa do Sul, 2009).

XXII (1324–5) set the tone for the debate on polyphonic sacred music of the next two centuries. This remarkable and much discussed document fully belongs to the history of music criticism by virtue of combining observations on the moral effects of music with unusually technical recommendations on polyphonic sacred music.²⁴ Pope John wished to ban from sacred polyphony the rhythmic ‘abuses’ of the ‘new school’ (the *ars nova*) – namely semibreves, minims, hockets and intricate discants – which make mincemeat of the old melodies, obscure the texts and ‘intoxicate the ear’ rather than moving the listeners to devotion. Nevertheless, the bull encouraged the use of simple polyphony on solemn feasts, provided it followed the rules of the church modes, and provided it enhanced, rather than obscured, the character of the original chant melodies and their texts as a way of arousing the congregations to devotion.

A few years after *Docta sanctorum*, Jacques de Liège mounted his famous attack against the music of the *moderni* in the seventh book of his *Speculum musicae* (completed c. 1330), using language reminiscent of the papal bull. Arguing that more subtlety and difficulty do not necessarily lead to a more perfect art, Jacques lambasts the rhythmic complexities of the *moderni*, particularly the recent practice of imperfecting breves, semibreves and, if that was not enough, rhythmic values that are already imperfect. At the root of Jacques’s critique is the idea that music is not to be evaluated by its degree of difficulty, but rather by the extent to which it promotes ‘what is good and useful, since it is a virtue perfecting the soul through the medium of the intellect’.²⁵

Thus, the positions articulated by authors such as John XXII and Jacques de Liège hinged around the basic question of the nature and purpose of musical pleasure, which was addressed, predictably, from within the boundaries of Christian ethics: the innovations of the *moderni* appeared to them as morally suspect because they sought to generate sensuous pleasure for its own sake, to the point of crowding out the underlying text with rhythmic and harmonic intricacies. Worse yet, the attitude itself behind the quest for ever more sophisticated forms of

²⁴ On the impact of the papal bull on the subsequent history of sacred music, see Franz Kördle, ‘Die Bulle “Docta sanctorum partum”. Überlieferung, Textgestalt und Wirkung’, *Die Musikforschung*, 63 (2010), 147–65. According to the author, the document provided the basis for the debate on sacred music that took place at the Council of Trent in the early 1560s (158). See also Craig A. Monson, ‘The Council of Trent Revisited’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 55 (2002), 1–37.

²⁵ Roger Bragard (ed.), *Jacobi Leodiensis Speculum musicae*, bk 7 (Rome: American Institute of Musicology, 1973), p. 428; trans. Oliver Strunk, revised John McKinnon, in Oliver Strunk (ed.), *Strunk’s Source Readings in Music History*, ed. Leo Treitler, revised ed. (New York: Norton, 1998), pp. 272–3. On the broader intellectual context of Jacques’s scathing attack against the ‘discantores’ of his time, see Holsinger, *Music, Body, and Desire*, ch. 4.

musical delight was as reprehensible as the creative outcomes of the quest (i.e. the rhythmic subtleties of the *ars nova*). The lasciviousness of the modern polyphonic style was the direct consequence of the proud motivations of its creators, who considered themselves superior to the ancients by venturing into uncharted musical territories.

As Rob Wegman has shown in a thought-provoking monograph, the cluster of aesthetic and moral issues triggered by *ars nova* polyphony intensified in the fifteenth century in direct connection with the growth of various religious reform movements.²⁶ One of the salient points emerging from Wegman's study is not so much the uncompromising position against polyphony adopted by many religious reformers in the second half of the century, but rather the very fact that polyphony could be easily dismissed as inspiring *lascivia* and empty pleasure after gaining a solid foothold in the Christian liturgy during the previous centuries (a foothold which may thus have been not so solid, after all). The debate for and against polyphony appears to have reached even peripheral areas; witness the heated dispute that in the late 1480s pitted a parish priest of the town of Görlitz against the city elders and his own parishioners. To the latter, who eventually won the dispute, the polyphony performed during Mass was *hoferey* ('vain' or 'vainglorious', though the etymology from 'hof' also points to 'courtly' or, at any rate, 'secular').²⁷ The headwind of opposition to sacred polyphony in the fifteenth century was strong enough to lead others, such as Egidius Carlerius (d. 1472), to offer apologies for it.²⁸

Wegman has plausibly argued that such discriminating views about polyphony – critical of recent developments, yet favourable to moderate versions of it – is a constant feature of musical texts until around 1470. For instance, Carthusian authors such as Heinrich Eger von Kalkar, Denis Ryckel and the already mentioned Johannes Gallicus, active from the mid-fourteenth to the mid-fifteenth century, rejected the intricacies of *fractio vocis* (short and complex rhythmic values) while recognising that the simple forms of discantus described by John XXII could inspire the congregation to contemplation and devotion.²⁹ After around 1470, religious reformers rejected polyphony altogether, a position embraced by Calvinist reformers in later decades.³⁰

²⁶ Rob C. Wegman, *The Crisis of Music in Early Modern Europe, 1470–1530* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 1–15.

²⁸ See Reinhard Strohm and J. Donald Cullington (eds.), *On the Dignity and the Effects of Music. Egidius Carlerius, Johannes Tinctoris: Two Fifteenth-Century Treatises*, trans. J. Donald Cullington (London: Institute of Advanced Musical Studies, King's College London, 1996), pp. 5–16, 23–38. See also, 'The Defense of Music', in Wegman, *The Crisis of Music in Early Modern Europe*.

²⁹ Wegman, *The Crisis of Music*, pp. 17–32. ³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 32–48.

The ‘Judgement of the Ears’: Johannes Tinctoris and Henricus Glareanus

The rise of humanist culture in the fifteenth century did not lead *ipso facto* to new forms of music criticism. Evidently, the sophisticated methods of textual exegesis that the humanists deployed in their study of the Classics did not transfer to the musical domain as a matter of fact, at least not before the age of printing. In hindsight, the early humanist generations sound rather conventional and amateurish in their reports of their occasional exposure to polyphony.³¹ As Giovanni Zanovello has rightly pointed out, a deeper understanding of the musical art of their time would have required a level of familiarity with terminology and conceptual systems that were largely scholastic in origin, and thus rooted in anti- or non-humanistic modes of thought.³²

Thus, modern scholars have paid much attention to the few stanzas dedicated to music in Martin Le Franc’s *Le Champion de dames* (written in the 1440s), which exceptionally deliver to us the reflections of a contemporaneous listener on the momentous stylistic change ushered in by John Dunstable and his followers (the *contenance angloise*), along with other passing and tantalisingly cryptic remarks on the musical characteristic and affective connotations of the new style, marked by good *muance* and *frisque concordance*.³³

In many ways, Johannes Tinctoris (c. 1453–1511) and Heinrich Lortz Glareanus (1488–1563) represent different facets of Renaissance musical culture. The former was a legal scholar affiliated with a princely court (that of the Aragonese dynasty in Naples) who produced what is often recognised as the most comprehensive synthesis of medieval musical thought, touching virtually all aspects of *musica speculativa* (proportions) and *musica practica* (the Hand, notation, mensuration, the modes and counterpoint). The latter epitomised humanist culture through a lifetime dedicated both to Classical texts, which he edited and printed with new commentaries, and to instructing scores of pre-university students in a number of quadrivial and literary

³¹ See Giovanni Zanovello, ‘Les humanistes florentins et la polyphonie liturgique’, in Perrine Galand-Hallyn and Fernand Hallyn (eds.), *Poétiques de la Renaissance: Le Modèle italien, le monde franco-bourguignon et leur héritage en France au XVI^e siècle* (Geneva: Droz, 2001), pp. 625–38.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 633–6. To be sure, the musical writings by non-musical authors of the humanist era are in need of further study. Some of these texts are gathered in Carlo Vecce, *Gli umanisti e la musica: un’antologia di testi umanistici sulla musica* (Milan: Università Cattolica, 1985).

³³ See the extended discussion on these passages in David Fallows, ‘The “Contenance Angloise”: English Influence on Continental Composers of the Fifteenth Century’, *Renaissance Studies*, 1 (1987), 189–208 (esp. 195–205); Christopher Page, ‘Reading and Reminiscence: Tinctoris on the Beauty of Music’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 49 (1996), 1–31 (esp. 2–4); and Rob C. Wegman, ‘New Music for a World Grown Old: Martin Le Franc and the “Contenance Angloise”’, *Acta musicologica*, 75/2 (2003), 201–41.

disciplines, particularly music and geography. Yet, despite their different intellectual orientations and activities, somewhat amplified by the generational gap, the two authors developed forms of musical understanding that shared a key epistemological trait: they were both amenable to questioning the prescriptive rules that regulated the musical practice of their time (specifically those pertaining to counterpoint and the modes) as a result of their inductively informed assessment of common compositional behaviours in musical practice. It is as if, after learning from the Classical *auctores*, writers such as Tinctoris and Glareanus came to extend the weight of authority to the celebrated composers of their time, praising them for their extraordinary accomplishments in the art of sounds, despite recognising that their accomplishments may occasionally rub against the accepted norms of modal and contrapuntal well-formedness.

Tinctoris gave his readers an exemplary demonstration of this attitude in the late chapters of his *Liber de arte contrapuncti*, completed in October 1477 and dedicated to King Ferrante (he had earlier dedicated his treatise on the modes to Johannes Ockeghem and Antoine Busnoys, whom he publicly regarded as two of the most accomplished composers of his age).³⁴ The famous Eight Rules of Counterpoint that Tinctoris lists at the end of his treatise are now regarded as broadly representative of the polyphonic practice of the time. The last rule in particular, which is a sort of gold standard that singles out the role of contrapuntal inventiveness (*varietas*) in the art of composition, points to a rhetorical understanding of the musical art that was deeply rooted in Renaissance culture.³⁵

The greater part of the treatise lays out the building blocks of counterpoint, namely the vertical intervals, their octave duplications and the notions of ‘concord’, ‘discord’ and ‘false concord’ (such as tritones and augmented octaves), all illustrated through musical examples. Up until the later chapters of book 2, Tinctoris regards discords and false concords as inadmissible in counterpoint, following a long-established theoretical precept. However, a decisive change of attitude pervades the subsequent section of the treatise (chapters 24–32), where the author seeks to formulate more nuanced rules of contrapuntal behaviour, allowing the moderate use of discords in florid

³⁴ The treatise will soon be accessible online, along with a new English translation, as part of *The Complete Theoretical Works of Johannes Tinctoris: A New Digital Edition*, ed. Ronald Woodley for the Early Music Theory website, available at earlymusictheory.org/Tinctoris (accessed 29 May 2017). The editions used for this essay are Johannes Tinctoris, *Liber de arte contrapuncti*, in *Johannis Tinctoris opera theoretica*, ed. Albert Seay, CSM 22 (American Institute of Musicology, 1975–78), vol. II, pp. 11–157; Johannes Tinctoris, *The Art of Counterpoint*, trans. Albert Seay ([n.p.]: American Institute of Musicology, 1961).

³⁵ On this topic see, among others, Alexis Luko, ‘Tinctoris on Varietas’, *Early Music History*, 27 (2008), 99–136, and Sean Gallagher, *Johannes Regis* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), pp. 190–3.

counterpoint under certain conditions (for instance, 7–6 and 4–3 suspensions at cadences).³⁶ The result may be the earliest known formulation of the principle of dissonance preparation, strike and resolution that will remain a staple of musical grammar throughout the modern era.³⁷ As other scholars have pointed out, in this section of his treatise Tinctoris does not hesitate to critique even the most respected composers of the time (such as Faugues, Caron and Busnoys) for the forbidden dissonances (including false concords) that occasionally punctuate their counterpoint.³⁸

The chapters from the counterpoint treatise discussed here feature an unusually high number of long sections of polyphonic works. These examples not only illustrate the nuances of dissonance treatment presented in the text, but also acquire a normative agency of their own by reminding their readers that the musical practice of the time tends to be more ‘liberal’ than the musical *auctores* of the time, such as Tinctoris himself, would seem ready to endorse.³⁹ Thus, these pages fully belong to the history of music criticism in that they highlight a familiar tension in the history of Western music (witness, for instance, the Artusi–Monteverdi controversy from about a century later): on the one hand, the written codifications of musical sound are dedicated to fostering the creative exploration of new and legitimate (if tightly prescribed) forms of musical *dulcedo*; on the other hand, the occasional examples from contemporaneous polyphonic practice draw attention to what actually hits the listeners’ ears, whether to sanction or censor it.

The key interface between listening and theorising (in other words, between ‘outward’ and ‘inward listening’) is the *judicium aurium*, the ‘judgement of the ears’, which Tinctoris explicitly invokes at a critical junction in his treatise when he invites the listeners (*id audientibus judicandum reliquo*) to form their own opinion on two passing dissonances in Ockeghem’s *Missa La belle se siet*.⁴⁰ It is noteworthy that Tinctoris evaluates Ockeghem not against some absolute and universal musical laws, but, more modestly and self-consciously, against *his* understanding of those laws, thus leaving the door open for alternative rationalisations of dissonance practice that may absolve Ockeghem from the charge of

³⁶ Tinctoris, *The Art of Counterpoint*, pp. 115–29.

³⁷ Tinctoris, however, does not deal with the topic of dissonance resolution in these pages.

³⁸ For instance, in Tinctoris, *The Art of Counterpoint*, pp. 130–1. For an extended discussion of this point, see Margaret Bent, ‘On False Concords in Late Fifteenth-Century Music: Yet Another Look at Tinctoris’, in Anne-Emmanuelle Ceulemans and Bonnie J. Blackburn (eds.), *Music Theory and Analysis, 1450–1600* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Département d’histoire de l’art et d’archéologie, 2001), pp. 65–118.

³⁹ I develop this point at length in my ‘Dalhaus’s Principles and Tinctoris’s Ears: Music Theory as Rhetoric’, forthcoming in a collection of essays on Tinctoris edited by Ronald Woodley.

⁴⁰ Tinctoris, *Opera theoretica*, vol. II, p. 143; trans. Albert Seay, p. 129.

committing contrapuntal improprieties.⁴¹ It has been pointed out that Tinctoris's music criticism, by relying on the musical ear as the ultimate arbiter of value judgement, no longer aimed at strengthening the authority of the church, but rather intended to institutionalise the figure of the musical expert who enforces the standards of the educated (read: courtly) elite.⁴²

One generation later, the key faculty of aural judgement takes centre stage in the music theoretical project of Heinrich Glarean's *Dodecachordon* (Basel, 1547), together with what we might call the combinatorial principle for generating the modes. By consistently relying on his *judicium aurium* in his assessment of the modal practice of his time, Glarean seeks to emphasise the 'reality' of his modal theory, presented as indisputable: the twelve modal categories differ from one another in both sound characteristics and affective import. In addition, Glarean argues not only that the new Aeolian and Ionian modes have been there all along for centuries, but also that the ear recognises them as modal categories in their own right: the D–d octave with B \flat (which Glarean considers a transposition of the Aeolian mode, A–E–a) has a different colour, or *phrasis*, from the Dorian (D–d with B \natural). This experience-based reasoning lends support to the argument that Glarean puts forward to make the case for the logical necessity of his system: he forcefully contends that the principle of the double division of the octave (harmonic and arithmetic), inconsistently applied in the old eight-mode system, *must* be logically extended to all seven octave species, generating fourteen theoretically possible modal categories. Two of those categories are ill-formed (namely the 'Hyperaeolian' (B–f–b) and 'Hyperphrygius' (F–b–f), leaving twelve well-formed types.⁴³

⁴¹ 'However, Johannes Ockeghem dissents a great deal from our arrangement of discords in a small section of one of his compositions' ('Ab hac tamen nostra discordantiarum ordinatione Johannes Ockeghem in parva cantus particula, hoc est in principio 'Patrem' Missae la belle se siet, plurimum dissentit, ut hic': [example follows]; Tinctoris, *The Art of Counterpoint*, p. 129.

⁴² Kurt von Fischer, 'Zu einigen Wertkriterien in der Musik des 14. und 15. Jahrhunderts', *Die Musikforschung*, 30 (1977), 289–92.

⁴³ The scholarly literature on Glarean is predictably vast, considering the immense contribution of the author to the culture of his time. The recent volume by Iain Fenlon and Inga Mai Groote (eds.), *Heinrich Glarean's Books: The Intellectual World of a Sixteenth Century Musical Humanist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), brings together the main research paths pursued in the last few decades. On Glarean's landmark treatise, see Sarah Fuller, 'Defending the *Dodecachordon*: Ideological Currents in Glarean's Modal Theory', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 49 (1996), 191–224; and the many contributions on this topic by scholars such as Bernhard Meier and Harold Powers. On the music criticism of Glarean and other contemporaneous authors, see James Haar, 'Value Judgments in Music of the Renaissance', in Tess Knighton and David Fallows (eds.), *Companion to Medieval and Renaissance Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987). A facsimile edition of *Dodecachordon* is available from Broude Brothers (New York, 1967) and via the Petrucci Music Library, available at imslp.org (accessed 31 May 2017); for an English translation, see Heinrich Glarean, *Dodecachordon*, trans. and ed. Clement A. Miller, 2 vols. ([n.p.]: American Institute of Musicology, 1965).

Yet, Glarean's musical ear is not merely instrumental to the need of bolstering support for the reform of the modal system. Rather, it fulfils the far more significant role of assessing the affective and rhetorical import of a musical work, making abundantly clear that mode, in the end, is a structural means to a music-semiotic end. When encountering the remarkable commentaries of book 3, on polyphony, the modern reader marvels at the author's ability to capture the salient aspects of a musical work or composer. At times, the emotional intensity of the flow of sound seems comparable to that of dramatic representation: witness, for example, these remarks on Michele Pesenti's motet *Tulerunt dominum meum*:

[The piece is] truly a very beautiful and learned example of the elegies of Magdalene at the tomb of the Lord, possessing great emotion and innate sweetness and tremendous power, so that one really believes he hears the weeping of a woman and her following.⁴⁴

Even more subtly, Glarean interprets the apparent textural unevenness in Josquin's *Planxit autem David* as a deliberate compositional choice aimed at conveying the psychology of a mourner:

Concerning the beginning of this song, I have no doubt that some are going to exclaim: 'Mountains are in labour, but a funny little mouse is born.' But they do not consider carefully that throughout this entire song there has been preserved the mood appropriate to the mourner, who at first is wont to cry out frequently, and then, turning gradually to melancholy complaints, to murmur subduedly and presently to subside, and sometimes, when emotion breaks forth anew, to raise his voice again and to emit a cry.⁴⁵

One might think that Glarean is describing a *seconda prattica* madrigal from c. 1600; his strand of music criticism, however, did not need exposure to the late-Renaissance achievements in musical expression by, say, a Wert or a Monteverdi in order to bear fruit. We may see it, rather, as the mature product of religious musical culture of (at least) the last two centuries, which had consistently recognised musical sound as an effective means for dramatising sacred texts and for drawing religious communities to devotional practices. Equally significant to Glarean's music criticism was of course the robust humanist tradition of textual exegesis, which he had mastered by producing a long series of commentaries on Classical texts, and which was finally being imported into the domain of musical studies (significantly, *Dodecachordon* virtually spurred the long-lasting tradition of *musica poetica* in Germany).

⁴⁴ Glareanus, *Dodecachordon*, p. 312; trans. Miller, vol. II, p. 259.

⁴⁵ Glareanus, *Dodecachordon*, p. 367; trans. Miller, vol. II, pp. 269–70.

Glarean was no doubt familiar with the rhetorical figure of *ekphrasis*, a verbal description of a work of art that enables readers to visualise the described object with their ‘inner eye’.⁴⁶ Ekphrastic rhetoric is the most prominent, but not the only aspect of Glarean’s multimedial approach to music criticism; he will also invite readers to ‘taste’ a melodic line, as when he observes, in his remarks on Josquin’s *Victimae paschali laudes*, that ‘cantus sapit antiquitatem’ (‘the Cantus line savors of antiquity’).⁴⁷

Yet, at the root of Glarean’s music criticism is the notion of *phrasis*, which he invokes time and again in his modal analyses to capture the distinctive musical ‘flavour’ of a particular mode, work or composer. The term, mediated from the ‘sciences of language’ (philology and rhetoric), is the clearest indicator that in his landmark treatise Glarean no longer regards the modes as fixed categories meant for classifying melodies in liturgical practice, but rather as the starting point for deeper inquiries into the structural relationships of musical works and their rhetorical and communicative import. Tinctoris famously ‘smelled’ musical sound.⁴⁸ Glarean visualised it, tasted it and articulated it into meaningful phrases, as if parsing a literary text. Modern music criticism may have been taking its initial, feeble steps during the Renaissance, but it was already adept at catering to the bodily senses, synaesthetically, in its passionate attempt to come to terms with the ever-elusive target of musical meaning. It grew by capitalising on the rich interpretive tradition of the rhetorical arts, no doubt with considerable help from the composers themselves.

⁴⁶ On the significance of ekphrastic criticism in the Renaissance, see David Rosand, ‘Ekphrasis and the Generation of Images’, *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics*, 1 (1990), 61–105; and Norman E. Land, *The Viewer as Poet: The Renaissance Response to Art* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994).

⁴⁷ Glareanus, *Dodecachordon*, p. 364; trans. Miller, vol. 11, pp. 266.

⁴⁸ See the insightful account of Tinctoris’s ‘olfactory’ criticism, likely mediated from Ciceronian and Augustinian models, in Page, ‘Reading and Reminiscence’, 21–8.

Musical Discourse in Italy, 1500–1800

CARRIE CHURNSIDE

Music criticism, in the form we think of it today, did not exist for most of the period under discussion here; it was only in the final decades of the eighteenth century that concert reviews began to appear in the press, and even then they were not always unbiased critical appraisals. However, over the course of these three centuries musical discourse abounded in other forms – literary dialogues, travel journals, vehement polemics and personal letters – as musicians and music-lovers discussed what was a period of remarkable artistic fecundity via both printed and unpublished means. Through an overview of some of these discussions it is clear that, even over such a wide time period and geographical range, a number of clear trends emerge as to what was considered praiseworthy both in composition and performance. Prior to its unification in 1861 Italy constituted a varied group of smaller states, each with a distinctive musical tradition and outlook. Yet contemporary critical assessments of performances and music produced across the peninsular often highlight the same preoccupations: with the need for performers not to confuse mere technical display with musicality, and for composers to combine technical craft with a certain originality (although the extent to which critics allowed composers licence to break the rules in pursuit of innovation varied greatly, and led to some of the most heated debates of the period).¹

Sixteenth-Century Writings

It is difficult to find anything approaching systematic or detailed music criticism in sixteenth-century Italian texts. Instead there are brief glimpses into

¹ Writings are considered here that express a value judgement, rather than simply documenting the performance of music. Whilst, in the field of composition, this could include the numerous theoretical works published, particularly in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, these have been excluded due to the limits of space. Readers are instead advised to consult Thomas Christensen (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

what was considered good music or performance, often in the middle of discussion of something else. One such example is Baldassare Castiglione's *Il cortegiano* (1528), a work that went on to be influential in many fields throughout the century.² Castiglione's is a literary account of discussions that took place over four nights at the Urbino court over the qualities a courtier ought to possess. James Haar states that the occasional references to music give us a 'convincingly real picture of how music, and talk about music, figured in the lives of Castiglione's peers'.³ The discussion tends to remain general, rather than critiquing individual works. On only one occasion is a specific composer named, and then not in particularly complimentary terms. When discussing the power of others' opinions, Federico⁴ recounts the story of a motet that found little favour when it was first performed, until it was revealed to be by the famous Josquin.⁵ But remarks are frequently less detailed, such as Federico's definition of a good performance:

Truly beautiful music . . . consists, in my opinion, in fine singing, in reading accurately from the score and in an attractive personal style, and still more in singing to the accompaniment of the *viola*.⁶

Unsurprisingly, accuracy plays an important part; he goes on to explain that this is why solo singing is better than an ensemble, as in the latter singers can cover one another's mistakes. The performance must also be stylish ('con bella maniera'). Elsewhere Castiglione highlights the importance of *sprezzatura* and *grazia*, as it is a 'universal rule . . . to practise in all things a certain nonchalance [*sprezzatura*] which conceals all artistry and makes whatever one says or does seem uncontrived, and effortless. I am sure that grace springs especially from this'.⁷ These two terms were famously used by Caccini to describe a kind of rubato in solo singing at the turn of the seventeenth century (whether Castiglione intended the same here is unclear). However, it is 'cantare alla viola per recitare' that is singled out for the highest praise. Haar defines this as 'improvised song or declamatory speech-song over instrumental

² Although only published in 1528, it had been a work in progress for some time beforehand: see George Bull, 'Introduction' to Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. George Bull (London: Penguin, 1976).

³ James Haar, 'The Courtier as Musician', in Paul Corneilson (ed.), *The Science and Art of Renaissance Music* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), p. 20.

⁴ Federico Fregoso, a courtier and close friend of Castiglione: Castiglione, *Book of the Courtier*, p. 25.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 120–1. For a discussion of this passage see Walter H. Kemp, 'Some Notes on Music in Castiglione's *Il libro del cortegiano*', in Cecil H. Clough (ed.), *Cultural Aspects of the Italian Renaissance: Essays in Honour of Paul Oskar Kristeller* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1976), pp. 357–60.

⁷ Castiglione, *Book of the Courtier*, p. 67. Bull translates 'sprezzatura' as 'nonchalance'; elsewhere it is rendered as 'negligence' (see Nigel Fortune, 'Sprezzatura', *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, available at www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed 15 May 2018). Caccini uses the term in his prefaces to *Euridice* (1600) and *Le nuove musiche* (1602).

accompaniment'.⁸ The reason for its success is that 'the instrument gives the words a really marvellous charm and effectiveness'.⁹ There is thus a preference for the individual over ensemble, and for music that foregrounds performative aspects, rather than the composition itself. In another passage Count Ludovico¹⁰ compares the individual styles of two named singers: Antonio Bidon, who 'moves and inflames' the spirits of all who hear him with his 'skilful, quick, vehement and passionate' singing, and Marchetto Cara, whose 'softer . . . plaintive sweetness . . . gently touches and penetrates our souls'.¹¹ Whilst each clearly takes a very different approach, both are equally prized because of their ability to evoke feeling in the listener.

Cosimo Bartoli's *Ragionamenti accademici* (1567) is another work that provides a snapshot of the discussions that took place between music-loving amateurs.¹² Whilst a large number of contemporary performers and composers are referenced in this dialogue between three friends, frustratingly little detail is given about why they are being singled out for praise. Two exceptions are the composers Verdelot and Gombert. We learn that the former's compositions are the marvel of 'the most judicious composers' because:

They have light passages, those that are serious, tender, pitiful, fast, slow, gracious, enraged, fugato, according to the propriety of the words upon which he set to compose.¹³

This is certainly not an unbiased assessment, as Verdelot had settled in Bartoli's hometown of Florence and is here described as 'my most dear friend' (*mio amicissimo*).¹⁴ Nevertheless, this is an interesting appraisal, based entirely on Verdelot's ability to set music in a wide range of styles to reflect the meaning of the text. As Michael Fend notes, this is a descriptive, largely non-technical account that tells us how his music was heard: 'what Bartoli says about a musician cannot be verified or denied by looking at a score, but is the

⁸ Haar, 'Courtier as Musician', p. 26; he also discusses to which instrument the term 'viola' may refer.

⁹ Castiglione, *Book of the Courtier*, p. 120.

¹⁰ Lodovico Canossa, 'a man of great culture and ability': *ibid.*, p. 24.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 82. Haar points out that in the second edition Bidon's name was substituted with that of Alexander Agricola, which 'bespeaks a certain insensitivity about the personal *maniera* of musicians': 'Courtier as Musician', p. 28.

¹² Cosimo Bartoli, *Ragionamenti accademici sopra alcuni luoghi difficili di Dante* (Venice: Francesco de' Franceschini, 1567). Although published in 1567, references to music and musicians appear to date from 1525 to 1560: Haar, 'Cosimo Bartoli on Music', in Corneilson (ed.), *Science and Art*, p. 45. For a discussion of the volume as a whole, see Judith Bryce, *Cosimo Bartoli (1503–1572): The Career of a Florentine Polymath* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1983), pp. 253–80.

¹³ 'Perche elle hanno del facile, del grave, del gentile, del compassionevole, del presto, del tardo, del benigno, dello adirato, del fugato, seconda la proprieta della parole sopra delle quali egli si metteva a comporre': Haar, 'Bartoli on Music', p. 49. Haar transcribes all of the third dialogue on pp. 45–61.

¹⁴ See H. Colin Slim and Stefano La Via, 'Verdelot, Philippe', *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, available at www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed 15 May 2018).

result of musical experience'.¹⁵ On the other hand, Gombert is praised for his handling of contrapuntal lines, 'united with a harmony that gives you a marvellous delight', which Haar describes as 'an aesthetic judgement of some pertinacity'.¹⁶ There is a sense, then, that whilst these are not detailed technical descriptions of compositional approach, when he chooses, Bartoli is able to give us an effective description of how music was heard by the well-informed listener.

Luigi Dentice's *Duo dialoghi della musica* (1552) is important because it contains an early concert review.¹⁷ At the beginning of the second dialogue between Paolo Soardo and Giovanni Antonio Serone the former describes to the latter a concert that he has just attended at the house of the noblewoman Giovanna d'Aragona and her daughter Vittoria Colonna. Whether this concert actually took place, or is a literary invention,¹⁸ it is important because seven of the eight musicians who took part are named (Soardo refuses to identify the soprano, as he did not enjoy his performance).¹⁹ He records the reaction of the audience, as the two ladies 'transported by such sweet harmony, were so intent on the music, that they appeared almost to be transformed, in fact they themselves were in harmony'.²⁰ Disappointingly, though, the music that was performed was not named (although this has not prevented musicologists from trying to surmise what it might have been),²¹ and we only get general praise of the musicians: the instrumentalists are 'first class' and the singers 'most perfect musicians and sing miraculously'.²² The discussion swiftly moves onto Soardo's complaints about bad singers (those who make errors in intonation, pronunciation, *passaggi* and shaping the line) and renowned sopranos of the past. Thus, whilst this is of interest as an early review, we might wish for more a detailed critique.

¹⁵ Michael Fend, 'Cosimo Bartoli and the Language of Musical Experience in Sixteenth-Century Italy', in Francesco Paolo Fiore and Daniela Lamberini (eds.), *Cosimo Bartoli (1503–1572): Atti del convegno internazionale Mantova, 18–19 novembre, Firenze, 20 novembre 2009* (Florence: Olschki, 2011), p. 135.

¹⁶ 'congiunta con una armonia che ti dà un diletto meraviglioso': Haar, 'Bartoli on Music', pp. 49, 53.

¹⁷ A modern facsimile of the second edition is available: Luigi Dentice, *Duo dialoghi della musica* (Rome: Vincenzo Lucrino, 1553; repr. Luca: LIM, 1998).

¹⁸ Richard Wistreich points out that whilst it may have been real, it also might have been a carefully calculated fabrication constructed for political reasons when Dentice was in exile in Rome: *Warrior, Courtier, Singer: Giulio Cesare Brancaccio and the Performance of Identity in the Late Renaissance* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2007), p. 138.

¹⁹ As Dentice was a soprano himself, this may either have been a rival, or a tongue-in-cheek reference to himself: see *ibid.*, p. 139. The four instrumentalists are Giovanlonoardo dell'Harpa Napoletano, Perino da Firenze, Battista Siciliano and Giaches da Ferrara; the three named singers are Giulio Cesare Branzazzo [Brancaccio], Francesco Bisballe and Scipione del Palla.

²⁰ 'Tratte da si dolce Harmonia, furono si intente alla Musica, che quasi pareano trasformate, anzi erano essi concenti': Dentice, *Duo dialoghi*, H.1117.

²¹ For a summary of the arguments see Wistreich, *Warrior, Courtier, Singer*, p. 140.

²² 'Ottiene il primo luogo'; 'son perfettissimi Musici, & cantano miracolosamente': Dentice, *Duo dialoghi*, H.1117–v.

Perhaps the most illuminating insight into how sixteenth-century musicians heard the music of their contemporaries comes from a work issued in the seventeenth century: Lodovico Zacconi's *Prattica di musica* (1622). The theorist begins by describing the seven different aspects of *musica armoniale*: *arte*, *modulatione*, *diletto*, *tessitura*, *contraponto*, *inventione* and *buona dispositione*. He then goes on to depict a conversation of 1584 where the theorist Gioseffo Zarlino discussed the compositional style of seven composers (himself, Porta, Striggio, Willaert, Morales, Lasso and Palestrina), pointing out that the disposition of these seven different aspects allows the listener to instantly recognise the music of a particular composer. Whilst this is the most detailed sixteenth-century critique considered so far, it depends on our understanding exactly what Zacconi/Zarlino meant by these rather vague terms. Through reference to contemporary sources, Haar has attempted to reconstruct Zacconi's meaning.²³ Following his definitions we can surmise that Zarlino and Porta are skilled in contrapuntal planning and the execution of these contrapuntal designs ('regular *tessitura* and *arte*'); Striggio is praised for his 'talent and gift for charming melodies' (*modulatione*), whilst Willaert was excellent at contrapuntal planning and creating well-ordered pieces (*grand'arte* and judicious *dispositione*).²⁴ Morales excels in contrapuntal planning (*arte*), writing counterpoint over a cantus firmus (*contrappunto*) and beautiful melodies (*buona modulazione*). The two greatest names of the period, Lasso and Palestrina, come last in the list 'as if a comparison between the two greatest masters of the age was intended'.²⁵ Lasso is praised not only for his contrapuntal planning (*arte*) and melody (*modulatione*) but his '*bonissima inventione*', his novelty and range of musical ideas. Palestrina, on the other hand, receives the greatest amount of praise: he has *arte*, *contrapunto*, a flowing *modulatione* (melody) and *ottima dispositione*, excellent ordering of proportions. Zacconi's passage gives us a fleeting glimpse, then, of true musical criticism, but – as always – we could wish for more.

Turn-of-the-Century Debates

The musical experiments at the turn of the seventeenth century launched an avalanche of writing about music, as theorists and composers debated how ancient Greek music might have sounded and how this might be recreated, explained new compositional approaches, and described new styles of

²³ Haar, 'A Sixteenth-Century Attempt at Music Criticism', in Corneilson (ed.), *Science and Art*.

²⁴ Haar reads this as meaning 'careful ordering of melodic and contrapuntal materials': *ibid.*, p. 12.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

performance. Among these publications are passages of music criticism. One example is the letter written by Giovanni Bardi (host of the famous *camerata*) to the singer and composer Giulio Caccini (a key exponent of the new style) entitled ‘Discourse Addressed to Giulio Caccini, Called the Roman, on Ancient Music and Good Singing’.²⁶ Of interest here are not Bardi’s thoughts on ancient music, but those on good singing. He contrasts two performances: one of an unnamed celebrated bass singer he heard in Rome in 1567, and ‘those never sufficiently praised ladies of Ferrara’.²⁷ The bass singer is naturally gifted, with a large range, but spoils his delivery of the text by placing his *passaggi* in the wrong place, resulting in ‘a massacre of the unfortunate poetry’. Bardi speaks here as a connoisseur, able to see beyond the ‘adulation . . . [of] the ignorant public’.²⁸ In contrast are Duke Alfonso d’Este’s celebrated *concerto delle donne*, whom Bardi heard perform in Ferrara, and who are able to perform more than 330 madrigals ‘by heart . . . without ever spoiling even one syllable’.²⁹

Bardi was not the only person to praise the *concerto delle donne*. The group was Alfonso’s *musica secreta*, performing only for his close circle and invited guests. As a result, those visitors privileged with an invitation tended to report back what they had heard, with imitations quickly springing up across the country.³⁰ Witnesses noted their musicianship in being able to sing at sight ‘however difficult [the] pieces may be’ and the astonishment that they provoked in the listeners.³¹ But it was for their judicious use of *passaggi* and sensitivity towards the text that they won the highest praise. Whilst this is commented upon in contemporary reports, it is Vincenzo Giustiniani’s retrospective account of 1628 that gives the most detailed, and rhapsodic, praise:

They moderated or increased their voices, loud or soft, heavy or light, according to the demands of the piece they were singing; now slow; breaking off with sometimes a gentle sigh, now singing long passages legato or detached, now groups, now leaps, now with long trills, now with short, and again with sweet running passages sung softly, to which sometimes one heard an echo answer unexpectedly . . . They made the words clear in such a way that one could hear even the last syllable of every word, which was never interrupted or suppressed by passages and other embellishments.³²

²⁶ Transcribed and translated in Claude V. Palisca, *The Florentine Camerata: Documentary Studies and Translations* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), pp. 78–131. The author is not explicitly stated in the source but it seems clear that it was Bardi: see *ibid.*, pp. 81–4.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 121. ²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 123. ²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

³⁰ See Anthony Newcombe, *The Madrigal at Ferrara 1579–1597* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980).

³¹ Letter from Alessandro Striggio to Francesco de’ Medici (29 July 1584) and Leonardo Conosciuti (28 July 1584); quoted in Newcombe, *Madrigal at Ferrara*, pp. 55, 68.

³² Vincenzo Giustiniani, *Discorso sopra la musica*, trans. Carol MacClintock, *Musicological Studies and Documents* 9 (n.p.): American Institute of Musicology, 1962), p. 69.

Yet as early as 1586 there were complaints that they were past their best, as they 'are accumulating bellies and other such accessories, and seem . . . somewhat hoarser than usual'.³³

The most noteworthy outcome of the discussions of Bardi and the others was, of course, the birth of opera. Yet, reactions to the premiere of Jacopo Peri's *Euridice* show that contemporary audiences were not necessarily impressed. The work was first performed in front of a select audience in Florence on 6 October 1600 to celebrate the marriage of King Henri IV of France and Maria de' Medici.³⁴ Ambassadors from Modena and Venice praised it, if not in particularly glowing terms: the former said that 'it turned out very well', whilst the latter described 'a comedy recited entirely by musicians on very sweet melodies'.³⁵ However, whilst the musical director Emilio de' Cavalieri is by no means a disinterested observer, the comments he reports are far more damning.³⁶ The main objection is that recitative is boring: he says that 'many people of all ranks' (particularly the Marchese de Piano) have told him that 'the music was tedious, that it seemed like the chanting of the passion'.³⁷ Furthermore, foreigners saw it as 'commonplace and [it] struck people as tedious. Everyone says it lasted more than five hours, but it did not even reach three'.³⁸ Not without bias, Cavalieri compares the Florentine entertainments to his own *Rappresentazione d'Anima e di Corpo* (performed in Rome that year), stating that those who had seen both 'say that they found [the *Rappresentazione*] much more to their taste, because the music moved them to tears and laughter and pleased them greatly, unlike this music of Florence, which did not move them at all, unless to boredom and irritation'.³⁹ Whilst Cavalieri may have had his own reasons for highlighting negative aspects of the work, the accusation of boredom also came from other sources: the Papal Legate, Cardinal Pietro Aldrobrandino, described *Euridice* as deserving 'much praise for its scenery and its intermedi, but the manner of singing easily became boring'.⁴⁰ Interestingly, whilst it only took a couple of years for people to look

³³ Alfonso Fontanelli (24 August 1586); in Newcombe, *Madrigal at Ferrara*, p. 106.

³⁴ Claude V. Palisca, 'The First Performance of *Euridice*', in *Studies in the History of Italian Music and Music Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), p. 436.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 439.

³⁶ In a letter assumed to be addressed to Marcello Accolti, secretary to the Grand Duke, and probably dating from November 1600, translated in Claude V. Palisca, 'Musical Asides in the Diplomatic Correspondence of Emilio de' Cavalieri', in *Studies*, pp. 403–4. Cavalieri was aware that the wedding celebrations under his direction had not been entirely successful, which he blamed on difficult characters not following his advice. He also knew that he was losing favour at court, with Caccini's star in the ascendancy: *ibid.*, pp. 401–2.

³⁷ *Ibid.* ³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 404. ³⁹ *Ibid.* ⁴⁰ Palisca, 'First Performance', in *Studies*, p. 434.

back upon *Euridice* as an important landmark,⁴¹ the complaint about the ‘tedious’ nature of recitative remained a refrain for years to come.⁴²

Arguments between advocates of the old and new styles were plentiful, with the most famous being that between the theorist Artusi and the composer Monteverdi.⁴³ Such debates went on for years: as late as 1640 Pietro della Valle was defending the modern style against Lelio Giudiccioni’s criticisms in his *Della musica dell’età nostra che non è punto inferiore, anzi è migliore di quella dell’età passata* (‘On the music of our age which is not in an inferior state, rather it is better than that of the past age’).⁴⁴ In the course of this defence he provides an interesting critique of the music and musicians of his day. Della Valle advocated popularity as a means of judging music; in Robert Holzer’s words, he believed that ‘music can be praised or criticized based on . . . how fashionable it is’.⁴⁵ Thus Palestrina’s works should be admired, but ‘preserved and kept out of the way in a museum as beautiful curiosities’.⁴⁶ In the realm of performance, della Valle cites the example of Frescobaldi, who adopted a new style of playing in order to appeal to the public, which is seen as the ultimate aim of the performer:

And if today he employs a different manner with more *galanterie* in the modern style, which Your Lordship does not like very much, he must do so because he will have learned through experience that in order to please all kinds of people this manner is more *galante*, if less learned. And if they succeed in truly giving delight, sound and performer need ask no more.⁴⁷

⁴¹ See Marco da Gagliano’s preface ‘Ai lettori’ to *Dafne* (1608); transcribed in Angelo Solerti, *Le origini del melodramma* (Turin: Fratelli Bocca, 1903), p. 81.

⁴² See Carolyn Gianturco, ‘Nuove considerazioni su il tedio del recitativo delle prime opere romane’, *Rivista italiana di musicologia*, 18 (1982), 212–39, where she argues that Domenico Mazzocchi’s reference to the ‘tedium of recitative’ is not necessarily a criticism of the style itself, but of its being used almost exclusively, rather than being broken up by the appearance of arias. As late as 1734, the literary theorist Francesco Saverio Quadrio advised poets that they might omit the opening recitative in chamber cantatas, partly due to the public’s distaste for them, as ‘[the practice of] beginning a cantata with an aria originates from the *maestri di cappella*, who loathe the trouble of setting lots of things to music, and likewise from the common herd who, delighting little in recitatives, moved composers to reduce them’ (Bisogna trattanto in primo luogo avvertire, che il cominciar le *Cantate* da un *Arietta* è provenuto da’ *Maestri di Cappella*, che la fatica hanno abborrito di mettere molta roba in musica, e dal Volgo altresì, che poco gustando de’ *Recitativi*, ha mossi i compositori a scemarli). Francesco Saverio Quadrio, *Della poesia italiana libri due di Giuseppe Maria Andrucchi* (Venice: Cristoforo Zane, 1734), p. 396.

⁴³ The key text on the exchange is Claude V. Palisca, ‘The Artusi–Monteverdi Controversy’, in *Studies*.

⁴⁴ Transcribed in Solerti, *Le origini del melodramma*, pp. 148–79. Giudiccioni’s *Discorso sopra la musica* is translated in Andrew dell’Antonio, *Listening as Spiritual Practice in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), pp. 135–55. In 1640 della Valle also entered into another dispute with Nicolò Farfaro over the question of the supremacy of modern music: see Agostino Ziino, ‘“Contese letterarie” tra Pietro della Valle e Nicolò Farfaro sulla musica antica e moderna’, *Nuova rivista musicale italiana*, 3 (1969), 101–20.

⁴⁵ Robert Rau Holzer, ‘“Sono d’altro garbo . . . le canzonette che si cantano oggi”’: Pietro della Valle on Music and Modernity in the Seventeenth Century’, *Studi musicali*, 21 (1992), 256.

⁴⁶ Della Valle, quoted and translated by Holzer, ‘“Sono d’altro garbo”’, 256.

⁴⁷ Translated in *ibid.*, 257–8.

This is radically different to Bardi's idea of the learned critic, able to see what the ordinary public cannot. Della Valle also makes a vigorous defence of modern composers.⁴⁸ Of particular interest is his description of a performance he heard of Virgilio Mazzocchi's music in the Collegio Romano:

And if by chance you had found yourself the other day in the Collegio Romano at that most noble music for six choirs composed by the younger Mazzocchi, you would have heard in it both the madrigal style with beauty and grace and lightness, and the motet style with gravity and well-written imitations, various airs both ancient and modern, and spirited recitatives of pleasing taste, and *bizzarrie* of trumpets, drums, mortars, battles, battle marches, so that in my opinion one could not wish for more variety and elegance.⁴⁹

This exemplifies della Valle's approach: it is not that the moderns do not know how to write in the old, contrapuntal style, but that they only choose to do so when they wish, otherwise employing a wide variety of styles, as Mazzocchi does here. The term *bizzarrie* denotes the fashionable and the original, thus encompassing all of the novelty that della Valle prizes.⁵⁰

In terms of performers, della Valle dismisses Giudiccioni's assertion that the earlier Luzzaschi (?1545–1607) was a great solo performer. He agrees that he was able to improvise complex counterpoint, but says that he performed this 'rustically', without grace, and 'did not know how to perform [even] a trill'. Using a culinary simile, della Valle states that 'I call this flavourless playing because it is exactly like a meal of delicious food, garnished with the best ingredients, but without salt.'⁵¹ Later on, when praising modern performers such as Kapsperger, Orazio Michi and Michelangelo del violino,⁵² he specifies exactly what he desires as 'salt':

Some of the most excellent modern performers have learnt to add to the fineness of their counterpoint a thousand graces in their playing, such as trills,

⁴⁸ For a detailed analysis of his comments on the chamber songs of Luigi Rossi and Orazio Michi, see *ibid.*

⁴⁹ 'E se a caso V. S. si ritrovò l'altro giorno nel Collegio Romano a quella nobilissima musica a sei cori composta dal più giovane Mazzocchi, averà inteso in essa e stile madrigalesco con vaghezze e leggiadrie, e stile da mottetti con gravità, e imitazioni ben fatte di arie diverse antiche e moderne, e recitativi spiritosi di buon garbo, e bizzarrie di trombe, di tamburi, di bombarde, di battaglie, di serra serra, che io per me non so che si possa desiderare di più varietà e di più galante', in Solerti, *Le origini del melodramma*, p. 172.

⁵⁰ See Holzer, "'Sono d'altro garbo'", 268–72, 287.

⁵¹ 'Non sapeva fare un trillo . . . chiamo io questo un sonare sciapito; perchè è appunto come una vivanda di cibo delicato, condita con ottimi ingredienti, ma senza sale', in Solerti, *Le origini del melodramma*, p. 157. Luzzaschi was evidently prized as a performer in his own time: see Edmond Strainchamps, 'Luzzaschi, Luzzasco', *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, available at www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed 15 May 2018).

⁵² Possibly Michelangelo Rossi, although several performers went under that name: see Catherine Moore, 'Rossi, Michelangelo' *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, available at www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed 15 May 2018).

downward runs,⁵³ syncopation, tremolos, feints of piano and forte and other such niceties little used by those of the previous age.⁵⁴

A similar set of ‘niceties’ are also used by singers, who use crescendos and diminuendos, and rubato in order to reflect ‘with good judgement’ the sense of the text.⁵⁵ Thus della Valle expects performers to bring the music alive through shading and graces, in a lightness of manner that he claims was not found in earlier times.

An Early Eighteenth-Century Correspondence

Bitter polemics, of the kind that Artusi launched against Monteverdi, were not confined to the early Seicento, but continued throughout the century. Bologna seems to have been a hotbed, particularly in the arguments between Maurizio Cazzati and Giulio Cesare Arresi that lasted from 1659 to 1664 and included the latter republishing one of the former’s masses with annotations highlighting the mistakes,⁵⁶ and the row between Giovanni Paolo Colonna and Arcangelo Corelli over a passage of parallel fifths in the latter’s Op. 2.⁵⁷ But musical discourse did not always take the form of fierce personal attacks based on the finer points of compositional theory that, even if they did not make it into print (as in the case of Colonna and Corelli), became public through their wider circulation. Just as today, musicians corresponded privately with one another, often in a more informal manner that perhaps reflects more accurately their initial reactions to what they heard.⁵⁸ Like many Italian musicians in the early eighteenth century, the Bolognese singer and composer Francesco Antonio Pistocchi travelled widely, and his letters home to the composer Giacomo Antonio Perti provide a vivid insight into such private musical conversations, revealing him as ‘an astute critic of

⁵³ ‘Strascichi’ literally means ‘trailing’ or ‘dragging’.

⁵⁴ ‘Alcuni de’ più eccellenti moderni che alle sottigliezze de’ contrappunti hanno saputo aggiunger ne’ loro suoni mille grazie di trilli, di strascichi, di sincope, di tremoli, di finte di piano e di forte e di simili altre galanterie da quelli dell’età passata poco praticate’, in Solerti, *Le origine del melodramma*, p. 159.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

⁵⁶ See in particular Ursula Brett, *Music and Ideas in Seventeenth-Century Italy: The Cazzati–Arresi Polemic*, 2 vols. (New York and London: Garland, 1989). See also ‘La polemica Arresi–Cazzati: alcuni documenti inediti’, in Paolo Giorgi (ed.), *Maurizio Cazzati (1616–1678) Musico Guastallese: Nuovi studi e prospettive metodologiche* (Guastalla: Associazione ‘Giuseppe Serassi’, 2009).

⁵⁷ A detailed summary is provided in Peter Allsop, *Arcangelo Corelli: New Orpheus of Our Times* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 35–40. A more recent contribution can be found in Alberto Sanna, ‘Between Composition and Performance: Generic Norms and Poetic Choices in the Work of Arcangelo Corelli’, in *Arcomelo 2013: atti del settimo congresso internazionale di studi, Fusignano 28–30 novembre 2013* (Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana, 2015).

⁵⁸ A good example from the sixteenth century can be found in Bonnie J. Blackburn, Edward E. Lowinsky and Clement A. Miller (eds.), *A Correspondence of Renaissance Musicians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

music'.⁵⁹ Pistocchi's viewpoint is very much that of the performer, as is clear from his complaint about difficult operatic writing: 'on Saturday we go on the stage without fail and I do not know a single word of the third act, which is very long, with most infamous, unworthy and cruel recitatives by Pollaroli [Carlo Francesco Pollarolo]'.⁶⁰ His letters are full of appraisals of his fellow singers, such as that written from Piacenza on 4 April 1701 on the cast of Ziani and Aldrovandini's *I rivali generosi*:

La Tilla is most precious; *la Contrallora* excellent, both spirited and of good voice; Nicola Paris, really I find has his former beautiful voice; Valeriano sings with really good taste; Bucceleni! let us speak no more of him because I call him the parasite of music since he devours it.⁶¹

Pistocchi prizes both good voices and taste in performance, which is clearly lacking in the case of the 'parasite' Bucceleni. Further insight into precisely what Pistocchi considers to be bad taste is found in his description of *la Margherita* (Margherita Salicola Suini) in Venice in

⁵⁹ Anne Schnobelen, 'Pistocchi, Francesco Antonio', *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, available at www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed 15 May 2018); similarly, Francesco Lora notes how his letters demonstrate his authority as a musician and critic: 'Pistocchi, Francesco Antonio Mamiliano', *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, available at www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/ (accessed 14 August 2018). The letters are now held in the Museo Internazionale e Biblioteca della Musica, Bologna (1-Bc). Leonardo Busi draws on Pistocchi's letters to Perti in his biography of the singer, in *Il padre G. B. Martini: musicista-letterato del secolo 18* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1891), pp. 142–86. Four of the letters written while Pistocchi was in Tuscany are transcribed in Francesco Vatielli, *Lettere di musicisti brevemente illustrate* (Pesaro: Federici, 1917). While the present chapter was in press, another study discussing some of the same letters was published: Alejandra Béjar Bartolo and Fabrizio Ammetto, 'Documentos inéditos de un cantante y compositor de ópera de finales del siglo xviii', in Fabrizio Ammetto (ed.), *La 'ópera' como punto de cohesión entre las artes* (Guanajuato: Universidad de Guanajuato, 2015).

⁶⁰ 'Sabato si va in scena senza fallo ed io non sò una parola del 3:o Atto che è longhissimo con recitativi del Poll:i infamissimi indegnissimi e scleratissimi': 1-Bc, P.146.2, Milan (1 February 1702). The opera must be Pollarolo's *Ascanio*, performed in Milan's Teatro Regio. Pistocchi's involvement is not recorded in Sartori's catalogue: see Claudio Sartori, *I libretti italiani a stampa dale origini al 1800*, 7 vols. (Cuneo: Bertola and Locatelli, 1990), vol. 1, p. 338.

⁶¹ 'La Tilla preziosissima, la contralora brava è spiritosa è bella voce, Nicola Paris, pure lo trovo con la sua bella voce di prima, Valeriano canta assai di bon gusto, Bucceleni! poi non se ne parla perche io lo chiamo il parasito della musica già che lui la divora': 1-Bc, P.146.154. The opera is not mentioned by name by Pistocchi: see Sartori, *I libretti italiani*, vol. v, p. 57. All of the singers listed here were celebrities of their day. *La Tilla* is Maria Domenica Pini, who was in the service of Prince Ferdinando de' Medici and for whom parts of Alessandro Scarlatti's *Il gran Tamerlano* were written; see Colin Timms, 'Pini, Maria Domenica', *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, available at www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed 15 May 2018). *La contralora* is Maria Maddalena Manfredi, described in the libretto as in the service of the Duke of Savoy. Nicola Paris was known as 'the famous swan' and must have been fairly advanced in years at this stage: he is first recorded in 1645; see Paola Besutti, 'Nicola, Paris', *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, available at www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed 15 May 2018). Valeriano Pellegrini went on to work with Handel; Winton Dean and John Rosselli describe him as 'a technically proficient rather than a glamorous singer'; see 'Pellegrini, Valeriano', *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, available at www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed 15 May 2018). The tenor Giovanni Bucceleni (also known as Buzzoleni) had been in the service of the Duke of Mantua; see Paola Besutti, 'Buzzoleni, Giovanni', *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, available at www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed 15 May 2018); and Lorenzo Bianconi and Thomas Walker, 'Production, Consumption and Political Function of Seventeenth-Century Opera', *Early Music History*, 4 (1984), 277–9.

1703.⁶² On 10 November he states that ‘Up until now our opera entirely pleases, although they say very bad things about the drama, on the other hand *la Margherita* is acquitting herself with great distinction’.⁶³ This good opinion of the singer does not last long. A week later he writes that the opera is attracting crowds and ‘if *la Margherita* were restrained, as she was in the rehearsals and the first performances, it would do wonders’.⁶⁴ However, she appears to no longer be singing with good taste:

the infinite caricatures that she does when singing, and singing contralto, and endless bad trills and grimaces, with the most vile off-the-cuff buffoonery on the stage, her character being a heroine . . . And by the middle of the opera her voice diminishes and remains a little dark and harsh. Let this be between ourselves. But the rabble like her ladyship.⁶⁵

Thus Pistocchi complains about her performance on musical grounds: her overuse of trills is tasteless, and her employment of her lower register means she is unable to sustain her voice throughout the entire opera. But it is also her appearance on stage that is at fault, as she grimaces and incorporates comedic elements into *opera seria*.⁶⁶ It sounds as if she is playing to the crowd (the *popolaccio*, to use Pistocchi’s derogatory term) and is very much the caricature of the operatic diva famously satirised in Benedetto Marcello’s *Il teatro alla moda*.⁶⁷

Pistocchi also comments on church music. In summer 1703 he was working for the Medici, and he describes a motet by Melani that was performed on Prince Ferdinando’s birthday.⁶⁸ In typically effusive fashion, he declares that

⁶² The opera must have been *Il miglior d’ogni amore per il peggiore d’ogni odio*, performed in Venice’s S. Casciano in 1703; the libretto states that Suini is in the service of the Duke of Modena: Sartori, *I libretti italiani*, vol. IV, p. 147.

⁶³ ‘La nostr’opera sino ad hora solo piace ma dicono molto male del Dram[m]a p[er] altro la Margherita si porta egregiamente bene’: 1-Bc, P144.161.

⁶⁴ ‘Se la Margherita si fosse contenuta come alle prove e prime sere, farebbe miracoli’: 1-Bc, P146.1, Venice (17 November 1703).

⁶⁵ ‘Le infinite caricature ch’ella fa in cantare, e far il contralto, e trillacci infiniti, e smorfie, di lazzi vilissimi in scena, essendo il suo Carattere un eroina . . . E la voce a mezz’opera se gli scema e resta oscurretta e rauca, questo stia tra noi la Mad[onn]a al popolaccio piace’: 1-Bc, P146.1.

⁶⁶ ‘Lazzi’ are improvised jokes and buffoonery in the *Commedia dell’arte* tradition.

⁶⁷ Benedetto Marcello, *Il teatro alla moda* (Venice: Aldiviva Licante, 1720). An English translation is given in Reinhard G. Pauly, ‘Il teatro alla moda’, 2 parts, *Musical Quarterly*, 34 (1948), 371–403; 35 (1949), 85–105.

⁶⁸ 1-Bc, P 146.186 (11 August 1703). This letter is transcribed in Vatielli, *Lettere*, pp. 16–18; and Francesco Lora, ‘I drammi per musica di Giacomo Antonio Perti per il teatro della Villa Medicea di Pratolino (1700–01; 1707–10)’, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Bologna (2012), 299–300; partially in Warren Kirkendale, *The Court Musicians in Florence During The Principate of The Medici* (Florence: Olschki, 1993), p. 433; and Mario Fabbri, *Alessandro Scarlatti e il Principe Ferdinando de’ Medici* (Florence: Olschki, 1961), p. 46. Vatielli misreads the date as 21 August, an error that is corrected by Kirkendale. Pistocchi is presumably referring to a work by Alessandro Melani, who was described in 1695 as being under the protection of Ferdinando: Robert Lamar Weaver, ‘Melani (3): Alessandro Melani’, *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, available at www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed 15 May 2018).

'in all my days I have never heard anything more wretched'.⁶⁹ His main criticism is the lack of variety:

All note against note, without ever an *attacco*, a fugue, a slur, a move to dissonance; nothing, but absolutely nothing: a confusion of fast notes that made a racket like the devil, with an abundance of semiquaver scales that clashed, in short it could not have been worse, neither have I ever heard anything more shocking . . . May God watch over every faithful Christian, because there is no modulation,⁷⁰ neither basslines worth tuppence, always from bad to worse.⁷¹

The one moment of relief is a solo aria written by 'Martinetto' (Martino Bitti), which serves as 'much sugar in the middle of that atrocity', yet even this is not an unqualified success: Pistocchi accuses him of aping Scarlatti's style 'without, however, his talent, which not everyone has'.⁷² Pistocchi is similarly unimpressed by the motet by Pagliardi that they are rehearsing for the Grand Duke's birthday, which is 'antique' and in 'wretched taste', as well as the incompetence of the conductor.⁷³ The following week's letter explains that Pagliardi's motet was replaced by another, by 'Bassetto di Roma', which 'disgusts [him] less'.⁷⁴ He acknowledges that there was some contrast between the two choirs and praises the *cantilena*, but finds fault with the lack of *concerti* in the solos. An added solo recitative and aria by Bitti come in for criticism for being relentless ('you never find a single bar of peace and repose') whilst a finale by the same author is 'always . . . note against note'.⁷⁵ Here his fellow performers come in for ridicule: the bad conductor is joined by an organist who got lost when accompanying Pistocchi in the recitative; Matteo⁷⁶ taps his feet in his solo; Vincenzino⁷⁷ twisted his shoulders in

⁶⁹ 'De' miei giorni non ho sentito cosa più sciagurata': 1-Bc, P.146.186.

⁷⁰ 'Modulazione' may either be taken in its modern sense of 'modulation', or the earlier meaning of 'melody': see Haar, 'A Sixteenth-Century Attempt at Music Criticism', p. 9.

⁷¹ 'Tutto nota contra nota, senza mai un attacco, una fuga, una legatura, un contrasto di parti; niente ma niente a fatto una confusione di note veloci che faceva un businamento del Diavolo, con quantità di scale di semicrome che s'incontravano, in fine non si può far peggio, nè mai ho sentito cosa più ladra . . . Dio ne guardi ogni fedel cristiano, p[er]che non v'è modulazione, nè bassi che vagliano un corno, sempre di cattiva in cattiva': 1-Bc, P.146.186.

⁷² 'Tanto zucchero in mezzo a quella scleraggine'; 'senza però quel ben genio, che non tutti l'han[n]o': *ibid.*

⁷³ 'Anticaglia' . . . 'sciagurato gusto': *ibid.* The conductor was Padre Ferdinando Paolucci, a bass singer at court: Vatielli, *Lettere*, p. 17.

⁷⁴ 'Mi disgustò meno dell'altro': 1-Bc, P.146.5; Pratolino (18 August 1703), transcribed in Vatielli, *Lettere*, pp. 14–16. Lora suggests 'Bassetto di Roma' may have been Giovanni Lorenzo Lulier: 'Introduction' to Giuseppe Antonio Perti, *Integrale della musica sacra per Ferdinando de' Medici, principe di Toscana*, ed. Francesco Lora, 2 vols. (Bologna: Ut Orpheus, 2010–11), vol. 1, v.

⁷⁵ 'Mai vi si trova una battuta di pace e riposo'; 'sempre . . . nota contra nota': P.146.5.

⁷⁶ Matteo Sassani: see Vatielli, *Lettere*, p. 12.

⁷⁷ Vincenzo Olivicciani: see Lora, 'I drammi per musica', p. 299.

his, whilst Canevese⁷⁸ got his words muddled up (singing ‘et Mariam advocatus’ instead of ‘et Mariam advocemus’). It seems, then, that in a composition Pistocchi prizes contrast and good melodies, having little time for constant counterpoint, whilst he criticises both mistakes and awkward appearance in performance.

Travellers’ Diaries

Some of the most vivid insights into the music of the period come from travellers’ reports, with many music-lovers visiting Italy, often as part of the Grand Tour. The diaries of the German Johann Friedrich Armand von Uffenbach review a number of performances he heard, including Vivaldi performing so high up on the violin that he was ‘within a straw’s breadth of the bridge’.⁷⁹ In March 1715 he attended the performance of an oratorio by Caldara at Prince Ruspoli’s palace in Rome. After describing the lavish surroundings and the audience’s rapt attention he goes on to compare two of the singers: ‘Mariotgi’ (Anna Maria di Piedz)⁸⁰ and Caldara’s wife.⁸¹ The former is ‘wholly extraordinary and uncommonly pleasing in her singing’ but the latter, whilst very accomplished in her art (‘very finished in music and sang flawlessly the most difficult things with great skill’), does not please Uffenbach as much because of the ‘weakness of her voice’.⁸² He also records his dismay at the bad performances he hears at San Apollinare, the church of the German College, where a singer performed ‘shockingly long coloraturas’: Uffenbach records him spending thirteen minutes on a single vowel.⁸³ Thus the German is impressed by technical display, such as Vivaldi’s stratospheric range, but not when it is excessive or in place of natural talent.

One of the most detailed and important of the travellers’ accounts of the period is Charles Burney’s *The Present State of Music in France and Italy* (1771).⁸⁴

⁷⁸ The tenor Giuseppe Canavesi is described as ‘musico favorito’ of Ferdinando in a performance of the oratorio *La costanza trionfante nel martirio di Santa Lucia* in Florence, 1705: Kirkendale, *Court Musicians*, p. 490.

⁷⁹ Eberhard Presussner, *Die musikalischen Reisen des Herrn von Uffenbach* (Kassel and Basel: Bärenreiter, 1949), pp. 64, 67. Translation by Michael Tilmouth, ‘Uffenbach, Johann Friedrich Armand von’, *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, available at www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed 15 May 2018).

⁸⁰ See Ursula Kirkendale, ‘Antonio Caldara: La Vita’, *Chigiana*, 26–7, ns. 6–7 (1971), 284.

⁸¹ She is not named in Uffenbach’s account, but in 1711 Caldara had married Caterina Petrolli: see Brian W. Pritchard, ‘Caldara, Antonio’, *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, available at www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed 15 May 2018).

⁸² Translated in David Pountney, ‘Alessandro Scarlatti and the Transformation of Oratorio’, *Musical Quarterly*, 59 (1973), 589. Pritchard states that Petrolli was a contralto, but Uffenbach describes her as a soprano, which may explain why he finds her voice weak.

⁸³ ‘erschrecklich lange Kolloraturen’; quoted in Presussner, *Die musikalischen Reisen*, p. 82. My thanks to Matthew Gardener for his translation of this passage.

⁸⁴ Charles Burney, *The Present State of Music in France and Italy: Or, The Journal of a Tour through Those Countries, Undertaken to Collect Materials for A General History of Music* (London: T. Becket, 1771). A second,

As a musician writing with the express aim of describing the music he encountered to a general readership, this is perhaps one of the first works of music criticism explicitly intended to be understood as such.⁸⁵ Burney commented on a wide range of music that he heard on his travels, from the street to the church, the opera house to the chamber. A key passage that reveals Burney's criteria for judging compositions is his conversation with the composer Baldassare Galuppi. The latter shares his 'definition of good music', which Burney finds 'admirable, and though short, very comprehensive'; it should have '*vaghezza, chiarezza, e buona modulazione*' (translated by Burney as 'beauty, clearness, and good modulation').⁸⁶ Only once does Burney judge a piece of music explicitly by these criteria: at the church of San Bartolomeo in Bologna he dismisses the music as having 'not one of Buranello's three requisites, *vaghezza, chiarezza, e buona modulazione* to recommend it'.⁸⁷ However, he refers indirectly to all three aspects throughout his discussion. In relation to the first, the (rather vague) adjective 'pretty' is used frequently. *Chiarezza* refers to the relationship between the different parts; according to Grant, 'in its most primitive form *chiarezza* is embodied in a beautiful and effective melody and the simplest of non-melodic bass lines'.⁸⁸ But it could also refer to contrapuntal music, ensuring that each part is clearly heard, and it is in this sense that Burney describes 'a clearness and, if it may so be called, a *transparency* which is wonderful' in the ritornellos of Piccinni's opera.⁸⁹ Galuppi's third requirement, '*buona modulazione*', is frequently commented upon. In the more conservative field of church music, 'sound harmony, and regular modulation' is something to be praised.⁹⁰ Elsewhere, however, experimental harmony is noted approvingly; a scene from Jommelli's *Olimpiade* is 'justly admired for the boldness and learning of the modulation, which is *recherchée*, but expressive and pleading'.⁹¹ This is linked to Burney's appreciation of originality and novelty. For Burney 'new', 'original', 'ingenious contrivances' are to be cherished: his most frequent complaint is of 'old', 'dull' or

corrected edition was published in 1773. The volume was based on Burney's manuscript diary from his travels in 1770; the print excludes a significant amount of material found in the original diary, including details of travelling and some remarks that were likely to cause offence. This earlier version is found in H. Edmund Poole, *Music, Men, and Manners in France and Italy 1770* (London: Eulenburg, 1974). Reference is made here to the first printed edition of 1771.

⁸⁵ According to Burney, the job of a critic was 'to instruct the ignorant lovers of Music how to listen, or to judge for themselves': *A General History of Music*; quoted in Kerry S. Grant, *Dr Burney as Critic and Historian of Music* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1983), p. 18.

⁸⁶ Burney, *Present State*, p. 177. ⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 197. ⁸⁸ Grant, *Burney as Critic and Historian*, p. 35.

⁸⁹ Burney, *Present State*, p. 314. See Burney's own definition of clarity in contrapuntal music: 'a favourite excellence with musicians in speaking of counterpoint: and in compositions of many different parts carrying out different designs, that clearness in their texture and arrangement, which enables the hearer to disentangle them . . . we think might with some degree of propriety be termed *transparency*'; quoted in Grant, *Burney as Critic and Historian*, p. 36.

⁹⁰ Burney, *Present State*, p. 226. ⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

‘trite’ material. Indeed, the violinist Emanuele Barbella is even praised for having ‘a tincture of not disagreeable madness’ in his compositions.⁹²

Burney has even more to say about performance. He describes a Venetian street singer as having ‘several essentials belonging to that of a good singer, such as compass, shake, and volubility’, and proceeds to look for these qualities in the others he hears.⁹³ A young castrato in Brescia has all three: a compass of two octaves from middle C, he ‘executes swift passages with facility’, has a ‘good’ shake and ‘promises to be a great singer’.⁹⁴ His assessment of the performance is not entirely complimentary, though: he notes that he has a tendency to overuse ornamentation and is not always in tune, but with these three key aspects in place ‘there seems to be good stuff for a master to work upon’.⁹⁵ He frequently comments on a singer’s good shake, and its absence is a source of criticism: the ‘excellent tenor’ Abate Fibbietti ‘left nothing to wish, but a shake a little more open’, whilst Burney is dismayed that ‘nothing like a shake could be mustered out of the whole band of singers’ when he hears the boys of the Neapolitan conservatorio of the Pietà.⁹⁶ ‘Volubility’, the third of Burney’s criteria, relates to fluency of delivery and is linked to the ability to ornament and execute *passaggi*.⁹⁷ Volubility is certainly on display in the Venetian *ospedali*. At the *Incurabili* he hears the girls performing ‘difficult divisions’ in a manner he compares to birds, doing such things ‘as I do not remember to have heard attempted before’, and singling their cadenzas out for praise.⁹⁸ At the *Pietà* ‘the girls played a thousand tricks in singing, particularly in the duets, where there was a trial of skill and of natural powers, as to who could go highest, lowest, swell a note the longest, or run divisions with the greatest rapidity’, whilst a second visit to the *Incurabili* praises their ‘rapidity of execution’ in cadenzas ‘such as would have merited and received great applause in the first operas of Europe’.⁹⁹ The naturalness of these performers is in stark contrast to the boys of the Neapolitan conservatorios, who attempt similar feats, but are too studied (‘scholar-like’) and ‘stiff’, with the soprano forcing the high notes.¹⁰⁰ Instead of the girls’ charming and natural playfulness, here ‘the divisions were so rough and so strongly marked, that they became quite grotesque and ridiculous’.¹⁰¹

Burney’s disgust at such a performance leads to one of his most memorable put-downs, describing a bass singer ‘as rough as a mastiff, whose barking he

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 322. ⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 138. ⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 112. ⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 112. ⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 237, 304.

⁹⁷ The second definition of ‘volubility’ in Johnson’s Dictionary is ‘activity of tongue; fluency of speech’: Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, 2 vols. (London: W. Strahan, 1755), vol. II, p. 2220, available at johnsonsdictionaryonline.com (accessed 27 August 2014).

⁹⁸ Burney, *Present State*, p. 149. ⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 161, 168. ¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 304. ¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 307.

seemed to imitate'.¹⁰² Yet sheer volubility is not enough: the performer also needs taste in knowing when to add embellishment. Burney is harsh in his criticism of those who add too much, and finds the tendency for long cadenzas in both Rome and Naples 'always tiresome, and often disgusting', with even the best singers needing to be curtailed. Instead, he believes that they should comprise 'a few select notes . . . as it should consist of something *superior* to what has been heard in the air, or it becomes impertinent'.¹⁰³ Burney documents a wide range of musical activity in this work, with his vivid descriptions allowing us a clear insight into the viewpoint of such an informed and knowledgeable (if not entirely unbiased) observer.

Newspapers

Printed newspapers sprang into existence across Italy in the seventeenth century; the first appeared in Genoa in 1639, followed by Rome in 1640, Bologna and Milan in 1642, Turin in 1645, Modena in 1658 and Naples in 1681.¹⁰⁴ These early newsheets contained brief notices of military victories, diplomatic manoeuvring and various official state events relating not only to the city in which they were issued, but more broadly across the Italian peninsular and beyond. Like their manuscript counterparts – the various *avvisi* and diaries that kept particular noblemen informed of events in a certain city – they recorded the fact that music had been performed (usually as part of civic or religious ceremonies), but it is often assessed in the vaguest terms (frequently described as *squisita* or *eccellente*).¹⁰⁵ Only in the final decades of the

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 305.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 364. Taste is defined by Burney as 'the adding, diminishing, or changing a melody, or passage, with judgement and propriety, and in such a manner as to *improve* it': p. vii.

¹⁰⁴ Valerio Castronovo, 'I primi sviluppi della stampa periodica fra cinque e seicento', in Carlo Capra, Valerio Castronovo and Giuseppe Ricuperati (eds.), *La stampa italiana dal cinquecento all'ottocento* (Rome: Laterza, 1986), p. 20.

¹⁰⁵ See, for example, Gloria Staffieri, *Colligite Fragmentata: la vita musicale romana negli 'Avvisi Marescotti' (1683–1707)* (Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana, 1990); Luca della Libera and José María Domínguez, 'Nuove fonti per la vita musicale romana di fine Seicento: il *Giornale* e il *Diario di Roma* del Fondo Bolognetti all'Archivio Segreto Vaticano'; and Alexandra Nigito, 'Le lettere di Filippo Silva al principe Giovanni Andrea III Doria Landi (1684–1723)', in Caroline Giron-Panel and Anne-Madeleine Goulet (eds.), *La musique à Rome au XVIIe siècle* (Rome: École française de Rome, 2012). An unusual exception is the Venetian publication *Pallade veneta*, where the descriptions are far more effusive: a vespers service is 'a banquet of delights for the ear' ('un banchetto di delitie all'orecchio') and Lucrezia, a singer at the Ospedale della Pietà, has a voice 'amongst the whirlwinds of sighs in a storm of tears singing and . . . calming again the air with the melody, almost like a little charming goldfinch amongst the greenest branches of vivacity' ('fra i turbini de' sospiri in una tempesta di lagrime cantando e . . . rabbonacciando l'aria con la melodia, quasi vezzoso cardellino fra i più verdi ramuscelli del brio'): Eleanor Selfridge-Field, *Pallade Veneta: Writings on Music in Venetian Society 1650–1750* (Venice: Fondazione Levi, 1985), p. 48. However, although the language is more vivid, virtually every account is laudatory because 'to the seventeenth-century journalist in France or Italy, music was one evidence of the glory of the existing social order, one star in the diadem of power, and it was the duty of the journalist to reaffirm that truth': *ibid.*, p.

eighteenth century do true concert reviews begin to appear, and a typical example of this later type is provided by the reviews of five *accademie* held by the *accademici armonici* in Florence between 8 March and 5 April 1789, printed in the *Gazzetta toscana*.¹⁰⁶ Each successive account is increasingly effusive, praising both the occasion (which was ‘magnificent, brilliant, and well thought out’) and the quality and number of the audience (‘it was very numerous with the top-ranking nobility, and choice citizens of both sexes’).¹⁰⁷ That of 29 March is the most detailed:

The fourth *accademia* given by the Signori Armonici . . . managed just like the others to be astonishing and superb. Also this time the numerous and choice number of spectators, the beautiful illuminations and the excellent pieces of instrumental and vocal music united to make it prestigious. Signora Anna Andreozzi sang various arias very well, and the renowned Signore Andrea Martini, called *il Senesino*, astonished the audience with his sweet voice, and with his well-known mastery of music. We will refrain from giving him a eulogy here, because the audience testified to him as, by universal request, they wanted him to repeat the aria that had been sung by him with such distinction. Signora Rachele d’Orta and Signori Magnelli, Amici and Tamagni also all distinguished themselves. The first part of the entertainment was broken up by a violin concerto by Signore Pietro Nardini, known by now for his sweet, and not easily imitated manner of playing, and the Signore Pelleschi also performed a harpsichord concerto on pianoforte that pleased both for the precision and for the *bravura* and talent of this young performer. In the second part the previously praised Signore Pietro Nardini performed another solo sonata, and rekindled the most sincere applause and acclaim.¹⁰⁸

56. It is therefore of a different nature to the reasoned critical assessment of performances that we would consider today to be music criticism.

¹⁰⁶ Mary Sue Morrow states that the *Gazzetta toscana* was ‘the most assiduous in reporting concerts’ of the twenty-three *gazzette* and literary and scholarly journals she surveyed from 1760 to 1800: ‘Late Eighteenth-Century Instrumental Music from the Perspective of the Italian Press’, in Patrizia Radicchi and Michael Burden (eds.), *Florilegium musicae: studi in onore di Carolyn Gianturco*, 2 vols. (Pisa: ETS, 2004), vol. 1, p. 717.

¹⁰⁷ ‘Magnifico, brillante, e bene ideato’; ‘fu numerosissima della primaria Nobiltà, e scelta Cittadinanza d’ambidue i sessi’, *Gazzette toscane uscite settimana per settimana nell’anno 1789* (Florence: Pagani, 1789), pp. 48–9.

¹⁰⁸ ‘La quarta Accademia data dai Sigg. Armonici nella sera del dì 29 dello scorso riesci in egual modo dell’altre sorprendente, e superba. Anche in questa si riunirono a renderla decorosa il numeroso, e scelto concorso degli spettatori, la vaga illuminazione, ed i ben intesi pezzi di Musica Istrumentale, e Vocale. Cantò bravamente diverse Arie la Sig. Anna Andreozzi, ed il rinomato Sig. Andrea Martini, detto il *Senesino*, sorprese l’udienza con la dolce sua voce, e con il cognito suo possesso nella Musica. Tralascieremo di farli qualunque elogio, poichè glielo testificarono gli ascoltanti, i quali con universal richiesta vollero, che ripettesse l’aria dal medesimo egregiamente cantata. Si distinsero ancora la Sig. Rachele d’Orta, ed i Sigg. Magnelli, Amici, e Tamagni. La prima parte della Festa fu tramezzata da un Concerto di Violino del Sig. Pietro Nardini, noto oramai per la sua dolce, e difficilmente imitabil maniera di suonare, ed il Sig. Pelleschi esegui altro Concerto di Cembalo a piano-forte che incontrò sì per la precisione, che per la bravura, e genio di questo giovine Professore. Nella seconda parte il prelodato Sig. Pietro Nardini fece altra suonata a solo, e riscosse i più sinceri applausi, ed acclamazioni’, *Gazzette toscane uscite settimana per settimana nell’anno 1789* (Florence: Pagani, 1789), p. 53.

Like the majority of such reviews, this is entirely positive, although some performers are praised more loudly than others (d'Orta, Magnelli, Amici and Tamagni are dismissed rather summarily). Whilst Martini's sweetness and 'mastery' are acknowledged, rather than a critical discussion of his performance, the reader is referred to his reception; it must be remembered that the encore was requested by the cream of society. Reviews of previous *accademie* have simply reported that Nardini 'astonished', but here there is a reference to his sweetness and inimitable style. The violinist was an important presence in the musical life of the city and a source of some pride.¹⁰⁹ This is a relatively long and detailed review (although the names of the compositions performed are noticeably absent), but it must also be seen in the context of a desire to publicise the artistic life of the city and compliment the prominent figures involved.

Conclusion

Such a survey of Italian musical discourse over the course of three centuries reveals the sheer diversity of forms in which it can take, from Castiglione's courtesy book to vehement polemics, from private correspondence to published travel diaries. Outside the realm of theoretical writings, a discourse that took place within a relatively small circle and required a particular level of education, sixteenth-century discussion of music tends towards the general and often appears as a fleeting reference in the midst of conversation on another topic. With the emergence of *la nuova musica* around the turn of the seventeenth century came a rise in much more detailed criticism, as partisans of both the old and new styles sought to explain exactly what it was they looked for, both in composition and performance. This more detailed approach is also found in travellers' reports, which have a tendency to be more systematic, as they seek to describe the music they encounter to those for whom it is entirely new. By the end of the period a recognisable form of music criticism emerges through regular newspaper reports, even if local pride prevents them from being truly objective. What emerges is that critics generally appreciated the same things as modern audiences do: in performance they looked for accuracy, technical virtuosity employed with taste (rather than simply showing off the performer's ability), and in singers a sensitivity towards the text. Regardless of arguments over the correct handling of

¹⁰⁹ Maria Teresa Dellaborra, 'Nardini, Pietro', *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, available at www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed 15 May 2018).

dissonance or contrapuntal rules, composers are universally praised for variety and an ability to write music appropriate for a particular occasion or text. Whilst writers in this period continue to search for meaningful ways of talking about music in terms that can be widely understood, the picture that emerges has a striking resonance today.

Music Criticism in France before the Revolution

CHARLES DILL

While music criticism in early modern France shared its history with journals such as the *Mercure galant*, it neither emerged from a journalistic tradition nor depended on journals for its themes. This means that as journalistic criticism grew in importance over the eighteenth century, it drew on topics established elsewhere – often in salons and private publications – that had less to do with particular performances than with defining the proper role of music in society. The composer, work or performer mattered, but usually within some larger social context. If the resulting criticism at times bears little resemblance to modern counterparts, it nevertheless offers something equally valuable: opportunities to observe a nation publicly weighing the roles it wished music to adopt.

French music criticism emerged from a confluence of factors:

- (1) the establishment of musical events as public entertainment (e.g. Lully's Académie royale de la musique, 1672)
- (2) the similar institutionalisation of other aspects of French culture (e.g. language in the Académie française, 1635)
- (3) the association of public entertainment with the monarchy
- (4) a robust salon culture that valued personal observation, at times over and against monarchical power
- (5) a flourishing publishing industry that produced not only journals, but novels, plays, poetry, satires, allegories, correspondence, music and manuals explaining social skills (e.g. decorum, conversation, letter-writing).

Louis XIV's absolutist monarchy was a defining feature of this terrain, ensuring that music had a public role in the nation's life and that criticism would contain nationalistic elements, but also that it could take place in the peripheries, away from the regulated world of the court.¹ Against this backdrop,

¹ Georgia J. Cowart, *The Triumph of Pleasure: Louis XIV and the Politics of Spectacle* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); Robert M. Isherwood, *Music in the Service of the King: France in the Seventeenth Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973).

salons, public entertainments and the publishing industry provided occasions for criticism of all kinds – cultural, social, literary, musical – across private and public venues. Music fared well because it framed cultural issues that commentators, readers and audiences deemed significant, offering a means to comment on the monarchy, religious controversies and even current gossip.

The results can be observed in the famed controversies of the eighteenth century. Whether discussing the relative values of French and Italian music, the propriety of genres (e.g. opéra-ballet, opera buffa), the merits of new composers (Campra, Destouches, Rameau, Gluck), changing performance practices or audience behaviours, criticism concerned itself with fundamental questions. How did music exist as a public event? What did popular music say about France? What was the relationship of music to right behaviour? When commentators moved beyond reporting dates, performers' names and features of staging, these were the topics that mattered. This gave music criticism of the pre-Revolutionary period a reactionary cast. The impetus for critical writing came from attachment to an imaginary past in which music was always better suited to public needs, more popular than at present, more acute morally in its offerings. So strong was this tendency that even with the appearance of progressive composers, like Rameau, and progressive commentators, such as the *encyclopédistes*, discussions rarely focused on how composers addressed existing musical practices in innovative ways; rather, composers were a pretext for discussing the direction in which the nation was headed. Apologists couched their arguments in traditionally framed conservative terms (e.g. nation, language, morality) and routinely conceded conservative points (that Rameau's music, say, was contrary to dramatic values). Only with the approach of the Revolution, with the proliferation of theatres and periodicals, did the situation come to resemble modern criticism.

Class structure helps us understand these developments. The settings in which criticism first transpired were private, among the most elite in the kingdom. Early in the seventeenth century, for example, the poet Malherbe cultivated a newly refined language within the circles of the queen and in the famous Rambouillet salon. Conversations in the novels of Madeleine de Scudéry echoed this mannered style, stressing etiquette, poise and conversation skills. Salon discussions were recorded, publicised and popularised principally by the bourgeois writers who participated.² Quinault and Voltaire were bourgeois whose careers originated in these settings, and major literary critics of the seventeenth century, like Boileau, came from bourgeois backgrounds as well. This mixture illustrates a gradual shift: bourgeois critics wrote partly for an aristocratic culture eager for new themes, but also for a bourgeois public eager

² Alain Viala, *Naissance de l'écrivain. Sociologie de la littérature à l'âge classique* (Paris: Minuit, 1985), p. 244.

to understand the mechanisms of social advancement. With the death of Louis XIV, the core culture moved from its court setting at Versailles to eighteenth-century Paris, bringing with it the values of earlier generations, which continued to have a place alongside emerging bourgeois values.³ Matters of propriety and decorum were never far from the surface.

Music criticism before the Revolution can be usefully divided into three periods, each with its distinctive themes. The first begins in the 1660s and continues to the end of the century. A response to the creation of the Académie royale de la musique, it coincides with the earliest attempts by Perrin and Cambert to create an opera theatre, continues through Lully's successful attempts, and concludes with the introduction of a new genre, opéra-ballet, in Campra and La Motte's *L'Europe galante* (1697). Criticism of this period concerned itself principally with music's role in society – as exemplar of court life, theatrical practice, moral life, public enjoyment – and in the life of the individual. The second period begins with Louis XIV's declining interest in public life, during the early years of the eighteenth century, and continues to the *querelle des bouffons* (1752–4). During the final decade of Louis XIV's reign and the regency of Philippe d'Orléans, the centre of musical life drifted from court to the Académie's theatre at the Palais royal. (The Palais royal, both royal residence and site for public promenades, drew attention to the Opéra as a liminal space with political and public associations.) While issues continued from the earlier period, new ones emerged. Tastes and styles changed with the appearance of new composers like Campra, Destouches and Rameau, who drew more attention to musical content than Lully had done. This was also the period when major public debates about musical entertainment emerged. The third period is bounded by the *querelle des bouffons* and the Revolution. The former accompanies a shift from earlier repertory, notably the *tragédie en musique*, towards comedy, the emergence of the Opéra-comique as a major theatrical establishment and a trend towards more modern critical language. The musical terrain shifted drastically, marked by new theatres and journals, and major transformations in repertory.

The Seventeenth Century

If, as Cowart notes, this period witnessed the beginnings of modern music criticism, it was because society fostered perspectives fundamental to critical

³ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence, paperback ed. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), pp. 27–56.

thinking.⁴ First among these was a shift towards the viewpoint of the individual. We observe evidence of this already in Montaigne's account of his life, but it found its lasting model in Descartes's portrait of a discrete, cognising beholder reflecting on his environment.⁵ The Cartesian subject was the ideal model for salon participants, who emphasised point of view, vernacular expression, the privileging of thought over sensory experience and fascination with recounting personal experiences.⁶ Salon culture also represented new forms of socialisation, wherein groups contemplated personal experiences together. DeJean notes that the publication of Lafayette's *La Princesse de Clèves* (1678), during the period when the *Mercure galant* first appeared, led to the formation of book clubs that reported their deliberations to the journal's editor.⁷ The Académie royale, established during the same period, witnessed a similar desire among audience members not only to form opinions about music but also to express them to the wider community, sometimes during performances.⁸ (The parterre of the Palais royal theatre was an especially fertile location for demonstrative behaviours.) Finally, we should acknowledge the role of language in the development of criticism. The seventeenth century, beginning with Malherbe, rediscovered the French language, savouring it as an expression of culture: Descartes published in the vernacular, writers as diverse as Vaugelas, Arnauld and Bouhours cultivated clear and elegantly spoken language, and institutions like the Académie française published dictionaries. If to modern readers these efforts seem academic, we should recall that academic writing was composed in Latin and adhered to Scholastic tradition; these new resources, by comparison, were modern, addressed contemporary concerns and were aimed at a reading public of aristocrats and bourgeois.⁹ Writers like Le Cerf modelled their discussions

⁴ See Georgia J. Cowart, *The Origins of Modern Musical Criticism: French and Italian Music, 1600–1750* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1981).

⁵ See, for example, Evert van Leeuwen, 'Method, Discourse, and the Act of Knowing', in Stephen Voss (ed.), *Essays on the Philosophy and Science of René Descartes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993). On Montaigne, see Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), pp. 285–311.

⁶ On the popularisation of Descartes's ideas, see Erica Harth, *Cartesian Women: Versions and Subversions of Rational Discourse in the Old Regime* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992); on the imagining of past experiences as applied to music, see Jairo Moreno, *Musical Representations, Subjects, and Objects: The Construction of Musical Thought in Zarlino, Descartes, Rameau, and Weber* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), pp. 50–84.

⁷ Joan DeJean, *Ancients against Moderns: Culture Wars and the Making of a Fin de Siècle* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), pp. 58–64.

⁸ Jeffrey S. Ravel, *The Contested Parterre: Public Theatre and French Political Culture, 1680–1791* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999); Jérôme de La Gorce, *L'Opéra à Paris au temps de Louis XIV* (Paris: Desjonquères, 1992).

⁹ Richard Scholar, *The Je-Ne-Sais-Quoi in Early Modern Europe: Encounters with a Certain Something* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 45, 183; Viala, *Naissance de l'écrivain*, pp. 147–51; Georges Matoré, *Histoire des dictionnaires français* (Paris: Larousse, 1968), p. 87.

of music on established treatments of language like Vaugelas's and imitated the comparisons of French and Italian culture found in language treatises.

Appreciation for language influenced how music was criticised. Discussions privileged vocal music, treating instrumental music as secondary because it contained no language and no information, appealing only to the sense of hearing. Similarly, dancing was a pleasurable pastime, not to mention a social practice of considerable importance, but there was nothing there, at least initially, to contemplate. Thus instrumental music appeared in criticism, but rarely drove it. (Surprisingly, this remained the case even in the progressive writings of the *encyclopédistes*.) Earlier French critics treated Italian operas and cantatas as glorified instrumental music, similarly devoid of content despite their texts. In this context, comparative explorations of national styles in chamber music, such as one finds in François Couperin's *Les Goûts réunis* (1724), provide useful musical commentaries, revealing how the French viewed foreign musical styles.¹⁰

Recent research by Victoria Johnson has demonstrated that Louis XIV and his ministers intervened in the creation of Perrin's Académie d'opéra (1669). Perrin had desired to establish a humanistic academy like the Académie française, but royal preference was for opulent theatre reflecting the glories of the monarchy. Through the vicissitudes of the next century and beyond, this expectation of a grand and lavish national music theatre remained constant, even in Revolutionary governments.¹¹ It was a high standard, however, and met with challenges. Perrin's productions, with their simple, artless music, were popular, and the usurpation of his patent by Lully, in 1672, led to important critical themes. First among these was illegitimacy, the impression that, however popular it was, the Académie royale had gone astray. Even the normally staid *Mercurie galant* joined in, staging a conversation among anonymous speakers who questioned the monarch's and Lully's intentions.¹² Pamphlets published in Lully's lifetime and after characterised the composer as a greedy interloper more interested in profit than serious theatre. One finds traces of this same theme in later writers like Dacier, Plûche, André, and Bollioud-Mermet. A related theme, emerging in pamphlets from Lully's lifetime, refers to charges of homosexuality he had escaped early in his career. Because music – and Lully's in particular – appealed to the senses, it cast moral doubt on the appropriateness of a national operatic

¹⁰ Don Fader, 'Philippe II d'Orléans's "Chanteurs italiens", the Italian Cantata and the *goûts-réunis* under Louis XIV', *Early Music*, 35/2 (2007), 237–49; Cowart, *Origins of Modern Musical Criticism*, pp. 87–113.

¹¹ Victoria Johnson, *Backstage at the Revolution: How the Royal Paris Opera Survived the End of the Old Regime* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

¹² Jérôme de La Gorce, *Jean-Baptiste Lully* (Paris: Fayard, 2002), pp. 180–3.

theatre. The composer's private life was attached metonymically to opera as a symbol of its decadence. With his death, condemnation focused on the theatre's female singers and dancers, the so-called *filles de l'Opéra*, who were still discussed in these terms during the nineteenth century.¹³ These kinds of commentary extended a criticism already directed at all French theatres of the seventeenth century: that they placed too much emphasis on love and gallantry rather than edification. Whatever the validity of the charge when levelled at the tragedies of Corneille and Racine, it was one to which Quinault's *tragédies lyriques*, with their *galant* plots, were vulnerable, and Boileau's tenth satire provided one of the best-known critiques in these terms.

Another model for criticism was a broad-ranging re-examination of French culture, the *querelle des anciens et modernes*, which peaked in the 1680s and continued into the early decades of the eighteenth century. For much of Louis XIV's reign, France had compared itself to the great empires of antiquity. *Anciens* like Boileau, who translated Longinus' treatise on the sublime, favoured the inspiring literary monuments of Greece and Rome. Ladvocat longed to recreate the tragedies of ancient Greece in modern opera *livrets*, an idea that resonated with later reform critics like Mably and Rémond de Saint-Mard in the 1740s.¹⁴ In this controversy, then, we encounter variations on the theme of an ideal, but lost, state of grandeur, but with this distinction: the *modernes* generally admired opera and were among its earliest supporters. Charles Perrault and Fontenelle imagined a kingdom unlike any that preceded it, favouring the scientific advances of the post-Cartesian period, modern manners and morals, and properties attributed to the French language – clarity of thought, lack of equivocation and simplicity. They regarded the creation of opera as one more stage in this history.¹⁵ In his *Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes* (1686), Fontenelle compared the workings of the universe to the machinery of a vast opera theatre, while Perrault, in his *Critique de l'Opéra* (1674), treated Quinault's *livrets* as exemplars of modern manners. This tension, between the ideal entertainment opera could be and the practical

¹³ See the anonymous 'Description de la vie et moeurs, de l'exercice et l'état des filles de l'Opéra', reprinted in Louis Ladvocat, *Lettres sur l'Opéra à l'abbé Dubos, suivies de Description de la vie et moeurs, de l'exercice et l'état des filles de l'Opéra*, ed. Jérôme de La Gorce (In.p.): Cicero, 1993). More generally, see Gina Rivera, 'Les filles de l'Opéra in the Early Eighteenth Century', unpublished PhD dissertation, Harvard University (2013).

¹⁴ Gabriel Bonnot, Abbé de Mably, *Lettres a madame la marquise de P... sur l'opéra* (Paris: Didot, 1741; facsimile ed., New York: AMS Press, 1978); Toussaint Rémond de Saint-Mard, *Réflexions sur l'Opéra* (The Hague: Jean Neaulme, 1741; facsimile ed., Geneva: Minkoff, 1972). See David Charlton, *Opera in the Age of Rousseau: Music, Confrontation, Realism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 162–8.

¹⁵ See Larry F. Norman, *The Shock of the Ancient: Literature and History in Early Modern France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011); DeJean, *Ancients against Moderns*.

entertainment it was, framed the famous controversies of the eighteenth century.

The culminating event in seventeenth-century criticism was an exchange between Ragueuet, who published *Parallèle des italiens et des français, en ce qui regarde la musique et les opéra* (1702), and Le Cerf de la Viéville, who responded with the most extensive music criticism yet published, his *Comparaison de la musique italienne et de la musique française* (1704–6). Both men were well educated, both familiar with opera. (Ragueuet had encountered Italian music during a 1697 visit to Rome, while acting as tutor to the nephews of Cardinal de Bouillon.) They both wrote in a period when comparisons between French and Italian cultures were common, stimulated by the banishment of the Comédie-italienne (1697), the influx of Italian musicians following the treaties of Turin (1696) and Ryswick (1697), and the publication of popular Italian songs by the royal printer Ballard, beginning in 1699.¹⁶ Ragueuet's pamphlet hardly seems controversial. He took pains to praise the most admired features of French opera, but confessed that he enjoyed Italian opera even more. Le Cerf's response was thus out of proportion – three volumes seething with invective, tendentious reasoning and nationalistic fervour. Despite its zealotry, the *Comparaison* is a valuable source, rich in fanciful anecdotes about Lully and Quinault, descriptions of theatrical practices and audience behaviours, comparisons of music and poetry from identifiable works, reflections on religious music and detailed explanations of current critical positions. This was a defining moment in French criticism. Expressing personal opinions about music and musical events became a thoroughly public event, subject to comment and debate.

1700–1750

Le Cerf's commentary identified important developments in the first half of the eighteenth century, demonstrating just how quickly conservative attitudes were evolving. First, opera was now acceptable entertainment even for *anciens*; one no longer needed to justify enthusiasm for it, though its lack of didactic content remained a cause for concern. Second, Lully's reputation underwent rehabilitation. He now became the touchstone for French opera, its creator and ideal practitioner, another example of its lost grandeur. In

¹⁶ Paul-Marie Masson, 'La Musique italienne en France pendant le premier tiers du XVIIIe siècle', in Henri Hauvette, *Mélanges de philologie d'histoire et de littérature offerts à Henri Hauvette* (Paris: Les presses français, 1934; facsimile ed., Geneva: Slatkine, 1972); Masson, 'Musique italienne et musique française, la première querelle', *Rivista musicale italiana*, 19 (1912), 519–45. See also Fader, 'Philippe II d'Orléans's "Chanteurs italiens"'.

a period when public taste favoured the thrilling music of Campra, Destouches and Rameau, the continued presence of Lully, both musically and as a critical ideal, reminded audiences that French opera was steeped in a tradition of poetry, dramatic situations and heroic figures. His operas were performed continually up to 1779, typically brought in to shore up profits when the attendance of newer works declined. (Ironically, his operas were repeatedly adapted to current tastes, so that he was representing the past with works made to sound modern.)¹⁷ In 1708, when Titon du Tillet proposed a monument commemorating French cultural achievements, he included Lully and Quinault alongside the likes of Corneille, Racine, Molière and Boileau, and in 1725, François Couperin dedicated an instrumental apotheosis to him.¹⁸

Finally, Le Cerf summarised a binary opposition in opera criticism that remained constant for the remainder of the century. He distinguished between, on the one hand, a French music rooted in sentiment, simplicity, the natural superiority of the French language, and strong theatrical principles and social values, and on the other, Italian music that ignored language, emphasising virtuosity, instrumental styles, sensuality and light entertainment. Although the divide between French and Italian music remained the most popular manifestation of this pairing – a constant right up to the Revolution – the broader distinction it implies could take many forms: native music versus foreign, civilised versus uncivilised, traditional genres versus new, traditional performance practices versus new, edification versus entertainment, simplicity versus pedantry, serious works (or composers or performers) versus gallantry. Thus, for example, during the 1720s, audiences identified the singer Lemaure with a traditional style of dramatic performance and her competitor, the singer Pélissier, with a newer, more mannered style.¹⁹ The point, ultimately, was not about which singer should reign supreme – both had good voices and praiseworthy acting skills – but what kind of music and what kind of performance practice should be valued. The singers stood in for a greater set of concerns.

Divisions deepened with Rameau's first official opera, *Hippolyte et Aricie* (1733). The *Mercure de France*, which reported on performances at the

¹⁷ Herbert Schneider, *Die Rezeption der Opern Lullys im Frankreich des Ancien régime* (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1982); Lois Rosow, 'Lully's *Armide* at the Paris Opéra: A Performance History, 1686–1766', unpublished PhD dissertation, Brandeis University (1981).

¹⁸ Julie Anne Sadie, 'Parnassus Revisited: The Musical Vantage Point of Titon du Tillet', in John Hajdu Heyer (ed.), *Jean-Baptiste Lully and the Music of the French Baroque: Essays in Honor of James R. Anthony* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

¹⁹ Charlotte-Élisabeth Aïssé, *Lettres de Mademoiselle Aïssé à Madame Calandrini*, ed. Jules Ravenel, 5th ed. (Paris: Gerdès, 1846), pp. 91–2, 107.

Académie royale and generally adopted a neutral outlook, immediately recognised *Hippolyte* as extraordinary, devoting an unheard-of fifteen pages to describing it. Equally revealing, however, was a review the *Mercur*e published six months later, a 'Lettre de M. *** à Mlle *** sur l'origine de la musique'.²⁰ Because, as an official journal, the *Mercur*e avoided personal attacks, the piece was written as an allegory, but it was aimed at Rameau. A young woman, the letter's ostensible recipient, had avoided learning about music because opinions varied so widely. The author assumes a moralising tone. Learning about music is like learning about lovers: some are corrupt, others dissimulate, still others flatter; true love, by comparison, is simple and unaffected. It was the same with music's origins. Psyche invented a pure music to celebrate virtuous love, which was perverted by Venus to induce lust. At some point, just about every charge later levelled at Rameau appears – lubricity, noise, pedantry, arrogance – and he would remain a controversial, if popular, figure for the remainder of his career. In a 1737 letter, Voltaire notes that *lullistes* referred to Rameau's enthusiasts as *ramoneurs* ('chimney sweeps').²¹

The dispute was about more than the efforts of one composer; French music was indeed changing, had been changing for a long time, and this was not lost on audiences. Opéra-ballets were more popular than hoary, expensive *tragédies en musique*. Plots grew weaker and *livret* poetry simpler to make room for more music. Recitative, the heart of Lullian opera, grew shorter and was performed more quickly, while ornamental *ariettes* and dance scenes grew in length and number. The resulting anxieties were older than Le Cerf, and in this sense Rameau was no more than a proximate cause. The two most thoughtful critics of the 1740s, Mably and Rémond de Saint-Mard, published 'poetics' of opera, in the manner of Aristotle, as calls for reform. Both admired opera, but acknowledged that it was changing. Obviously, *livret* poetry could not replicate the language of spoken tragedy, but it could benefit from better, more didactic poetry and clearer plot expositions. Both Rémond and Mably acknowledged opera's gallantry, arguing that the terrors of Greek tragedy were poorly suited to modern mores. And yet, though they imagined new, improved, serious operas, they still regarded Lully and Quinault as coming closest to achieving their ideal. Rameau, though never mentioned by name, remained a presence throughout.

Rémond and Mably also mention a theme that gained prominence during the 1740s, that of degeneracy or decadence. This resonates with an earlier

²⁰ Anon., 'Lettre de M. *** à Mlle *** sur l'origine de la musique', *Mercur*e de France (May 1734), 861–70, 864.

²¹ Theodore Besterman (ed.), *Voltaire's Correspondence*, 135 vols. (Geneva: Institute et musée Voltaire, 1953–77), vol. vi, 285.

contribution to the *querelle des anciens et modernes*, Anne Dacier's *Des causes de la corruption du goust* (1714). Responding to La Motte's translation of Homer, Dacier argued that operas and novels were ruining French taste. (Throughout, she made much of La Motte's activities as *livretiste*.) During the 1740s, this sense that modern music was corrupting society found expression in a series of strongly worded treatises: André's lectures on beauty, published as *Essai sur le beau* (1741); an anonymous *Lettre de M. de . . . a Madame de . . . sur les opera de Phaeton et Hippolyte et d'Aricie* (c. 1742); the seventh volume of Plûche's *Le Spectacle de la nature* (1746); and Bollioud-Mermet's *De la corruption du goust dans la musique française* (1746). The usual suspects were blamed: arrogant composers, egotistical performers, fashion, Italian music, neglect for rules, failure to imitate nature, sophistry, ambition. Bollioud-Mermet complained that the problem extended even to the music of religious institutions. (Especially interesting were his appeals for 'wholesome harmony' [*saine harmonie*]).²² The cure was to re-establish taste for the music of Lully and Lalande, with the composers from the intervening years apparently vanishing altogether. Little wonder, then, that Jean-Jacques Rousseau's opera, *Le Devin du village* (1752) proved successful. With its simple melodies, harmonies and sentiments, it offered up features that a significant portion of the audience longed to hear, a trend reflected elsewhere in works like Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* (1728).

1750–1789

At mid-century, aesthetic attitudes began showing evidence of further change. Earlier generations had adopted a dualistic view of art consistent with Descartes, stressing the gap between observed object and observing subject. Criticism emphasised both the rules necessary for creating good art and the taste requisite for judging its adequacy, while the senses were regarded as a source of temptation which introduced an unseemly element of enjoyment. The situation began changing with the *Traité du beau* (1715), by the Swiss philosopher Crousaz, and accelerated with the popular *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et sur la peinture* (1719) of Dubos; not coincidentally, these were also among the first works to treat music as a serious, compelling sister art comparable to literature, theatre and painting. Crousaz and Dubos were influenced by Locke to imagine an elevated role for the senses. Henceforth, there was validity in considering elements of experience that depended on

²² [Louis Bollioud-Mermet], *De la corruption du goust dans la musique française* (Lyon: Aimé Delaroche, 1746), pp. 23, 52.

them – creativity, inspiration, *sensibilité* and the effect of artworks on the beholder. This found further support in the 1720s, when Montesquieu and Voltaire returned from Great Britain influenced by Locke and Shakespeare, and again with Batteux's *Les Beaux arts réduits à un même principe* (1747). Batteux, like Dubos, located the sensory experience of art in mimesis: nature provided the model, the artist imitated nature and the beholder found in this imitation the semblance of emotions experienced in the natural world. (By drawing on this principle, Dubos and Batteux were also able to theorise a serious role for instrumental music as an imitation of natural events, such as storms.) The new sensibility had the ironic effect of validating the earlier critical position of the conservative *anciens*, who had argued for the instinctive inspirations of the Longinian sublime over and against the rational principles of the *modernes*. It would be an important influence on the *philosophes* involved with Diderot's *Encyclopédie ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers* (1751–72), who became the principal spokesmen for sensibility at mid-century.²³

If the 1740s had been formative for the *encyclopédistes*, the 1750s were decisive. Though the interests of Rousseau, Diderot, d'Alembert and Grimm ranged widely, they found themselves increasingly involved in public discussions of music. Rousseau wrote articles on it for the *Encyclopédie*, and both Diderot and d'Alembert became involved with making Rameau's music theories accessible to the reading public. (Rousseau aside, the *philosophes* initially were enthusiastic supporters of the composer, whom they regarded as offering something more than traditional French fare.) The *encyclopédistes* were largely in agreement with the view espoused by Dubos and later writers, that the individuals, rather than *gens du monde*, determined responses to musical events for themselves and relied on their sensory perceptions to do so. Focus shifted onto the experiences of individual audience members, and in this period French theatre audiences grew more silent and attentive.²⁴

The *philosophes*, eager to broadcast their opinions, constituted one set of actors effecting change, and observers identified them with it, but the *philosophes* were also symptomatic of larger instabilities in music and society. As previously noted, they emerged in a period that feared music was contributing to cultural degeneracy, and their philosophical and political views further stoked such anxieties. The repertory itself was changing. Despite frequent, mandated revivals, the venerable *tragédie en musique* of Lully and Rameau was

²³ Norman, *The Shock of the Ancient*, pp. 213–26. See also Georgia J. Cowart, 'Sense and Sensibility in Eighteenth-Century Musical Thought', *Acta musicologica*, 56 (1984), 251–66.

²⁴ James H. Johnson, *Listening in Paris: A Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); but see also Charlton, *Opera in the Age of Rousseau*, pp. 187–98.

dying out, with the theatre performing fewer and fewer new ones by other composers. Lighter and less literary opéra-ballets of various kinds displaced the tragedy. The Académie's perennial financial woes, which had wreaked havoc on a series of private financial syndicates, left the court eager to divest itself of financial risk, and so the king transferred control of the Académie to Paris's *prévôt des marchands*. This was an act of symbolic importance. It was one thing to invest in a royal institution, quite another to turn it into a financially responsible business.²⁵ And in addition to everything else, mounting dissatisfaction with French music in general spilt over into public life in ways that could no longer be ignored.

Grimm's pamphlet *Lettre sur Omphale* (1752) – a critique of Destouches's recently revived opera – initiated a new phase in music criticism.²⁶ Appearing in February, it ostensibly supported traditional French beliefs: opera should value language and emphasise drama over entertainment, vocal music over instrumental. But the *Lettre* denied French opera those very attributes. Though enthusiastic in his praise for Rameau, Grimm maintained that Italian opera, long the scourge of French good taste, was the superior genre. He referred to it as 'musique européenne', reminding readers that it was the pre-eminent musical entertainment everywhere but in France.²⁷ Grimm dismissed *Omphale's* poetry as unworthy of its author, La Motte, and claimed its music lacked taste, naturalness, expressiveness and clarity of thought, values long associated with French music. (This was a particularly vicious blow for the conservative critics of the previous decade, who were arguing to reinstate those very qualities in newer French repertory.) That spring, Grimm's views were seconded by his fellow *philosophes* in an unsigned letter to the *Mercur*e by Raynal and in a pamphlet by Rousseau entitled *Lettre à M. Grimm*.

The *Lettre sur Omphale* helped foment the *querelle des bouffons*.²⁸ In August 1752, the *prévôt* allowed the itinerant comic troupe of Bambini to perform on the stage of the Académie royale. Whereas only a few years earlier, critics had hoped to reintroduce dignity and didactic content into the *tragédie en musique*, they now encountered, on that same stage, Italian musicians producing fungible sex comedies like Pergolesi's *La serva padrona*. For conservative audience members, this really could be regarded as degeneracy,

²⁵ Elisabeth A. Cook, 'Challenging the Ancien Régime: The Hidden Politics of the "Querelle des Bouffons"', in Andrea Fabiano (ed.), *La Querelle des bouffons dans la vie culturelle française du xviii^e siècle* (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2005), pp. 141–60; William Weber, 'La musique ancienne in the Waning of the Ancien Régime', *Journal of Modern History*, 56/1 (1984), 58–88, especially 75–7.

²⁶ Friedrich Melchior Grimm, *Lettre de M. Grimm sur Omphale* (n.p.: 1752).

²⁷ Grimm, *Lettre de M. Grimm sur Omphale*, 2.

²⁸ See Charlton, *Opera in the Age of Rousseau*, pp. 179–86, 198–208; Weber, 'La musique ancienne', 77–80; Denise Launay, 'Introduction' to Launay (ed.), *La Querelle des bouffons*, 3 vols. (Geneva: Minkoff, 1973), vol. 1.

because the musics they had purportedly despised – Italian music, entertaining music, modern music, immoral music – were now achieving success. Matters intensified with the premiere of Mondonville's *Titon et l'Aurore* in January 1753, because audiences treated it as an exemplar for traditional French values. A full-scale pamphlet war then erupted with Grimm's *Le Petit prophète de Boehmischbroda*, a biting satire couched in quasi-prophetic language. Nearly sixty pamphlets followed, some responding to Grimm, some to Rousseau's *Lettre sur la musique française* (1753). Both made the same extraordinary claims: the French language was poorly suited to opera, and its music was weak, boring and unintelligible.²⁹ While it all sounds a bit silly to modern readers, the participants behaved as though something serious was at stake, and it is important to recall the nationalistic ideology France had invested in music to this point: it was not simply that the *philosophes* criticised French music, but rather that they questioned the very foundations on which beliefs about French music rested. The departure of the Bambini troupe in March 1754 was no rout: the Académie celebrated French music with the revival of a seventeen-year-old work, Rameau's *Castor et Pollux*, a magnificent composition in a moribund genre. More telling was the success of Dauvergne's *Les Troqueurs*, written in the manner of opera buffa, which was performed at the Foire Saint Laurent in November 1753; it signalled the growing importance of the *comédie mêlée d'ariettes*, or opéra-comique, then being performed at the Comédie-italienne and at the yearly fairs held near the abbeys of Saint-Germain-des-Prés and Saint-Lazare.

The *philosophes* continued to influence music discourse after the *querelle*.³⁰ Successive volumes of the *Encyclopédie* argued for new music and new musical experiences. And though Rousseau's *Lettre sur la musique française* had appeared in the thick of the *querelle*, its attack on French music was general in nature, in the manner of the *Lettre sur Omphale*, detailing the failures of Lully's famed monologue, 'Enfin, il est en ma puissance' from *Armide*. This marked the beginning of the *philosophes*'s split with Rameau. A professed admirer of Lully, despite what his critics believed, Rameau now defended the traditional composer in his *Observations sur notre instinct pour la musique* (1753). Of still greater concern to Rameau were Rousseau's articles on music theory for the *Encyclopédie*; while the exchange has often been treated as a simple disagreement – Rameau located expression in harmony, Rousseau in melody – recent research shows that Rousseau's articles were openly critical

²⁹ These materials have been collected in facsimile in Launay (ed.), *La Querelle des bouffons*.

³⁰ Alfred Richard Oliver, *The Encyclopedists as Critics of Music* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1947).

of Rameau's theories.³¹ The composer responded with his *Erreurs sur la musique dans l'Encyclopédie* (1755), leading the *philosophes* to defend Rousseau in the preface to the sixth volume of the *Encyclopédie* (1756). This exchange marks an important moment in French music criticism, which writers like Kintzler have regarded as epochal.³² And there is something to this. From this point, critical language begins to focus more on the musical work, and Italianisms become more common. The repertory was changing as well. The Académie produced scarcely any operas by Lully in the early 1750s, and productions of new operas by Rameau also slowed. After a brief resurgence, Lully's works again dwindled after 1767 and disappeared in 1779; Rameau fell from the repertory in 1784.³³

The opinions of the *philosophes* contributed to the next great pamphlet war, the *querelle des gluckistes et piccinnistes*.³⁴ The *philosophes* had adopted a strategy of upholding traditional-sounding values for French music, but locating the exemplars for those values in the music of foreigners. So it was that the ideal composers of the next generation were German and Italian, each in turn divining the true nature of French opera. Having visited Paris in 1767, Gluck understood the situation in France long before returning in 1774. A 1772 letter of support, from the French diplomat du Roulet, indicates that the composer had been considering a Parisian visit for some time, that he possessed a thorough knowledge of French opera (including, as it turned out, opéra-comique), and that he was well versed in the issues of French music criticism. (The letter was published in the *Mercure* later that year.)³⁵ A letter from Gluck himself followed, published by the *Mercure* in 1773, in which he freely admitted the influence of Rousseau's thoughts on music.³⁶ He returned to Paris in 1774 for the first of two more visits with a suitably tragic subject in hand, *Iphigénie en Aulide*, a story Diderot had recommended in *Entretien sur le fils naturel* (1757). Over the next five years the Académie staged six more of his works, written or adapted to suit French tastes. They featured tragic plots

³¹ Nathan Martin, 'Rameau and Rousseau: Harmony and History in the Age of Reason', unpublished PhD dissertation, McGill University (2008).

³² Catherine Kintzler, *Jean-Philippe Rameau: Splendeur et naufrage de l'esthétique du plaisir à l'âge classique*, 3rd ed. (Paris: Minerve, 2011); Belinda Cannone, *Philosophies de la musique (1752-1780)* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1990).

³³ Weber, 'La musique ancienne', 81.

³⁴ Daniel Heartz, *Music in European Capitals: The Galant Style, 1720-1780* (London: W. W. Norton, 2003), pp. 801-81; François Lesure, 'Introduction' to Lesure (ed.), *Querelle des gluckistes et piccinnistes*, 2 vols. (Geneva: Minkoff, 1984), vol. 1; Julian Rushton, 'The Theory and Practice of Piccinnisme', *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, 98 (1971-72), 31-46.

³⁵ [François-Louis Gand Le Bland du Roulet], 'Lettre à M. D., un des directeurs de l'Opéra de Paris. A Vienne en Autriche, le 1^{er} Août 1772', *Mercure de France* (October 1772), 169-74.

³⁶ Christoph Willibald Gluck, 'Lettre de M. le Chevalier Gluck, sur la Musique', *Mercure de France* (February 1773), 182-4.

often drawn from Greek tragedy; strong, unadorned declamation; clearly expressed emotional content; and dramatically motivated dance. A young generation of journalists and would-be philosophers, eager to emulate their predecessors, soon joined battle.³⁷ Arnaud provided a sensitive and surprisingly musical account of *Iphigénie in Aulide* in the *Gazette de littérature*.³⁸ The journalist La Harpe, on the other hand, criticised it in his *Journal de politique et de littérature*, levelling charges that had already been applied to earlier French composers: the declamation was unmelodious, and the composer had allowed two performers to sing at the same time.³⁹

What was required, yet again, was for a good Italian composer to act as counterbalance. The Neapolitan ambassador recommended Piccinni in 1774, and the composer arrived in Paris in 1776. Gluck and Piccinni made for odd adversaries: they were swept up in disputes they had not foreseen, they were mostly reluctant to engage each other in dispute and they each arguably learned something from the other's compositions. Both composed operas on themes previously associated with Lully – Gluck set *Alceste* and *Armide*, Piccinni set *Roland* and *Atys* – and both employed techniques like *tempête* scenes, long associated with French opera. Thanks to some backstage skulduggery, both wound up setting versions of *Iphigénie en Tauride*. Taken together, the two composers signalled a general trend towards Italianisation in French music, an acknowledgement that the older repertoires could no longer sustain French musical culture. For the most part, the *philosophes* of old remained aloof from the controversy. The exceptions were Marmontel, who supported Piccinni by updating Quinault's verses, and Rousseau, who acknowledged Gluck's homage and praised his operas as worthy examples of French opera. The inclination again is to regard it all as silly, a watered-down version of the *bouffonistes'* quarrel, but the stakes remained high. The question was how to modernise a theatre of great tradition and cultural standing, how to determine what kind of opera counted as French and what kind represented France, both to itself and abroad. Given the continued interest in Italian music, this was no small matter. The actual quarrel may have lasted only a few years, but the issues it raised remained commonplace past the Revolution and into the new century. Lesure notes that Choron and Fayolle were still discussing its influence as late as 1810.⁴⁰

³⁷ Robert Darnton, *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), pp. 1–40.

³⁸ [François Arnaud], 'Lettre de M. l'A. A** à Madame d****'; reprinted in Lesure (ed.), *Querelle des gluckistes et des piccinnistes*, vol. 1, pp. 29–39.

³⁹ Reprinted in Lesure (ed.), *Querelle des gluckistes et des piccinnistes*, vol. 1, pp. 113–14.

⁴⁰ Lesure (ed.), *Querelle des gluckistes et piccinnistes*, vol. 1, p. xv.

The trends from this period defined French music criticism up to the Revolution, aided by a profusion of new journals and writers eager to address the evolving music scene. The critics of the 1780s had been formed by the events of the 1770s. Notable among these writers were Chabanon, Lacépède and Framery, who, unusually for observers of musical culture, all had experience with music composition. Chabanon, best known for his elegy on Rameau's death,⁴¹ further developed notions of musical expression rooted in the *encyclopédistes'* thought, arguing in *De la musique considérée en elle-même* (1780) that music was remote from language and provided a discrete, even autonomous form of emotional experience. Similarly, Lacépède, who was working on his own setting of *Armide* when Gluck's was completed, offered in his *Poétique de la musique* (1785) perhaps the most detailed argument on behalf of instrumental music that France had yet witnessed. Framery, writing for the *Journal de musique historique, théorique, et pratique* and the *Mercure de France* in the 1770s and 80s, exemplifies the emergence of critics dedicated to reviewing current performances, covering concerts at the Opéra, the Concert spirituel, and, after the Revolution, the Théâtre Feydeau.

Long-standing trends were thus losing their hold on the French imagination. Framery was an especially zealous partisan for Italian opera, which completed its conquest of Paris in the 1780s with works by Sacchini and Salieri. During this period, the Académie ceased to exert the kind of control over competing Parisian music theatres which it had so long enjoyed. In 1762, its competitors, the Comédie-italienne and the fair theatres, had united to form a single Opéra-comique company, known variously as the Comédie-italienne or the Théâtre italienne; inspired by the success of composers like Grétry, the troupe opened its own theatre in 1783, the Salle Favart, which later became known as the Opéra-comique. These developments describe a music world that would have been unrecognisable even at mid-century, and here, in the years just prior to the Revolution, French music discourse shifts away from the themes that had for so long defined it.

The Opéra continued to possess a cachet unique among available musical experiences, and it is remarkable that performances there continued to matter in the post-Revolutionary period. If this were simply a matter of royal prestige, as it had been when the Académie was founded, then such performances surely would not have mattered so much. That they did can be attributed, at least in part, to a critical impulse, the desire of the individual to assess not just performances, but beliefs about music. It speaks to the fact that possession of French music had moved beyond its royal origins to become a set of beliefs

⁴¹ Michel Paul Guy de Chabanon, *Éloge de M. Rameau* (Paris: M. Lambert, 1764).

held by the nation itself, apart from political developments. The weighing of value in public, as a matter of culture, meant that most people – even those who did not attend performances – could have opinions about music, and this was so because they were already familiar with the actual process of attributing value to it. They could not have escaped doing so: a practical kind of critical activity formed part of every performance, every social gathering, every account of a life well lived and, most importantly, a thriving publication industry.

Sources for Music Criticism in the *Ancien Régime*

Publishing was heavily regulated in *ancien régime* France, with ramifications for music criticism.⁴² As the preceding discussion suggests, what was said about music mattered, but where it was said and how it was said mattered just as well. Music received the same kind of attention devoted to philosophical and political writings because it was subject to public enthusiasm generally, and so regulatory agencies and the police watched over it. And just as police informants kept an eye on opera singers, so too they kept one on publications, private discussions and even street songs related to the music industry.

There was a hierarchy among journals, and the most reputable journals were limited in what they could discuss. Consider the career of a standard, politically unexceptionable work on music, such as a Rameau treatise. Reputable printers possessing royal *privilèges* published such works with a notice of permission on the title page and a censors' *approbation* tucked away in back. The same held for journals. Official periodicals like the *Mercure de France* and the *Journal des savants* appeared with permission and *approbation*. These kinds of journals avoided personal commentary in their reporting: one reads about the singing of te deums, premieres of new works, scenery and costumes and reviews of new publications, but very little about what audience members believed regarding musical works. To understand the subtleties of music reception, scholars must broaden their search.

Fortunately, there were other kinds of publications as well. Well-connected authors, journalists and printers received various forms of *permission tacite*, lacking the official approval (if not scrutiny) of censors; this allowed journals like Fréron's *L'Année littéraire* and Clément's *Lettres sur quelques écrits de ce temps* to publish more thoughtful discussions and reviews while still largely

⁴² On publication practices and journalism in pre-Revolutionary France, see Jack R. Censer, *The French Press in the Age of Enlightenment* (London: Routledge, 1994); Jean Sgard, *Bibliographie de la presse classique, 1600–1789* (Geneva: Slatkine, 1984); Darnton, *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime*.

avoiding controversy. Other books, treatises and journals were published either illegally in France or else beyond its borders, to be smuggled into the country. This was true of Le Cerf's opinionated *Comparaison*, which was printed in Brussels, and it was true of treatises published during the *querelle des bouffons*. Grimm's *Lettre sur Omphale* and Rousseau's *Lettre sur la musique française* listed neither publisher nor location on their title pages, while other pamphlets carried the names of fanciful printers and locales ('sur le Mont Parnasse, de l'Imprimerie divine', 'en France, chez Philantrope, à l'humanité', 'à Septimaniopolis'). These sources were more likely to contain unbridled opinions about particular works, particular performers and the state of music. The most opinionated and scandal-ridden sources of all were handwritten *nouvelles à la main*, often couched as chatty letters from Parisians to provincial friends. Here one encounters the unvarnished opinions of audiences. *Nouvelles* of this kind proved invaluable, for example, in Masson's study of the *lulliste-ramiste* controversy.⁴³

The important point is that, however regulated it was, French culture was deeply fascinated by opinion and rumour. Readers wanted to know the kind of gossip avoided in the *Mercur*e, and as a result, valuable commentaries exist outside of conventional publications. Letters are one source of information. Public figures like Voltaire, who wrote thousands of letters over the course of his life, intended some to be read aloud and circulated among friends in the manner of *nouvelles à la main*, while others wrote newsletters for small groups of subscribers, as with Grimm's *Correspondance littéraire, philosophique et critique*. The letters of de Brosses, and of lesser-known figures like Aïssé, and the personal memoirs by knowledgeable figures like Collé and d'Argenson contain valuable information about attitudes towards music. At the lowest levels of society, two locations in Paris were devoted to rumour-mongering, the public gardens of the Palais royal and Pont neuf. The former was an ideal location for selling the kind of illegal pamphlets published during the *querelle des bouffons*, because the seller could not be arrested on royal ground. The latter, a centrally located bridge, was a popular location for street songs commenting on current events, so much so that the songs heard there or purchased there in broadsheet form were called 'pont neufs'.⁴⁴ The music of the elite theatres circulated at all levels of society. Street songs sometimes took operatic tunes for their melodies – there are stories of Lully stopping his

⁴³ Paul-Marie Masson, 'Les Deux versions du "Dardanus" de Rameau', *Acta musicologica*, 26 (1954), 36–48. More generally, see Paul d'Estrée, 'Les Origines du Chansonnier de Maurepas', *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France*, 3 (1896), 332–45.

⁴⁴ Robert M. Isherwood, *Farce and Fantasy: Popular Entertainment in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 3–21, 216–49.

coach to correct a melody overheard in passing – and they often commented on current events in the musical world. Because they were associated with *nouvelles à la main*, these songs received police scrutiny, and many have been preserved in sources like the Chansonnier de Maurepas and the Chansonnier de Clairambault, which may have had ties to police informants.⁴⁵ And finally the theatres themselves provide another valuable resource. The Comédie-française and fair theatres routinely performed satirical parodies of operas current at the Académie royale, and there one finds observations about conventions, reception and the perceived weaknesses of popular works.⁴⁶ Strange though it may seem, music was a presence in the *ancien régime* at all levels of society, and even those who could not afford to attend performances had some form of investment in knowing about the music scene.

⁴⁵ Rivera, 'Les filles de l'Opéra'; d'Estrée, 'Les Origines du Chansonnier de Maurepas'.

⁴⁶ Hertz, *Music in European Capitals*, pp. 702–3; Michel Noiray, 'Hippolyte et Castor travestis: Rameau à l'opéra-comique', in Jérôme de La Gorce, *Jean-Philippe Rameau. Colloque international organisé par la Société Rameau, Dijon, 21–24 septembre 1983* (Paris: Champion, 1987).

Music Criticism in Britain up to Burney

REBECCA HERISSONE

[M]usical criticism has been so little cultivated in our country, that its first elements are hardly known. In justice to the late Mr. Avison, it must be owned, that he was the first, and almost the only writer, who attempted it.'

Charles Burney, 'Essay on Musical Criticism' (1789)¹

Burney's claim that Charles Avison's *Essay on Musical Expression* (1752) was virtually the only piece of British music criticism that had been produced by the closing years of the eighteenth century was obviously something of an exaggeration – one designed in this case to help establish Burney's own critical authority in his *General History of Music*. Nevertheless, music criticism in Britain did develop more slowly than in some other European centres, particularly France and Germany, and it was only in the nineteenth century that dedicated music periodicals and magazines, equivalent to those that had been established in Germany in the 1720s, such as Mattheson's *Critica musica*,² began to be produced. For virtually the whole of the period considered within this chapter – which broadly covers from the sixteenth century to the end of the eighteenth – music criticism was a sporadic and unsystematic activity in Britain, in which only a small number of individuals participated, and it was found in a diverse range of publications, relatively few of them dedicated polemics.

It is, indeed, remarkable how few of the major musical topics that were debated elsewhere in Europe stimulated English writers in the late Renaissance.³ At least to an extent, this slow pace can be explained by two factors: first, although playing and singing art music did, as elsewhere, start to

¹ Charles Burney, 'Essay on Musical Criticism', in *A General History of Music, from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period*, 4 vols. (London, 1776–89), vol. III, p. vi.

² See Stephen Rose, 'The Musical Map of Europe, c. 1700', in Simon Keefe (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 10–11.

³ In this chapter the terms 'Britain' and 'British' are reserved for references that include eighteenth-century writings and events following the Treaty of Union in 1707; 'England/English' or 'Scotland/Scottish' are used when reference is made only to the earlier periods.

grow as an amateur pastime during the sixteenth century, music publishing in England had hesitant beginnings, so music continued to have a very limited reach within society as a whole.⁴ Writings on music, as well as printed music collections, began to be published only in the last quarter of the sixteenth century, and remained infrequent until the 1650s. Secondly, as has often been stated,⁵ English music theorists concentrated to a much greater extent than their continental counterparts on rudimentary practical theories designed for beginners. They did promote particular critical viewpoints on theoretical issues (often arguing in favour of simplifying outdated theories to cater for their intended market, the most famous example of which was the Locke–Salmon controversy of 1672–73), but broader speculative and polemical topics were explored infrequently. Indeed, critical opinion was more often expressed in private writings not intended for the public domain – most colourfully in the diary of Samuel Pepys in the 1660s, and in the perceptive and detailed observations of Roger North between the 1690s and the late 1720s. Since the present volume is restricted primarily to issues that formed part of *public* debate, such personal reflections are necessarily excluded from this chapter.

Engagement with music criticism thus remained an isolated pursuit in English writing until towards the end of the seventeenth century, but at this point major changes began to occur both to the nature of the music profession and to the way in which non-professionals experienced music as a recreational pastime, and these changes resulted in an explosion of critical activity that ultimately laid the foundations for the more widespread music criticism that developed during the eighteenth century. In broad terms, the life of the professional musician began to move away from traditional employment by patrons such as the royal court and the church towards freelance entrepreneurial activities, which included providing music for the commercial London theatre companies and mounting public concerts.⁶ Although it is easy

⁴ On the difficult early history of music printing in England, see Rebecca Herissone, 'Playford, Purcell, and the Functions of Music Publishing in Restoration England', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 63 (2010), 246–63. Although evidence is sparse, recent studies have begun to reveal something of the range of people who bought and used this music. See David Greer, *Manuscript Inscriptions in English Printed Music. Music and Material Culture* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015); Stephanie Carter, "'Yong Beginners, who live in the Countrey': John Playford and the Printed Music Market in Seventeenth-Century England", *Early Music History*, 35 (2016), 95–129; and Bryan White, 'Music and Merchants in Restoration London', in Linda Phyllis Austern, Candace Bailey and Amanda Eubanks Winkler (eds.), *Beyond Boundaries: Rethinking Music Circulation in Early Modern England* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017).

⁵ For example, in Rosamund McGuinness, 'Writings about Music', in Ian Spink (ed.), *The Seventeenth Century. The Blackwell History of Music in Britain*, vol. 111 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), p. 406.

⁶ The broader context for the rise of the entrepreneur in the arts is traced in, among others, Michael Foss, *Man of Wit to Man of Business: The Arts and Changing Patronage, 1660–1750* (Bristol: Bristol Classic Press, 1988); first published as *The Age of Patronage* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1971).

to exaggerate the speed and extent of this transformation, it did result in musicians having a greater personal stake in their incomes than had previously been the case, and in the development of a newly competitive environment, especially because of the rapid influx of foreign musicians seeking to make their living in this thriving culture; it also exposed art music to a much larger public than had previously been able to experience it.

From the latter half of the seventeenth century these practical, cultural and societal changes provoked new forms of musical debate, which appeared in a range of publications not previously associated with music criticism. These included the prefatory material to printed collections of music, playbooks and opera libretti (and even sometimes their prologues and epilogues), which were used by composers and literary figures to make statements about their own and others' works, as were published collections of poetry and satire. With the advent of daily newspapers, together with an expanding range of periodical magazines, journalism also became an important outlet for music criticism, although it was only in the 1780s that dedicated music reviews began to be published, and even these concentrated on printed music and music books rather than performances.

By the turn of the eighteenth century dedicated publications on music-critical subjects had begun to be produced, and they continued to be published at regular intervals, reflecting the topics that preoccupied critics at particular points during the century. In addition, music was brought into discourse in several other areas of criticism from the mid-eighteenth century, particularly philosophical and aesthetic tracts in which the different arts were compared. Finally, as interest in writing about the history of music began to develop, its authors established clear links to music criticism, meaning that the music histories published in the eighteenth century often reveal as much about contemporary critical views as they do about the music of the past. All these forms of writing are therefore rich resources for understanding British music criticism in the later part of the period covered by this chapter.

The diversity of the types of source that preserve music criticism in Britain up to the end of the eighteenth century, and of the backgrounds of the authors responsible for creating it, makes it difficult to generalise about their approaches and opinions. Nevertheless, broadly speaking, the musical topics that provoked debate in British writings in this period can be divided into four areas. The earliest and most persistent controversy concerned the role of music in religious worship, as well as the potential of music to cause moral corruption. The second topic, opera, became a matter for discussion from the earliest English attempts at the genre in the 1650s, owing to disagreements about appropriate ways of setting the English language to music; however,

debate continued for over a century, the focus shifting to national influences on opera because of the successful importation of Italian opera at the turn of the century. A more specifically aesthetic topic developed in the mid-eighteenth century, concentrating on music's ability to move the passions. Finally, the increasingly historical perspectives on music that grew up during the eighteenth century provoked arguments about the value of 'ancient' music as compared with 'modern', a debate that also reflected many of the fundamental changes in approaches to artistic creation that were key to Enlightenment thinking. The remainder of this chapter seeks to investigate each of these topics in turn and to situate them within the broader cultural and social contexts that helped to determine the ways in which the controversies were played out in British music criticism.

The Role of Music in Christian Worship and Moral Life

The significant religious upheavals that occurred in England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries stimulated a wide range of published debate on music, much of it strongly felt. There was a widespread cautiousness about the potential power that music was generally acknowledged in this period to possess – it was a force that could be used for moral and religious good but that was equally capable of inciting corrupt practices.⁷ These issues were debated in more than a hundred books, dedicated pamphlets and sermons printed in Britain from the 1570s to the 1790s, often at great length, making this by far the most frequently discussed area of music criticism in the period; yet the essence of the arguments changed little during this time, and writers largely drew on evidence from the same Biblical, early Christian and Classical sources.

Within the context of religious practice, those who felt most dubious about music's inclusion in Christian services argued that divine authority for its use derived only from Old Testament references, and that it was lacking in the gospels.⁸ In more immediate practical terms, they voiced three additional objections: they were concerned that it distracted from the most important parts of the service (prayer and preaching); some saw it as an example of worldly vanity and human indulgence; and they also complained that singing (particularly choral singing) made it difficult for worshippers to understand

⁷ On early modern depictions of the physical and moral power of music see Christopher Marsh, *Music and Society in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 32–70; see also pp. 391–4, 445–53.

⁸ See, for example, Isaac Marlow, *A Brief Discourse Concerning Singing in the Publick Worship of God in the Gospel-Church* (London, 1690), p. 15.

the words. Shortly after the Restoration, Solomon Eccles, a trained musician who famously converted to Quakerism, expressed the view of his new sect that music was a corrupting force that should be banned from church services altogether, ‘for such Musick and Singing was never set up of God, but of men’.⁹ However, this was an extreme view, and most Puritans agreed with the prevailing view that music could be used as an aid to worship, provided that it was kept as simple as possible, with a strong focus on the intelligibility of the words and on the participation of ordinary congregation members.

In the light of the publications arguing for music to be banned from church services, a number of tracts were published in its defence. The earliest was *The Praise of Musicke* (1586), at one time attributed to John Case, which summarised the fundamental belief of those who were sympathetic to music’s role in church services: ‘Musick is rather to bee used in the church than not, because it is the excellent invention and gift of God himselfe . . . [It] doth as it were knit & joyne us unto God, putting us in mind of our maker.’¹⁰ Significantly, the author argued not only for the inclusion of monophonic congregational singing but also for the retention of choral music;¹¹ this, together with the reference made by the book’s printer to reinstating ‘that studie which laie, as dead, for a time’,¹² implies that one incentive for publishing the book was to revive choral training: the implications of its post-Reformation decline were much lamented by those with sympathies for choral music.¹³ English music education remained in a poor state throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and those with high-church sympathies or professional musical interests continued periodically to voice essentially the same arguments in favour of choral singing, including Charles Butler and Arthur Bedford (both ordained ministers), the music publisher John Playford and Thomas Mace, a Cambridge singing man.¹⁴

While few authors specifically promoted choral music, there was widespread support across a broad religious spectrum for congregational psalm singing, and its use in public worship was frequently endorsed in published

⁹ Solomon Eccles, *A Musick-Lector: or, The Art of Musick (that is so much vindicated in Christendome)* (London, 1667), pp. 13–14.

¹⁰ Anon., *The Praise of Musicke* (Oxford, 1586), pp. 150–1. On the authorship of the book, see J. W. Binns, ‘John Case and “The Praise of Musicke”’, *Music & Letters*, 55 (1974), 444–53.

¹¹ Anon., *The Praise of Musicke*, pp. 139–43. ¹² *Ibid.*, sig. ii.

¹³ See Morrison Comegys Boyd, *Elizabethan Music and Musical Criticism*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1962), pp. 18–21; Peter le Huray, *Music and the Reformation in England* (London: Jenkins, 1967), pp. 13–18; and Nicholas Temperley, *The Music of the English Parish Church*. Cambridge Studies in Music, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), vol. 1, pp. 10–19.

¹⁴ Charles Butler, *The Principles of Musik in Singing and Setting* (London, 1636), pp. 98–119; Arthur Bedford, *The Temple Musick* (London, 1706), pp. 200, 217–33; John Playford, *A Brief Introduction to the Skill of Musick . . . The Fourth Edition* (London, 1664), sig. A2–A8; Thomas Mace, *Musicks Monument, or, a Remembrancer of the Best Practicall Musick* (London, 1676), pp. 1–31.

sermons and dedicated pamphlets, mainly produced from the 1650s onwards. For the most part, these emphasised the theological justifications for the practice and its positive effects on church attendance and congregational piety. However, they did not overlook objections from members of the educated classes, who frequently criticised the quality of the metrical verse of the Sternhold and Hopkins psalter.¹⁵ Musically trained commentators such as Butler and Playford more commonly bemoaned the poor standards of psalm singing in parish churches,¹⁶ an issue that remained a source of concern to the psalmody teacher William Riley in 1762 and to the Doncaster organist Edward Miller in 1791.¹⁷

A related issue that entered religious debate about music at the time of the Civil War was the question of whether organs should be allowed in church. Most Puritans disapproved of them, and they gradually went out of use in parish churches from the latter half of the sixteenth century; the 1644 ordinance that they should be ‘taken away, and utterly defaced’ resulted in the destruction of most of the remaining instruments.¹⁸ Polemics arguing for or against the use of the organ in worship began to be published from the late 1630s,¹⁹ and they continued to appear periodically thereafter; many were sermons that had been preached at the installation of new instruments, alongside responses produced by those arguing against their use.²⁰ Those in the negative camp believed that organs were ‘superstitious and idolatrous Monuments’,²¹ associated with all that was profane, heathen and, worst of all, papist.²² As in the case of choral singing, the lack of reference to instruments in the gospels was regarded as a problem, since Christ ‘left no *Order* at all for the *Use of Instrumental Musick*’.²³ The counterargument was that instrumental music, including the organ, was permissible precisely because there was evidence of God’s approval of it in the Bible – not only in the Old

¹⁵ See Beth Quitslund, *The Reformation in Rhyme: Sternhold, Hopkins and the English Metrical Psalter, 1547–1603* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 1–19.

¹⁶ See Nicholas Temperley, ‘John Playford and the Metrical Psalms’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 25 (1972), 331–78.

¹⁷ William Riley, *Parochial Music Corrected. Containing Remarks on the Performance of Psalmody in Country Churches* (London, 1762); Edward Miller, *Thoughts on the Present Performance of Psalmody in the Established Church of England* (London, 1791).

¹⁸ See Marsh, *Music and Society*, pp. 394–400.

¹⁹ The earliest of which I am aware is Humphrey Sydenham’s *The Wel-tuned Cymball; or, a Vindication of the Modern Harmony and Ornaments in our Churches* (London, 1637).

²⁰ For example, John Newte’s *The Lawfulness and Use of Organs in the Christian Church* (London, 1696) provoked a series of positive and negative responses.

²¹ *The Holy Harmony: Or, A Plea for the Abolishing of Organs* (London, 1643).

²² See, for example, *The Holy Harmony*, sig. A2; [James Owen], *Church-Pageantry Display’d: or, Organ-Worship Arraign’d and Condemn’d* (London, 1700), p. 10.

²³ Anon., *A Letter to a Friend in the Country, Concerning the Use of Instrumental Musick in the Worship of God* (London, 1698), p. 13.

Testament but also in the New, according to some authors²⁴ – and that it was therefore ‘one of Gods gifts’,²⁵ and had a long history of being practised within the church.

In the mid-eighteenth century a new topic for debate arose when Handel began performing his sacred oratorios in the public theatres during Lent, opera being banned throughout this period. The controversy here focused on whether oratorio was genuinely devotional or just a thinly disguised theatrical entertainment.²⁶ Those who spoke in Handel’s defence found oratorio performances to be spiritually uplifting. An anonymous letter-writer in *The London Daily Post* on 1 April 1740, for example, referred to *Israel in Egypt*, which he had attended the previous night, as ‘a truly-spiritual Entertainment’, remarking that ‘It is the Action that is done in [the theatre] . . . that hallows the Place, and not the Place the Action.’²⁷ Such people generally agreed with Rev. William Hughes that oratorio was ‘a strong Species of Church-Musick’,²⁸ but there was a weighty counterargument, voiced by ‘Musicus Antiquarius’ in *The Westminster Magazine* in 1776, that the music of oratorio ‘too much resembles that of the Opera; simplicity, majesty, and devout expression are sacrificed to the Composer’s vanity, or ill-directed art’,²⁹ particularly since it was performed by stage singers, whose reputation remained extremely poor throughout the eighteenth century.³⁰

The strength of feeling expressed about oratorio is put into context by the fear that a handful of particularly devout Christians expressed about the potential power of both music and drama to corrupt, even outside the context of worship. There were two main properties of music that writers on this topic criticised. First, it had come to be associated with lewdness and lasciviousness. Phillip Stubbes, for example, referred in *The Anatomie of Abuses* to ‘pyping, fluting, [and] drumming’ as ‘intiments to wantonnesse and sin’, and to travelling minstrels as ‘drunken sockets, and bawdye parasits, . . .

²⁴ See, for example, Joseph Brookbank, *The Well-Tuned Organ, or, an Exercitation* (London, 1660), pp. 37–42.

²⁵ Brookbank, *The Well-Tuned Organ*, p. 5.

²⁶ See, for example, *An Examination of the Oratorios which have been Performed this Season at Covent-Garden Theatre* (London, 1763), pp. 3–4.

²⁷ R. W., [untitled letter], *The London Daily Post, and General Advertiser* (1 April 1740), 1–2; also quoted in Thomas McGeary, ‘Music Literature’, in Harry Diack Johnstone (ed.), *The Eighteenth Century*, The Blackwell History of Music in Britain, vol. IV (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), p. 402 (with incorrect citation).

²⁸ William Hughes, *Remarks upon Church Musick. To which are added Several Observations upon some of Handel’s Oratorio’s* [sic], 2nd ed. (Worcester, 1763), p. 39.

²⁹ ‘Musicus Antiquarius’, ‘On the Origin of Oratorios’, *The Westminster Magazine, or the Pantheon of Taste* (February 1776), 76. The author derived his material from John Brown’s *A Dissertation on the Rise, Union, and Power, the Progressions, Separations and Corruptions of Poetry and Music* (London, 1763).

³⁰ See also Robert Manson Myers, *Handel’s Messiah: A Touchstone of Taste* (New York: Macmillan, 1948), pp. 113–34; Winton Dean, *Handel’s Dramatic Oratorios and Masques* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), pp. 132–43.

ryming and singing of uncleane, corrupt, and filthie songs'.³¹ Secondly, they believed music had the potential to cause sexual immorality by acting as a means of seduction. William Prynne cited St Basil in exclaiming 'What a miserable Spectacle is it to chaste and wel-mannered eyes, to see a woman, not to follow her needle or distaff, but to be often veiwed [*sic*] by others as a publicke whore: not to modulate or sing a Psalme of confession, but to sing songs inticing unto lust: not to supplicate to God, but willingly to hasten unto Hell.'³² Such condemnation was directed only towards women, but men nevertheless had to negotiate a complex path as far as musical performance was concerned; while on the one hand it was regarded as a valued pastime for the privileged classes, on the other it was seen as having the potential to 'wommanishe their minds'.³³ Corresponding emphasis was placed on homo-social musical activities, and the repertory created for performance in such environments – including catches, rounds and drinking songs for the tavern or alehouse, but also art songs often sung in the home – was often remarkably sexually explicit, at least to modern sensibilities.³⁴ It is also important to be aware of the widespread association between music and more positive potency, as both a form of pleasurable and wholesome recreation and as a means of restoring mental and physical health, as the author of *The Praise of Musicke* summarised: 'the effects of musicke generally are these. To make hast to incite and stirre up mens courages, to allay & pacifie anger, to move pittie and compassion, and to make pleasant and delightsome: Nay yet I will go farther: & doubt not but to prove by good authority, that musick hath brought madde men into their perfect wits & senses, that it hath cured diseases, driven away evil spirits, yea and also abandoned the pestilence from men & cities.'³⁵

³¹ Phillip Stubbes, *The Anatomie of Abuses* (London, 1583), sig. ¶6v, sig. D5.

³² William Prynne, *Histrio-Mastix: The Players Scourge, or, Actors Tragaedie* (London, 1633), p. 277, italics reversed. See also Linda Phyllis Austern, "'Sing Againe Syren": The Female Musician and Sexual Enchantment in Elizabethan Life and Literature', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 42 (1989), 420–48.

³³ Baldessar Castiglione, *The Courtyer*, trans. Thomas Hoby (London, 1561), sigs. Jiiir–v; quoted in Linda Phyllis Austern, 'Domestic Song and the Circulation of Masculine Social Energy in Early Modern England', in Leslie C. Dunn and Katherine R. Larson (eds.), *Gender and Song in Early Modern England. Women and Gender in the Early Modern World* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), p. 124. Austern considers discourse on male music-making and its core associations in *ibid.*, pp. 123–31, while Kirsten Gibson investigates the ways in which music and melancholy were figured as effeminising agents for educated men in discourses from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in 'Music, Melancholy and Masculinity in Early Modern England', in Ian D. Biddle and Kirsten Gibson (eds.), *Masculinity and Western Musical Practice* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).

³⁴ See Linda Phyllis Austern, "'Lo Here I Burn": Musical Figurations and Fantasies of Male Desire in Early Modern England', in Bonnie J. Blackburn and Laurie Stras (eds.), *Eroticism in Early Modern Music* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015); and Kirsten Gibson, 'Age, Masculinity and Music in Early Modern England', in Catherine Haworth and Lisa Colton (eds.), *Gender, Age and Musical Creativity* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015).

³⁵ *The Praise of Musicke*, pp. 56–7. On early modern links between music and medicine, see Penelope Gouk, 'Music, Melancholy and Medical Spirits in Early Modern Thought', in Peregrine Horden (ed.), *Music as*

Opera

Beyond the subject of religion, the longest-running strand of music criticism in Britain reflected tensions relating to opera. It began in the 1650s with debates about the suitability of the English language for recitative, but expanded in the first decade of the eighteenth century when all-sung opera in Italian was successfully imported to the London stage, posing a substantial threat to those involved in producing homegrown theatrical entertainment.³⁶ Some writers reacted to this threat by mounting a campaign to promote all-sung opera in English; others concentrated their efforts on criticising the Italian productions themselves, which in turn provoked tracts defending Italian opera, although these remained very small in number.

The majority of the criticism published on English recitative came, unsurprisingly, from the pens of literary figures, although musicians also contributed to the debate, and in substance both poets and composers agreed: whereas the Italian language was ideal for recitative, English was ill-suited to this sort of musical setting because of its short words, masculine endings and excess of consonants. John Dryden summarised the problem in the well-known preface to his all-sung opera *Albion and Albanus* in 1685:

All, who are conversant in the *Italian*, cannot but observe, that it is the softest, the sweetest, the most harmonious, not only of any modern Tongue, but even beyond any of the Learned . . . The *English* has yet more natural disadvantage than the *French*; our original *Teutonique* consisting most in Monosyllables, and those incumber'd with Consonants cannot possibly be freed from those Inconveniences.³⁷

From the first examples of full-scale English opera in the 1650s, playwrights offered two mutually exclusive solutions to this problem. Those in favour of all-sung opera described a range of ways in which their verse could be adapted to make it appropriate for an English form of recitative. Richard Fleckno was possibly the earliest to offer this solution, in the preface to the printed text of his *Ariadne* of 1654, where he explained that he had 'endeavour'd short periods, and frequent rithmes, with words smooth and facile, such as most easily might enter into the mind, and be digested by the understanding'.³⁸ Dryden's

Medicine: The History of Music Therapy since Antiquity (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000); Marsh, *Music and Society*, pp. 64–70; Austern, 'Domestic Song', pp. 131–2.

³⁶ An overview of this criticism is given in McGuinness, 'Writings about Music', pp. 418–20; and McGeary, 'Music Literature', pp. 398–402; comprehensive analysis is given in Thomas N. McGeary, 'English Opera Criticism and Aesthetics, 1685–1747', unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (1985).

³⁷ John Dryden, *Albion and Albanus: An Opera* (London, 1685), sig. b1r.

³⁸ Richard Fleckno, *Ariadne Deserted by Theseus, and Found and Courted by Bacchus* (London, 1654), sig. A7v. Unfortunately, the work was never performed, and the music does not survive.

preface to the second edition of *Albion and Albanus* subsequently included a much more comprehensive account of the ‘Rules which I have given to my self in writing of an *Opera*’.³⁹

The alternative solution was described by the composer Matthew Locke in the preface to the score of his music from his 1675 opera *Psyche*, to which he gave the provocative and defining title ‘The English Opera’. Drawing a parallel between the ‘Grand Design’ and ‘splendid Scenes and Machines’ of Italian opera and his own opera’s content, he argued that *Psyche* ‘may justly wear the Title [of opera], though all the Tragedy be not in Musick: for the Author prudently consider’d, that though *Italy* was, and is the great Academy of the World for that Science and way of Entertainment, *England* is not: and therefore mixt it with interlocutions, as more proper to our *Genius*’.⁴⁰ Thus Locke explained that the nature of the English language made it unsuited to the all-sung form, so in ‘English opera’ the drama was delivered primarily through spoken text, with musical scenes contributing only to the adornment of the work rather than to its dramatic substance. By the 1690s this had become the preferred form of opera in England, so the playwright Peter Motteux was able to explain in *The Gentleman’s Journal* in 1692: ‘Other Nations bestow the name of Opera only on such Plays whereof every word is sung. But experience hath taught us that our English genius will not relish that perpetual Singing.’⁴¹ As well as addressing the issue of the English language, this type of opera followed the basic dramatic principle that singing was irrational, and so should be reserved principally for non-human characters. This was a problem raised by several playwrights, including Dryden, who explained in *Albion and Albanus* that, because ‘The suppos’d Persons of this musical Drama, are generally supernatural, as Gods and Goddesses . . . The Subject therefore being extended beyond the Limits of Humane Nature, admits of that sort of marvellous and surprizing [*sic*] conduct, which is rejected in other Plays.’⁴²

Nevertheless, after all-sung Italian opera had been introduced to the London stage in 1705, the part-sung, part-spoken form described by Locke began to be criticised because it lacked dramatic continuity. In the late 1720s the musical commentator Roger North famously referred in his manuscript memoirs to English operas as ‘ambigue entertainements’, claiming ‘Some

³⁹ John Dryden, *Albion and Albanus: An Opera* (London, 1691), sig. a4r–a4v.

⁴⁰ Matthew Locke, *The English Opera; or the Vocal Musick in Psyche* (London, 1675), sig. a1r–a1v; italics reversed. As explained in Herissone, ‘Playford, Purcell, and the Functions of Music Publishing’, 267–77, Locke’s title was clearly intended as a counterattack to a perceived threat from a group of French musicians trying to establish an opera company in England at this time.

⁴¹ Peter Motteux, *The Gentleman’s Journal* (January 1692), 5.

⁴² Dryden, *Albion and Albanus* (1685), sig. a1r.

come for the play and hate the musick, others come onely for the musick, and the drama is pennance to them, and scarce any are well reconciled to both. Mr Betterton (whose talent was speaking and not singing) was pleased to say, that 2 good dishes were better than one, which is a fond mistake, for few care to see 2 at a time of equall choice.⁴³ In 1718 Charles Gildon was still defending the form in his *Complete Art of Poetry*: setting up one character against another, he commented ‘But then I think nothing can be more absurd, than his preferring the ridiculous Qualities of an *Opera* after the *Italian*, to that after the Way of *Harry Purcel* [in which] . . . what was proper for Musick, was sung, and the *Drama* performed as all other *Drama*’s [*sic*] were.’⁴⁴ However, Italian opera was by then highly popular on the London stage, and converts like Motteux – who set English text to several pre-existing Italian all-sung operas in the first decade of the eighteenth century – began to defend all-sung opera: in the dedication of *Love’s Triumph* (1708), for example, he claimed that ‘since, in vocal Melody, both Poetry and Music, like Body and Soul, are join’d and subsist together, sure they will rather support than destroy one another’.⁴⁵

As Italian opera began to take hold, English literary figures mounted a series of defences, published at intervals during the first half of the century. A matter of weeks after the 1705 London premiere of the first Italian opera, *Gli amori d’Ergasto*, John Steele had already set out three of the main arguments in the Epilogue to his play *The Tender Husband*: English writers felt it was ridiculous that audiences could not understand the words of these operas; they were suspicious of the Italian performers’ Catholicism; and they disliked the use of castrati, alongside other ‘effeminate’ characteristics of Italian opera.⁴⁶ In his *Essay on the Opera’s* [*sic*] *after the Italian Manner* (1706), John Dennis added to this by voicing his concern that the sensual allure of Italian opera threatened the survival of serious drama in English, since ‘Audiences will hardly suffer a Play, that is not interlarded with Singing and Dancing, whereas these are become Theatrical Entertainments, without any thing of the Drama.’⁴⁷

The series of commentaries published by Steele in *The Tatler* from 1709 to 1711 and then by his colleague Joseph Addison in *The Spectator* from 1711 to 1712 were similarly critical of the sensationalist side of Italian opera, which

⁴³ Roger North, ‘The Musicall Gramarian, or A practick Essay upon Harmony’, London, British Library Add. MS 32533, c. 1726; cited in John Wilson (ed.), *Roger North on Music* (London: Novello, 1959), p. 307.

⁴⁴ Charles Gildon, *The Complete Art of Poetry. In Six Parts*, 2 vols. (London, 1718), vol. 1, pp. 104–5.

⁴⁵ Peter Motteux, *Love’s Triumph. An Opera* (London, 1708), sig. A3r. On the whole, however, Motteux was somewhat apologetic about the new form in both this dedication and his preface to *Thomyris* in 1707.

⁴⁶ Richard Steele, *The Tender Husband; or, the Accomplish’d Fools. A Comedy* (London, 1705), ‘Epilogue, Spoken by Mr. Eastcourt’, sig. A3r. The relevant extracts are quoted in McGeary, ‘Music Literature’, p. 399.

⁴⁷ John Dennis, *An Essay on the Opera’s* [*sic*] *after the Italian Manner, Which Are About to Be Establish’d on the English Stage* (London, 1706), p. 4.

Steele complained was ‘given up to the shallow satisfaction of the eyes and ears only’.⁴⁸ However, Addison in particular did not condemn Italian opera outright; indeed, he clearly appreciated the inherent advantages of the Italian language for musical setting and positively preferred Italian recitative over English part-spoken opera, ‘The Transition from an Air to Recitative Musick being more natural than the passing from a Song to plain and ordinary Speaking, which was the common Method in *Purcell’s* Operas.’⁴⁹ He had three principal concerns: he felt that translations of Italian opera into English were often of poor quality; he regarded the bilingual productions in which Italian and English singers each performed in their native tongues as ridiculous, but worried that, now opera was entirely performed in Italian, ‘We no longer understand the Language of our own Stage’;⁵⁰ and he regretted the fact that Italian opera had subsumed national theatre music, so that ‘In short, our *English* Musick is quite rooted out, and nothing yet planted in its stead.’⁵¹

Like Fleckno and Dryden, Addison was keen to stress the importance of developing an appropriate form of recitative, noting that ‘an *English* Composer should not follow the *Italian* Recitative too servilely, but make use of many gentle Deviations from it, in Compliance with his own Native Language’.⁵² Thus Addison effectively appealed for the development of an English form of all-sung opera, a call that was taken up by the playwright John Hughes in *Calypto and Telemachus* in 1712, described by Hughes in his preface as ‘an Essay for the Improvement of Theatrical Musick in the *English* Language, after the Model of the *Italians*’.⁵³ Unfortunately, the production, with music by John Ernest Galliard, ran for only a handful of performances in May that year, and it was the Italian form that continued to dominate the English stage in the mid-eighteenth century.⁵⁴

Italian opera continued to cause controversy, particularly at flashpoints in the history of the London stage. During the critical season of 1727–8, for example, the dominance of Italian star singers was criticised in *A Letter from*

⁴⁸ *The Tatler*, 4 (18 April 1709). Steele’s and Addison’s contributions to the debate are traced in Siegmund Betz, ‘The Operatic Criticism of the *Tatler* and *Spectator*’, *Musical Quarterly*, 31/3 (1945), 318–30; McGeary, ‘English Opera Criticism’, pp. 107–8, 165–88.

⁴⁹ *The Spectator*, 29 (3 April 1711). ⁵⁰ *The Spectator*, 18 (21 March 1711). ⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *The Spectator*, 29 (3 April 1711).

⁵³ John Hughes, *Calypto and Telemachus. An Opera* (London, 1712), sig. A3r; italics reversed. See J. Merrill Knapp, ‘A Forgotten Chapter in English Eighteenth-Century Opera’, *Music & Letters*, 42 (1961), 4–16; Malcolm Boyd, ‘John Hughes on Opera’, *Music & Letters*, 52 (1971), 383–6; McGeary, ‘English Opera Criticism’, pp. 194–208.

⁵⁴ McGeary (‘English Opera Criticism’, p. 197) notes that the five Italian operas at the Haymarket that season ran for forty-five performances in total, so they had much greater longevity than *Calypto and Telemachus*.

a Gentleman in the Town to a Friend in the Country (1727), but the anonymous author of *The Touch-Stone* (1728) subsequently mounted a considered defence of the genre, apparently because of the threat being posed by *The Beggar's Opera*, which had been so successfully mounted at Lincoln's Inn Fields for the first time that year.⁵⁵ He addressed four principal criticisms of the form: he defended performance in Italian by appealing to the oft-cited view that Italian was the best language to set in recitative; he addressed the unnaturalness of all-sung productions by describing recitative as nothing more than a 'refinement' of normal speech; he defended the use of Italian singers by stating that there were no English singers of equally high calibre; and he answered the criticism that opera contravenes Aristotelian and Rapinian rules of drama by arguing that the genre lay outside those rules for tragedy and comedy.⁵⁶ Most significantly, he attacked the quality of performances at Lincoln's Inn Fields, saving his ire principally for the 'execrable' *Beggar's Opera* itself, which, he claimed, consisted of 'Rags of Poetry and Scraps of Musick'.⁵⁷ Later, John Lockman inserted a long and wide-ranging essay at the beginning of his libretto to his English opera *Rosalinda*, which had music by John Christopher Smith and was performed in 1740. It largely followed Addison's criticisms of Italian opera, but added a regret that the English-language operas for which Addison had called 'had not the wish'd for Success'⁵⁸ – a fate he no doubt hoped would not befall *Rosalinda* itself. By the end of the eighteenth century criticism of opera was more frequently directed towards the comic operas and related entertainments that often accompanied spoken plays in this period, for example in *The Theatrical Review* of 1772.⁵⁹ However, the posthumously published *Letters upon the Poetry and Music of the Italian Opera* (Edinburgh, 1789) by the Scottish painter John Brown explained the character and content of 'serious' Italian opera, which, he regretted, was in decline, because of 'the admiration bestowed in Britain on difficulty and novelty, in preference to beauty and simplicity', which, he wrote, 'is the effect . . . of the total want of taste'.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ This is McGeary's view; see 'English Opera Criticism', pp. 218–19.

⁵⁶ Anon., *The Touch-Stone: or, Historical, Critical, Political, Moral, Philosophical and Theological Essays upon the Reigning Diversions of the Town* (London, 1728), pp. 12–40. See McGeary, 'English Opera Criticism', pp. 216–37.

⁵⁷ *The Touch-Stone*, pp. 15–16.

⁵⁸ John Lockman, *Rosalinda, A Musical Drama. As It Is performed at Hickford's Great Room, in Brewer's Street* (London, 1740), p. iii. See also McGeary, 'English Opera Criticism', pp. 254–69.

⁵⁹ On these entertainments, and their emphasis on novelty, see Michael Burden, 'The Lure of Aria, Procession and Spectacle: Opera in Eighteenth-Century London', in Keefe (ed.), *Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Music*.

⁶⁰ John Brown, *Letters upon the Poetry and Music of the Italian Opera* (Edinburgh, 1789), pp. 115–16; similar comments are made in McGeary, 'Music Literature', p. 401.

Imitation and Expression

The concerns expressed about appropriate text setting in British music criticism on opera occurred within the context of a broader aesthetic debate on imitation in art and literature, which had its roots in Renaissance humanism and, ultimately, in Aristotelian doctrines on mimesis. Although these philosophies were not addressed directly by English music theorists of the sixteenth century, they had a strong practical influence on approaches to text setting, as is reflected in technical compositional instructions in Morley's *Plaine and Easie Introduction* of 1597,⁶¹ and in Christopher Simpson's *Compendium* of 1667. Here Simpson advised: 'When you compose Musick to Words, your chief endeavour must be, that your Notes do aptly express the sense and humour of them. If they be grave and serious, let your Musick be such also: If Light, Pleasant, or Lively, your Musick likewise must be suitable to them.'⁶²

It was in the mid-eighteenth century that musical mimesis became a topic for critical debate. At issue was the growing dissatisfaction with the naivety of the type of imitation that sought to recreate texts, or in instrumental music the sounds of nature, literally, as a form of musical 'description'. Indeed, as early as 1715 Roger North had already commented in his private writings on the 'rediculous absurdity' that could result from such imitation: 'as when any thing is sayd to *rise*, the musick must needs advance in the scale, which commonly proves too short to reach the skyes, tho' a voice is made almost to crack, and the air is wounded almost to death, yet it will come short; and on the other side going downe into gloomy vaults, wee begin to grumble, and double DD is not deep enough to reach the pitt of Hell'.⁶³ The same criticism was also levelled at mimesis in instrumental music when it involved literal depiction of sounds like thunder or bird song. The difficulty was outlined by James Harris in his 'Discourse on Music, Painting, and Poetry' in 1744. 'In Music', he wrote, 'the fittest subjects of imitation are all such things and incidents, *as are most eminently characterised by Motion and Sound*'; however, since music 'pretends *at most* to no more, than the raising of Ideas *similar*, . . . Musical Imitation is greatly below that of Painting, and . . . *at best* it is but an imperfect thing'.⁶⁴ Music's ability to raise the passions was felt to be more effective when the composer attempted to depict mood in a more general

⁶¹ See Thomas Morley, *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practical Musicke* (London, 1597), pp. 177–8.

⁶² Christopher Simpson, *A Compendium of Practical Musick in Five Parts* (London, 1667), p. 140.

⁶³ Quoted in Wilson (ed.), *Roger North on Music*, pp. 112–13, from 'An Essay of Musicall Ayre', London, British Library Add. MS 32536, c. 1715–20.

⁶⁴ James Harris, 'A Discourse on Music, Painting, and Poetry', in *Three Treatises*, 2nd ed. (London, 1765; first published 1744), pp. 65–6, 68–9. See also Herbert M. Schueller, "'Imitation" and "Expression" in British Music Criticism in the Eighteenth Century', *Musical Quarterly*, 34/4 (1948), 549–50; and McGeary, 'Music Literature', p. 418.

sense, so as to translate the ‘spirit’ of a text or mood into music, thus imitating not the actual sounds of nature, but the passions they aroused; hence, wrote Harris, music’s power ‘consists not in Imitations, and the raising *Ideas*; but in the raising *Affections*, to which *Ideas* may correspond’.⁶⁵ Again, this notion had been anticipated by North when he wrote that ‘the sounds are not to represent the things comonly signified by words, but the thoughts of the person that useth them’.⁶⁶ It was Thomas Twining who pointed out in his 1789 translation of Aristotle’s *Poetics* that this was in fact what the ancients had meant by imitation in the first place: ‘When *they* speak of Music as imitation, they appear to have solely, or chiefly, in view, its power over the *affections*. By *imitation*, they mean, in short, what *we* commonly distinguish from imitation, and oppose to it, under the general term of *expression*’.⁶⁷

Primary interest in the topic of imitation came from literary scholars and philosophers rather than musicians, occurring in the context of their preoccupation with making comparisons between the arts, specifically painting, poetry and music; they included Daniel Webb, James Beattie, Sir William Jones and Adam Smith.⁶⁸ However, by far the most significant publication on musical imitation and expression was the work of a professional musician – the Newcastle organist Charles Avison – whose *Essay on Musical Expression* (1752; revised edition 1753) was the first dedicated publication on music criticism. Avison took Harris’s ‘Discourse’ as his point of departure, agreeing with him that ‘Music as an imitative Art has *very confined Powers*’, limited to imitation of sound and motion, stating that music ‘obtains its End by raising *correspondent Affections* in the Soul’;⁶⁹ he was equally scornful of attempts at literal representation.⁷⁰ But Avison was the first to make a clear distinction

⁶⁵ Harris, ‘A Discourse in Music, Painting and Poetry’, p. 99.

⁶⁶ Wilson (ed.), *Roger North on Music*, pp. 112–13, from ‘An Essay of Musically Ayre’.

⁶⁷ Thomas Twining, ‘On the Different Senses of the Word, Imitative, as Applied to Music by the Antients, and by the Moderns’, in *Aristotle’s Treatise on Poetry, Translated: with Notes on the Translation, and on the Original* (London, 1789), p. 46. This passage is quoted in McGeary, ‘Music Literature’, p. 418.

⁶⁸ Respectively, in *Observations on the Correspondence between Poetry and Music* (London, 1769); *Essays on Poetry and Music as They Affect the Mind* (Edinburgh, 1776); ‘On the Arts, Commonly Called Imitative’, in *Poems, Consisting Chiefly of Translation from the Asiatick Languages* (London, 1772); and ‘Of the Imitative Arts’, in *Essays on Philosophical Subjects* (London, 1795). The comparative basis of aesthetic discussions on music is outlined briefly in Barnaby Ralph, ‘Comparative Aesthetic Thought in Early Eighteenth-Century England’, in Elizabeth Mackinlay, Denis Collins and Samantha Owens (eds.), *Aesthetics and Experience in Musical Performance* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2005).

⁶⁹ Charles Avison, *An Essay on Musical Expression ... Second Edition, with Alterations and Large Additions* (London, 1753), pp. 60–1. See also Pierre Dubois’s ‘Introduction’ to *Charles Avison’s Essay on Musical Expression, with Related Writings by William Hayes and Charles Avison* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp. xxiii–xxv; and, for broader contextualisation of the moral and social basis of Avison’s aesthetic views, Pierre Dubois, ‘“Music ... Is Like a Conversation among Friends, Where the Few Are of One Mind”’: Charles Avison’s Moral Philosophy’, in Roz Southey and Eric Cross (eds.), *Charles Avison in Context: National and International Musical Links in Eighteenth-Century North-East England* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018).

⁷⁰ Avison, *An Essay on Musical Expression ... Second Edition*, p. 59.

between imitation and expression, explaining that the latter portrayed ‘the Poet’s general Drift or Intention’ rather than ‘dwell[ing] on particular Words in the Way of Imitation’.⁷¹ Moreover, he believed that expression was achieved through a process of association through which music could call up the passions: ‘Thus Music, either by imitating ... Sounds in due Subordination to the Laws of *Air* and *Harmony*, or by any other Method of Association, bringing the Objects of our Passions before us, ... does naturally raise a Variety of Passions in the human Breast.’⁷²

Avison went further still in seeking to classify the passions that music was able to evoke: at the end of the second edition of his *Essay* he advertised a proposal to publish by subscription ‘Specimens of the various Stiles in Musical Expression’, as illustrated in the psalms of Benedetto Marcello. They comprised ‘The Grand’, ‘The Beautiful’ and ‘The Pathetic’, each divided into three subcategories;⁷³ the psalms belonging to each category were subsequently identified in the Preface to the edition in 1757.⁷⁴ While not quite adhering to Edmund Burke’s later contrast between the ‘beautiful’ and ‘sublime’ – the latter was just a subset of ‘The Grand’ for Avison – his categories belonged firmly within an aesthetic tradition that was established via Nicolas Boileau’s 1674 translation of Longinus’s first-century account of the sublime in rhetoric, which became highly influential in England in the early eighteenth century.⁷⁵ Avison’s own categorisations were subsequently used by later musical writers, including both Burney and Hawkins.⁷⁶

From the perspective of music criticism, what was particularly important about the categorisations was that they were founded on the basis of music’s effect on the senses and on the listener’s personal response, and so were not reliant on adherence to compositional ‘rules’, accessible only to those with technical knowledge.⁷⁷ This, indeed, was one of the objections to Avison’s *Essay* expressed by the Oxford Professor of Music, William Hayes,⁷⁸ but Avison, significantly, saw it as positively beneficial that his approach was

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 69. ⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 3–4.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, sig. H3v. See also Dubois (ed.), *Charles Avison’s Essay*, pp. xxxix–lx; Schueller, “‘Imitation’ and ‘Expression’”, 562.

⁷⁴ Charles Avison, ‘Remarks on the Psalms of Marcello’, in *The First Fifty Psalms Set to Music, by Benedetto Marcello* (London, 1757); the remarks are assessed in Roger B. Larsson, ‘Charles Avison’s “Stiles in Musical Expression”’, *Music & Letters*, 63 (1982), 266–7.

⁷⁵ See Larsson, ‘Charles Avison’s “Stiles in Musical Expression”’, 262–4. Burke’s treatise, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*, was published in 1757.

⁷⁶ Larsson, ‘Charles Avison’s “Stiles in Musical Expression”’, 270–3.

⁷⁷ As noted in Alan Lessem, ‘Imitation and Expression: Opposing French and British Views in the Eighteenth Century’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 27 (1974), 329.

⁷⁸ [William Hayes], *Remarks on Mr. Avison’s Essay on Musical Expression* (London, 1753), as reprinted in Dubois (ed.), *Charles Avison’s Essay*, p. 103; as Dubois notes in *ibid.*, pp. xxxiii–xxxiv, Hayes also sought to denigrate Avison’s musical skills on the basis of lack of technical ability.

able to appeal to the ‘ordinary man’ rather than only to the musically initiated. His aim, he wrote, ‘had nothing to do with theoretic Principles, and the mere Mechanism of the Science’; rather, it was ‘Intended . . . as a critical, but yet as a liberal, Examen of this pleasing Art; according to Rules, not drawn from the formal Schools of systematical Professors, but from the School of Nature and Good Sense’.⁷⁹ In this respect, he was firmly in the camp of the ‘moderns’, as described below.

The other important effect of Avison’s approach was to raise the status of instrumental music, which had long been considered much less significant than vocal because its lack of text made it incapable of the same level of expression. This barrier was removed now that expression was equated with emotional stimulus and music had been granted an autonomous status apart from poetry. Thus Daniel Webb wrote in 1769: ‘On hearing an overture by Jommelli, or a concerto by Geminiani, we are, in turn, transported, exalted, delighted; the impetuous, the sublime, the tender, take possession of the sense at the will of the composer.’⁸⁰

Historical Perspectives and the Notion of ‘Good Taste’

In the 1690s music was brought into the British response to the French Quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns, which gave rise to what became known as the Battle of the Books, after the satire of that name published by Jonathan Swift in his *A Tale of a Tub* in 1704.⁸¹ In essence, the argument was between those who believed that the achievements of the Ancients – that is, Classical Greek and Roman authors – could not be bettered, so that the aim of modern creators should be to emulate them, and those who felt that the Ancients’ accomplishments had been superseded in modern times, meaning that greater authority should be given to contemporary creativity. Sir William Temple’s 1690 ‘Essay upon the Ancient and Modern Learning’ took the side of the Ancients, arguing that the strong effects music was reported to have had in ancient times had been lost, so that it had become ‘little more but . . . Fiddling’.⁸² In his 1694 response, William Wotton pointedly distinguished between untrained and trained listeners: whereas ancient music could

⁷⁹ Charles Avison, *A Reply to the Author of Remarks on His Essay on Musical Expression* (London, 1753), p. 4. See also Dubois (ed.), *Charles Avison’s Essay*, p. xxxvi.

⁸⁰ Webb, *Observations on the Correspondence between Poetry and Music*, p. 11; quoted in Lessem, ‘Imitation and Expression’, 329.

⁸¹ On the French Quarrel see Georgia Cowart, *The Origins of Modern Musical Criticism: French and Italian Music, 1600–1750*, *Studies in Musicology* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1981).

⁸² William Temple, ‘Upon Ancient and Modern Learning’, in *Miscellanea. The Second Part. In Four Essays . . . The Second Edition* (London, 1690), pp. 45–6.

probably move the emotions of unskilled listeners as powerfully as modern music, the musically educated found modern music superior because it used harmony rather than remaining monophonic, making it more complex.⁸³ To the untrained listener – such as Temple, Wotton implied – ‘what is intricate, appears confused; and therefore he can make no Judgment of the true Excellency of those Things, which seem *fiddling* to him only, for want of Skill in *Musick*’.⁸⁴

Several later writers up to the middle of the eighteenth century fell on one side or the other of this argument, but they did not add to its substance.⁸⁵ However, around the turn of the eighteenth century, the term ‘Ancients’ took on a new meaning, referring not to the musicians of Classical Greek and Roman times, but rather to the polyphonic composers of the sixteenth century. This decisive turn positioned debates about the relative value of ‘old’ and ‘new’ music within the context both of practical music-making, and of several important changes that were developing in underlying attitudes to the arts, bringing them to the forefront of critical debate in music.

Weber notes that the earliest applications of this new usage of the term ‘Ancients’ in music occurred in the 1690s, but it was in 1731 that it gained a precise definition for a group of musicians who met to perform this ‘old’ repertory, when they changed their title from the Academy of Vocal Music to the Academy of Ancient Music.⁸⁶ As John Hawkins was later to remark, the Academy’s members ‘appl[ie]d the epithet *ancient* to the compositions of the *sixteenth* century’, and sought out ‘such . . . as are capable of distinguishing between the feeble efforts of simple melody, and the irresistible charms of elegant modulation and well-studied harmony’, a style that they felt was embodied not only by the music of ‘such men as *Palestrina, Tallis, Byrd, [and] Carissimi*’, but also to ‘*Purcell, . . . Buononcini, Pergolesi, [and] Handel*’.⁸⁷ At root, then, their interest lay not in sixteenth-century music per se, but in its ‘learned’ style, which they appreciated equally in the works of more recent composers. The Concert of Antient Music – a later and much more public

⁸³ William Wotton, ‘Of Ancient and Modern Musick’, in *Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning* (London, 1694), pp. 285–7.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 287. See also Herbert M. Schueller, ‘The Quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns’, *Music & Letters*, 41/4 (1960), 316–18; McGeary, ‘Music Literature’, p. 403.

⁸⁵ As McGeary states (in ‘Music Literature’, p. 403), they included Lord Shaftesbury, the Earl of Chesterfield and James Grassineau, who were on the side of the Ancients, and Hildebrand Jacob, Alexander Malcolm and Richard Brocklesby, who took the Moderns’ perspective. Malcolm’s contribution is outlined in Cowart, *The Origins of Modern Musical Criticism*, pp. 115–16.

⁸⁶ William Weber, *The Rise of Musical Classics in Eighteenth-Century England: A Study in Canon, Ritual and Ideology* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), p. 29. On the historical concerts, see *ibid.*, pp. 56–73, 143–97; Percy Lovell, ‘“Ancient” Music in Eighteenth-Century England’, *Music & Letters*, 60 (1979), 401–15.

⁸⁷ John Hawkins, *An Account of the Institution and Progress of the Academy of Ancient Music* (London, 1770), pp. 18–19, 12, 22.

concert series, founded in 1776 – concentrated primarily on eighteenth-century repertory, mainly Handel, Geminiani and Corelli, but shared the same ideological basis in ‘serious’ music. The battle lines were thus drawn between the ‘ancients’ – who preferred older music’s foundation in harmonic rules and contrapuntal rigour and regarded modern repertory as frivolous and superficial – and the ‘moderns’ – who saw this attitude as backward-looking, favouring the melodic Italianate style of their own time.

On the surface this was a straightforward conflict about musical styles. Indeed, in the early 1750s it drew the British into another French stylistic controversy, the *querelle des bouffons*, in which Jean-Philippe Rameau claimed that harmony was the basis of all music, while Jean-Jacques Rousseau argued that melody had superior claims because of its close links to speech.⁸⁸ However, beneath this stylistic facade lay more substantial underlying differences between the two camps. Whereas the ‘ancients’ were predominantly members of the musical elite, often professional musicians,⁸⁹ many of the ‘moderns’ lacked formal musical education; the fact that they did not consider this a disadvantage reflects their new approach to evaluating music, which – as Avison’s ‘Stiles in Musical Expression’, discussed above, illustrates – relied on personal responses rather than technical understanding. Philosophically, the ‘ancients’ retained the humanistic belief that creativity should come about through emulating ancient authorities, whereas the ‘moderns’ – who belonged firmly in the Enlightenment in terms of their belief in the concept of progress – came to advocate originality as a creative principle; imitation thus came to be regarded as plagiarism.⁹⁰

Perhaps surprisingly, music criticism dealing explicitly with the ‘ancients’ and ‘moderns’ only began to be published in Britain in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, and the majority did not appear until the 1790s.⁹¹ Yet the conflicts underlying the differences between the ‘ancient’ and ‘modern’ camps outlined above emerged gradually throughout the century in a range of

⁸⁸ See Jean-Jacques Rousseau, ‘Essai sur l’origine des langues’ (1753) and Jean-Philippe Rameau, ‘Observations sur notre instinct pour la musique, et sur son principe’ (1754) as translated in Edward A. Lippman (ed.), *Musical Aesthetics: A Historical Reader, Vol. 1: From Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century. Aesthetics in Music 4* (New York: Pendragon, 1986), p. 333.

⁸⁹ For example, the original members of the Academy of Ancient Music included William Croft, Maurice Greene, Bernard Gates and, later, John Christopher Pepusch.

⁹⁰ On the rise of originality as a creative principle, see Rebecca Herissone, *Musical Creativity in Restoration England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 41–59. The reviews of printed music published by Thomas Busby in the 1780s, described below, included frequent accusations of plagiarism.

⁹¹ Those who wrote in favour of the ‘ancients’ included William Jones of Nayland and William Jackson; the side of the ‘moderns’ was taken by Benjamin Stillingfleet, William Mason and, largely, John Marsh. Their contributions are analysed in Howard Irving, *Ancients and Moderns: William Croft and the Development of Classical Music* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999); see also Howard Irving, ‘John Marsh and the Ancient-Modern Polemic’, *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, 31 (2002), 215–36.

publications that demonstrate a growing interest in the history of music. None of these was intended primarily as a work of music criticism, but judgement of composers and their music ran as a common thread throughout them, and they engaged with contemporary debates as much as historical comparisons. In the prefatory essay to his 1740 playbook for *Rosalinda*, for example, Lockman used his exploration of the foundations of opera to criticise Italian opera on the English stage in his own day; similarly, William Mason began his 1782 *Copious Collection* of musical psalm settings with an essay tracing the stylistic changes in cathedral music following the Reformation, which allowed him to exhort modern cathedral musicians to avoid lapsing into overly elaborate styles themselves. It was in this manner, then, that the respective values of ‘ancient’ and ‘modern’ music entered the realm of music criticism in British publications from the mid-eighteenth century.

Nowhere is this more clearly illustrated than in the two books that form the first major monuments of music history: John Hawkins’s *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music*, published complete in five volumes in 1776, and Charles Burney’s *A General History of Music from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period*, which appeared in four volumes between 1776 and 1789. While it is an oversimplification to view Hawkins’s approach as representative of the ‘ancients’ and Burney’s as encompassing that of the ‘moderns’, there is some truth in this interpretation. Hawkins was fundamentally an antiquarian and scholar whose research was restricted to libraries and archives. His book made few concessions to the reader, being arranged in almost two hundred chapters without titles, and was difficult to access for the musically uninformed. He was firmly on Rameau’s side of the *querelle*,⁹² and, most significantly, although he did believe in the concept of progress,⁹³ his *History* ends not with the music of his own time, but some twenty-five years earlier. He explained in his Conclusion that this was because he felt that the compositions of his own present, which ‘abound in noise and clamour’, were valued by their ‘vulgar admirers’ only because of ‘mere novelty’; his own view was that, whereas music by Corelli, Handel and Geminiani had an effect that ‘was deep and is lasting[,] . . . who now remembers, or rather does not affect to forget the music that pleased him last year?’⁹⁴

⁹² As stated in an annotation to his 1760 edition of *The Compleat Angler*, quoted in Roger Lonsdale, *Dr Charles Burney: A Literary Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), p. 190.

⁹³ See, for example, John Hawkins, *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music*, 5 vols. (London, 1776), vol. v, p. 429.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 429–31.

The contrasts with Burney could not be stronger. His research was based on lengthy trips to Europe, where he had experienced its music at first hand.⁹⁵ He was a prominent and popular figure in London society, and took pains to make his book attractive to his fashionable readership. Although (as described below) he stressed the importance of measured judgement in criticism, his own bias towards the present permeates his writing: he began his account of sixteenth-century Italian music, for example, by lamenting that ‘Melody, itself the child of Fancy, was still held in Gothic chains’,⁹⁶ a viewpoint that implies his preference for the Italianate melodic style of his own day, thus placing him on Rousseau’s side in the *querelle*.⁹⁷ His preference for the music of his own time influences the very structure of the *History*, given that its final volume is almost entirely devoted to Italian opera.

It is easy, therefore, to regard Burney as an archetypal representative of the ‘moderns’. Yet, as Howard Irving has demonstrated, there are important contradictions in Burney’s writings that demonstrate a much more complex approach to the past.⁹⁸ In his ‘Essay on Musical Criticism’ Burney was keen to emphasise how important it was for the critic to judge his materials even-handedly, claiming that ‘A critic should have none of the contractions and narrow partialities of such as can see but a small angle of the art . . . A chorus of Handel and a graceful opera song should not preclude each other: each has its peculiar merit; and no one musical production can comprise the beauties of every species of composition.’⁹⁹ It is difficult to imagine a statement that more clearly accommodated both ‘ancient’ and ‘modern’ viewpoints, but Burney’s bias towards the moderns pervades throughout much of his criticism. By setting himself up as the arbiter of musical ‘good taste’ in the *History*, Burney exerted considerable influence on the views of ordinary music-lovers in the latter part of the eighteenth century. This was a role he subsequently extended through his journalistic publications as a critic of writings on music, and through his influence on other reviewers such as William Bewley, who was largely responsible for the public condemnation

⁹⁵ See his two travel journals: *The Present State of Music in France and Italy* (London, 1771), and *The Present State of Music in Germany, The Netherlands, and United Provinces* (London, 1773).

⁹⁶ Burney, *A General History of Music*, vol. III, p. 150. His belief in progress is summarised in *ibid.*, vol. IV, p. 685.

⁹⁷ Indeed, he criticised Avison for following Rameau in Burney, *A General History of Music*, vol. IV, p. vi. On the influence of Rousseau on Burney, see Edward Green, ‘The Impact of Rousseau on the Histories of Burney and Hawkins: A Study in the Ethics of Musicology’, in Zdravko Blažeković and Barbara Dobbs Mackenzie (eds.), *Music’s Intellectual History*. RILM Perspectives 1 (New York: Répertoire International de la Littérature Musicale, 2009).

⁹⁸ Irving, *Ancients and Moderns*, especially pp. 20–1, 90–145.

⁹⁹ Burney, *A General History of Music*, vol. III, p. vi.

Hawkins's *History* eventually suffered, because of the 'devastating' account he gave of the book in *The Monthly Review* in 1777.¹⁰⁰

The reviews in this journal, and later *The Critical Review*, were the earliest dedicated specifically to writings on music. For a short time in the 1780s reviews of published music also appeared in *The European Magazine* and *The Analytical Review*, and they are now known to have been the work of Thomas Busby, a minor composer, singer and organist.¹⁰¹ Although they were described from the outset as 'Impartial and Critical',¹⁰² Busby used his reviews in the same way as Burney, to disseminate his notions of good musical taste. They placed him clearly in the camp of the moderns in the emphasis he placed on originality,¹⁰³ although he was more in line with the ancients in stressing the importance of good musical grammar.¹⁰⁴ He was also relatively old-fashioned in continuing to regard instrumental music as of less value aesthetically than vocal because it lacked the affective powers of vocal music.¹⁰⁵ Nevertheless, he was clearly influenced in his approach by the needs of his amateur readers, particularly in his concentration on the effectiveness of the arrangements for piano of his chosen repertory.¹⁰⁶ His reviews both reflected and helped to determine the popular repertory of the 1780s, setting the stage for the establishment of music reviewing as a regular feature of the journalism of the following century.

Conclusions

The three centuries of comment and debate considered in this chapter reflect the gradual emergence of music criticism as an organised activity in England, from its heterogeneous beginnings in a wide variety of writings that were contributed by a diverse range of individuals: literary figures, moralists, philosophers and aestheticians, as well as professional musicians. Many of these authors had vested interests in promoting particular viewpoints. While these sometimes had little to do with music, they nevertheless highlight the contribution that core underlying debates made to the performance and

¹⁰⁰ See Roger Lonsdale, 'Dr Burney and the *Monthly Review*', *Review of English Studies*, New Series, 14 (1963), 346–58; 15 (1964), 27–37.

¹⁰¹ See Carrol Grabo, 'The Practical Aesthetics of Thomas Busby's Music Reviews', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 25/1 (1966), 37–8.

¹⁰² *The European Magazine, and London Review*, 6 (July 1784), title page.

¹⁰³ See, for example, his review of James Hook's 'Labour in vain', in *The European Magazine, and London Review*, 6 (July 1784), 8 [recte, 6]. See also Grabo, 'The Practical Aesthetics', 39–40.

¹⁰⁴ For instance in his criticisms of parallels in *The Beauties of Music and Poetry* in *The European Magazine*, 5 (May 1784), 368.

¹⁰⁵ See Grabo, 'The Practical Aesthetics', 41–2; and also the section 'Imitation and Expression' above.

¹⁰⁶ Grabo, 'The Practical Aesthetics', 38.

reception of the main musical genres of this period. They include moral arguments about the role music should play in religious and civil life that reflect the strength of division between Puritan and high-church factions; responses to Italian opera's presence on the London stage that illustrate how its domination was seen both as a threat to playwrights' livelihood and as a challenge to national identity; and discussions about the expressive qualities of music that drew into question the authority of musical models and placed new emphasis on the importance of creative originality. Above all, those debates that focused on musical content demonstrate an increasing divergence between, on the one hand, the professional musician – whose rigorous technical training led him to value traditional contrapuntally complex and serious 'ancient' music – and, on the other, the interested amateur – for whom successful expression was judged more on the basis of personal response than technical correctness, leading to a preference for the 'modern' Italianate melodic style. Writing about music was thus opened up to an increasingly broad range of would-be critics, setting the context for what was to become a remarkable proliferation of critical activities in the nineteenth century.

German-Language Music Criticism before 1800

STEPHEN ROSE

In May 1722 Johann Mattheson published the inaugural issue of *Critica musica*, the first known periodical devoted to music criticism. Focusing on the appraisal of music theory, this journal defined the purpose of criticism as ‘for the most feasible uprooting of all coarse errors and the promotion of a better growth of the pure harmonic science’.¹ Mattheson used the metaphor of an overgrown garden to convey his belief that critics should weed out musical faults: ‘I have become somewhat severe about the beautiful musical garden, and will not fail to uproot the old, deep-rooted, stiff, prickly, wild, barbaric briars.’² He explained that the regular rhythm of periodical publication suited his critical mission to shape wider opinion: ‘In today’s lifestyle only rarely will people read a whole book, but they will more readily read through a few pages every month. In this format the [critical] onslaught is always new, and, like a steady drip of water, is able finally to make holes here and there in the rock.’³ *Critica musica* ceased publication after three years, but it pioneered many distinctive features of German-language music criticism in the eighteenth century.

In subsequent decades, approximately thirty further German periodicals of music criticism appeared, before the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* was founded in 1798.⁴ Influenced by journals in other fields such as literary criticism, these periodicals sought to create networks of readers debating how to make informed judgements on music. Some of these journals were published monthly or weekly; others appeared at less regular intervals. Most were short-lived, folding after a few years owing to a lack of contributors or subscribers; several, however, were republished in book format, and these

¹ *Critica musica*, 1 (1722), title page. Translations from primary sources are my own; the original German can be found in digitised versions of these periodicals.

² *Ibid.*, sig. A2r. ³ *Ibid.*

⁴ For an index of articles on music in eighteenth-century journals, see Laurenz Lüttken (ed.), *Die Musik in den Zeitschriften des 18. Jahrhunderts: eine Bibliographie mit Datenbank auf CD-ROM* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2004).

multiple editions can create confusion in bibliographies and citations. Some periodicals were aimed primarily at experts (*Kenner*), typically defined in the period as connoisseurs who understood music from its fundamentals.⁵ Others addressed music-lovers (*Liebhaber*), whose listening was stereotyped as intuitive and attuned to the sensual aspects of music.⁶

The proliferation of music periodicals reflected a unique set of circumstances in German-speaking lands. Following Jürgen Habermas, scholars have shown that the development of a public sphere in eighteenth-century Europe required institutions and social spaces where private individuals could share and develop their opinions.⁷ In Teutonic regions, as in other parts of Europe, there were clubs, salons, coffee houses, reading groups and so forth where individuals could meet;⁸ yet the political fragmentation of German territories gave print a greater role than elsewhere. James Sheehan has described the emergence in German-speaking lands of a ‘literary culture’, the ‘culture of readers and writers for whom print had become the essential means of communication and printed matter the primary source and subject of cultural activity’.⁹ Books and journals allowed the educated elite to voice intellectual, spiritual and cultural identities that bridged political frontiers. In musical life, although cities such as Hamburg and Leipzig had a growing public market for concerts and sheet music, periodicals allowed debates about such questions as musical taste to reach *Kenner* and *Liebhaber* dispersed in courts and towns across German-speaking lands.

A further reason for the growth of criticism in German territories lay in the contested status of music. Advocates and detractors of music discussed whether it was morally uplifting, necessary for religious worship, or mere sensual entertainment. Around 1700 there were debates about whether music was regulated by intellectual rules that could be the basis for learned discussion. From the 1730s, shaped by French neoclassical ideals of mimesis, critics debated whether music should imitate nature or the emotions, or should have meanings intrinsic to itself.¹⁰ Dispute also raged about how music should be

⁵ Matthew Riley, ‘Johann Nikolaus Forkel on the Listening Practices of “Kenner” and “Liebhaber”’, *Music & Letters*, 84 (2003), 414–33.

⁶ On the dialectical relationship of *Kenner* and *Liebhaber*, see Yonatan Bar-Yoshafat, ‘*Kenner und Liebhaber – Yet Another Look*’, *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, 44 (2013), 19–47.

⁷ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989); Charles W. J. Withers, *Placing the Enlightenment: Thinking Geographically about the Age of Reason* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), pp. 62–83.

⁸ Emanuel Peter, *Geselligkeiten: Literatur, Gruppenbildung und kultureller Wandel im 18. Jahrhundert* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1999).

⁹ James Sheehan, *German History, 1770–1866* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 153.

¹⁰ Bellamy Hosler, *Changing Aesthetic Views of Instrumental Music in Eighteenth-Century Germany* (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1978).

judged, with regard to differing notions of taste and the contrasting behaviour of *Kenner* and *Liebhaber* at concerts.¹¹ Such debates stimulated the contributions to the journals discussed in this chapter.

For reasons of space, this chapter focuses on music periodicals and related writings in isolation from broader debates about music as found in compositional manuals, theological writings and treatises on aesthetics. The chapter identifies three broad phases in the development of music criticism within German print culture. A first phase involved the discussion of music in vernacular literature (including satirical novels) in the last decades of the seventeenth century. A second period from the 1720s to 1750s saw the establishment of the first periodicals discussing music; often strongly polemical in tone, these early publications were modelled on scholarly journals or moral weeklies. A third phase was shaped by the rapid growth in music publishing from the 1760s onwards, as critics tried to guide consumers through the profusion of sheet music now available. The chapter also discusses two issues that pervaded music criticism in the period: first, the question of how to form judgements on specific compositions; and second, the patriotic search for attributes of German music.

Music Criticism and Vernacular Literature

Although the Lutheran Reformation had introduced the vernacular into the liturgy from the 1520s onwards, Latin remained the usual language for scholarly debate until the closing decades of the seventeenth century. Around this time several German scholars sought to reach a wider audience by contributing to the emerging literary culture in the vernacular. In 1687 the jurist and philosopher Christian Thomasius chose to lecture at Leipzig University in German instead of Latin; the following year he founded the journal *Monats-Gespräche*, which contained book reviews and philosophical debate in the guise of conversations among passengers on a coach journey. Musicians likewise entered vernacular literature to boost awareness of debates involving their profession. Already from the start of the seventeenth century, music theorists increasingly favoured publication in German, to make their treatises accessible to musicians lacking Latin.¹² From the late 1670s musicians used satire and narrative to bring musical topics to the attention of the wider public.

¹¹ On concert-going behaviour, see Peter Schleuning, *Das 18. Jahrhundert: der Bürger erhebt sich* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1984), pp. 169–97.

¹² Michael Praetorius commented on his use of German in his *Syntagmatis Musici . . . Tomus Secundus De Organographia* (Wolfenbüttel, 1619), sig.:(5r).

One pioneer was the Mühlhausen organist Johann Georg Ahle, who used the format of a fictional dialogue to make musical discussion entertaining to non-specialists. His *Unstruhtinne oder musikalische Gartenlust* (1687) portrays a group of male citizens discussing musical topics, interspersed with continuo songs. His four volumes of ‘seasonal dialogues’, *Musikalisches Frühlings-Gespräche* (1695), *Sommer-Gespräche* (1697), *Herbst-Gespräche* (1699) and *Winter-Gespräche* (1701), evoked in their titles not only Thomasius’s journal, but also earlier works depicting conversations, such as Georg Philipp Harsdörffer’s *Frauenzimmer Gesprächspiele* (1643–57). Ahle’s characters have allegorical names such as Deuschold, Muselieb and Wonnemund, and they discuss music in locations including a garden hut and under a walnut tree. They debate technical topics such as the choice of cadences and the characteristics of good text setting, and they criticise a fictitious song by ‘the schoolteacher in Gänsau’ (printed in full by Ahle).¹³ Ahle’s dialogues thus modelled a social setting where enquiring burghers could form opinions on music.

In his *Phrynis Mitilenaeus* (1676/77, revised 1696), Wolfgang Caspar Printz used the format of a travel narrative to enliven his exposition of compositional theory. The treatise is written in the first person as the account of the trainee musician Phrynis who wanders through Mediterranean lands, studying with instrumentalists in various towns. Although the places and characters have Greek names, the culture described is that of central German lands. Printz adopted a satirical tone, aiming to teach through laughter; targets of his satire included Phrynis’s early naivety as a composer, and three fictitious examples of inept compositions, which are given in score. Through the medium of satire, Printz published some of the first detailed critiques of individual compositions.

Printz and other musicians, such as Johann Beer and Daniel Speer, also wrote novels to address questions about the social status of their profession. Published anonymously or under pseudonyms, these narratives tapped the public curiosity about musicians as adventurers on the edges of society. In Beer’s *Der simplicianische Welt-Kucker* (1677–79) the protagonist’s musical career leads him into the libidinous lifestyle of noblewomen in Germany and Venice. In Speer’s *Dacianischer Simplicissimus* (1683) the life story of an army trumpeter is combined with topographical description of the borderlands between Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. The three novels by Printz, by contrast, portray the lives of municipal instrumentalists in an effort to prove they are honourable members of society.¹⁴

¹³ Johann Georg Ahle, *Musikalisches Frühlings-Gespräche* (Mühlhausen 1695), pp. 12–42; *Musikalisches Sommer-Gespräche* (Mühlhausen 1697), pp. 1–39.

¹⁴ Stephen Rose, *The Musician in Literature in the Age of Bach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 43–112.

The most significant of the novels about music was Johann Kuhnau's *Der musicalische Quack-Salber* (1700), which showed how to distinguish incompetent from skilled musicians. Kuhnau explained the book was 'not just for well-informed music-lovers, but also for all those who have no particular knowledge of this art';¹⁵ 'however, nobody should seek here the special matters that can be indicated only in musical notation'.¹⁶ The book narrates the adventures of Caraffa, a German musician who disguises himself as an Italian in order to exploit the Teutonic love of foreign music and to hide his own deficiencies. The first half of the novel is set in a *collegium musicum*, a group of amateur and professional musicians who (as in Ahle's dialogues) voice their opinions on an array of musical topics. The members expose Caraffa's incompetence by testing him in various ways, for instance giving him a poem to set to music. The novel ends with a list of sixty-four attributes of virtuous musicians, showing the public how to evaluate the talents of performers and composers.¹⁷

These satirical writings about music were read widely in subsequent decades and were quoted by later critics such as Mattheson and Friedrich Wilhelm Marburg.¹⁸ The novels fed the public's appetite to read about the lives of musicians, an appetite that led to the inclusion of biographical reports and anecdotes in music periodicals throughout the eighteenth century. By describing social settings where individuals formed their opinions on music, Kuhnau and Ahle helped music criticism enter the spaces that constituted the public sphere.

Periodicals as Polemics

Between the 1720s and 1750s, a series of short-lived periodicals advanced contentious arguments about the status and nature of music. These journals were shaped by the Protestant urban environments where they developed, including the trading city of Hamburg with its liberal attitude to the press, Leipzig with its community of scholars and booksellers, and the Prussian capital of Berlin. They were aimed partly at professional musicians with scholarly aspirations, partly at a wider public. Each of these periodicals was closely associated with the individual voice of its editor, who used it as a mouthpiece for his views on music.

¹⁵ Johann Kuhnau, *Der musicalische Quack-Salber* (Dresden, 1700), title page. ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

¹⁷ Rose, *The Musician in Literature*, pp. 113–50.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 9, 23–8, 143. Marburg included excerpts from Ahle's dialogues in *Kritische Briefe über die Tonkunst*, 91 (19 December 1761), 210–14; 92 (9 January 1762), 215–22; 93 (17 January 1762), 223–30; 94 (23 January 1762), 231–8.

There were two principal models for these early journals about music. One model was provided by scholarly periodicals such as the *Acta eruditorum*, issued in Leipzig under the editorship of Otto Mencke from 1682 onwards, or the *Monatliche Unterredungen*, published also in Leipzig and edited by Wilhelm Ernst Tentzel from 1689 to 1698. The *Acta eruditorum*, published monthly in Latin, developed from the correspondence networks used by scholars to share discoveries and ideas. It contained articles on the natural sciences, medicine and mathematics, and it reviewed treatises on a wide range of topics. With a likely print run of 800 to 1,000 copies, the journal reached an international audience of scholars.¹⁹ An alternative model was provided by moral weeklies, which themselves emulated English journals such as *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*. A pioneer in this genre was Mattheson, whose *Vernünfftler* (1713–14) contained articles translated from English;²⁰ subsequent moral weeklies included *Der Patriot* (Hamburg, 1724–6) and *Der Biedermann* (Leipzig, 1727–9). Providing models of behaviour for the urban bourgeoisie, moral weeklies discussed topics such as the avoidance of greed and hypocrisy, the choice of spouse, the education of girls and the development of taste. Influenced by English models, the contributors to moral weeklies cultivated witty and urbane prose, avoiding the convoluted syntax of scholarly writing.²¹ Their articles were mildly satirical, often using pseudonyms and fictitious characters; they thereby combined instruction with entertainment in a similar way to Printz's and Kuhnau's narratives about music.

Scholarly journals such as the *Acta eruditorum* provided the model for the first periodical devoted to music criticism, Mattheson's *Critica musica*. Introducing the inaugural issue, Mattheson explained

The chief aim is to report on all kinds of musical writings and things, old and new, printed and manuscript, native and foreign, German, French, Italian, Latin, English etc., in such a way as is done in the *Acta eruditorum* . . . and for each treatise (some rare) not only to give such a full report and review so that anyone is able to know its essence without buying the book, but also to praise good things within it, to reject evil confusions and instead to promote healthy teachings.²²

¹⁹ Augustinus H. Laeven, *The Acta eruditorum under the Editorship of Otto Mencke (1644–1707): The History of an International Learned Journal between 1682 and 1707*, trans. Lynne Richards (Amsterdam: APA-Holland University Press, 1990).

²⁰ Dirk Hempel, 'Der Vernünfftler – Johann Mattheson und der british-deutsche Kulturtransfer in der Frühaufklärung', in Wolfgang Hirschmann and Bernhard Jahn (eds.), *Johann Mattheson als Vermittler und Initiator. Wissenstransfer und die Etablierung neuer Diskurse in der ersten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Hildesheim: Olms, 2010).

²¹ Eric A. Blackall, *The Emergence of German as a Literary Language, 1700–1775* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), pp. 60–9.

²² *Critica musica*, 1 (1722), sig. A2v.

Mattheson thereby distanced himself from his earlier work translating moral weeklies for Hamburg, instead aiming to provide a scholarly forum for a scattered audience of erudite musicians. He emulated the international flavour of a learned journal, including news from locations such as London and Paris, and providing German translations of topical polemics such as François Ragueneau's comparison of French and Italian styles.²³ Like a scholarly periodical, *Critica musica* was partly based on an epistolary network – in this case, Mattheson's own correspondents – and it printed letters praising his writings and extracts from his correspondence with Heinrich Bokemeyer about the value of canonic writing.

Compared to the sober tone of the *Acta eruditorum*, Mattheson struck a polemical pose in *Critica musica*. The first three instalments of *Critica musica* attacked the *Academia musico-poetica bipartita* (1721) by the Munich organist Franz Xaver Murschhauser, a conservative exposition of music theory that outlined techniques of solmisation and the twelve ecclesiastical modes. Mattheson had scorned such matters in his previous books, and he took exception to Murschhauser's claim 'to shed a little more light on the excellent Mattheson'.²⁴ He rebutted his adversary sentence by sentence, snidely titling his review 'the compositional light-snuffer'.²⁵ Mattheson similarly interrupted the excerpts from Bokemeyer's letters with digressions and caustic comments.²⁶ Rather than offering a 'full report' on other treatises as he had initially promised, Mattheson used *Critica musica* as a sounding board for his own opinions.²⁷

The model of the scholarly journal was again followed by Lorenz Christoph Mizler's *Musikalische Bibliothek*, which appeared sporadically between 1736 and 1754. Primarily a theorist rather than a practical musician, Mizler began lecturing in music at Leipzig University in 1737; the following year he founded a learned society, the Korrespondierende Sozietät der Musicalischen Wissenschaften. The journal acted as an organ for Mizler's society, evaluating works of music theory from his viewpoint that music was a science. It reviewed treatises by current authors such as Mattheson and by musicians of previous generations such as Printz and Andreas Werckmeister. The journal also contained letters from members on specific

²³ Ibid., 91–166. ²⁴ Murschhauser's comment as reported by Mattheson in *ibid.*, 1.

²⁵ 'Die melopoetische Licht-Scheere', *ibid.*

²⁶ David Yearsley, *Bach and the Meanings of Counterpoint* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 52–8, 72–3.

²⁷ On Mattheson's antagonistic relationship with professional musicians including Bach, see Keith Chapin, 'Bach's Silence, Mattheson's Words: Professional and Humanist Ways of Speaking of Music', in Keith Chapin and Andrew H. Clark (eds.), *Speaking of Music: Addressing the Sonorous* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013).

theoretical questions; obituaries of deceased members; and lists of 'Musikalische Neuigkeiten' reporting on publications and concerts in various cities. Mizler's *Musikalische Bibliothek* is therefore another example of how the critical discussion of music developed in conjunction with social networks such as his corresponding society. His periodical was an influential example: Marpurg declared on launching his *Historisch-kritische Beyträge zur Aufnahme der Musik* (1754–60): 'I want the set-up and purpose of this journal to be the same as the *Musikalische Bibliothek*, except that the things considered here concern more the practical than the theoretical side of the art.'²⁸

An alternative prototype for early periodicals of music criticism was provided by moral weeklies, whose informal tone, satirical style and fictitious scenarios allowed music critics to reach a wider audience of *Liebhaber*. Mattheson modelled his short-lived *Musicalischer Patriot* (1728) on the Hamburg journal *Der Patriot* (1724–6), the organ of the city's Patriotische Gesellschaft. He dedicated his periodical to members of the society, showing his effort to reach a different readership from the erudite musicians targeted by *Critica musica*. Just as *Der Patriot* promoted the civic virtues upheld by Hamburg's merchant elite, *Der musicalische Patriot* argued for the ethical value of music and opera in city life.²⁹

Non-specialists were again addressed by another journal modelled on the moral weeklies: Johann Adolph Scheibe's *Der critische Musicus*, published in Hamburg from 1737 to 1740 (at first fortnightly). According to his 1773 recollections, Scheibe planned the journal in collaboration with Telemann, whose own sheet music (including the serial *Der getreue Music-Meister*, 1728–9) likewise cultivated a middle-class market for music. Telemann reportedly also read portions of the first fifteen issues prior to publication.³⁰ *Der critische Musicus* discussed topics of interest to the musical public, such as taste, the legitimacy of opera and music as an imitation of nature; Scheibe neither addressed technical topics such as counterpoint nor included reviews of sheet music and treatises. The journal aped the tone of the moral weeklies: instalments were published anonymously, each started (like *Der Biedermann*) with a quotation from an ancient or modern philosopher, and several included satirical letters from fictitious figures.³¹ The title of Scheibe's periodical acknowledged the influence of Johann Christoph Gottsched's *Critische*

²⁸ *Historisch-kritische Beyträge zur Aufnahme der Musik*, 1/1 (1754–5), xiv.

²⁹ David Yearsley, 'The Musical Patriots of the Hamburg Opera: Mattheson, Keiser, and *Masaniello furioso*', in Peter Uwe Hohendahl (ed.), *Patriotism, Cosmopolitanism, and National Culture: Public Culture in Hamburg 1700–1933* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003).

³⁰ Johann Adolph Scheibe, *Über die musikalische Composition. Erster Theil* (Leipzig, 1773), pp. v–x.

³¹ For example, *Der critische Musicus*, 31 (2 April 1739).

Dichtkunst (1730), which inspired Scheibe's rationalistic approach to the arts (discussed below).

Scheibe's satires readily crossed the line into aggression, notoriously in the sixth issue of *Der critische Musicus* (14 May 1737). Here an anonymous letter from 'a skilled musician' (*ein geschickter Musicant*) described a journey around central and northern German lands, criticising various anonymous musicians. Expert readers could identify the individuals satirised in this critique, as shown by the annotated copy once owned by Johann Gottfried Walther and rediscovered by Michael Maul.³² Using his notion of musical taste (described below), Scheibe evaluated the style of several composers. He attacked J. S. Bach's music as 'bombastic' (*schwülstig*) and 'confused' (*verworren*), but praised the melodious writing of Johann Adolf Hasse (one of two musicians he identified by name). He made gossipy comments on other musicians, disclosing that the Leipzig organist Carl Gotthelf Gerlach relied excessively on others' compositions. The attack on Bach provoked rebuttals in Mizler's *Musikalische Bibliothek* and counterblasts from Scheibe;³³ these lengthy exchanges epitomised the waspish nature of early musical criticism.

Aspects of the moral weeklies also shaped two of the journals edited in Berlin by the musician and civil servant Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg. *Der critische Musicus an der Spree* (1749–50) contained satirical items such as fictitious letters exposing the ignorance of amateur musicians.³⁴ Marpurg's *Kritische Briefe über die Tonkunst* (1759–63) comprised letters from members of a fictional music society with Greek pseudonyms such as 'Amisallos' and 'Neologos', often addressed to real-life musicians such as C. P. E. Bach and Leopold Mozart. The format of the music society recalled Ahle's and Kuhnau's portrayal of similar settings where individuals voiced their opinions. The *Kritische Briefe* courted controversy, as was typical of the period: one of the fictitious contributors 'Paläophil' attacked Marpurg, while the journal criticised the compositional practices of Johann Philipp Kirnberger and publicised the dispute about keyboard temperament between Georg Andreas Sorge and Christoph Gottlieb Schröter.³⁵

Each of these early periodicals created a network to circulate critically informed views on music, reaching either the erudite professionals who

³² Michael Maul, 'Johann Adolph Scheibes Bach-Kritik. Hintergründe und Schauplätze einer musikalischen Kontroverse', *Bach-Jahrbuch*, 96 (2010), 153–98; English version as 'Bach versus Scheibe: Hitherto Unknown Battlegrounds in a Famous Conflict', *Bach Perspectives*, 9 (2013), 120–44.

³³ English translation of the exchange in *The New Bach Reader*, ed. Hans T. David, Arthur Mendel and Christoph Wolff (New York: Norton, 1998), pp. 337–53.

³⁴ *Der critische Musicus an der Spree*, 1/ii (11 March 1749), 10–12.

³⁵ *Kritische Briefe über die Tonkunst*, 2 (30 June 1759), 9–15; 23 (24 November 1759), 175–82; 117 (30 October 1762), 417–8; 118 (6 November 1762), 419–26.

viewed music as a science or the groups of amateur musicians in cities such as Hamburg and Berlin. Though these journals strengthened the place of music criticism in the literary culture of German-speaking lands, none established a collective of contributors; each periodical was primarily a vehicle for the views of its editor, ensuring a strongly polemical streak in this phase of music criticism.

Criticism and the Commodification of Composition

From the mid-1760s, the function and mechanisms of German literary criticism and music criticism were transformed by a rapid growth in publishing. In 1763 the end of the Seven Years' War encouraged an upsurge in consumer culture, with a major expansion of the book market in Prussia and Saxony.³⁶ The quantity of books advertised at the Leipzig fairs increased substantially, as did the numbers of available journals on all subjects. Between 1766 and 1790, 2,191 new periodicals were founded, compared to the total of 754 periodicals inaugurated between 1741 and 1765.³⁷ Reading patterns also changed, with the literate increasingly likely to read 'extensively', covering a large number of texts (including novels or books borrowed from libraries), rather than the old pattern of 'intensive reading' of a few sacred texts.³⁸ A similar expansion occurred in the music trade, thanks to Johann Gottlob Immanuel Breitkopf's new movable type, whose symbols were formed, mosaic-like, from many smaller components. Marpurg noted that Breitkopf's technique was cheaper than engraving and promised to make good taste more widespread.³⁹ In the ensuing decades Breitkopf printed large quantities of keyboard music, songs, and operas in vocal scores; his commercial scriptorium also supplied manuscript copies of less popular genres such as church music and instrumental ensemble works.

The growth of the wider book trade put a new onus on literary criticism to guide the consumer through the mass of available publications. In 1765 the Berlin bookseller Friedrich Nicolai inaugurated the *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek*, which aimed to review all new German publications for the benefit of

³⁶ Michael North, *'Material Delight and the Joy of Living': Cultural Consumption in the Age of Enlightenment in Germany*, trans. Pamela Selwyn (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 7–10.

³⁷ Joachim Kirchner, *Das deutsche Zeitschriftenwesen: seine Geschichte und seine Probleme*, 2 vols. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1958–62), vol. 1, pp. 72, 115.

³⁸ Reinhard Wittmann, 'Was There a Reading Revolution at the End of the Eighteenth Century?', in Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier (eds.), *A History of Reading in the West*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Cambridge: Polity, 1999).

³⁹ *Historisch-kritische Beyträge zur Aufnahme der Musik*, 1/vi (1755), 508.

lovers of the most recent literature . . . who are scattered in many towns across Germany, partly in small towns where no bookshop can be found, and it does them a great service to receive reports of new books and their true worth, and it perhaps also is not unpleasant for them annually to see the whole of the latest literature in overview as in a painting.⁴⁰

Through his journal, Nicolai aimed to create more discriminating readers who would uphold standards of literary quality. As he wrote to Johann Gottfried Herder in 1768: ‘You see how much mediocre trash is issued, yet still reckoned by many people to be good.’⁴¹ But it soon became impossible for Nicolai to review all books released within the rapidly expanding market.⁴² Hence his journal confronted the tensions arising from the dual role of books as intellectual products and as commodities, tensions that Jochen Schulte-Sasse argues would eventually undermine the Enlightenment ideal of providing literary education to the general public.⁴³

The *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* established new modes for literary criticism in German lands. It was universal in coverage, reviewing publications in fields as diverse as theology, philosophy, history, literature, the fine arts and music.⁴⁴ Whereas many previous journals were the work of a sole author, Nicolai assembled a team that eventually totalled over four hundred contributors; each signed their reviews with initials, according to a cipher for which only Nicolai held the key.⁴⁵ Nicolai encouraged an impartial and impersonal tone in reviews: ‘The assessments must not be general and flattering but instead well-grounded and candid. However frank your judgements may be, you should abstain from personal attacks and seek to avoid controversy as far as possible.’⁴⁶ Nicolai’s success in cultivating a collective of reviewers contributed to the longevity of his journal.

The collective authorship and constructive tone of the *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* were emulated by several music journals from the 1760s onwards, notably the *Wöchentliche Nachrichten und Anmerkungen die Musik betreffend*

⁴⁰ *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek*, 1/i (1765), ii.

⁴¹ Friedrich Nicolai, *Verlegerbriefe*, ed. Bernhard Fabian and Marie-Luise Spieckermann (Berlin: Nicolai, 1988), p. 62.

⁴² Klaus Berghahn, ‘From Classicist to Classical Literary Criticism, 1730–1806’, in Peter Uwe Hohendahl (ed.), *A History of German Literary Criticism, 1730–1980*, trans. Franz Blaha (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), pp. 68–9.

⁴³ Jochen Schulte-Sasse, ‘Das Konzept bürgerlich-literarischer Öffentlichkeit und die historischen Gründe seines Zerfalls’, in Christa Bürger, Peter Bürger and Jochen Schulte-Sasse (eds.), *Aufklärung und literarische Öffentlichkeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Edition Suhrkamp, 1980).

⁴⁴ On the music reviews, see Thomas Bauman, ‘The Music Reviews in the *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek*’, *Acta Musicologica*, 49 (1977), 69–85; Gudula Schütz, *Vor dem Richterstuhl der Kritik: die Musik in Friedrich Nicolais Allgemeiner deutscher Bibliothek, 1765–1806* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2007).

⁴⁵ Gustav Parthey, *Die Mitarbeiter an Friedrich Nicolai’s Allgemeiner Deutscher Bibliothek nach ihren Namen und Zeichen in zwei Registern geordnet: ein Beitrag zur deutschen Literaturgeschichte* (Berlin, 1842).

⁴⁶ Nicolai, *Verlegerbriefe*, p. 28.

(1766–70), edited in Leipzig by the conductor and pedagogue Johann Adam Hiller. Hiller nurtured a team of contributors (although their exact identity is obscured by the use of anonymity or pseudonyms); he also published letters from readers, who (despite the use of pseudonyms) do not seem to be fictitious. Following Nicolai, Hiller urged moderation among his reviewers: ‘It is better to avoid a critical tone that starts a lawsuit against someone, or gives the appearance of a dictator in music.’⁴⁷ The *Magazin der Musik* (1783–6), edited by the Kiel professor Carl Friedrich Cramer, was modelled on Hiller’s journal, again using a collective of contributors, and aiming to give ‘prompt, impartial but never bitter reviews’.⁴⁸ However, other periodicals of the late eighteenth century were single-authored works, such as the *Musikalisch-kritische Bibliothek* (1778–9) by the Göttingen academic Johann Nicolaus Forkel, or the *Musikalisches Kunstmagazin* (1782, 1791) by the Berlin musician Johann Friedrich Reichardt.

The biggest factor shaping German music criticism from the 1760s onwards was the increased availability of printed music. Rather than appraise composers in terms of their style (as in Scheibe’s 1737 account of Bach) or discuss general issues of music theory, music criticism re-oriented itself to guide *Liebhaber* in their choice of sheet music. Already in 1761 Marpurge’s *Kritische Briefe* included detailed reviews of compositions available from Breitkopf.⁴⁹ Hiller’s *Wöchentliche Nachrichten* often reviewed music supplied by Breitkopf, and occasionally offered comments on compositions available only in manuscript. In February and March 1768 the journal printed an extended review, submitted by ‘Epicikophilus’, of Gottfried August Homilius’s Passion oratorio *Wir gingen alle in der Irre* (*Nun, ihr, meiner Augen Lider*), explaining that a handwritten score had been obtained after much effort.⁵⁰ Such reviews were intended to guide the amateur consumer: ‘In all our reviews and judgements we will sit ourselves in the place of the *Liebhaber*, and say just as much as is necessary for them to know when they wish to decide whether to acquaint themselves with it or to enquire no further after it.’⁵¹ Evaluating printed music was also central to Cramer’s *Magazin der Musik*, which during its four-year lifespan published several hundred brief reviews of sheet music.

Some music critics echoed the tensions arising in literary criticism from the dual status of the book as intellectual product and commodity. They sought to defend their expert notions of musical quality against the commercial

⁴⁷ *Wöchentliche Nachrichten und Anmerkungen die Musik betreffend*, 1/i (1 July 1766), 5.

⁴⁸ *Magazin der Musik*, 1/i (1783), vii.

⁴⁹ *Kritische Briefe über die Tonkunst*, 82 (17 October 1761), 140–2, and often in subsequent issues.

⁵⁰ *Wöchentliche Nachrichten*, 2/xxxiv (22 February 1768), 261–8; 2/xxxv (29 February 1768), 269–76; 2/xxxvi (7 March 1768), 277–80.

⁵¹ *Wöchentliche Nachrichten*, 1/i (1 July 1766), 7.

pressures of the publishing trade. In 1778 Forkel opened his *Musikalisch-kritische Bibliothek* by chastising those composers who wrote in prolific quantities for *Liebhaber*:

Through the lavish applause of amateurs, who are rarely sufficiently occupied with the study of this art enough to penetrate its depths, [composers] inundate us with new inventions until finally all order, all true nature, all noble and worthy expression, and in short all that true musicians and connoisseurs can value (beside the sensual) as intellectual pleasure – all this is driven out, and in place of notable creation is an unworthy and risible plaything.⁵²

Instead of repertory that ‘merely sounds and tickles the ear’, Forkel argued that critics should promote compositions where ‘true genius, nature and art connect correctly to each other’.⁵³

Similarly in 1782 Reichardt began his *Musikalisches Kunstmagazin* with an attack on composers who followed the market: ‘The highest goal of today’s so-called artist is this: to satisfy the greatest quantity of his payer’s follies at once.’⁵⁴ Reichardt warned that the market was corrupting the nobility of ‘natural’ music, which he identified as residing in folk songs and in composers’ unmediated outpourings: ‘A handwritten page given to me by many a true artist from his hidden store during my travels was often infinitely more valuable than twenty engraved works by the same man, prepared for the constricted heart of his gracious buyer and the iron-mongering of his publisher.’⁵⁵

Regardless of critics’ views on the merits of the music trade, the increasing availability of printed music allowed them to engage closely with specific compositions. From around 1760, music examples were used regularly for reviews in music journals and also non-specialist periodicals such as the *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* and *Das Neueste aus der anmuthigen Gelehrsamkeit*. Such notated examples were facilitated by Breitkopf’s new movable type, whereas previous periodicals had struggled to include music notation within a letterpress book (occasionally resorting to short engraved extracts, as in Mattheson’s *Critica musica*). Sometimes these music examples were included as promotional material. Hiller’s *Wöchentliche Nachrichten* explained: ‘It is insufficient for the curiosity of music-lovers when we merely introduce to them an unknown composer, with a packet of his works under his arm, by name only . . . They say to us: Hey, could we not hear something as

⁵² *Musikalisch-kritische Bibliothek*, 1 (1778), xiii–xiv. ⁵³ *Ibid.*, xvi, xvii.

⁵⁴ *Musikalisches Kunstmagazin*, 1 (1782), 5.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 6. See also David Gramit, ‘Selling the Serious: The Commodification of Music and Resistance to It in Germany, circa 1800’, in William Weber (ed.), *The Musician as Entrepreneur, 1700–1914: Managers, Charlatans, and Idealists* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).

a sample.⁵⁶ Critics also used music examples to illustrate detailed discussions of musical grammar, as with Marpurg's complaints about voice-leading and harmony in keyboard sonatas by Josef Antonín Štěpán.⁵⁷ Some reviewers even accused composers of plagiarism, detecting similarities with previous published works.⁵⁸ As Estelle Joubert has argued, the use of notated examples led to the 'emergence of music analysis' in criticism in this period.⁵⁹

Music criticism of the 1760s to 1790s continued to include some features characteristic of earlier periods, such as lists of recent performances, and anecdotes and life-stories about musicians. Its focus shifted away from polemics in music theory, instead seeking to give guidance to the growing market of *Liebhaber* for printed sheet music. Crucial to this new task was the question of how individual compositions should be judged.

The Formation of Musical Judgement

In his *Musicalische Discourse* (written in 1690), Johann Beer explained that whether music was judged more by rules or by the ear was one of the greatest questions aired among musicians: 'In general one calls those who follow rules fundamentalists, but those who seek to content the listener are ear-ticklers.'⁶⁰ Such a debate persisted until the 1730s, when new notions of musical taste offered a way to reconcile the demands of rules and the ear. From the 1760s, as music critics sought to shape a discerning attitude among consumers of printed music, they recognised that the varying levels of knowledge in *Liebhaber* and *Kenner* might lead to different judgements. To help non-specialists refine their opinions, Hiller and Reichardt recommended the study of a canon of approved works.

In the late seventeenth century, many musicians argued that compositions should be judged according to acoustic or contrapuntal rules. The emphasis on rules was partly motivated by a desire to show that music was a science, in the Aristotelian sense of being based on infallible knowledge. The Hanover court musician Agostino Steffani argued in his *Quanta certezza* (1695; German translation 1699) that music's harmonic proportions gave it an immutable

⁵⁶ *Wöchentliche Nachrichten*, 1/i (1 July 1766), 6.

⁵⁷ *Kritische Briefe über die Tonkunst*, 83 (25 October 1761), 144–5.

⁵⁸ See Daniel Gottlob Türk's review of Karl Hanke's Singspiel *Robert und Hannchen*, in *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek*, 86 (Anhang 53) (1790), 1893.

⁵⁹ Estelle Joubert, 'Maria Antonia of Saxony and the Emergence of Music Analysis in Opera Criticism', *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 25 (2013), 37–73.

⁶⁰ Johann Beer, *Musicalische Discourse* (Nuremberg, 1719), pp. 32–3. This work was written in November 1690, according to Beer's autobiography; see Johann Beer, *Sein Leben, von ihm selbst erzählt*, ed. Adolf Schmiedecke (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965), p. 31.

emotional power.⁶¹ Werckmeister claimed that the ratios underpinning consonant intervals and triads corresponded to the harmonies of the heavens.⁶² For Werckmeister and Printz, contrapuntal rules were the yardstick by which to judge compositions, as shown by their critiques of faulty voice-leading in fictitious compositions.⁶³

In the mid-eighteenth century, Mizler upheld rules based on the mathematical certainties of harmonic ratios. His *Musikalische Bibliothek* reviewed approvingly the writings of Werckmeister and Printz (praising the latter as ‘one of the best-grounded musical scholars of his time’),⁶⁴ and publicised the music-mathematical writings of Leonhard Euler and Christoph Gottlieb Schröter. Mizler criticised musicians such as Mattheson who ‘contrary to all reason, deny that all pleasures in music have their basis in mathematics’.⁶⁵ Such an emphasis on rules suited Mizler’s effort to prove that music was a learned discipline.

Mattheson, by contrast, favoured a relativistic view of music, where judgement rested primarily in the senses. His earliest treatise, *Das neu-eröffnete Orchestre* (1713), mocked those who promulgated ‘learned delusions’ (*gelehrte Grillen*) about music as mathematics, and instead aimed to make music intelligible to non-experts such as the *galant homme*. He elaborated this viewpoint in *Das forschende Orchestre* (1721), which invoked empiricist philosophers such as John Locke in an effort to prove that the interval of the fourth should be regarded as dissonant (in contrast to the Pythagorean view of it as a consonance). Here he declared: ‘My ultimate aim for music is and remains for eternity the stirring of the sense embedded in the soul, namely of hearing as the best judge in these matters.’⁶⁶ Mattheson’s empiricist viewpoint pervaded *Critica musica*, where he dismissed rules inherited from past musicians. When attacking Murschhauser, he declared: ‘I am an eclectic musician and I submit to no authority contrary to the senses or reason.’⁶⁷ Instead he emphasised that taste (*sapere*) should shape judgement and, in conjunction with natural talent, should triumph over rules.⁶⁸ Only in 1744, however, did

⁶¹ Stephen Rose, ‘The Contest of Reason versus the Senses: Steffani’s *Quanta certezza* and German Musical Thought’, in Claudia Kaufold, Nicole K. Strohmann and Colin Timms (eds.), *Agostino Steffani: Europäischer Komponist, hannoverscher Diplomat und Bischof der Leibniz-Zeit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017).

⁶² Andreas Werckmeister, *Musicalische Paradoxal-Discourse* (Quedlinburg, 1707).

⁶³ Andreas Werckmeister, *Cribrum musicum* (Quedlinburg, 1700), pp. 1–27; Wolfgang Caspar Printz, *Phrynis Mitilenaenus* (Quedlinburg, 1676–77; revised ed., Dresden, 1696).

⁶⁴ *Musikalische Bibliothek*, 1/iv (April 1738), 5. ⁶⁵ *Musikalische Bibliothek*, 3/ii (1746), 317.

⁶⁶ Johann Mattheson, *Das forschende Orchestre* (Hamburg, 1721), pp. 449–50.

⁶⁷ *Critica musica*, 1 (1722), 48. See Wolfgang Hirschmann, ‘“Musicus eclecticus”. Überlegungen zu Nachahmung, Norm und Individualisierung um 1700’, in Rainer Bayreuther (ed.), *Musikalische Norm um 1700* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010).

⁶⁸ *Critica musica*, 1 (1722), 250–1.

Mattheson publish a definition of taste (*Geschmack*) as ‘that inner sensibility, selection and judgement through which our intellect makes itself felt in the domain of the senses’.⁶⁹

In 1745 Scheibe offered a detailed essay on taste, reconciling the sensory and rule-bound aspects of music: ‘[Taste is] a faculty of understanding that can judge what the senses feel.’⁷⁰ Showing the influence of French classicism and Gottsched’s rationalist poetics, he argued that music follows good taste when it is orderly (*regelmäßig*) and illuminates the senses (*scharfsinnig*).⁷¹ For Scheibe, however, ‘rules’ denoted not contrapuntal or harmonic conventions but aesthetic qualities derived from the imitation of nature, such as simplicity and clarity.⁷² He believed that such qualities, epitomised in the melodious style of Hasse and Carl Heinrich Graun, could transport the listener to unprecedented heights. These ideals of clarity and naturalness informed his critique of Bach’s music as bombastic and confused (see above).

By the 1760s, as critics increasingly focused on the appraisal of printed music, they aimed to teach *Liebhaber* the rules with which *Kenner* might judge music. Describing the ideal reader of its reviews, Hiller’s *Wöchentliche Nachrichten* indicated an aspiration to merge the categories of *Liebhaber* and *Kenner*: ‘We put ourselves always in the place of someone captured by a love of music, who has a certain taste, a well-made ear and much knowledge of the rules, so he can say: This pleases or displeases me, because it has a good or bad effect on me.’⁷³ Many reviews of the 1760s judged sheet music for how far it conformed to compositional rules, complaining at consecutive consonances or weak modulations, and criticising the inclusion of features not usually associated with the genre.⁷⁴

Forkel aimed to move *Liebhaber* beyond sensual pleasure to an awareness of the inner logic of musical materials. Taste, in Forkel’s definition, involved ‘the discovery in feelings of the fundamentals of the art, through which one arrives in the state, without long study, of knowing whether an artwork is beautiful or hateful’.⁷⁵ Expert listeners should understand those rhetorical elements in music – such as the choice of style, the ordering of ideas and the individual

⁶⁹ Johann Mattheson, *Die neueste Untersuchung der Singspiele, nebst beygefügtter musikalischen Geschmacksprobe* (Hamburg, 1744), p. 123.

⁷⁰ Johann Adolph Scheibens ... *Critischer Musikus. Neue, vermehrte und verbesserte Auflage* (Leipzig, 1745), p. 767.

⁷¹ On Scheibe’s relationship with French classicism, see Keith Chapin, ‘Scheibe’s Mistake: Sublime Simplicity and the Criteria of Classicism’, *Eighteenth-Century Music*, 5 (2008), 165–77.

⁷² Johann Adolph Scheibens ... *Critischer Musikus*, p. 771.

⁷³ *Wöchentliche Nachrichten*, 1/xxxii (3 February 1767), 251.

⁷⁴ Mary Sue Morrow, *German Music Criticism in the Late Eighteenth Century: Aesthetic Issues in Instrumental Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 79–89.

⁷⁵ Johann Nicolaus Forkel, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik. Erster Band* (Leipzig, 1788), p. 65

melodic gestures – that had emotional power. Forkel’s detailed reviews of printed music highlighted and sometimes sought to improve aspects of this rhetoric. Appraising a keyboard arrangement of Georg Benda’s melodrama *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Forkel showed how sections could be rewritten to express the drama more effectively and to make better use of melody and harmony.⁷⁶ Examining Gluck’s *Iphigénie en Aulide*, he criticised the lack of musical gestures to reinforce the emotions of the text, explaining how Agamemnon’s arioso ‘Peuvent-ils ordonner?’ could be enhanced by such additions as chromatic progressions or the lamenting sound of horns.⁷⁷ For Forkel, the noble simplicity sought by Gluck prevented the music adding its own power to the drama. Such reviews show that Forkel, far from merely hunting for harmonic errors and violations of arbitrary rules (as his detractors claimed),⁷⁸ tried in his own way to reconcile the differing demands of reason and the senses.

To guide the formation of taste, critics advised music-lovers to study the works of particular composers or theorists. Recommendations for a music library were already offered by Marpurg,⁷⁹ and were developed further in Hiller’s *Wöchentliche Nachrichten*. Here a series of articles recommended theoretical works on music, then extolled composers in different genres such as opera and chamber, keyboard and orchestral music. Hiller justified his lengthy listings by voicing his mission to educate the *Liebhaber*: ‘We well know that one rarely has more diverse opinions than with music; but we are little inclined to praise beauty that contradicts the rules of healthy reason, nature and good taste, nor to underestimate its merit when it has an effect.’⁸⁰

Reichardt likewise identified a canon of music worthy of study. His *Musikalisches Kunstmagazin* included vocal scores of ‘noteworthy pieces by great masters of various times and nations’,⁸¹ particularly composers from the first half of the eighteenth century. His commentary highlighted such features as ‘the unity of natural harmony’ in an aria by Reinhard Keiser, the expressive qualities of an aria by Leonardo Leo, the ‘varied yet always smooth modulations’ in a duo by Francesco Durante or the ‘noble simplicity’ of a Handel duet (‘He shall feed his flock’, *Messiah*).⁸² In printing these illustrious compositions, Reichardt hoped to educate composers (most of whom, he complained, ‘are so one-sided in their taste, procedures and opinion’) and

⁷⁶ *Musikalisch-kritische Bibliothek*, 3 (1779), 250–85 (esp. 266).

⁷⁷ *Musikalisch-kritische Bibliothek*, 1 (1778), 141–8. For further examples of Forkel’s criticism, see Matthew Riley, *Musical Listening in the German Enlightenment: Attention, Wonder and Astonishment* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), chapter 5.

⁷⁸ *Magazin der Musik*, 1/ii (1783), 1080.

⁷⁹ *Kritische Briefe über die Tonkunst*, 7 (4 August 1759), 49–56.

⁸⁰ *Wöchentliche Nachrichten*, 3/xiv (3 October 1768), 108.

⁸¹ *Musikalisches Kunstmagazin*, 1 (1782), 34. ⁸² *Ibid.*, 38, 41, 135, 193.

also the public (whose ‘taste and love of art is a shaky pipe that judders with every distant wind or nearby flood’).⁸³ Although Reichardt acknowledged the importance of studying the music of other nations, he argued his canon served a patriotic purpose: ‘This shall illuminate for us a new image of music history, and perhaps clarify the path that German artists must follow, if they want to be great and influential.’⁸⁴ Indeed by the 1780s musical judgement was increasingly based on nationalist criteria rather than considerations of rules or the senses.

Defining German Music

Patriotism was a driving force behind the literary culture that connected the educated elite of eighteenth-century German lands. Johann Gottfried Herder argued that a sense of national community could be achieved by revitalising Teutonic cultural traditions.⁸⁵ Literary critics sought to inculcate a distinctly German sensibility: the *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* reviewed only works written in German, regularly invoked the ‘honour of the fatherland’ and started each issue with a portrait of a famed German cultural figure. Music critics absorbed these patriotic tendencies, often speaking of ‘us Germans’ and ‘the dear fatherland’, and identifying idealised features of German music. As Bernd Sponheuer argues, these ideal types either comprised features supposedly exclusive to German music (such as qualities of hard work and depth) or involved the synthesis of other national traditions to create something universal and superior.⁸⁶

From the late seventeenth century onwards, German musicians interjected patriotically in the debates about national styles of music. Sometimes they dispelled fears that German music was inferior to that of other nations. Kuhnau’s *Der musicalische Quack-Salber* satirised Germans who uncritically admired Italian musicians, showing how the discriminating members of the *collegium musicum* saw through Caraffa’s claims to be an Italian virtuoso. Elsewhere Kuhnau asserted that ‘one can find equally good musical fruits in Germany as those that grow in an Italian climate’.⁸⁷ In 1745 Scheibe likewise declared that German musicians were equal to the best Italians in their achievements.⁸⁸ In his discussion of national styles, Scheibe characterised German music as borrowing heavily from foreigners, yet he identified features

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 34. ⁸⁴ *Ibid.* ⁸⁵ Sheehan, *German History*, pp. 165–6.

⁸⁶ Bernd Sponheuer, ‘Reconstructing Ideal Types of the “German” in Music’, in Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter (eds.), *Music and German National Identity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), p. 40.

⁸⁷ Johann Kuhnau, *Frische Clavier-Früchte* (Leipzig, 1696), preface.

⁸⁸ *Johann Adolph Scheibens . . . Critischer Musikus*, sig. C2r.

that would become stereotypes of Teutonic musical identity: ‘depth of harmony’, ‘regular phrasing’, ‘diligent work’ and a ‘more thorough approach’.⁸⁹ Such diligence could lead to the ‘dark’ and ‘bombastic’, yet also enabled Germans to improve foreign styles and write pieces more beautiful than those of Italian composers.⁹⁰ Somewhat similarly, Johann Joachim Quantz spoke of the Germans developing a mixed style from the best of Italian and French music, creating a synthesis that had universal appeal.⁹¹

From the 1760s onwards, critics increasingly used ideals of the German in music to shape their judgements on individual pieces. Mary Sue Morrow has shown how reviews of instrumental music in the 1760s and early 1770s decried Italian compositions or Italianate style as an Other, lacking the depth and intellectual labour expected by German audiences.⁹² A 1766 review of keyboard sonatas by Vincenzo Manfredini (then employed in St Petersburg) began: ‘Hey, an Italian, a Russian imperial Capellmeister, who makes no better sonatas – this is lamentable! Your poor grasp of order, symmetry, rhythm, modulation, correct and pure harmonies!’⁹³ Reviewers scorned sonatas such as Manfredini’s for excessive melodic repetition, sudden dynamic contrasts, faulty voice-leading and left-hand parts with an Alberti bass or drumming repeated notes. Such attacks partly reflected the critics’ struggle to explain the thematic variety and comic playfulness found in Italian instrumental music.⁹⁴ However, German composers who avoided such Italianisms were praised for the diligence and harmonic richness of their works, and increasingly for the originality of their ideas and the display of genius.⁹⁵

Although not discussed by Morrow, there was an analogous nationalist strand in reviews of vocal music. Building on Scheibe’s attacks on Italian opera as immoral and unnatural,⁹⁶ this strand of criticism attacked coloratura or showy vocal writing. German composers were instead praised for showing stereotypically masculine qualities such as mastery and strength, as in a 1766 review of C. P. E. Bach’s cantata ‘Thirsis, willst du mir gefallen’ (*Phyllis und Thirsis*, H697/Wq232):

We Germans have always had our ears so full of Italian coloraturas, that a good German song rarely has its intended effect on us ... Here we have

⁸⁹ Collated from Scheibe’s 1737 and 1745 accounts which differ slightly: *Der critische Musicus*, 15 (17 September 1737), 118; *Johann Adolph Scheibens ... Critischer Musikus*, p. 147.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

⁹¹ Johann Joachim Quantz, *On Playing the Flute*, trans. Edward R. Reilly (London: Faber, 1966), p. 342.

⁹² Morrow, *German Music Criticism*, pp. 45–65.

⁹³ *Wöchentliche Nachrichten*, 1/xvi (21 October 1766), 127.

⁹⁴ Hosler, *Changing Aesthetic Views of Instrumental Music*, pp. 1–30.

⁹⁵ Morrow, *German Music Criticism*, pp. 50–1, 99–133.

⁹⁶ *Der critische Musicus*, 7 (28 May 1737), 49–54; 23 (7 January 1738), 177–84.

a noteworthy example: a poem full of expression, and a musical setting full of masterly beauty, strength and expression, without any glimpse of great crowds of wallowing semiquavers.⁹⁷

The multifarious connotations of the German in music are evident in Reichardt's writings, which are suffused with such loaded terms as *Volk* and *Natur*. Arguing that musicians should follow nature, Reichardt elevated folk songs (taken by Herder as symbolising a people's or nation's identity) as the most genuine form of art: 'You will often find in a true folksong, which outlives the centuries, more true sense of art than in many great operas.'⁹⁸ His insistence on simplicity led him to praise the Singspiel as suiting the German language and character, as opposed to fully sung operas for the stereotypically impassioned Italians.⁹⁹ Yet alongside his appreciation of noble simplicity, Reichardt praised J. S. Bach as 'our greatest harmonist'. Quoting Goethe's account of Strasbourg cathedral – an account which detected an underlying unity behind the decorative detail of the facade, and which claimed Gothic architecture to be inherently German – Reichardt found a similar feeling in the fugues of Handel and Bach: 'My soul was filled with one great impression, which, since it consisted of a thousand harmonic details, I could readily taste and enjoy, but by no means understand or explain.'¹⁰⁰ Reichardt singled out the F Minor Fugue from Book 2 of Bach's *Das Wohltemperierte Clavier* (BWV881/ii) as having a beauty and expressivity otherwise found only in Handel's fugues. With its three-part texture and melodious lines, this fugue is relatively simple by Bach's standards. Nonetheless Reichardt was moving towards a patriotic appreciation of complexity that would ultimately usurp Scheibe's view of Bach's music as bombastic and confused. Such a shift reflected the complex constellation of cultural and political forces shaping notions of German music.

Conclusion

'It is not possible for me to hear a piece of music,' declared Reichardt in 1776, 'without making comments on it, and I cannot keep these to myself.'¹⁰¹ For Reichardt and the other critics who shared this urge, the many periodicals founded in the eighteenth century provided the means to reach networks of *Kenner* and *Liebhaber* and to shape public opinion on music. Yet across the century, it proved impossible to sustain a music periodical for more than a few

⁹⁷ *Wöchentliche Nachrichten*, 1/xxviii (6 January 1767), 218.

⁹⁸ *Musikalisches Kunstmagazin*, 1 (1782), 3. ⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 161–2. ¹⁰⁰ Goethe quoted in *ibid.*, 196.

¹⁰¹ Johann Friedrich Reichardt, *Briefe eines aufmerksamen Reisenden die Musik betreffend ... Zweyter Theil* (Frankfurt and Breslau, 1776), pp. 98–9.

years. After the collapse of another of his ventures into music journalism, Reichardt lamented that 'our musical public seems to be too poor either in enthusiasm for art or in money to support the publication of the *Musikalische Monatschrift* that took the place of the *Musikalisches Wochenblatt*'.¹⁰² Only from 1798 onwards did Friedrich Rochlitz's *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* show that a music periodical could reach a wide audience and prove commercially sustainable (see Chapter 9, Laura Tunbridge's contribution to this volume). Consequently, German-language music criticism in the eighteenth century was varied and localised, based primarily on networks extending from Protestant cities such as Hamburg, Leipzig and Berlin. The music journals of this period preserve the contending voices of individual critics, whose views were shaped by their activities as performers, composers or theorists; their criticism must therefore be understood both within their local contexts as well as contributing to broader debates.

¹⁰² Friedrich Ludwig Aemilius Kunzen and Johann Friedrich Reichardt (eds.), *Studien für Tonkünstler und Musikfreunde* (Berlin, 1793), unpaginated preface.

· PART II ·
THE RISE OF THE PRESS

French Music Criticism in the Nineteenth Century, 1789–1870

MARK A. POTTINGER

The period between the outbreak of revolution in 1789 and the establishment of the Third Republic in 1871 is an age filled with the rise and fall of various political groups and philosophical definitions in France, from absolutism to communism, from classicism to romanticism. The economic and cultural importance of France increased well beyond its borders during this time, aided much by the will of its political leaders (e.g. Napoleon I and Napoleon III) and the industrial strength of its resources. In short, the period can be classified as an ‘age of becoming’ when nearly every aspect of French society was in development.

The great inheritors of the age were ‘the public’ or *le peuple*, a mixture of a growing administrative or educated class and a burgeoning working class, all primarily defined by the forces of urbanism and suddenly entrusted with the creation of a new political definition for the country. The French historian Jules Michelet (1798–1874) was a well-known supporter of this concept of ‘the public’ as evidenced by his widely read publication *Le Peuple* (Paris, 1846). Although Michelet saw a great divide growing among the social classes due to modernisation and industrialisation in French society, the book highlights his faith in the ‘innate goodness of the masses’ as espoused in the love of one’s country and its past. Equally so, Claude Henri de Rouvroy, comte de Saint-Simon (1760–1825) was another writer who embraced this new era of change by denouncing aristocratic privilege and arguing for a collective society unified by its desire for industry (e.g. *Le Nouveau christianisme*, 1825). His views eventually came to define a pseudo-religious movement known as Saint-Simonianism, which counted Berlioz, David and Liszt as members of the organisation.¹ What these two authors demonstrate in their writings is that this new era afforded certain sections of the urban public a critical voice in

I am grateful to Julian Rushton, Katharine Ellis and David Charlton for reading this chapter in draft and providing wonderful insights and advice.

¹ For information on the Saint-Simon movement and its connection to the musical world, see Ralph P. Locke, *Music, Musicians, and the Saint-Simonians* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

how culture was produced, seen, read and heard in society.² As a result, reading clubs and literary societies began to sprout up throughout France. By the middle of the century, there were well over 400 public reading rooms in Paris, where an individual could pay an entrance fee to a *cabinet de lecture* and read the latest publication. All of this activity encouraged a wider range of citizens than hitherto to discuss the cultural and political ideas of the day as well as take possession of their new inheritance.³

With the rise in literacy in France came an increase in the public consumption of ideas. For our purposes, this went hand in hand with public concerts and musical performances in the open air (e.g. gardens, boulevards, outdoor arenas), as well as cafés, salons and music halls. In addition, the rise of private instrumental lessons, orchestral societies and formal concert series, the building of music halls to accommodate larger orchestras and larger audiences⁴ and the establishment of formal music education for both men and women with the founding of the Paris Conservatoire in 1795 were all an outgrowth of the public's desire for a musical culture in which every individual could participate. In this context, music was not seen as separate from nation-building, but as involved in the very project of the people of France outgrowing the limitations of the past:⁵

The need to know stirs the entire world; civilization is advancing in giant steps and is overturning everything that gets in its way. Having arrived at its present level, it inspires in everyone the desire to be knowledgeable about everything that concerns him, be it his right, his duties, or his pleasures. There is no well-educated man, who, in our time, remains voluntarily removed from questions

² Although it is emphasised here that the urban population in France was setting the pace for ideas to be expressed and acted upon throughout the nineteenth century (see, for example, Anselm Gerhard, *The Urbanization of Opera: Music Theater in Paris in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998)), the rural population did have some influence on the political and cultural life in France. For information on the emergence of public opinion throughout France and the *voix publique*, see James R. Lehning, *Peasant and French: Cultural Contact in Rural France during the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); James H. Johnson, 'Musical Experience and the Formation of a French Musical Public', *Journal of Modern History*, 64/2 (January 1992), 191–226; and Barbara L. Kelly (ed.), *French Music, Culture, and National Identity, 1870–1939* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2008), pp. 197–250.

³ For general information about the rate of literacy in France and its social and cultural implications in the nineteenth century, see Martyn Lyons, *Readers and Society in Nineteenth-Century France: Workers, Women, Peasants* (New York: Palgrave, 2001); and James Smith Allen, *In the Public Eye: A History of Reading in Modern France, 1800–1940* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

⁴ Although there were nearly fifty Parisian concert halls active between 1828 and 1871, many were too small or contained poor acoustics to accommodate an orchestra of eighty-plus persons. Two of the largest concert venues in Paris that were built during this time include the 3,000-seat Salle Barthélemy in 1851 and the Cirque Napoléon (later the Cirque d'Hiver), a 5,000-seat auditorium built in 1852; see Jeffrey Cooper, *The Rise of Instrumental Music and Concert Series in Paris, 1828–1871* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1983), pp. 16–17.

⁵ For more information on the emergence of concert societies and the general consumption of music in France in the nineteenth century, see Jean Mongrédien, *La Musique en France, des lumières au romantisme, 1789–1830* (Paris: Flammarion, 1986); English version, *French Music from the Enlightenment to Romanticism, 1789–1830*, trans. Sylvain Frémaux (Portland: Amadeus, 1996); and Cooper, *The Rise of Instrumental Music and Concert Series in Paris*.

that are discussed before him. The language of the arts, and even that of the sciences, becomes every day more popular. The time of secrets is gone for everything, and he who would speak today of the ‘mysteries of his art’ will simply be hissed. But even though one wants to learn a great deal, one is forced to learn quickly. Now, nothing is more suitable for communicating readily the concepts one needs in the world at large than the journals, be they daily or periodical.⁶

François-Joseph Fétis (1784–1871), one of the most profound music writers of the age, published the above words in the inaugural issue of the *Revue musicale*, one of the first specialised music journals in France. As witnessed by these remarks, there was a great demand and desire for ideas to be expressed and understood in the public arena. More so than in any preceding age, to converse with ideas was paramount in being part of a time when one was expected to shape the destiny of a nation. Music criticism in France, then, was not in isolation from the public or part of a specialised project by a few writers, but a direct outgrowth of the nation’s desire to educate the masses in all that is ‘sounding’ around them.

In considering the recent literature on French criticism of the nineteenth century several narratives emerge. One narrative projects a movement from musical amateurism to musical professionalism, the so-called literary critic or *homme de lettres* who is soon outshone by the critical acumen of the music specialist;⁷ another and somewhat related narrative argues that all forms of music criticism in the early nineteenth century culminate in the writings of Hector Berlioz, arguably the finest (and most entertaining) music critic of the age, thus leaving little room for the amateur musician-critic or dilettante who was writing for the well-read popular press;⁸ while another posits that with the arrival of Beethoven’s symphonies in Paris in 1828 French criticism (and listening) changed for the better.⁹ My plan here is not to take on such

⁶ François-Joseph Fétis, *Revue musicale*, 1 (February 1827), 1–2; quoted and trans. in Peter Bloom, ‘François-Joseph Fétis and the *Revue musicale* (1827–1835)’, unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania (1972), 26–7.

⁷ See for example Mongrédien, *La Musique en France, des lumières au romantisme*; Shelagh Aitken, ‘Music and the Popular Press: Music Criticism in Paris during the First Empire’, unpublished PhD dissertation, Northwestern University (1987); Belinda Cannone, *La Réception des opéras de Mozart dans la presse parisienne, 1793–1829* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1991); and the more recent Rémy Campos, *François-Joseph Fétis: Musicographe* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2013), who presents Fétis as the ultra music professional who dwarfs all writings on music before him. As an alternative to this point of view, see both Katharine Ellis, ‘A Dilettante at the Opera: Issues in the Criticism of Julien-Louis Geoffroy, 1800–1814’, and Benjamin Walton, ‘The Professional Dilettante: Ludovic Vitet and *Le Globe*’, in Roger Parker and Mary Ann Smart (eds.), *Reading Critics Reading: Opera and Ballet Criticism in France from the Revolution to 1848* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

⁸ See for example Kerry Murphy, *Hector Berlioz and the Development of French Music Criticism* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1988).

⁹ See for example James H. Johnson, *Listening in Paris: A Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995) and Ora Frishberg Saloman, *Listening Well: On Beethoven, Berlioz, and other Music Criticism in Paris, Boston, and New York, 1764–1890* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), who both argue that

narratives but to suggest how differing critical modes of music engagement co-existed and thrived. Although one's critical stance was not exclusive of another – nor can one preclude authors changing their perspective over a long career – three critical positions begin to emerge when examining the writings of French critics of the nineteenth century: (1) as a self-appointed protector of the listening public in defending 'taste'; (2) as a holder and keeper of compositional rules to ensure the viability of music as a profession and to educate the public; and (3) as a torch bearer for the past and the future of music composition (i.e. criticism as history and canon formation).¹⁰ Thus, by taking such a perspective on French criticism in the nineteenth century, I hope not to walk down a purely chronological path nor to argue that the age belongs entirely to one or two critics, but to present a more neutral approach to the material that highlights the collectivity of the age and its ability to present co-existing musical perspectives that stand as the critical record of a people finding their voice.

Taste as the Arbiter of a 'Common' Truth

The most prolific writer of music criticism at the start of this period and one of the first writers to engage a growing public interest in music was Julien-Louis Geoffroy (1743–1814). Born in Brittany and later educated in Paris, Geoffroy was professor of rhetoric at the Collège des Quatre-Nations (Collège Mazarin) of the University of Paris. A fierce royalist supporter, Geoffroy was forced to leave Paris around the time of the Terror but returned soon after Napoleon's *coup d'état* on 18 Brumaire Year VIII (9 November 1799), whereupon he established himself as one of the foremost critics in the capital. As a testament to Geoffroy's fame and notoriety, his writings were later collected into a five-volume set and published as the *Cours de littérature dramatique* (Paris: Blanchard, 1819–20).¹¹

Geoffroy was a literary man – neither a musician nor a composer – who 'insisted on talking about music for his entire career, despite understanding hardly a single note of it'.¹² He wrote critical reviews of operas and theatrical

with the performance of Beethoven's symphonies in Paris romanticism took hold of the listening public in France and moved them to an awe-filled silence, thus bringing about a new critical voice in the musical press.

¹⁰ The tripartite nature of these perspectives is informed by Carl Dahlhaus's summary of the critical press in *Nineteenth-Century Music*, trans. J. Bradford Robinson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 244–62.

¹¹ For detailed information on the life and critical legacy of Geoffroy, see Charles-Marc Des Granges, *Geoffroy et la critique dramatique sous le Consulat et l'Empire, 1800–1814* (Paris: Hachette, 1897).

¹² Mongrédien, *La Musique en France, des lumières au romantisme*; quoted and trans. in Katharine Ellis, *Music Criticism in Nineteenth-Century France: La Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris, 1834–1880* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 8.

works in a regular column, or *feuilleton* (literally meaning ‘little page’), from 1800 to 1814 in the *Journal des débats*.¹³ Owing much to the fact that Geoffroy had access to a large readership during a time of strong national support and his own classical interests in the works of Racine and Corneille, his reviews on operatic works were primarily drawn along nationalist lines, so that the works of an Austrian composer such as Mozart suffered greatly under his pen. For example, when reviewing a performance of the French version of *Don Giovanni* in 1805 (i.e. *Don Juan*), Geoffroy found it ‘a feast or an extreme bounty that satisfies [all too] quickly’.¹⁴

Beyond his devotion to France, Geoffroy’s writings harboured a commitment to ‘taste’ and the accessibility of the untrained ear to the music compositions of the day: ‘As much as it was possible, I worked for the glory of the nation in combating bad taste, endeavouring to uphold the honour of French literature in one of the principal genres of our glorious national [tradition]’.¹⁵ According to Dahlhaus, ‘judgments of taste have always been . . . the province of a group, social stratum, class, or nation’.¹⁶ This view on ‘taste’ is informed by Kant’s *Critique of Judgement* (1790), which argues that there can be no universal perspective of ‘taste’ but only the illusion of such, and thus ‘good taste’ remains only a personal and subjective judgement that is verified by an appeal to a larger understood ‘truth’ (i.e. common sense).¹⁷ It follows then that when a critic such as Geoffroy proclaimed that a music composition or performance showed poor or good taste, it was in reference to the degree that the music presented ideas that were codified in the repertoire (e.g. French literature) and approved by a listening public (e.g. the national tradition). The problem of proving taste, then, was at the heart of the critic’s craft in defining their knowledge of the repertoire and ultimately his or her critique,¹⁸ which was often presented in aesthetic analogies and

¹³ The *Journal des débats, politiques et littéraires (Journal des débats et des décrets, 1789–1805; Journal de l’Empire, 1805–1814)* was founded among the volatile days surrounding the Revolution of 1789 as it published the actual debates of the National Assembly. Owing to its auspicious beginning, the *Journal des débats* was one of the most read weekly newspapers in France throughout the nineteenth century, its popularity superseded only by *La Presse, 1836–1935*, a conservative daily political paper; *Le Siècle, 1836–1932*, a daily newspaper that supported the constitutional monarchy of Louis Philippe and opposed Napoleon III; and *Le Petit Journal, 1863–1944*, a workers’ daily Parisian newspaper. The *Journal des débats* ceased publication in 1944 during the Second World War. The *feuilleton* usually appeared near the bottom quarter of the page, which was separated from the political news of the day with a heavy bold black line.

¹⁴ Geoffroy, *Journal des débats* [i.e. *Journal de l’Empire*] (19 September 1805), 2.

¹⁵ Geoffroy, *Journal des débats* [i.e. *Journal de l’Empire*] (22 November 1809); quoted in Des Granges, *Geoffroy et la critique dramatique*, p. 495.

¹⁶ Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, p. 246.

¹⁷ For a studied perspective on Kant’s notion of ‘taste’, see Anthony Savile, *Kantian Aesthetics Pursued* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993).

¹⁸ The number of female music critics in nineteenth-century France was extremely small, in large part because of the civil codes enacted by Napoleon in 1804, which forbade women from conducting an independent life outside of the home without the approval or support of the husband or a male

personal truths.¹⁹ We see this clearly in the writings of Geoffroy, who – owing (in part) to his lack of musical knowledge – chose to present a cultural and literary context when reviewing musical compositions so that the work was not perceived in isolation but as part of a larger aesthetic community of intellectual ideas. For example, when Geoffroy reviewed a performance of *Œdipe à Colone* in 1804, a three-act *tragédie lyrique* by Antonio Sacchini (1730–86) first performed in 1786, the French critic attempted to rise above the Gluck–Piccinni debate²⁰ of less than a generation before by arguing that Sacchini’s composition occupied the middle ground:

There came a man of genius superior to that of Gluck and Piccinni: for a long time he studied the ground; he observed that Gluck was too French, Piccinni too Italian; that the former was too concerned with the drama at the expense of the music, and that the latter, giving everything to the music, neglected the drama. After a few attempts at striking a good balance between the two genres, Sacchini found the middle way in *Œdipe à Colone*. He resolved the problem that consists in allying the dramatic interest with the musical effect; in reconciling the delights of the spirit and the heart with the pleasure of the senses. He gave a Europe a new spectacle, in letting her watch a touching tragedy clothed in delicious melody.²¹

As can be witnessed from the above words, Geoffroy chose not to discuss the actual music of the composition (i.e. the notes on the page) but rather how the operatic work struck a balance between two extremes (this approach is similar to that of Jean François de La Harpe (1739–1803), a critic who actively participated in the Gluck–Piccinni debate of the 1780s by denouncing the music of Gluck in favour of the Italian works of Sacchini).²² In this context, then, French critics such as Geoffroy were seeking a middle ground for music that appealed neither to an ardent music professional nor to a neophyte of

counterpart; it was not until 1946, when the French Constitution guaranteed women ‘equal rights to men in all spheres’, that this law was abandoned. To circumvent such a policy, many female critics wrote under male pseudonyms, the most famous being ‘George Sand’ or Amantine Lucille-Aurore Dupin, Marquise de Dudevant (1804–76), who, apart from being an acclaimed novelist, wrote articles for the main music journal in France, *La Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris*. For more information on the political and cultural situation for female critics in nineteenth-century France, see Wendelin Guentner (ed.), *Women Art Critics in Nineteenth-Century France: Vanishing Acts* (Lanham: University of Delaware Press, 2013); and Muriel Andrin, Laurence Brogniez et al. (eds.), *Femmes et critique(s): lettres, arts, cinéma* (Namur: Presses Universitaires de Namur, 2009).

¹⁹ See Katherine Kolb Reeve, ‘Rhetoric and Reason in French Music Criticism of the 1830s’, in Peter Bloom (ed.), *Music in Paris in the Eighteen-Thirties/La Musique à Paris dans les années mil huit cent trente* (Stuyvesant: Pendragon, 1987).

²⁰ For a thorough discussion of the debate, see François Lesure (ed.), *Querelle des Gluckistes et des Piccinnistes: Texte des pamphlets avec introduction, commentaires et index* (Geneva: Minkoff Reprint, 1984).

²¹ Geoffroy, *Journal des débats* (10 brumaire an 13/1 November 1804), 3; quoted and trans. in Ellis, *Music Criticism in Nineteenth-Century France*, p. 11.

²² See Julian Rushton and Manuel Couvreur, ‘La Harpe, Jean François de’, in Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (eds.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., vol. 10 (London: Macmillan, 2001), p. 363.

musical aesthetics, but to one whose mind was seasoned with concern for artistic balance in beauty and form.

Although one might argue that the predilection for the dictates of taste as described here was an element that occurred only in the early part of the century, when musical amateurism reigned in the press, such a critical stance persisted well beyond the Napoleonic era in France. Théophile Gautier (1811–72), a well-known poet and a strong defender of liberalism and the tenets of romanticism, was a theatre and dance critic for *La Presse* from 1837 to 1855,²³ *Le Moniteur universel* from 1855 to 1871,²⁴ and then briefly with the specialised music journal the *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris* (more on this journal later) before his death a year later. Gautier was no more a trained musician than Geoffroy, so his critical writings on music were often filled with comparisons to both the literary and visual worlds, but references to musical terms and ideas remain, as in his review of the 1838 premiere of Berlioz's *Benvenuto Cellini* at the Paris Opéra:

The waiting for the premiere of this piece by the musical world excited the same anxious curiosity that awoke in the literary world during the most turbulent eras of Romantic reform ... [for the Romantics] their first thought ... was to free themselves from the old classical rhythm with its unending drone, its obligatory cadences and its predetermined pauses; just as Victor Hugo displaces caesuras, uses enjambments and varies, by all kinds of devices, the monotony of the poetic phrase, Hector Berlioz changes time, deceives the ear, which was expecting a symmetrical recurrence, and punctuates as he sees fit the musical phrase ... [Berlioz] makes the instruments sing much more than had hitherto been the case, and, by the abundance and variety of his patterns, he has amply compensated for the lack of rhythm of certain sections ... With both [Berlioz and Hugo] there is the same enthusiasm for the dreamy, complicated art of Germany and England, and the same disdain for the too bare, too simple line of classical art; there is the same search for great and violent effects, the same inclination to proceed synthetically and to develop several thoughts simultaneously, there is also the same exact translation of natural effects.²⁵

²³ Founded by the novelist and politician Émile de Girardin (1802–81) in 1836, *La Presse* is considered one of the first of the so-called 'penny press' newspapers in France, owing to its inexpensive cost of production and purchase, with its surface ideas and a tabloid-style of writing for a working- and middle-class consumer. The paper was purchased directly from street vendors or by subscription. For more information on the industrialised press in France, see Dean de la Motte and Jeannene M. Przybylski (eds.), *Making the News: Modernity and the Mass Press in Nineteenth-Century France* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999).

²⁴ *Le Moniteur universel* (originally *Gazette nationale ou le moniteur universel* until 1811) was founded during the 1789 Revolution as one of the main newspapers chronicling the political debates of the National Assembly. Although the paper published articles on science, literature and art, it eventually became the official journal of the French government during Napoleon's reign and remains today an important voice for the French government under the auspices of the Ministry of Interior as the *Journal officiel de la République Française*.

²⁵ Théophile Gautier, 'Feuilleton de La Presse', *La Presse* (17 September 1838), 1; quoted and trans. in Michael Spencer, 'Théophile Gautier: Music Critic', *Music & Letters*, 49 (January 1968), 8–9.



Figure 7.1 J. J. Grandville, ‘Les Romains échevelés à la 1re représentation d’*Hernani*’, 1830 lithograph, 250 x 180 mm, Maison de Victor Hugo, Paris. Photograph by Culture Club/Getty Images.

As seen in the above words, Gautier was a great champion of the Romantics²⁶ and prized above all else originality in performance and in composition with a flair for the eclectic, witnessed not only here but in his celebrated obituary of Berlioz.²⁷ In opposition to the status of music earlier in

²⁶ Gautier’s affiliation with the French Romantic school was auspiciously defined with his participation in the opening performance of Victor Hugo’s *Hernani* at the Comédie Française on 25 February 1830 (see Figure 7.1). Dressed in green trousers and a pink waistcoat, Gautier rallied with other young ‘Bohemians’ (e.g. Gérard de Nerval, Pétrus Borel, Théophile Dondey, Célestin Nanteuil) to challenge the old guard of classic French theatre in order to embrace a new freedom of verse and human action for the French stage.

²⁷ Gautier, *Journal officiel de la République Française* (16 March 1869); the obituary is reprinted with minor changes in Gautier’s *Histoire du romantisme* (Paris: Charpentier, 1874), pp. 259–70. Berlioz was a great

the century under the critical eye of Geoffroy, Gautier reveals in his critical writings a glimpse into the inner world of music that sought comparison with other forms of artistic production during a time when art was applauded for going beyond the immediate in order to touch upon the infinite.²⁸ However, to adhere to such a desire for the music, similar to Geoffroy, Gautier showed an affinity for the dictates of the listening public who were well versed in other forms of cultural production, seeking to listen and to contemplate one's time and not necessarily the rules of composition or a definition of the composer's craft. Such writings were found in the critical reviews of the musician-critic, who sought a more focused discussion on the music itself.

The 'Rule' Approach to Criticism

Although throughout the nineteenth century compositional rules were becoming less valuable as an 'aesthetic *guarantee* for the claims of music to rank as art',²⁹ musical rules presented a hope to the composer and the musician-critic alike to lessen failure and to invite comprehension by the listening public. The musician-critic would often be concerned with the formal properties of the music (e.g. melodic phrase, harmony, instrumentation, tempo), thus affording music an autonomous place in the arts and an elevated form of journalism. In this vein, when a composer is deemed to have violated a rule, then the critic's position is to punish the lawbreaker and to convey to the reader a commitment to keep the discussion squarely on the music, thereby maintaining the standards of the profession. One of the first French critics of the nineteenth century who was both a musician and a critic and whose journalistic writings became a model for a 'rule' approach to criticism is François-Henri Joseph Blaze (1784–1857) or Castil-Blaze.³⁰

Castil-Blaze started his journalistic career by writing a weekly column in the *Journal des débats* from 1820 to 1832. He was the first musician to hold a post at an established newspaper in France, thus highlighting the place music criticism or music listening had for the general public and indeed for

admirer of Gautier's own published work as evidenced by his setting of Gautier's poems for the song cycle *Les Nuits d'été* (1841).

²⁸ For example, in 'Bodies at the Opéra: Art and the Hermaphrodite in the Dance Criticism of Théophile Gautier', in Parker and Smart (eds.), *Reading Critics Reading*, the author Maribeth Clark points out that Gautier's critical writings on dance continually compare the dancers to 'classical figures in paintings, cameos, frescoes, and ancient Greek sculpture' (p. 237).

²⁹ Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, p. 245.

³⁰ According to David Cairns, François-Henri Joseph Blaze used the pseudonym of Castil-Blaze to differentiate between himself and his father, Henri-Sébastien Blaze (1763–1833), who was both a composer and music critic for several periodicals in France; see Hector Berlioz, *The Memoirs of Hector Berlioz*, ed. and trans. David Cairns (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), p. 586.

the owners of the journal itself.³¹ Although born and raised in the Provinces, and thus stigmatised as an individual lacking culture and refinement, the reputation of Castil-Blaze as a knowledgeable musician-critic was made surer in the public's eye not only by the fact that he was one of the first generation of students at the Paris Conservatoire, but also through the successful publication of *De l'opéra en France* (Paris, 1820) and the widely read *Dictionnaire de musique moderne* (Paris, 1821).³² Owing to his musical training and his lawyer's mind (Castil-Blaze first came to Paris in 1799 to study law and then later served in an administrative position in Vaucluse before returning once again to Paris in 1820 to begin a career in music),³³ he sought a form of criticism that was instructional for the musician and the music-lover alike. Suffused throughout his reviews are words such as *transpositions*, *la tonique* and *basses continues*, which appear with such regularity that it prompted some of his colleagues at the *Journal des débats* to complain of their overuse.³⁴ Thus, Castil-Blaze took care to utilise terminology that highlighted his allegiance to the craft of composition but also to educate the French public in how to understand and hear musical works. He even went so far, for example, as to write arrangements of Italian and German works for the French public, where he was often accused of taking extreme liberties with the musical settings of his so-called 'castilblazades', a term defined by Berlioz as he campaigned to preserve the composer's original composition against such 'hackwork'.³⁵ In his defence, Castil-Blaze sought only to ensure the success of foreign or even older works by adapting them to the current sensibilities of the French, whereupon he would critique the faults of such works in order to highlight current compositional practice and thus defend his adaptations.³⁶

No area of the musical world was absent from the critical view of Castil-Blaze, including purely instrumental music, which was often ignored by the non-musician critic owing to the lack of a dramatic text. To be sure, the

³¹ The Bertin family were the most prominent owners of the periodical; Louis-François Bertin (1766–1841), who Ingres immortalised in 1832 with a famous portrait, was the principal family member who acquired the publication in 1799. The family were great patrons of music, serving as the principal supporter of Berlioz, who eventually replaced Castil-Blaze as chief music contributor to the *Journal des débats* from 1834 until 1863.

³² For in-depth analysis of the journalistic career of Castil-Blaze, see Donald G. Gíslason, 'Castil-Blaze, *De l'opéra en France* and the Feuilletons of the *Journal des Débats* (1820–1832)', unpublished PhD dissertation, University of British Columbia (1992).

³³ See Gíslason, 'Castil-Blaze', 42–3. ³⁴ *Ibid.*, 71–2.

³⁵ For a discussion of how such a pragmatic approach to the recitatives and vocal writing in Gluck's operas drew the ire of Berlioz, see Mark Everist, 'Gluck, Berlioz, and Castil-Blaze: The Poetics and Reception of French Opera', in Parker and Smart (eds.), *Reading Critics Reading*.

³⁶ For a detailed discussion of the reception in France of Weber's works via Castil-Blaze's arrangements, see Frank Heidberger, *Carl Maria von Weber und Hector Berlioz: Studien zur französischen Weber-Rezeption* (Tübingen: Hans Schneider, 1994).

formation in Paris of several music and concert societies in the 1820s and 1830s helped to support the critical project of Castil-Blaze. In addition, the musical activity of the famed conductor François-Antoine Habeneck (1781–1849) was also fundamental in this regard owing to his unrivalled music direction of the Paris Opéra from 1831 to 1846 as well as being the founder and director of the *Société des Concerts du Conservatoire*, which became (from 1828 on) one of the most revered orchestras in Europe.³⁷ In the end, Castil-Blaze's intention was to enlarge the public's definition of serious music so that all musical activity was given the same critical weight. This is clearly seen in how he approached opera, which he assigned its own musical category in order to redefine the genre from the earlier notion espoused by Geoffroy as a literary work accompanied by music. To Castil-Blaze, the goal of dramatic music was to represent the very beauty of music itself; to do so, it must adhere to the inner rules of music, which can only be gleaned by studying the musical score, not the libretto:

If some critics propose that the first motive of the overture of [*La Mort du Tasse* by M[anuel] Garcia is the same as that found in the overture to *Gulnare* [by Dalayrac in 1798], I respond that this particular phrase is formed by the notes of the triad perfectly apparent to anyone, however it is more fortunately placed in this opera. M. Garcia accompanies the second motive of his overture with a phrase in the second violin, which creates a good effect. Although this phrase would be heard with greater pleasure if it did not appear when the first said motive was heard for the second time, the melody and its accompaniment appear two more times toward the end of the overture.³⁸

When he began writing for the *Journal des débats* in 1820, no other individual in the popular press rivalled Castil-Blaze in his musical acumen and his ability to speak directly about the music itself on practical matters of concern for the musician and the listening public. Although his writings lacked communion with larger aesthetic ideas of the musical world (e.g. notions of musical meaning and transcendent philosophy in art), Castil-Blaze's critical approach helped to demystify the craft of composition and performance and upheld established compositional rules in order to create a set of expected norms for the French public. In the end, as music-making became invariably linked to academic pursuits within the halls of the university, the 'rule approach' to French music criticism championed by Castil-

³⁷ For a detailed biographical study of François Habeneck's life and career, see the recent work of François Bronner, *François Antoine Habeneck (1781–1849): Biographie* (Paris: Hermann Editions, 2014).

³⁸ Castil-Blaze, *Journal des débats* (19 February 1821), 2; quoted in Gíslason, 'Castil-Blaze', 69. As noted by Gíslason, one of the unique aspects of Castil-Blaze's approach to music criticism was to study the actual score before passing judgement on the composition, a practice that he encouraged his readers to follow; see *ibid.*, 66–70.

Blaze in the mid-nineteenth century became the main stylistic voice of the French specialised press.

Criticism as History and Canon Formation

As Ellis remarks, ‘Castil-Blaze was less a bringer of overnight change than a transitional figure’ to a more progressive form of criticism that highlighted the future of music composition and performance in France and established a canon for years to come.³⁹ This was primarily the realm of the specialised musical press that went beyond the general interest of the French public and wrote directly to the amateur and professional musician.

We first see a glimpse of this critical approach in one of the early specialised music journals in nineteenth-century France, *La Correspondance des amateurs musiciens* (1802–05). This twice-weekly publication was edited by ‘Cocatrix, Amateur’,⁴⁰ a mysterious individual who focused his or her attention on orchestral concerts, performance styles, aesthetic rules of taste, organology and music for the amateur to perform in the home.⁴¹ The critical reviews centred primarily on the three main concert societies in Paris: the *exercices publics d’élèves* at the Conservatoire (a concert series from winter to early summer made up of students, teachers and alumni at the Paris Conservatoire; the concert series began in 1800 and ceased in 1824),⁴² the *Concerts de la rue Cléry* (a subscription-based concert series made up of about eighty players; it was founded in 1798 and disbanded in 1805)⁴³ and the *Concerts de la rue Grenelle* (the series was primarily dedicated to the music of young composers as well as aspiring amateur and professional musicians; the concert series began in 1803 and ended in 1806).⁴⁴ By focusing on concert series almost exclusively rather than on theatrical works, the publication accepted instrumental music on its own terms as the main source of engagement and not simply as an accompaniment to the dramatic ideas of a libretto.

³⁹ Ellis, *Music Criticism in Nineteenth-Century France*, p. 27.

⁴⁰ According to Ellis, Cocatrix was an amateur musician from western France (La Rochelle), who arrived in Paris in 1797, staying for about seven years before moving on; see Ellis, *Music Criticism in Nineteenth-Century France*, p. 256.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 14–15.

⁴² For more information on the series, see Jean Mongrédien, ‘Les Premiers exercices publics d’élèves (1800–1815) d’après la presse contemporaine’, in Anne Bongrain, Yves Gérard, and Marie-Hélène Coudroy-Saghai (eds.), *Le Conservatoire de Paris: des Menus-Plaisirs à la Cité de la Musique, 1795–1995* (Paris: Buchet-Chastel, 1996); and David Charlton, John Trevitt and Guy Gosselin, ‘Paris’, in Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (eds.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., vol. 19 (London: Macmillan, 2001), pp. 107–9.

⁴³ See Boris Schwarz, *French Instrumental Music between the Revolutions, 1789–1830* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1987), pp. 21–6.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

Haydn's symphonies were seen as the prime example of such music with their formal construction of rhetorical gestures and immediate accessibility to linguistic narratives, as the following review of Haydn's Symphony No. 100 at the *Concerts de la rue Grenelle* attests:

The Haydn symphony, called military or Turkish, ... needs to be heard, listened to, meditated upon several times before one can present an accurate response. He is a profound teacher, this Haydn, with him stones become diamonds. Take care; his motifs at first seem common, well known, worn maybe. This is false; the engineering designer who creates them, and the pure taste that directs them will soon prove to you that you are hearing these motives for the first time. He is a Proteus, a true magician. The *andante* of the symphony offers to the imagination wonderment, a vast tableau that appears to represent all the richness, all the brilliant glory of a *pompe orientale*. It is a magnificent Sultan sitting on his throne of glory, surrounded by all pleasures, intoxicated by all delights; it is, in a word, ideal beauty that belongs only to genius, whose definition is in any language.⁴⁵

Although the review displays a naivety to the inner workings of music composition, it aspires nonetheless to create a narrative that apprehends the mystery of instrumental music for a novice listener who was often not familiar with listening to music without a story but who was still in awe of the medium. Unlike the critical approach of writers on taste, here the author is seeking not to relate music to other areas of the arts, but to use descriptive language that captures the ability of the music to say something about itself. Yet, at the same time, the author's use of the term 'genius' also points the reader to a larger universal, which sees the creators of music as part of something greater than themselves, whereby a canon of musical genius is formed.

The concept of 'genius' in music was well articulated in France in the late eighteenth century by writers such as Rousseau, who saw it as an internal fire that forces an individual to submit 'the whole universe to his art ... continually ... burning but ... never consumed'.⁴⁶ It was not until the late 1820s via the lectures and writings of the French philosopher Victor Cousin (1792–1867) that the following definition of genius found its way in the critical press in France: '*instruments of destiny* who realized that their greatness lay not in their individuality but in their knowledge that they were vehicles for the expression of widely felt ideas which lesser men were unable to

⁴⁵ Unsigned, *Correspondance des amateurs musiciens*, 2/2 (13 nivôse an 12/4 January 1804), 12–13. As pointed out to me by Julian Rushton, the possible author of this review is the Belgian composer Jérôme-Joseph de Momigny (1762–1842), who wrote of Haydn symphonies in a similar fashion.

⁴⁶ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 'Génie', *Dictionnaire de musique* (Paris, 1768); English trans. William Waring, *The Complete Dictionary of Music* (London, 1779), p. 182.

articulate'.⁴⁷ In this context, then, the desire is for music to be an eternal art form that does not appeal to fashion or to the 'common' sense of the listening public but to an overarching creative spirit that propels the work.

Although the French novelist Honoré de Balzac (in Part Two of his novel *Illusions perdues*, 1839–44) argued against the objectivity of this all too pervasive critical perspective in France, stating that 'one of the perfidies of Parisian journalists was to mask personal spite as critique from the vantage point of the World Spirit',⁴⁸ the desire to preserve in the concert repertoire works of genius invites nonetheless a critical approach that appeals to history, for one must use knowledge of the past to justify the elevation of the work but also an awareness of its ability to speak to future generations. The music critic thus becomes the upholder of an eternal truth, a priest of a sacred text that will be judged by future generations. It is no wonder then that it is a music historian that begins a new wave of specialised music journals in the late 1820s by upholding 'an unhappy middle between a long-lost "classic" period and a "romantic" future whose day has not yet arrived'.⁴⁹

Following the closure of *Correspondence* in 1805 and the all too brief run of the *Tablettes des polynnie* from January 1810 to October 1811,⁵⁰ the *Revue musicale* (1827–35), a weekly publication, was the next major specialist music journal to appear in France. The *Revue musicale* was founded by one of the first graduates of the Paris Conservatoire, François-Joseph Fétis (1784–1871), who nearly single-handedly ran the entire publication until 1833, when he handed over the reins of the periodical to his eldest son Edouard (1812–1909) in order to take over the directorship at the Brussels Conservatory of Music.⁵¹ Similar to previous specialised music periodicals, Fétis's publication sought to present a detailed assessment of current performance practice, theory, composition, organography, biographical research and critical reviews on the orchestral and vocal music of the day. The periodical was acquired in 1835 by the German music publisher Maurice Schlesinger (1798–1871) and became *La Revue et Gazette musicale*

⁴⁷ Cousin, *Cours de philosophie* (1828); Ellis, *Music Criticism in Nineteenth-Century France*, p. 41. Incidentally, this definition of 'genius' corresponds quite well with the *grands hommes* project of the Panthéon in Paris, which began to inter 'the great men' of 'the grateful homeland' in 1791.

⁴⁸ Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, p. 249. ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 247.

⁵⁰ The *Tablettes des polynnie: Journal consacré à tout ce qui intéresse l'art musical* was founded by the French vocal pedagogue and composer Alexis de Garaudé (1779–1852) and his former Italian composition instructor Giuseppe Maria Cambini (1746–1825). Although the journal published only thirty-three issues during its brief tenure, it does offer to the reader a glimpse into the musical thinking of the French public during the final years of Napoleon's reign, albeit somewhat skewed towards Italian models of composition. For more information about the journal and its contents, see Ellis, *Music Criticism in Nineteenth-Century France*, pp. 14, 21–7.

⁵¹ For detailed information about Fétis's career and musical outlook, see Bloom, 'François-Joseph Fétis and the *Revue musicale*'; and Campos, *François-Joseph Fétis*.

de Paris, a formidable publication that courted all the major music writers in Europe.⁵²

Fétis believed in and espoused the ideas of history within the *Revue musicale*, so much so that Cousin, who published and lectured on ideas such as eclecticism and relativism in understanding the meaning of the past,⁵³ made a great impression on Fétis's music historical thinking as found in his publication.⁵⁴ To Cousin, history had two levels of inquiry, the 'real' and the 'true'. The real represented external events for the historian, while the philosopher of history analysed the external events in order to understand the overall meaning or a larger truth. In this perspective, all art culminates into an overarching 'truth' that is substantiated by the 'real'. While 'rule'-defining critics such as Castil-Blaze searched for the 'real' in their music criticism (i.e. the rules that define music composition and performance), Fétis sought to understand the 'truth' of such 'real' observations, as evidenced in his opening three-page article on the periodical's mission that appeared in the first issue:

As civilization advances, one's needs become more specialized and demand new organs of the press. Political newspapers, designed to elucidate society about its dearest concerns, can give only a small amount of space to items that for them are of only secondary importance, such as the discoveries and inventions that are made every day in science, art, and industry. Their rapid reviews

⁵² *La Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris* is considered by many to be the most important specialised music periodical of the nineteenth century. Founded by Maurice Schlesinger, the weekly periodical was originally titled the *Gazette musicale de Paris*, which began its serial publication on 5 January 1834. After Schlesinger acquired the *Revue musicale* from Fétis, the periodical was titled *La Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris*, which ran from 1 November 1835 to 31 December 1880. Schlesinger sold the periodical in 1846 to the French music publisher Louis Brandus, who continued the success of the publication. *La Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris* was the main voice for Austro-German music in France, including the works of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Weber. The periodical also championed the music of Meyerbeer and Berlioz (among others), whose compositions were published by Schlesinger and later Brandus. Important contributors include (among many) Berlioz, Castil-Blaze, Balzac, George Sand, Fétis, d'Indy, Liszt, d'Ortigue, Robert Schumann and Wagner. The most comprehensive study of the periodical is Ellis, *Music Criticism in Nineteenth-Century France*, which includes a complete list of the writers and an in-depth discussion of the overall aesthetic content of the publication.

⁵³ Victor Cousin was highly influential during the July Monarchy (1830–48), an important political era in France's history that was often characterised as a *juste milieu* (i.e. a middle ground) between the extremes of royalism and republicanism. Cousin's philosophy of history essentially argued for a synthesis of past truths in order to represent an 'eclectic' mix for the present. Certain points in time were not to be rejected simply because they were superseded by later developments, but all moments in the past contain levels of 'truth' that provide substance and meaning that can be meticulously observed and explained. The present is simply a culmination of past 'truths'. For a more detailed study of Cousin and his influence in mid-nineteenth-century France, see Claude Bernard, *Victor Cousin, ou, La religion de la philosophie* (Toulouse: Presses universitaires du Mirail, 1991); and Alan Spitzer, *The French Generation of 1820* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 71–96.

⁵⁴ For a brief time, Fétis also wrote review articles for *Le National: Feuille politique et littéraire* (Paris, 1830–51) and *Le Temps: Journal des progrès politiques, scientifiques, littéraires et industriels* (Paris, 1829–42), two liberal dailies that appeared around the time of the 1830 Revolution; see Bloom, 'François-Joseph Fétis and the *Revue musicale*', 52–7.

and superficial analysis can therefore only be considered as a sort of invitation to examine further the facts they present or the opinions they venture.⁵⁵

We see Fétis taking up this ‘invitation to examine’ in later review articles, as in the following discussion of Chopin’s debut performance in Paris, 27 February 1832:

To speak these days of a pianist who has a good deal of talent, or, if you will, a great talent, is simply to indicate that he is a competitor or a rival of several artists of the first order whose names everyone knows quite well . . . But here is a young man, who surrendering himself to his natural impressions and taking no model, has found, if not a complete renewal of piano music, at least a part of that which we have long sought in vain, namely, an abundance of original ideas of a kind to be found nowhere else. This is not at all to say that M. Chopin is gifted with an imagination so powerful as Beethoven’s, nor that his music features the remarkably bold conceptions found in the music of that great man: Beethoven wrote music for the piano; but here I am speaking of music by pianists, and it is in this regard that I find in M. Chopin his inspirations the symptoms of a renewal of forms which may henceforth exercise a great deal of influence upon this branch of the art.⁵⁶

As seen in the above examples, the *Revue musicale* (and its later manifestation, *La Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris*) helped to establish the authoritative voice of the critic as a philosopher of music history, which was furthered even more by the many short stories on music and composer biographies published within its pages.⁵⁷ Thus, the status of the critic as espoused by the journal stemmed from the short stories, serious essays and acute observation of its writers, who were defined in a similar fashion to that of the music and artists reviewed: ‘as [individuals] apart, living on a superior plan to that of the common herd and often suffering the indignity of incomprehension at the hands of philistines who disparaged [them] in part for [their] lowly status as a servant’.⁵⁸ The reverence afforded the composer and the critic in the specialised music press were not in short supply following Fétis’s departure from

⁵⁵ Fétis, ‘Utilité d’un journal de musique et plan de celui-ci’, *Revue musicale*, 1 (February 1827), 2; quoted and trans. in Bloom, ‘François-Joseph Fétis and the *Revue musicale*’, 27.

⁵⁶ Fétis, *Revue musicale*, 12 (3 March 1832), 38; quoted and trans. in Bloom, ‘François-Joseph Fétis and the *Revue musicale*’, 301–2.

⁵⁷ Short stories, novelettes, editorials, and dialogues on music written by several acclaimed writers (e.g. Jules Janin, Dumas, Hoffman, Balzac, Liszt, Berlioz) appear in both the *Gazette musicale* and *La Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris*, helping to solidify the heightened perspective on composers of the past (e.g. Janin, ‘Stradella, ou le poète et la musicien’, 1836) as well as the current and future of music making (e.g. Berlioz, ‘Euphonia, ou la ville musicale’, 1844); see Ellis, *Music Criticism in Nineteenth-Century France*, pp. 262–5, for a list of writings that appeared in the journal from 1834 to 1846.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

Paris;⁵⁹ in fact it increased substantially through the critical writings of Hector Berlioz (1803–69), a professional composer-critic.⁶⁰

Berlioz began his journalistic career as early as 1823 when he wrote the first of three unsolicited, ‘highly opinionated and flamboyant’ articles for *Le Corsaire*, a daily newspaper on all literary and artistic matters of the day.⁶¹ In the three articles, Berlioz took to task what he saw as a pervasive atmosphere of musical ignorance and dilettantism both in the press as well as the listening public, even castigating the revered Castil-Blaze for his negative opinions of Gluck.⁶² It is no surprise then that Berlioz continued this same combative stance when he took to the journalistic profession formally in 1833, writing for *L’Europe littéraire* and *La Rénovateur*, two short-run periodicals in Paris, before landing the prestigious position of head music writer at the *Journal des débats* (succeeding Castil-Blaze) in 1834 and also debuting as a regular contributor to Schlesinger’s *Gazette musicale de Paris* (later *La Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris*) that same year.⁶³

Although Berlioz was a recent Prix de Rome winner and achieved some level of notoriety in the press for his compositions (see for example Fétis’s articles on Berlioz in the *Revue musicale* starting in 1828),⁶⁴ he primarily

⁵⁹ Fétis continued to write for the *Revue musicale* (since 1835, *La Revue et gazette musical de Paris*) while living in Belgium, writing for the publication well into his eighties. Fétis’s profound interest in history was also well defined throughout his career, evidenced by the publication of his *Biographie universelle des musiciens et bibliographie générale de la musique* (Paris: H. Fournier, 1835–44), an impressive eight-volume encyclopedia on the life and works of thousands of composers from the past and present, as well as his sketches of the history of music theory, *Esquisse de l’histoire de l’harmonie* (Paris, 1840), and of music in general, *Histoire générale de la musique* (Paris, 1869–76).

⁶⁰ Along with Berlioz, the Hungarian-born French pianist and composer Stephen Heller (1813–88) and the composer and conductor Edmé Deldevez (1817–97) were also well defined in the French musical press. I am grateful to Julian Rushton for directing me to the work of these two composer-critics.

⁶¹ The articles appeared on 12 August 1823, 11 January 1824, and 19 December 1825, respectively; Murphy, *Hector Berlioz*, pp. 39, 229.

⁶² See Everist, ‘Gluck, Berlioz, and Castil-Blaze’, pp. 88–92.

⁶³ Berlioz wrote for the *Journal des débats* for nearly thirty years, when despair and disillusionment with the journalistic profession eventually took its toll and he became ‘morbidly conscious of death’ (Hugh Macdonald, ‘Berlioz’, in Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (eds.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., vol. 3 (London: Macmillan, 2001), p. 397). Although he retired from the *Journal* in 1863, he continued to serve as an editor of *La Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris* until 1868 (see Ellis, *Music Criticism in Nineteenth-Century France*, p. 249). The critical writings of Hector Berlioz are found in a multiple-volume set entitled *La Critique musicale, 1823–1863*, eds. H. Robert Cohen, Yves Gérard, Anne Bongrain and Marie-Hélène Coudroy-Saghai (Paris: Buchet/Chastel, 1996–). Ten volumes comprise the entire critical edition; currently eight volumes exist (writings from 1823 to 1855). For a complete catalogue of his critical writings and musical works, see D. Kern Holoman, *Catalogue of the Works of Hector Berlioz* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1987).

⁶⁴ Fétis first met Berlioz when he was a prospective student applying for admission to the composition classes of the Conservatoire; see Fétis’s description of their meeting in Michael Rose, *Berlioz Remembered* (London: Faber and Faber, 2001), p. 16. In spite of his initial impression of Berlioz, Fétis was fairly balanced in his reviews of the then young composer. All things changed, however, when Fétis published a damaging assessment of the composer and his *Symphonie fantastique* in the *Revue musicale* (1 February 1835); see Edward T. Cone (ed.), *Berlioz: Fantastic Symphony* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1971), pp. 215–20.

turned to music criticism owing to his struggles as a composer. As he fought against the pragmatic conservatism of the critics of his music (most notably Castil-Blaze and Fétis), Berlioz attempted to create a platform for his compositions to be received and admired by highlighting notions of a larger dramatic truth that can only be defined when compositions (for example, his magnum opus, *Les Troyens*) channelled the variety of concepts found in earlier works and were guided by a desire for a unity of musical expression with poetic ideas. As noted by musicologist Hugh Macdonald, however, this strategy ultimately failed, leaving his journalism ‘an independent professional activity, executed with extreme flair and wit, but in fact making his stature as a composer all the harder to establish’.⁶⁵ Perhaps owing to this curious mixture of self-defeat with an acute awareness of the conservative nature of his own musical present, Berlioz’s criticism became an ‘idiosyncratic admixture of autobiography, analysis, and true criticism’,⁶⁶ a point that Katharine Ellis reiterates:

[Berlioz’s literary technique is characterised by a] sensitivity to rhythm in prose, often reflecting the overall shape of the music; an ability to suspend closure and build to a climax, thereby observing what Berlioz calls the . . . ‘law of crescendo’; a drawing in of the reader through exhortations such as ‘Listen!’ or ‘See how . . . ’; integration of technical explanations relating to harmony, instrumentation, and phrase structure into poetic prose; reference to the category of the romantic sublime, expressed either in terms of the listener’s extreme emotional reaction, or by means of analogies of vastness and natural tempestuousness applied to the music itself; interpolation of literary quotations, often from Shakespeare or Virgil; and finally, an explicit distinction between Berlioz’s own view and that of (postulated) uncomprehending philistines – a device that neatly interlocks with the drawing in of the reader by encouraging a sense of solidarity: critic and reader become fellow initiates.⁶⁷

His career trajectory notwithstanding, Berlioz reviewed nearly all forms of music activity in Paris, including ‘most of the concerts of the Société des Concerts; he wrote of new instruments and musical gadgets, of his own impressions of music abroad and of important musicians visiting France; he wrote biographical notices of Gluck, Beethoven, Spontini, Méhul and himself; he wrote fiction and fantasy, often with a critical purpose; he wrote serialized treatises on orchestration and conducting’.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Macdonald, ‘Berlioz’, p. 408.

⁶⁶ D. Kern Holoman, *Berlioz* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 362.

⁶⁷ Katharine Ellis, ‘The Criticism’, in Peter Bloom (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Berlioz* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 158.

⁶⁸ Macdonald, ‘Berlioz’, p. 407.

A true product of the professionalism both composition and music journalism now enjoyed, Berlioz and other composer-critics became entangled by their apparent interdependence. As noted in the histories of many of the specialised music journals, the circulation of musical compositions and the subsequent review articles of their performances were often published by the same editor or music publishing house; for example, a composition published by the Heugel publishing firm was also reviewed in *Le Ménestrel*, the firm's own weekly music journal.

Along with *La Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris* and *La France musicale* (a weekly periodical founded by the music publishers Marie-Pierre-Pascal-Yves Escudier (1819–80) and his brother Léon Escudier (1821–81), which ran from 31 December 1837 to 31 July 1870), *Le Ménestrel* was one of the chief music periodicals in Paris throughout the nineteenth century. The periodical was published weekly from 1 December 1833 to its final issue on 5 April 1940. Jacques-Léopold Heugel (1815–83) acquired the periodical in 1840. The Heugel Firm primarily published popular compositions by composers such as David, Offenbach, Thomas and Delibes, thus making the periodical a voice piece for the positive reception of light French works. The two most significant writers for the journal include Jules Lovy (1801–63), who was with the publication from the very beginning as a contributing author (1833–6) and as editor-in-chief (1836–63), and the famous early music enthusiast Joseph d'Ortigue (1802–66), who before starting his work as chief editor at the journal in 1863 founded the periodical *La Maîtrise* (1857–60), which promoted the reform of church music in France. Thus, the 'business' of being a critic in France became increasingly economically defined, often cheapened by the motivation for a strong sales forecast of a particular composition. Yet, at the same time, with the proliferation of the specialised music journals and their desire to fix or canonise the repertoire with works supported by the same publishing firm, music criticism became less part of a populist tradition and more of an engagement for the music-makers themselves, shaping music into an autonomous art form that no longer reflected the public's desire for it but the needs and interests of professionals. This point is illustrated, if not admitted to, by Berlioz in his published memoirs, which the composer began in 1848 after fifteen years as a professional critic:

This self-perpetuating task [of music criticism] poisons my life. And yet, quite apart from the income I get from it, which I cannot do without, I see no prospect of being able to give it up. To do so would leave me without weapons, exposed to all the rancour and hatred that I have incurred by it. For in one sense the Press is a more useful weapon than the spear of Achilles. Not only can it heal the wounds it has inflicted; it also serves the user as

a shield. Oh, but the manoeuvrings, the abject subterfuges I am obliged to practise! The circumventions in order to avoid telling the truth, the concessions to society and even to public opinion, the rage repressed, the shame swallowed! Yet there are those who think me violent, scathing, supercilious in what I write. Fools! If I really spoke my mind, you would find the nettles you complain of a bed of roses compared with the gridiron on which I would roast you.⁶⁹

The voice of a frustrated composer-critic aside, it would take a more radical shift in the national politics for this increasing interdependence of composition and music criticism to change, one centred on the debates concerning modernity and the music and writings of Wagner – a shift further hardened by the alliances formed by the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 and the subsequent Paris Commune of 1871.⁷⁰

Believing that journalism contained the voice of a new generation coming of age following revolution and the start of a new century, this chapter set out to present a set of aesthetic tendencies in music criticism during a time of great change in France – as a harbinger of taste, a presentation of pragmatic rules for the profession and as a product of history to fix repertoire. None of these proved to be exclusive of the other, but co-existed and stood as the critical record of how the French heard and understood the music around them. In the end, music criticism in nineteenth-century France was a curious mixture of public performance and self-service, where rhetorical positions would often change in order to cast oneself in a kind of ‘verbal caricature’ (e.g. the enlightened, the ignoramus or even the comedian) for the hope and benefit of capturing the public’s attention.⁷¹ In this context, the music writers as discussed here were not isolated men of thought and musical understanding, but were shaped by the very medium by which they were engaging, a verbal public arena where the agency of voice was defined.

⁶⁹ David Cairns (ed.), *The Memoirs of Hector Berlioz* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), pp. 230–1.

⁷⁰ For detailed study of French music-making and the critical press in relation to the music and writings of Wagner in France, see André Coeuroy, *Wagner et l'esprit romantique: Wagner et la France, le Wagnérisme littéraire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1965); Steven Huebner, *French Opera at the Fin de Siècle: Wagnerism, Nationalism, and Style* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Paul du Quenoy, *Wagner and the French Muse: Music, Society, and Nation in Modern France* (Bethesda: Academia Press, 2011); and Katharine Ellis, ‘Wagnerism and Anti-Wagnerism in the Paris Periodical Press, 1852–1870’, in Annegret Fauser and Manuela Schwartz (eds.), *Von Wagner zum Wagnérisme: Musik, Literatur, Kunst, Politik* (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 1999).

⁷¹ See Emmanuel Reibel’s thoughtful study *L'Écriture de la critique musicale au temps de Berlioz* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2005), where he discusses the rhetorical positions, the tone, and the various critical typologies that French music critics embodied during the nineteenth century. Convincingly, the author suggests that a courtroom drama existed within the pages of the French critical press, as if a defendant was entering a plea against a prosecutor’s claims in the court of ‘public opinion’.

Gatekeeping, Advocacy, Reflection: Overlapping Voices in Nineteenth-Century British Music Criticism

LEANNE LANGLEY

A basic tool for investigating nineteenth-century British journalism, including music criticism, has long been *The Waterloo Directory of English Newspapers and Periodicals, 1800–1900*, issued in 1976. Among the 50,000 entries of its updated series 2 (2003) are more than 200 music titles.¹ Most of those originated in London and had brief lives. They touch every conceivable topic from church music to Wagner, madrigals to music hall, string technique to theories of history. Add the several thousand literary magazines, art and theatre papers, and daily and weekly newspapers that carried essays, review articles and other music-evaluative discussion, and the bulk of British music criticism grows exponentially. This is before one absorbs *Waterloo's* prediction that its final list, series 5, is expected to reach 125,000 entries. Nineteenth-century periodical publishing took place on a prodigious scale, more than a hundred times greater than that of book production, and music was far from trivial in the content of thousands of titles: the very presence of music discussion helped to sell many of them. The old cliché about a few backward critics controlling taste in this environment is as unlikely as it is naive.

The reasons are less to do with number and range of titles, however, or even the over-stressed visibility of a few critics whose identities are clear – that is, those who kept long attachments to one or two prominent journals in a largely anonymous, freelance context and who left vivid memoirs or had literary careers beyond music. That kind of celebrity has encouraged repeated secondary reference to the same few writers, often owing to ease of access and the entertainment value in their barbed judgements, maybe ‘wrong’ in

¹ Edited by John S. North (Waterloo: North Waterloo Academic Press), with series 3 reaching a total of 73,000 entries (2013) (available online at www.victorianperiodicals.com/series3). North and his colleagues cast their music net wide. For a more focused approach, see the list for Great Britain under ‘Periodicals’ in *New Grove* 2, vol. 28, App. F, pp. 394–8; and Leanne Langley, ‘The English Musical Journal in the Early Nineteenth Century’, PhD dissertation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (1983), vol. 2, ‘A Descriptive Catalogue of English Periodicals Containing Musical Literature, 1665–1845’, 409–638. Echoing the *Waterloo*, the present chapter covers both newspapers and periodicals. Music criticism in other formats (lectures, treatises, programme notes, dictionary articles, books) has not been included.

retrospect, but confident and memorably expressed, and therefore quotable. Henry Chorley, J. W. Davison and George Bernard Shaw spring to mind as variously dyspeptic, protectionist or sardonic on their chosen targets. They are still illuminating to read, pointed and useful in many ways.² But as commentators, they were probably neither as damaging at the time nor as lastingly influential as later readers tend to assume.³ Rather, the fuller argument against any monolithic power for a particular writer or view is that the active reach of real music, all kinds of it, was simply too wide and deep in nineteenth-century Britain. Too many other taste-making influences worked on the public unmediated: instrument sales and music publishing, opera and theatre production, concert programming, artist management, the music examination system, even sound recording. Lesser-known but equally articulate writers meanwhile deserve more investigation, not as ‘high profile’ necessarily, but for having had something to say.

A further reason to resist reductionism is still more obvious: time passed and tastes changed. Music and the public media proliferated hourly in what was then the liveliest open market in the world for both. Consumers needed critics, and critics needed platforms; musicians needed all three. The whole system worked on a dynamic rolling basis, at several levels of literary purpose and musical sophistication. Ordinary readers played their part in the assimilation process, buying tickets, singing and playing at home, taking lessons, listening at concerts, annotating programme notes, writing letters ‘to the editor’. And though keen consumers surely valued the fresh information and first-hand comment a critic might provide, they were neither ignorant nor likely lacking their own opinions. Many will have read or consulted more than one paper at a time, say, a specialist title and a general newspaper within one home. By comparative reading they will have learned that music experience counts for authority in a critic but does not always promise insight. If we ignore this wider potential in criticism’s multi-sidedness, its differing levels of address in a constantly moving picture, we miss what a more sensitive relational study could show, including British cultural development through education and discourse over time.

Among scenarios that invite study are some familiar dilemmas. In all creative industries it is a truism that ‘nobody knows’ – not even the composer-performer –

² Chorley and Davison left memoirs, but their views are best studied through the journals they served, chiefly the *Athenaeum* (Chorley, 1834–68), *Musical World* (Davison, 1843–85) and *Times* (Davison, 1844–78). Shaw’s material has been usefully collected and indexed as *Shaw’s Music: The Complete Musical Criticism of Bernard Shaw*, ed. Dan H. Laurence, 3 vols. (London: Bodley Head, 1981; 2nd revised ed., 1989).

³ Meirion Hughes, *The English Musical Renaissance and the Press, 1850–1914: Watchmen of Music* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2002), typifies an approach taking ‘power of the press’ and critical ‘influence’ as givens across the period.

how a new work will go in a given physical setting, whether it will sound well, hold together and make a good or bad impression, whether it will last, what it may come to mean.⁴ Reception study helps make sense of immediate and successive reactions, especially where performance is so repeatedly crucial. But critics do not often agree. They may change their minds later or express a veiled, dishonest or deeply self-interested opinion; one critic's view may be exclusively his or hers, reached late in a lifetime of listening or early in ignorance or bias; waves of opinion rise and fall. Detecting different sides to a critical conversation, finding reactions to a printed critique, discovering that a critic actually led or perhaps deliberately aimed to reflect reader opinion: such paths offer a more fruitful strategy than just freeze-framing a set of press quotations. Through published opinions, an articulate critic might even have opened up programming or performing style, proposed a fresh poetic or technical angle to a composer, or documented gradual appreciation of some baffling new work with repeated hearings.⁵ Any of these tracks implies real influence. Yet such a level of understanding requires more than a quick dip in an online database. It involves re-entering the period and hearing many voices, reading backwards, forwards, across wider literature and in private correspondence while also absorbing the mechanics of Britain's rapidly changing musical life, including the likelihood of critical and public taste fluctuation.

Because this material is so vast and unwieldy and even experienced researchers cannot claim to have read most of it, it makes sense to set limits here, to compare selected writers and contexts in ways that allow broad meanings. Three themes will serve: recognised intellectual tempers across the period 1810–1914; groupings of known writers and their career patterns; and critical functions, or voices, available to a music writer. Together these help explain how British music criticism developed in tandem with the press industry and in response to a flourishing, even relentless, music industry. Far from ignoring aesthetic or higher ideals, a threefold overview also allows specific opinions to come forward without automatically linking them to a presumed national character (e.g. 'liberal-minded'), style preference ('conservative') or political aim

⁴ For the significance of 'nobody knows' as an economic property of creative activities in the marketplace, including the need for critics as certifiers, see Richard E. Caves, *Creative Industries: Contracts between Art and Commerce* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000).

⁵ While writing for the *Morning Chronicle*, C. L. Gruneisen used his influence to help establish an opera company at Covent Garden Theatre, 1847, rivalling Her Majesty's and ensuring all performances were in Italian. Davison's advice in the late 1850s to focus initial concerts at St James's Hall on chamber music instead of miscellaneous programming became one of his signal achievements. From 1901 Ernest Newman exchanged both public and private opinions with Edward Elgar in productive discussions of programme versus absolute music; see Michael Allis, 'Elgar, Lytton, and the Piano Quintet, Op. 84', *Music & Letters*, 85 (2004), 198–238.

(‘musical nation-building’). Indeed, if any single trait colours English music criticism *tout court*, it is likely to be an ethical concern in the writer towards music and the public good, not some default preference in an imagined binary opposition (Rossini versus Beethoven, Mendelssohn versus Wagner, beauty versus technique) or a particular intellectual path reflecting the nation’s perceived musical progress. The point is that a critic’s voice emerges over time from his or her own experiences. And whether its function is seen as upholding standards, advocating change or registering a personal journey to help other listeners, that voice reveals most when respected for its part in a larger, interactive process.

Four Tempers: 1810–1914

Scholars have often chosen the years 1789–1914, the long nineteenth century, as most relevant for studying British culture in this period. Given musical press output in those earlier years,⁶ we can narrow the focus slightly to 1810–1914, a span that subdivides into four tempers or mindsets colouring intellectual thought, including music criticism. At their most basic, these embrace the Scottish Enlightenment (with roots to about 1750), romanticism (1790), evangelicalism (1800) and, infused by the previous three, liberalism (1835). Traceable to philosophical, economic and political debates of the eighteenth century, these four tempers have recently been described by the intellectual historian Mark Bevir as a useful way to understand nineteenth-century British thinking so as to cut across the usual disruptions familiar from social histories of the Victorian era (industrialisation, challenges of metropolitan life, galloping commerce, class conflict and so on); they can thus reveal more continuity between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries than traditional historiography has allowed.⁷ Warning against overly rigid boundaries, however – any periodisation obviously selects sections of time according to the historian’s own purposes – Bevir recommends exploring these divisions as ‘a series of over-lapping beginnings, contents and endings’.⁸ It is a concept that nicely reflects both a fluidity of ideas about music and the periodical format itself. Things move on but continually refer back; a regular cycle of production goes forward but to no predetermined date; multiple readers and views overlap simultaneously.

⁶ A brief survey of periodic writing on music, 1760–1830, appears in Leanne Langley, ‘Musical Press’, in Iain McCalman (ed.), *An Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age: British Culture, 1776–1832* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 615.

⁷ For a full discussion of Bevir’s ideas, see ‘The Long Nineteenth Century in Intellectual History’, *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 6 (2001), 313–35.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 314.

Without suggesting that all music critics in a given decade were in thrall to one dominant philosophy, it is still possible to harness the analogy and see broad parallels in how critics valued music and called for aesthetic change. In all cases the music critics' work came at a distance of several decades from the root idea. So, for example, traces of Enlightenment thinking appear to have strongly influenced British music critics as late as the 1810s and 20s, from Henry Robertson's informed opera criticism in Leigh Hunt's *Examiner*, agitating for Mozartian reforms and attacking diva culture at the King's Theatre,⁹ to R. M. Bacon's pleas in the *Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review* for a balanced rapprochement between aristocratic music amateurs and middle-class music professionals; and again, from Bacon's repeated critique, on logical grounds, of nonsensical English opera that was half-sung, half-spoken, to William Ayrton's calls in the *Harmonicon* for prosodic clarity in hymn and song text setting just as for deeper historical information on which to base critical assessments of music.¹⁰ Emerging from a kind of intellectual darkness into light, indeed, the notion of taking music seriously as technical achievement and cultural expression can also be seen in writers as diverse as A. F. C. Kollmann, who dealt systematically with John Wall Callcott's *Musical Grammar* and began to explicate J. S. Bach in the *Quarterly Musical Register*,¹¹ and John Parry, the Welsh instrumentalist and composer who contributed enlightening articles on Welsh airs to the *Cambro-Briton* in this period.¹² All these critics saw a new political power in periodicals: the press offered not just literary aid to lift a music writer's social standing (in the Burneyian sense), but a practical channel for airing views, musical and non-musical, that might engage more and more readers.

As a reaction in part to Enlightenment thinking, slightly younger writers influenced by what we call Romanticism were concerned with imagination, creativity and the life of the mind. Questions of time and evolution began to challenge those of system and balance. In articulate music criticism by the 1830s, this focus showed itself less in steady delivery of information than in personal response to artistic stimuli, stressing change in the individual hearer by reacting to, understanding and loving music. The writer's own memory and growth, inspired by distant or earlier models in art, literature or music,

⁹ See Gillen D'Arcy Wood, 'Cockney Mozart: The Hunt Circle, the King's Theatre, and *Don Giovanni*', *Studies in Romanticism*, 44 (2005), 367–97, esp. 375–81, exploring the social and political critique inherent in Mozart advocacy.

¹⁰ Langley, 'English Musical Journal', 194–281 (*Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review*), and 282–408 (*Harmonicon*).

¹¹ Discussed in Michael Kassler, *A. F. C. Kollmann's Quarterly Musical Register (1812): An Annotated Edition with an Introduction to his Life and Works* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).

¹² Known as Bardd Alaw, Parry also contributed to the *Harmonicon*, *Musical World*, *Morning Post* and *Sunday Times*.

formed a solid reference point. It is not difficult to associate well-known, at times passionate, music critics of the 1820s, 30s and 40s with this intellectual stance. Leigh Hunt's warm feeling for Italian culture and sensibility as an antidote to what he saw as English music mercantilism,¹³ T. M. Alsager's fascination with classical Antiquity and with both the detail and totality of Beethoven's musical achievement,¹⁴ Thomas Love Peacock's imaginative yet incisive critiques of modern opera librettos,¹⁵ Edward Holmes's discovery of links between past musical models and contemporary music innovations,¹⁶ even J. W. Davison (in his young bohemian days) as a keen admirer of Shelley, much French literature and every note of Mendelssohn:¹⁷ such writers were excited by private aesthetic devotions that fundamentally shaped their approach to other music experiences. They may have been reluctant later to see their heroes displaced, but they also remained open to vivid performance and tended to reject a pedantry they saw increasingly distancing English 'music professors' from the general public.

By the 1850s and 60s, a more local (English Protestant) version of Enlightenment thought, evangelicalism, had come to affect music writers. Like their earlier counterparts in the 1810s, commentators of this temper sought broadly to address economic problems wrought by industrial change, social upheaval and a resurgence of intellectual doubt, though now from a theological perspective because the calamities could be thought to have resulted from rejecting God. For music critics, personal faith itself was less apparent than the core idea of atonement, pursued through self-education, character development, acceptance of duty and sacrifice, and the spreading of 'truth' to novices, the unconvinced or the fallen. High classical models were programmed at middle-class chamber concerts, for example, and analysed in print to inspire a widening array of listeners with the 'best music'.¹⁸ Fresh research was conducted on composers from Byrd and Blow to Handel and Haydn. Class teaching and mass publishing initiatives, some in tonic sol-fa notation, gained increasing momentum. Efforts to spread music's beneficent powers to the materially or artistically deprived grew in urban communities as

¹³ In his 'Theatrical Examiner' column, *Examiner* (5 March 1820), Hunt raised doubt about the purpose of the music shop attached to the Philharmonic Society's new home, the Argyll Rooms, Regent Street.

¹⁴ See David B. Levy, 'Thomas Massa Alsager, Esq.: A Beethoven Advocate in London', *19th-Century Music*, 9/2 (Autumn 1985), 119–27.

¹⁵ Appearing in the *Examiner* between about 1832 and 1835; see E. D. Mackerness, 'Thomas Love Peacock's Musical Criticism', *The Wind and the Rain*, 4 (1948), 177–87.

¹⁶ E. D. Mackerness, 'Edward Holmes (1797–1859)', *Music & Letters*, 45 (1964), 213–27.

¹⁷ Samuel Lipman, 'James William Davison of *The (London) Times*', in his *Music and More: Essays, 1975–1991* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1992).

¹⁸ Beethoven evoked religious metaphors in both Holmes (*Atlas*) and Davison (*Musical World*) by the late 1840s; see Christina Bashford, 'The Late Beethoven Quartets and the London Press, 1836–ca. 1850', *Musical Quarterly*, 84 (2000), 84–122, esp. 111–12.

well as across the Empire. Choirs, choral music and brass banding were widely promoted as ‘rational recreation’. Music lectures at mechanics’ institutes and a missional aestheticism in general evidenced the period’s association of music with moral purpose, whether demonstrating religious faith or displacing it.

While the tone behind such projects could be patronising, sentimental, even smug – and the ultimate objects were rarely purely charitable – it often sprang from sincere conviction: experiencing beauty was believed to make people better. Well-known writers taking part in this discourse included George Hogarth, immensely skilled at shading his observations, up or down, to a given journal’s readership (he contributed music reviews to at least eighteen different titles);¹⁹ H. J. Gauntlett, enthusiastic advocate of J. S. Bach’s music, the German pedal organ and better congregational singing in churches; Edward Taylor, the *Spectator* critic who besides lauding Spohr as a Mendelssohn alternative, also lectured on madrigals and attacked the poor state of English cathedral music; Joseph Bennett, the Novello associate and *Daily Telegraph* critic whose musical anchor remained choir-and-organ, with his registration preset to ‘beauty’ (he contributed to some sixteen titles);²⁰ John Hullah, the fixed-doh educationist who believed in the musical superiority of the working classes and argued for music to become part of a liberal education; and the Rev. H. R. Haweis, whose very repute rested on his dynamic preaching, linkage of music with emotional well-being, and a widely read book of compiled journal essays, *Music and Morals* (1871). All this signalled a broad church for music activity in the mid-Victorian period, widely scoped in outreach if predictably over-reverent in feeling. For many people, music’s legitimate value was seen to reside in the human or spiritual effect it produced rather than in the notes themselves.

By the mid- to later nineteenth century, liberal philosophers were widening the purview and complicating the possibilities. Blending aspects of enlightenment, romantic and evangelical thinking, they sought to protect their own interests while also incorporating the rules of commerce, law, sociability and a progressive view of history. Utility – defined as the greatest benefit for the largest number – was deemed the ultimate appeal on all ethical questions, but it was still grounded in a view of humans as reforming, working to improve both self and society. Romanticism can be detected in the way some liberal thinkers, notably in the universities, not only saw racial character in national histories but also remained sceptical about the benefit of true markets and preserved a certain elitism through belief in an intellectual clerisy. Gladstone’s

¹⁹ See Leanne Langley, ‘Hogarth, George’, *New Grove* 2, vol. 11, pp. 609–10, and note 47 below.

²⁰ See Bennett’s own *Forty Years of Music, 1865–1905* (London: Methuen, 1908).

popular Liberalism, itself a mixture of elements, is the most familiar expression of this temper across the later nineteenth century. In its increasingly vague programme of non-conformist ideas, however (pure Liberal tenets had not panned out as predicted for the economy or society), it suggests parallels with the splintering of music-critical thought into many shades from the 1870s to 1914. High liberal music critics, for example, representing the late-Victorian cultured elite who were university-educated, professional, well-connected and reform-minded, included names such as J. A. Fuller Maitland, Hubert Parry and W. H. Hadow, all sharing a taste for Brahms, early English music and ‘form over feeling’, as well as intellectual resistance to more modern music.²¹

For all their perceived social and institutional eminence, those particular writers were still a minority compared with the number of slightly ‘lower’ critics working at the coalface, especially from the late 1880s onwards – writers who had to absorb and interpret a frenetic range of music and musical activity in the nation’s concert halls, theatres, schools and churches, music colleges, town halls, music halls, festivals and publishing houses. Whether occasional essayists, journal editors or regular commentators, writers in this large heterogeneous group often showed themselves more open than the high liberals were to technical and stylistic innovation in music – or at least more closely engaged with new music-making, including debates about its progress. Perhaps not coincidentally, they were also more dependent on writing for a living and, for that reason, probably more alert to large numbers of press readers and paying concert audiences.²²

Among such writers with enlightenment tendencies, keen to apply new knowledge, technical understanding and a rational, ostensibly objective approach to new or lesser-known music, were Ebenezer Prout, Edward Dannreuther, J. S. Shedlock, E. A. Baughan (an observant, commonsense contributor to some fifteen journals, occasionally signing ‘E. A. B.’, sometimes ‘R. Peggio’), C. A. Barry, Robin Legge, Ernest Newman and Alfred Kalisch.

²¹ Matthew Riley, ‘Liberal Critics and Modern Music in the Post-Victorian Age’, in Matthew Riley (ed.), *British Music and Modernism, 1895–1960* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010). Fuller Maitland’s concoction of a narrowly defined new school of English composers he called the ‘English Musical Renaissance’ (*English Music in the nineteenth Century* (London: Grant Richards, 1902)) was part of that resistance – and a construction widely disputed. See John Ling, ‘The Debate in England on the Progress and Regress of Music, 1888–1907’, unpublished PhD dissertation, Royal Holloway, University of London (2014). Indeed, calls for a distinctively national music receded in the 1890s, just as the number, quality and individualism of British composers rose dramatically.

²² Philip Ross Bullock theorises a direct opposition between academic institutions privileging the classicism of German ‘absolute’ music and modern concert-giving institutions such as Queen’s Hall preferring the ‘descriptive’ ambitions of Romanticism. See his ‘Tsar’s Hall: Russian Music in London, 1895–1926’, in Rebecca Beasley and Philip Ross Bullock (eds.), *Russia in Britain, 1880–1940: From Melodrama to Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

Closer to the romantic side, drawing on ardent personal responses, perhaps with literary, poetic or philosophical underpinnings, extra-musical causes or the joys and pains of performance as springboard, were Francis Hueffer, Shaw, J. F. Runciman, Herman Klein, Arthur Johnstone and Rosa Newmarch. Subtle differences among all these writers, though, including distinctions in background, education, training and degree of literary or music professional status, show how inadequate the four tempers are for predicting a critic's responses by this late period. 'Diversity' and 'plurality' might sound evasive as hallmarks, but they are the only fair ones for such a polychromatic profusion.²³

Prout, for example, was as much evangelical didact as enlightened analyst. Keen to explore aesthetic values in Schubert, Schumann and Wagner, he was employed on the *Monthly Musical Record* to help sell the magazine owner's – Augener's – educational editions. With a stress on feeling in English music of the 1890s, and noting the lack of it, Baughan might with equal force be called romantic as well as enlightened. Newman and Runciman were both liberal in their reform-minded goals, like Shaw, but unlike him (the Fabian socialist), they argued against spending music educational effort on the working classes; all three writers disdained music academicism – the kind practised by Prout, who, however, was largely self-taught.²⁴ Shaw and Runciman might seem alike in their designedly provocative tone – attractive to readers and hence to press editors – but 'J. F. R.' was far more negative, even brutal in print, making 'G. B. S.' seem downright genial, a veritable missionary for Wagner, Hans Richter, Elgar, Puccini, Mascagni and earlier classical music by Gluck, Haydn and Mozart. Both C. A. Barry ('C. A. B.') and Arthur Johnstone, born a generation apart, were highly educated, musically cultured, respected by their peers and strong advocates of musical advance, yet their critical approaches were totally distinct; they wrote at different times for the *Manchester Guardian*, by the 1870s a socially liberal daily of national importance. Examples could be multiplied of apparent contradiction and crossover, for the truth is that clean philosophical and taste divisions are impossible, so

²³ For the complex shifts of culture and authority producing messiness among categories, see William Lubenow, *Liberal Intellectuals and Public Culture in Modern Britain, 1815–1914: Making Words Flesh* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2010).

²⁴ On the campaign against academicism, with its focus on technical fault-finding, see Runciman's 'Musical Criticism and the Critics', *Fortnightly Review*, 56, n.s. (1894), 170–83; and 'The Gentle Art of Musical Criticism', *New Review*, 12 (1895), 612–24. Runciman considered the best of the 'new' critics, Shaw, to be his own mentor, both of them 'slashing' (Suzanne Cole, 'A Tale of Two Wagnerites: G. W. L. Marshall-Hall and John F. Runciman', *Context*, 39 (2014), 57–67). His binary association of technical and aesthetic approaches with 'old' and 'new' criticism respectively, however, was not only coloured by personal rivalries among critics in the 1890s; it also echoed a long-standing tension, a recurring skirmish, in English criticism since the mid-eighteenth century.

variegated was the spectrum of British music criticism in this later period. This is to say nothing of the sensitive individual contributions of music-critical writers who were active mainly as composers or music editors, such as G.H. Clutsam, George Butterworth, William Denis Browne, Rutland Boughton, Joseph Holbrooke, A.J. Jaeger and C.V. Stanford; music book authors, like Henry Davey and Ernest Walker; or writers in other fields, including H.H. Statham (architecture), Arnold Bennett (novels), Vernon Lee (aesthetics) and Leonard Rees (newspaper editing). In every case – high to low, right to left – late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century critics were participating in the liveliest upturn British music culture had seen since the 1790s.

One Hundred and Seventy Writers: People and Practicalities

A different angle opens up when we look at music critics as a group and the practical world they inhabited. While many critics remain unidentified owing to the strong tradition of British press anonymity – until the 1880s, journalists sometimes signed with pseudonyms or initials, but the vast majority never signed at all²⁵ – it is still possible to construct a tentative list of names by cross-checking standard bio-bibliographical sources, memoirs and recent scholarship. Limiting publication to c. 1810–1914, chiefly in London, and collecting the attributed authors of regular or occasional music-critical pieces in weekly arts reviews, daily newspapers and monthly or quarterly magazines (music and general), we can see some 170 names come into view, from William Harrison Ainsworth, Henry Erskine Allon, Thomas Massa Alsager and William Ayrton to Ernest Walker, William Wallace, Thomas Attwood Walmisley, Alfred E. T. Watson, F. Gilbert Webb ('Lancelot' in the *Referee*), Egerton Webbe, Samuel Wesley and Henry Wylde, to cite only the first and last alphabetically. Eleven such critical writers were women, including Constance Bache, Amelia B. Edwards, Annie E. Keeton, Margery Kennedy-Fraser, Louise Liebich, Florence Marshall, Rosa Newmarch and Violet Paget (signing as 'Vernon Lee'). At least eight writers were also part-owners or editors of major non-musical titles – Ainsworth (*New Monthly Magazine*), Alsager (*The Times*), Bacon (*Norfolk Mercury*), C.L. Graves (*Spectator*), Hunt (*Examiner*), Haslam Mills (*Guardian*), Leonard Rees (*Sunday Times*) and

²⁵ See Oscar Maurer, Jr, 'Anonymity vs. Signature in Victorian Reviewing', *Studies in English*, 27 (1948), 1–28; and Mary Ruth Hiller, 'The Identification of Authors: The Great Victorian Enigma', in J. Don Vann and Rosemary T. VanArsdel (eds.), *Victorian Periodicals: A Guide to Research* (New York: Modern Language Association, 1978). The mammoth task of attributing 89,000 articles in forty key periodicals, some relevant to music, was achieved by Walter E. Houghton and his team on *The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals, 1824–1900*, 5 vols. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966–89).

Runciman (*Saturday Review*) – indicating press involvement far beyond the typical music critic's. A few musical writers even took a proprietary share in a specialist title so as to control direction or maintain distance from the music trade, including Kollmann (*Quarterly Musical Register*); Bacon (*Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review*); H. J. Gauntlett, Holmes and Egerton Webbe, Davison, Francis Hueffer and E. F. Jacques (all *Musical World*, successively); Hueffer again (*Musical Review*, 1883); and W. A. Ellis (*Meister*). Commerce, personal ambition and social networks all played a part in the spread of serious music criticism as public discourse.

As for deliberate occupational identity, though, no one set out at the age of eighteen to be a career music critic in nineteenth-century Britain.²⁶ Not only did no such profession exist, with a recognised system of training, qualification, pay and progression, but the work itself veered from being too casual or arbitrary, rooted in short opera, concert and festival seasons in the early part of the century, to being over-intensive, even exhausting by the Edwardian period.²⁷ Most writers found their way in by chance or necessity, as an additional income stream to, say, piano teaching, playwriting, translating or other kinds of journalism.²⁸ For those already professionally active as music teachers, performers or composers – just over half the total identified group, 51 per cent – critical writing opened the door to enhanced status and a new intellectual stimulation.²⁹ For those trained or professionally active outside music, whether in the theatre, literature, law, business, or occasionally the church or civil service – the remaining 49 per cent – it offered the chance to develop an artistic interest perhaps not otherwise encouraged by family or peers.³⁰ This closely balanced 'pro-am' split among published critics might

²⁶ At least two music critics did choose a music-literary path, if not criticism, from an early age. Chorley, whose Quaker family disdained professional connection with music, was inspired by E. T. A. Hoffmann's success as a musical fiction writer and started at the *Athenaeum* as a book reviewer. J. A. Fuller Maitland discovered a gift for music research through working on George Grove's *Dictionary* after leaving Cambridge; Grove introduced him to John Morley of the *Pall Mall Gazette*.

²⁷ 'Pianoforte-playing is becoming an accomplishment most hateful to me. Death is better than eighteen recitals per week' (G. B. Shaw, *The World*, 18 June 1890). At least three late-century critics – Henry Davey, Ernest Newman and H. A. Scott – held a dystopian view of London's music scene, thinking it to be a breeding ground for hack journalists; regional centres were considered better for coherent criticism because they fostered a more assimilable concert life.

²⁸ As a useful introduction to anonymous newspaper critics, albeit using variable sources, see Christopher Kent, 'Critics of Drama, Music and Art, 1830–1914: A Preliminary List', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 13 (1980), 31–55; and, 'More Critics of Drama, Music and Art', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 19 (1986), 99–105.

²⁹ For example, Edward Hodges, John Ella, T. A. Walmisley, Henry Smart, Edward Dannreuther and H. F. Frost were practising instrumentalists; William Horsley, C. A. Barry, Frederick Corder, Nicholas Gatty, Hubert Parry, Rutland Boughton, Joseph Holbrooke and Arthur Hervey were active composers.

³⁰ Examples include Leigh Hunt, J. A. Heraud, G. B. Shaw, C. L. Graves (literature, poetry, drama); W. H. Ainsworth, George Hogarth, William Dauncey, Henry J. Gauntlett, W. B. Squire (law); R. M. Bacon, Edward Taylor, F. G. Edwards, Ernest Newman, E. A. Baughan, Edwin Evans (business or finance); H.

seem surprising given the pace of professionalisation over the later nineteenth century, and the common (mis)perception that writing about music necessarily requires specialist expertise. In fact the balance reflects a long-standing British view of music as a liberal art, open to a range of higher and journalistic literary treatments by skilled writers from several backgrounds. More practically it shows the trend for music in all its forms and styles to be covered in a proliferating commercial press addressed increasingly to mixed readerships, especially of weekly and daily illustrated papers.³¹

The reasons for press proliferation, in turn, shine a light on the long-range development of British music criticism, from a kind of top-down assertion of taste authority early in the nineteenth century to a more heterogeneous, but more representative, reflecting of each journal's readership back to itself in later years. This gradual widening, with general titles cultivating ever more mixed readerships, gathered pace from the 1880s.³² New technologies first stimulated the change through efficiencies in music and letterpress typography, power-driven printing machines and new illustration methods (*Illustrated London News* offered a path-breaking mix of news and images from 1842), then telegraphy for news-gathering and a rapidly expanding rail network.³³ Just as important, though, were stepped reductions, between 1833 and 1861, in the old repressive taxes on newspapers, advertisements and paper itself, collectively known as the 'taxes on knowledge'. Once these duties were repealed just after mid-century, all periodicals became dramatically cheaper.³⁴ In 1855 the final quashing of the newspaper tax opened a new era of 'free trade in newspapers'. That year, the *Daily Telegraph* became the first penny daily to succeed commercially and soon far outweighed *The Times* in circulation.³⁵ An unprecedented expansion of journal output in the 1860s and 70s then culminated in the emergence of a mass press in the last two decades of the century. The unceasing thirst for copy implied by so much expansion indisputably helped to create music critics.

R. Haweis, John Edmund Cox, John Curwen (church); T. L. Peacock, R. A. Streatfeild, A. H. Sidgwick, Charles Maclean (civil service).

³¹ A second growth trend from the 1860s occurred in regional papers.

³² Mark Hampton, *Visions of the Press in Britain, 1850–1950* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004), makes a compelling case for the press's changing role from educator (a widely current view, 1850–90) to representative voice, with a correlative shift from purveying political debate to purveying news.

³³ For elements in production and distribution, see Lucy Brown, *Victorian News and Newspapers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985).

³⁴ Martin Hewitt, *The Dawn of the Cheap Press in Victorian Britain: The End of the 'Taxes on Knowledge', 1849–1869* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), explores the repeal campaign in its wider political context.

³⁵ Richard D. Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800–1900* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), App. C, 'Periodical and Newspaper Circulation', pp. 394–5, shows *The Times* hovering around 60,000 in the 1860s, the *Daily Telegraph* at 200,000 by c. 1870.

On the reader's side, such economic changes were accompanied by far-reaching political and social shifts. The Second Reform Act, the Representation of the People Act 1867, opened the franchise to a wider segment of society. Forster's Education Act of 1870 stimulated literacy through Board schools and a demand for graduated material on all subjects. Without specifying numbers, the novelist and historian Walter Besant thought that educative push trebled the number of UK readers by the 1890s. Including colonial policies over a seventy-year period, Besant imagined the magnitude of the rise to be even greater – from 50,000 English-speaking readers in 1830 to 120 million by the late 1890s.³⁶ Whatever the actual numbers, new opportunities promised newspaper and periodical writers the chance to make a real living. For music critics as for other journalists, though, a paradox emerged: with increased readerships, more work to do and constant new titles, 'journalist' as an occupational identity dropped in respectability by 1900, somehow hinting at compromise and lack of integrity. All kinds of critics might be more professionally and even financially secure by the end of the century, but they lost the higher social status associated with 'serious writers'.³⁷ A gap opened up between journalism and literature that had not been present in Dickens's day.

Solid information on pay is hard to pin down. Obviously a music critic's rank and experience, together with a journal's reputation and the job in hand, had a bearing. Circumstances varied widely. In 1813–26, through his close connection to the Philharmonic Society, William Ayrton acted as 'honorary' (unpaid) music critic for the *Morning Chronicle*, contributing occasional concert reviews. By contrast, in 1823–33 he was paid £512 a year to write or commission, edit and pay for all the music and literary content, including reviews, in William Clowes's music monthly, the *Harmonicon*.³⁸ If Ayrton retained, say, half that amount as part of his annual earnings, it will have made a healthy addition to his teaching and other work. In the same period William Hazlitt, probably the greatest English literary and art critic of the age (among other things, he mused on opera audiences for the *Examiner*), got the generous rate of fifteen guineas a sheet from the monthly *London Magazine* and sixteen from the *New Monthly Magazine*.³⁹ Those same two titles also carried

³⁶ Besant's views, from *The Pen and the Book* (1899, with a chapter on journalism as a career), are reported in Nigel Cross, *The Common Writer: Life in Nineteenth-Century Grub Street* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 205–6.

³⁷ See Catherine Gallagher's review of Cross's *Common Writer*, in *American Historical Review*, 92 (1987), 662–4. This devaluation and, from the 1880s, the fast-rising number of titles covering increasingly complex music, fostered calls to regulate the music-critical profession.

³⁸ Leanne Langley, 'The Life and Death of *The Harmonicon*: An Analysis', *RMA Research Chronicle*, 22 (1989), 143–4.

³⁹ Jonathan Bate, 'Hazlitt, William', in H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (eds.), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) [ODNB].

focused music essays by R. M. Bacon, who, if he got anything close to Hazlitt's rate, would have done well.⁴⁰ Such a pay level was unusual, however. More typical for weekly and daily staff critics was a low starting salary that might rise gradually. In 1833, when inexperienced, Henry Chorley accepted £50 'for six months of journalistic drudgery' at the *Athenaeum*, reviewing assigned books weekly.⁴¹ It was a paltry sum but still higher than a part-time organist's job would have paid, and more than twice what Percy Scholes was to earn in 1912 as assistant to J. S. Shedlock for weekly music coverage in the *Queen* (forerunner of *Harper's Bazaar*) – £40 a year.⁴² Only three years earlier, in 1909, the composer G. H. Clutsam reportedly received £3 10s. a week for his regular *Sunday Observer* column: not high but, again, a useful part-time addition to a package of earnings.⁴³ Where the responsibility was larger, say, covering both music and drama on a daily basis, the rate was commensurately higher. Dickens hired his father-in-law George Hogarth for just such a role at the *Daily News* in 1846 at five guineas a week, the same starting salary he himself had once received to cover parliamentary proceedings for the *Morning Chronicle*.

Although a figure is as yet undiscovered, J. W. Davison's *Times* salary deserves mention for a different reason: it continued to be paid to him in full as a pension from 1878 to his death in 1885 (long after Hueffer had replaced him), a rare gesture.⁴⁴ Few if any others were so lucky. Indeed, even with peripatetic writing for more than one journal and income from teaching, books and other sources, some music critics could barely survive. At least ten of them or their dependants applied for subsistence grants to the Royal Literary Fund, including Morris Barnett, Holmes, Hullah, Gauntlett, C. L. Gruneisen, C. L. Kenney, W. S. Rockstro and Desmond Ryan.⁴⁵ The years 1820 to 1840 were the leanest for all English authors. Yet because the press industry was expanding too, it potentially offered more scope than a different career already begun – in Hogarth's case, his Edinburgh law practice.⁴⁶ In 1830 he detected real possibilities in journalism, took successive posts covering politics in London, Exeter and Halifax besides writing music

⁴⁰ On music essays in the *London* and *New Monthly*, see Langley, 'English Musical Journal', 499–505.

⁴¹ Robert Bledsoe, 'Chorley, Henry Fothergill', in *ODNB*.

⁴² J. O. Ward (revised), 'Scholes, Percy Alfred', in *ODNB*.

⁴³ Kent, 'Critics of Drama, Music and Art', 32. Sixty years earlier Edward Holmes got a slightly smaller figure for his weekly *Atlas* column.

⁴⁴ Bennett, *Forty Years*, p. 287.

⁴⁵ Nigel Cross, *The Royal Literary Fund, 1790–1918: An Introduction to the Fund's History and Archives with an Index of Applicants* (London: World Microfilms Publications, 1984). The RLF Archive is now in the British Library.

⁴⁶ On the emerging profession of journal authorship, see Linda H. Peterson, 'Writing for Periodicals', in Andrew King, Alexis Easley and John Morton (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook to Nineteenth-Century British Periodicals and Newspapers* (London: Routledge, 2016).

reviews, then settled definitively in London as a musical writer in 1834; he never looked back. At various times he wrote on music regularly for the *Morning Chronicle*, *Illustrated London News*, *Daily News* and *Examiner*, also contributing simultaneously to many other papers.⁴⁷

While the pluralism in this pattern suggests a low-paid, insecure occupation – with modern implications for weighing press opinion where, for example, several papers publishing broadly similar views can be traced to one and the same (anonymous) writer⁴⁸ – that in itself was not necessarily sinister or a sign of bad work. Indeed, writing for more than one publication was ubiquitous across the press industry, not only for news reporters but for all journalists, including political commentators and arts reviewers.⁴⁹ To cite a particularly relevant situation, regular music columns became a feature of several London weeklies and dailies from the 1840s, with hikes in coverage shadowing the high social season, February to June; since more than one reporter was required and music reviews were seen to help sell a paper, savvy writers at each event could gain multiple assignments. It was not until the early 1870s that peripatetic work began to be discouraged at some titles in favour of exclusivity clauses. From 1874 the *Daily Telegraph* required Joseph Bennett to give up his *Sunday Times*, *Pall Mall Gazette* and *Graphic* posts to serve the *Telegraph* alone; in 1875 Davison ceased writing for the *Saturday Review* because that journal wanted its own exclusive music critic.⁵⁰ In this way measurable status, not just pay or rumours of bribery – which in any case could have had little actual effect in such a deep market⁵¹ – tended to raise the individual critic's profile.

Status aside, private feelings and hidden motives might affect a critic's remarks at any time. Money, personal friendship and the hope of association were obvious culprits where, for instance, Davison lauded music he did not

⁴⁷ Lillian Nayder, *The Other Dickens: A Life of Catherine Hogarth* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), describes Hogarth's work in the context of rearing a large family. Needing income, he had learned from the 1820s how to change his political position to suit different papers, a flexibility transferred to music; whatever his private opinions, he felt he had to 'earnestly, yet temperately and dispassionately' advocate the paper's views (Hogarth to W. Ayrton, 21 October 1833, British Library Add. MS 52338, f.91v; cited in Nayder, p. 44).

⁴⁸ Hogarth's simultaneous reviews of Verdi's *I Lombardi* in mid-May 1846 (*Daily News*, *Illustrated London News*, *Examiner*) are a case in point; Leanne Langley, 'Italian Opera and the English Press, 1836–1856', *Periodica Musica*, 6 (1988), 3–10.

⁴⁹ Brown, *Victorian News and Newspapers*, pp. 112–15, gives J. A. Spender, T. H. S. Escott and George Saunders as examples. Davison advised Berlioz that his *Times* review of a New Philharmonic Society concert in mid-June 1855 had been displaced by news from the Crimea, but that another one would appear in the *Musical World*.

⁵⁰ Bennett, *Forty Years*, p. 217; Henry Davison, comp., *Music during the Victorian Era: From Mendelssohn to Wagner, being the Memoirs of J. W. Davison* (London: Wm Reeves, 1912), p. 313.

⁵¹ Caves, *Creative Industries*, pp. 192–3. Ayrton and Davison are known to have declined bribes.

care for or understand (Chopin's, because Davison was in debt to that composer's London publisher; Berlioz's, for personal camaraderie), or where, a further example, Chorley promoted Mendelssohn's music a little too overtly, as Hueffer did Alexander Mackenzie's later, each hoping to become the composer's future librettist.⁵² Conversely, Davison's privileging of Mendelssohnian style and his marriage to the pianist Arabella Goddard must have influenced his persistently negative approach to Robert Schumann (whose music was promoted in London by the formidable taste-making pianist Clara Schumann, Robert's wife).⁵³ Conflict of interest more generally could have touched Hogarth, Henry Hersee (*Observer*) and Campbell Clarke (*Daily Telegraph*, *Athenaeum*), all of whom mixed music criticism with work as a concert or artist agent.⁵⁴ Most blatant, the critic Desmond Ryan went too far when, in the mid-1860s, he tried to stage a London concert for his own benefit, expecting participants to perform for free: they pilloried him for attempting to blackmail their profession.⁵⁵

Less obvious to modern readers are the guilt-by-association cases in which grievance about a non-musical issue coloured music critique in print. Beethoven, for example, became a scapegoat in some of William Horsley's more heated reactions of the mid-1820s, after Philharmonic Society expenditure on the composer – including commissioning and rehearsals for the Ninth Symphony – had exacerbated factionalism within the Society, of which Horsley was a founding member.⁵⁶ G. B. Shaw found it impossible to take the music of Brahms seriously, so wedded was the Irishman to condemning the academic tones of Stanford and Parry, whose god was Brahms. H. H. Statham used Schubert's music as a proxy to attack George Grove, who had earlier demoted Statham as a contributor to his *Dictionary*.⁵⁷ Private resentments may not invalidate the specific critique, of course, and any notion of

⁵² Robert Terrell Bledsoe, *Henry Fothergill Chorley: Victorian Journalist* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), pp. 96–102; Leanne Langley, 'Novello's "Neue Zeitschrift": 1883, Francis Hueffer and *The Musical Review*', *Brio*, 45 (2008), 14–27.

⁵³ Davison's Schumann critique grew from what he saw as the pretentiousness of progressive German composers after Beethoven when compared with Beethoven himself; see 'Philharmonic Concerts', *The Times* (31 May 1864), and Davison, *Music during the Victorian Era*, p. 184.

⁵⁴ All three were at different times Secretary of the Philharmonic Society, a concert promoter; Clarke also worked for Vladimir de Pachmann in Paris.

⁵⁵ Davison, *Music during the Victorian Era*, pp. 276–8; and Christine Kyprianides, 'Musical Crimes and Misdemeanors from the Pages of the *Orchestra* (1863–81)', paper delivered at the Annual Meeting of the American Musicological Society, Vancouver (2016).

⁵⁶ Arthur Searle, 'The First British Performances of Beethoven's "Choral" Symphony: The Philharmonic Society and Sir George Smart', *Electronic British Library Journal* (2010), article 4, 1–30, esp. 19–21, available at www.bl.uk/ebj/2010/articles/article4.html. Horsley's despairing piece appeared in *Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review*, 7 (1825), 80–4.

⁵⁷ Leanne Langley, 'Roots of a Tradition: The First *Dictionary of Music and Musicians*', in Michael Musgrave (ed.), *George Grove, Music and Victorian Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 188 and notes 106–7.

perfect objectivity was a chimera anyway; music critics are only human like anyone else, including composers.⁵⁸ But hobby horses, interpersonal rivalries and other hidden agendas can often provide much-needed context where a comment seems illogical, a tone over-exaggerated.

Similarly, insider language, jest and jibe, all classic components in the critic's toolkit, can add to a modern reader's confusion, even misinterpretation. Fleet Street's highly politicised bohemian culture in the 1840s, 50s and 60s, for instance, included a clique of music and drama critics around Davison whom he was presumed to control. His editorial persona as 'Q' in the *Musical World* (1843-4) silently imitated Douglas Jerrold's biting 'Q' character in *Punch*; Davison used it, among other things, to attack the *Morning Post*'s real music critic, Gruneisen, as if he were Jerrold's invented commentator 'Jenkins'. Together with other parodic devices for straddling multiple papers, Davison's tack partook more of comic journalism and overt theatricality than of serious criticism, a performative ploy not always appreciated later.⁵⁹ He was joined or followed in the satirical trend by writers such as Henry Sutherland Edwards and C. W. Shirley Brooks (sometimes 'Charles Brooks'), who often pounced for their own malicious entertainment.⁶⁰ Whether writing as G. B. S. or 'Corno di Bassetto', Shaw too was famous for his mocking tone, but at least he explained himself. He wanted to write such readable copy that even 'deaf stockbrokers' would follow his columns and be stimulated to think. Where his underlying purpose was to electioneer for a cause or argue sociopolitical change through music discussion, he never left the reader in doubt about his larger point.⁶¹

Three Voices: Gatekeeping, Advocacy, Reflection

'No', 'Yes' and 'I'm still thinking about it' sound a bit simplistic as critical responses to music. Yet together they outline the spectrum of opinion

⁵⁸ For an illuminating look at one composer's reactions to press treatment, see Aidan Thomson, 'Elgar's Critical Critics', in Byron Adams (ed.), *Edward Elgar and His World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

⁵⁹ Langley, 'English Musical Journal', 573-85. Bennett, *Forty Years*, pp. 222-5, identifies some of Davison's invented 'Muttonian' voices.

⁶⁰ On bohemian Fleet Street see Cross, *Common Writer*, pp. 90-125; on comic journalism and a 'functional brotherhood' under one journalist, see Patrick Leary's fascinating *The Punch Brotherhood: Table Talk and Print Culture in Mid-Victorian London* (London: The British Library Board, 2010). Davison's shenanigans and his perceived control of taste indeed fostered a low reputation for much mid-Victorian music criticism, but practices improved by c. 1910; see Arthur Hervey, 'Concerning Musical Criticism', *Musical Times*, 52 (1911), 373-5.

⁶¹ Stanley Weintraub, 'Shaw, George Bernard', in *ODNB*. For example, his unsigned 'Music for the People', in *Musical Review*, 1 (1883), 157-8, 173-4, compares four concert-giving initiatives to advance an argument for separating music from philanthropy (Langley, 'Novello's "Neue Zeitschrift"', 22).

available, in turn suggesting parallels with writerly perspective, or voice, as pointers to the function of a critical piece. In increasing degree of personal investment, these move from basic gatekeeping to impassioned advocacy and from both of those to critical reflection. A writer might rarely deploy two voices in a single critique. More often, critics take time and perhaps more than one outlet to develop distinct approaches. Voice is offered here as a way to query and enrich the narrative of British music criticism, so often portrayed monophonically as if from a single (often naysaying) perspective. Looking for voice can reveal multiple functions overlapping as well as the impact of performance culture, repeat listening and public reaction on critics themselves. A gatekeeper may not always say 'no', but his method still invokes some kind of test against prior models. He weighs up good and bad to reach a judgement about whether the subject passes muster or not – say, print quality in a music edition, vocal delivery in an opera performance or the coherence of a large instrumental work. The gatekeeper's vigilance is meant to inform and protect consumers against shoddy goods. By contrast an advocate's voice, sometimes polemical, argues for or against a particular music with some passion, explaining context, opening a fresh attitude, exposing an issue precisely to stir debate and generate thought, stimulating belief or resistance. At a further remove, maybe a more mature career stage, the reflective voice declares its own history, using a review to record a journey, perhaps ending with altered opinion after deepened experience. Seeking to understand his or her own reactions, the reflective critic affirms the possibility of growth.

All these voices weave through early nineteenth-century Beethoven criticism. From the mid-1820s to the 1840s the main divide was less about Beethoven's greatness, hardly doubted in England, than the manner and meaning of his challenge to Classical norms in the late symphonies and quartets. Since aural expectations had been exploded for all Beethoven listeners, what distinguished each critic was his degree of willingness to work at understanding such difficult pieces and to suggest meaning for them. William Ayrton (*Harmonicon*) and William Horsley (*Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review*), both diehard gatekeepers with eighteenth-century sensibilities, seized on what they heard as excessive length and lack of intelligible design in the late symphonies, Ayrton blaming the composer's impetuosity as a chief weakness.⁶² With successive hearings and better performances, however, Ayrton began to reflect. Remarking repeatedly on what from 1824 seemed

⁶² *Harmonicon*, 3 (1825), 69–70; *Harmonicon*, 8 (1830), 216; and Langley, 'English Musical Journal', 384–8.

the ‘interminable . . . narcotic’ Sixth Symphony, by 1830 he could observe that this work had

won amazingly in the affections of the people in this country. At first it was not in much favour, and we confess ourselves among the number of those who did not discern some of its merits. We have since discovered many beauties which, perhaps, inefficient performances concealed; though we remain of opinion that it would be improved by curtailment, particularly in the *andante*.⁶³

Before 1830, Ayrton had also wavered on Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, flummoxed by its structure, above all the finale’s relation to the rest of the work; yet after its first full public performance by the Philharmonic Society in March 1825, he at least admitted the symphony’s ingenuity and vigour despite uncertain presentation.⁶⁴ By comparison, Ayrton’s friends Horsley and Alsager offered more extreme, opposing views, Horsley writing a prolix condemnation after the symphony’s final rehearsal in London (*Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review*), and Alsager briefly but consistently maintaining his open-minded welcome to this latest demonstration of Beethoven’s ‘grandeur of conception’ and ‘originality of style’ (*Times*).⁶⁵ More articulate in general advocacy eleven years later was H. J. Gauntlett, in a multi-part signed analytical article in the *Musical World* on Beethoven’s style traits, itself moderating between extremes by showing how the composer had ‘enlarged the boundaries of the art’ to excite feelings.⁶⁶ Only a year afterwards, Ignaz Moscheles conducted a revelatory Philharmonic performance of the Ninth Symphony, enthusiastically welcomed by another *Musical World* writer with open ears, probably Edward Holmes.⁶⁷

Reviews of Beethoven’s late string quartets followed a similar pattern between 1836 and 1850.⁶⁸ Sceptical gatekeepers (Chorley, Edward Taylor, Hogarth) and warm advocates alike (Alsager, John Ella, Holmes, Davison, Gruneisen) admitted the challenges. Hogarth, an amateur cellist who much admired the composer, struggled more than most. Frustrated by his own inability to comprehend the quartets, he eventually gave up, falling back on Beethoven’s deafness as explanation; in this case, even earnest reflection had its limits. Complaints mirrored those for the late symphonies, including

⁶³ *Harmonicon*, 2 (1824), 77; *Harmonicon*, 8 (1830), 174.

⁶⁴ *Harmonicon*, 3 (1825), 69. Ayrton never fully accepted the symphony.

⁶⁵ *Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review*, 7 (1825), 80–4; *Times* (3 February 1825). Horsley’s piece came to symbolise extreme British resistance to late Beethoven. It was challenged. See also note 56 above.

⁶⁶ ‘Characteristics of Beethoven’, *Musical World*, 1 (1836), 21–5, 53–8, 117–22, 197–202.

⁶⁷ ‘Philharmonic Society’, *Musical World*, 5 (1837), 93.

⁶⁸ Thoroughly discussed in Bashford, ‘Late Beethoven Quartets’.

movement length and structural unpredictability, now with abrupt tempo changes. The most open writers, those of a younger generation, still gained insight with repeated exposure. Beethoven's music forced them to stretch their language and find more positive, dramatic ways of relating what they heard. By the 1840s most British critics recognised that the difficulties lay with their own perceptions, not the composer, who was variously seen as a poet, a god or someone ahead of his time. Higher performing standards (rehearsals), increasingly adept players, and attentive listening with scores all aided the assimilation process.⁶⁹

Similar trajectories might be explored for any number of composers whose music was new to Britain, especially when it challenged listener expectations, local performing conditions or the sensitivities of newly self-conscious British musicians. On early Verdi, for example, critical consensus moved in three stages between 1845 and 1856: from mixed but open-minded reaction (*Ernani*, *Nabucco*, *I Lombardi*), to solidly unfavourable opinion (*I masnadieri*, *I due Foscari*, *Attila*), to a clear division into two camps – interested acceptance and sneering hostility (*Rigoletto*, *Il trovatore*, *La traviata*).⁷⁰ The hostility, led by Davison (*Musical World* and *Times*) and Howard Glover (*Morning Post*), stemmed from jealousy on behalf of English dramatic composers, laced with the usual histrionics and acid wit.⁷¹ More representative were Chorley, Hogarth and Holmes who, if not enthusiastic still took the Italian composer seriously. For all writers, the basic stumbling blocks were Verdi's perceived lack of (conventional) melody, apparently wilful imbalance in orchestration and part-writing, and sometimes confusing or morbid plots. It was Holmes, again, who exemplified both reflection and advocacy when, after his recent negative impressions of modern Italian opera, he warmed to *Nabucco* for its dramatic conception and musical characterisation:

This is just what our lyric stage wants. So many operas consist of a fuss about nothing, that when we get a character to excite real interest, it is a matter to be grateful for . . . Here music and poetry are one and the self-same . . . Never was a . . . difficult subject more admirably treated in music. Its success in realising the emotions which the composer desired to create is perfect; and whatever Verdi may hereafter do, whatever may be his ultimate position, here at least it must be allowed that he has attained a completeness of effect and an elevation of style unprecedented in the musical productions of modern Italy.⁷²

A year later, in February 1848, Holmes made another remarkable volte-face, this time on the whole idea of programme music after being surprised and delighted by Berlioz's *Harold en Italie*. Holmes admitted in his *Atlas* review

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 108–12. ⁷⁰ Langley, 'Italian Opera', 7–10. ⁷¹ Lipman, 'James William Davison', p. 208.

⁷² 'Her Majesty's Theatre', *Atlas* (6 March 1847).

that he had gone to the Drury Lane concert a sceptic ('we went among the most mistrusting and infidel of the audience').⁷³ Won over by Berlioz's poetic imagination, he soon became one of the composer's keenest advocates, arguing in *Fraser's Magazine* for more and better London orchestral opportunities.⁷⁴ A salutary parallel lies in the changed minds of critics on other subjects too, sometimes many years after what had seemed their settled opinions. Ayrton eventually came round to the beauties of J. S. Bach; Davison responded deeply to late Beethoven, Schubert, even *Tristan*, after once dismissing them; E. A. Baughan shifted to 'positive' his early negative view of state subsidy for a national opera house; Shaw ultimately admitted value in both Brahms and Sullivan, as Fuller Maitland did (in his autobiography) for Strauss and Debussy. A telling hallmark of Ernest Newman's work, broadly, was that his views developed.⁷⁵ Time's effect worked on many writers.

British Wagner reception exhibits a particularly broad set of overlapping voices, which remain to be studied in depth sequentially from the early 1850s to 1914. Far from tracing a clear path (resistance to deification), this material follows a winding, cross-cut road. It starts with Wagner's conflicted personal appearances in London in 1855, in which Davison's wonderment over the composer's inept conducting (not least compared with that of Berlioz, also in town) fuelled scepticism about his character, intent and ability as a system-maker.⁷⁶ A fifteen-year stasis followed: little of Wagner's music was heard in London, although press derision continued, provoked by the composer's posturing. Only in the early 1870s with Francis Hueffer's evangelical writing, and soon Edward Dannreuther's practical insight (Hueffer was no musician), did a fuller unfolding of theoretical ideas conjoined to musical means enter the discourse, notably in literary journals (*Fortnightly Review*, *Nineteenth Century*, *Athenaeum*, *Saturday Review*). Despite some distortion from Hueffer's misplaced emphases and his desire to be seen as chief UK apologist, Wagner's aesthetic project grew clearer.⁷⁷

⁷³ 'A First Impression of the Genius of Hector Berlioz', *Atlas* (12 February 1848). Berlioz was thrilled by the concert and Holmes's perceptive review, toppling 'the edifice of theories ... constructed here ... on the strength of idiotic critics from the continent. Thank God the entire English press has spoken with extraordinary warmth' (Berlioz to Joseph d'Ortigue (15 March 1848)).

⁷⁴ 'Hector Berlioz', *Fraser's Magazine*, 38 (1848), 421–7, a major biographical-critical piece in the best London monthly of educated liberal opinion. For more on Berlioz reception beyond his lifetime, see Leanne Langley, 'Agency and Change: Berlioz in Britain, 1870–1920', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 132 (2007), 306–48.

⁷⁵ See Paul Watt, *Ernest Newman: A Critical Biography* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2017).

⁷⁶ Kathy Fry, 'Music and Character in the Victorian Reception of Wagner: Conducting the Philharmonic ca. 1855', in Sarah Collins (ed.), *Composing the Liberal Subject: Liberalism and Victorian Music Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

⁷⁷ Mark S. Asquith gives a careful summary, highlighting the English periodical press as conduit for a more coherent discussion of Wagner's theories than the composer's own writings offered, in 'Francis

By the time of the London Wagner Festival of 1877, and especially from 1879 with Hans Richter's commanding orchestral performances, a fruitful understanding of theory and music became possible together. Already in the mid-1870s two remarkable stagings, though in Italian, had begun to alter critical minds (*Lohengrin*, 1875; *Tannhäuser*, 1876). Surging public and critical response to Richter's concerts, together with impressively good opera productions in German (1882, 1884) and yet further Wagner orchestral programming in the 1890s, led to a near mania. By the early 1900s Wagner's music was not only acceptable in London but, to some listeners, old hat in the wake of newer musics from Russia and Scandinavia. All along, successive trails of Wagnerism had pulled the composer's protean ideas into wider artistic and ideological debates fostering sectarian rivalry among outspoken Wagnerites themselves – William Ashton Ellis, Shaw, Dannreuther and Runciman. The composer's ability to polarise critical discourse continued long after the public had embraced his music. Meanwhile in Ireland, Wagner productions actively helped elevate critical standards.⁷⁸

The three voices can be easily identified throughout this giant exchange. Joseph Bennett was at times more gatekeeper than Davison or Chorley, dissecting Hueffer's argument around Wagner and Schopenhauer to discredit Hueffer himself. Other gatekeepers included Louis Engel, morally indignant at the *Ring's* incest (a rare view), and Edmund Gurney, unhappy with Wagner's melodic theories 'substituting stream for structure' (a more common critique).⁷⁹ Strong advocates covered a range of positions, too, dependent on readership, aim and interpretative strategy, from Frederick Corder, Barry, E. F. Jacques and Prout, to Shaw, Runciman and Newman. Admitting openly their inclination to reassess, both Davison and Klein reflected on personal discovery of Wagner's skill as dramatic poet, hence his music's deeper beauty and his genuine claim to artistic integrity: they had at last witnessed coherent productions instead of concert-room snatches.⁸⁰ Davison felt his own quiet turning point in 1875:

It seems almost incredible that Wagner the poet should also be Wagner the composer. Whatever may be said, and from whatever point of view, about the music of Wagner, and the theory upon which he constructs it, . . . to deny his high poetical tendency, even in his musical treatment of the subjects he appropriates, would be absurd. We may question the soundness of his

Hueffer and the Early Reception of Richard Wagner's Aesthetics in England', in Jörg W. Rademacher (ed.), *Modernism and the Individual Talent: Re-Canonizing Ford Madox Ford (Hueffer)* (Münster: LIT, 2002).

⁷⁸ Michael Murphy, 'The Musical Press in Nineteenth-Century Ireland', in Michael Murphy and Jan Smaczny (eds.), *Music in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007).

⁷⁹ Asquith, 'Francis Hueffer', p. 142, notes 89 and 95.

⁸⁰ For the significance of Klein's public turnaround (*Sunday Times*) after the 1882 London production of *Tristan und Isolde*, see his *Musicians and Mummies* (London: Cassell & Co., 1925), pp. 177–9.

theories; we have often questioned it . . . But what cannot fail to enlist sympathy is earnestness which carries him with more or less artistic self-contentment through every task he sets himself.⁸¹

As before in English critical writing, ethical underpinning now allowed the gate to open.

* * *

The approaches to periodic music criticism suggested here offer a framework for further study. Surprisingly perhaps, much of the material is more thoughtful and engaged, the subjects livelier and the views more contested than previous accounts have indicated. And though few readers would posit literary greatness for the writing, especially in mid- and late-century dips where content can be banal and judgements blustering, all of it forms part of the greater story of how music and musicians gained purchase in the UK public sphere. Reading and listening audiences, new and discerning alike, increasingly joined the conversation, stimulated by music's power to create a sense of community. For scholars, this material's immediacy is the positive side of its ephemerality, opening a vanished world of sound, fury and delight; the ideas are most telling when read in sequence and placed in time and context, like music itself. Latterly for some high-minded critics, too many voices overlapped, disparate and unregulated. Calls were made for gatekeeping the gatekeepers, with proper training and standards in what by the Edwardian period had become a solid if still remarkably haphazard profession. Experts needed sorting from the pundits. 'Musicology' and its own discontents could surely not be far away.

⁸¹ 'Lohengrin', *The Times* (10 May 1875).

Constructing a Musical Nation: German-Language Criticism in the Nineteenth Century

LAURA TUNBRIDGE

In 1799 Friedrich Rochlitz, founding editor of the Leipzig-based *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, wrote about the importance of music for the development of the German nation.¹ It was a political statement at a time when German-speaking lands were not yet unified but a loose confederations of states.² By aligning music with Germanness, and with history, Rochlitz and subsequent critics also elevated the art form from being considered mere entertainment to being treated as a meaningful discourse that could stand alongside literature and philosophy. Importantly, it was the way in which music was written about, as much as the exceptional achievements of individual musicians, which enabled the view that music was ‘the most German of the arts’.³ During the nineteenth century, German-language music criticism thus not only proliferated and professionalised; it also played a vital role in imagining the construction of the nation.⁴

The ambition of Rochlitz’s *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* (AMZ) was markedly different from previous German-language music journals.⁵ During the eighteenth century, as literacy rates and printing technologies improved, and

¹ Friedrich Rochlitz, ‘Vorschläge zu Betrachtungen über die neueste Geschichte der Musik’, *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, 1 (1798/1799); quoted in Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter, ‘Germans as the “People of Music”: Genealogy of an Identity’, in Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter (eds.), *Music and German National Identity* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2002), p. 4.

² Germany was unified in 1871; Austria remained part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire until the First World War. For a historical overview see John Breuilly (ed.), *19th-Century Germany: Politics, Culture and Society 1780–1918* (New York and London: Arnold/Oxford University Press, 1997/2001).

³ The phrase is discussed with regard to the twentieth century in Pamela Potter, *Most German of the Arts: Musicology and Society from the Weimar Republic to the End of Hitler’s Reich* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

⁴ Current writers on music and nationalism are wary of according Germany and Austria too much privilege or, at least, are intent on demonstrating how notions about the superiority of German music were contingent on multiple factors, including views from abroad; see, for instance, Peter van der Merwe’s *Roots of the Classical: The Popular Origins of Western Music* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004). An alternative view is offered by Celia Applegate, *The Necessity of Music: Variations on a German Theme* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017).

⁵ On late eighteenth-century journals see Stephen Rose’s essay, Chapter 6 in this volume; Mary Sue Morrow, *German Music Criticism in the Late Eighteenth Century: Aesthetic Issues in Instrumental Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

as consumption of novels and journalism increased, there had been a surge in literary criticism designed to educate a new, middle-class readership. The *AMZ*, founded in 1798, was, similarly, an Enlightenment project, and would contribute towards the development of an aesthetics of ‘serious’ music in the nineteenth century.⁶ Yet its intended readership was not only aestheticians but also musicians and music-lovers who were eager to understand as much as enjoy.⁷ The journal’s title seems bland but, as historian Celia Applegate observes, was ‘[a] small masterpiece of marketing’.⁸ Its claim to generality (*Allgemeine*) pointed to a wider readership than previous, connoisseur- and professional-oriented music publications. It was also significant that it did not describe itself as a *Zeitschrift* (journal) but as a *Zeitung* (newspaper), which falsely suggested daily editions and an extensive readership. In other words, the type of music criticism established by the *AMZ* helped redefine boundaries between practitioners and audiences, between professionals and amateurs, between art and entertainment, and between nation states. Moreover, like many of the journals that followed in its wake, the *AMZ* was invested to some degree in explaining the significance of music: its relative worth and – an always contentious issue in the nineteenth century – its meaning.

When discussing nineteenth-century music aesthetics we tend to rely on books and treatises: on, say, Eduard Hanslick’s *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen* (*On the Musically Beautiful*, 1854) rather than his hundreds of concert reviews.⁹ However, philosophical and political ideas about music could filter into what we might call everyday criticism, and can be a useful way to distinguish key trends in aesthetic thought.¹⁰ One of the challenges of writing about German-language music criticism in the nineteenth century, though, is the overwhelming amount of material available.¹¹ It took some time before the *AMZ* had a serious competitor, but the number of music journals increased dramatically through the decades, not to mention the newspapers, more

⁶ Leon Botstein, ‘Listening through Reading: Musical Literacy and the Concert Audience’, *19th-Century Music*, 16/2 (Autumn 1992), 129–45.

⁷ On the middle-class readership of the *AMZ* see Martha Bruckner-Bigenwald, *Die Anfänge der Leipziger Allgemeinen musikalischen Zeitung* (Hilversum: Frits A. M. Knuf, 1965); Sanna Pederson, ‘Enlightened and Romantic German Music Criticism, 1800–1850’, unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania (1995), 63–5.

⁸ Celia Applegate, *Bach in Berlin: Nation and Culture in Mendelssohn’s Revival of the St Matthew Passion* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005), p. 88.

⁹ This is not to say that *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen* was insignificant: Lee A. Rothfarb describes its publication as a ‘watershed moment’ in ‘Nineteenth-Century Fortunes of Musical Formalism’, *Journal of Music Theory*, 55/2 (2011), 167–220.

¹⁰ James Garratt makes a similar point in ‘Values and Judgements’, in Stephen Downes (ed.) *Aesthetics of Music: Musicological Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 32.

¹¹ Availability via digital resources remains more limited than for English-language periodicals, however. The Retrospective Index to Music Periodicals (RIPM) provides helpful introductions to many nineteenth-century German-language journals, as well as providing a database of articles.

general magazines and feuilletons that also covered musical topics and events. Although, as we will see, these publications played an important part in extending musical networks, as is often evident in their titles (with the notable exception of the *AMZ*), most reflected the interests of a particular place or group.¹² Despite the growing interest in expressions of German identity, even after unification in 1871 there was no named ‘national’ music journal (similarly, Vienna continued to dominate the musical life of its empire). Yet there were a few individuals whose influence reached beyond their immediate place and time, three of whom are considered here: E. T. A. Hoffmann, Robert Schumann and Eduard Hanslick.

There is a risk, in selecting such case studies, that this chapter might too closely resemble the ‘great men’ narratives of contemporary biographies that many recent historians have tried to unsettle in favour of broader contextual studies.¹³ In some ways, music critics of the time resisted such grandstanding: most had other jobs or interests as well, or during the so-called Age of Metternich wrote under the threat of censorship; all reasons why they did not always sign their reviews or wrote under pseudonyms. Hoffmann and Schumann, though, were also composers, and applauded and defended work in keeping with their aesthetics or by colleagues they admired; Schumann in particular conceived his purpose as critic to be fighting against those he termed the Philistines. Such partisanship on the part of critics became still more pronounced during the second half of the century, as illustrated by Hanslick, whose views on music aesthetics (and his championship of Johannes Brahms) made him an adversary of the circles around Franz Liszt, Richard Wagner and Anton Bruckner. Hoffmann, Schumann and Hanslick, then, provide a way into thinking about some of the broader themes raised by German-language music criticism in the nineteenth century: about the ways journals facilitated networks and polemics, defined ideas of national identity and dealt with ideas about what music means.¹⁴

¹² The opus classicus on the role of print culture in consolidating identities is Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised ed. (London: Verso, 2006). A critique of Anderson that carefully considers issues of locality alongside imagined nations is Angharad Closs Stephens’s *The Persistence of Nationalism* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

¹³ The exemplar of the ‘Great Man’ music history is Raphael Georg Kiesewetter’s *Geschichte der europäischen-abendländischen oder unsrer heutigten Musik* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1846); for more on him, see Gundula Kreuzer, ‘Heilige Trias, Stildualismus, Beethoven: On the Limits of Nineteenth-Century Germanic Music Historiography’, in Nicholas Mathew and Benjamin Walton (eds.), *The Invention of Beethoven and Rossini: Historiography, Analysis, Criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); more generally Jim Samson, ‘The Great Composer’, in Jim Samson (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

¹⁴ The potential for music criticism to be discussed in terms of Actor Network Theory, with reference to Franz Brendel (as presented in Richard Taruskin’s *Oxford History of Western Music*, vol. 111 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 411–42), is discussed in Benjamin Piekut, ‘Actor-Networks in Music History: Clarifications and Critiques’, *Twentieth-Century Music*, 11/2 (September 2014), 191–215.

One further caveat: I concentrate on symphonic music here because that is the genre most closely associated with defining Germany musically, although that association reflects mid-twentieth-century musicology's preoccupation with instrumental music more than nineteenth-century practices. An alternative narrative might be told by looking instead at opera, a profusion of which was noted in German lands at the start of the nineteenth century.¹⁵ Musicologist Albrecht Riethmüller has noted that the notion of a canon of great works was most prominent in symphonic repertory, which favoured native composers; by contrast, opera 'remained international in scope'.¹⁶ The 'foreignness' of much opera made it figure as a threatening other in discourse about national identities, most obviously as manifest in the writings on the 'twin styles' of Rossini and Beethoven.¹⁷ Yet opera was performed frequently and covered extensively by the musical and daily press. Historians tend to highlight the negative comments made about Italian or French opera by German critics in the mid-nineteenth century (Schumann, for instance, dismissed Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots* as 'calculatedly shallow' music).¹⁸ Often critical discussions would touch on the importance of cultivating a national style or school, or of nurturing homegrown performers, preoccupations that intensified with the rise of Wagnerism in the second half of the century. But this disregards the very real presence of opera from around Europe on German stages and in German-language journals, especially in large cities such as Berlin and Vienna.¹⁹ Taking the continued cosmopolitanism of German

¹⁵ According to John Warrack, *German Opera: From the Beginnings to Wagner* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 265.

¹⁶ Albrecht Riethmüller, "'Is That Not Something for *Simplicissimus*!'" The Belief in Musical Superiority', in Applegate and Potter (eds.), *Music and German National Identity*, p. 296.

¹⁷ On the 'twin styles' see Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, trans. J. Bradford Robinson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 8–15; Bernd Sponheuer, 'Beethoven vs Rossini – Anmerkungen zu einer ästhetischen Kontroverse des 19. Jahrhunderts', in Christoph-Hellmut Mahling and Sigrid Wiesmann (eds.), *Bericht über den internationalen musikwissenschaftlichen Kongress Bayreuth 1981* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1981).

¹⁸ Robert Schumann, 'Fragmente aus Leipzig', *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, 7/19 (5 September 1837), 73–5; reprinted in Martin Kreisig (ed.), *Gesammelte Schriften über Musik und Musiker*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1914), p. 323. Printed in translation as 'The Huguenots', in *Schumann on Music: A Selection from the Writings*, ed. and trans. Henry Pleasants (New York: Dover, 1965), pp. 137–40. Attitudes to Italian opera are traced in Michael Wittmann, 'Das Bild der italienischen Oper im Spiegel der Kritik der *Leipziger allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*', *Le parole della musica 11: Studi sul lessico della letteratura critica del teatro musicale in onore di Gianfranco Folena*, in Maria Teresa Muraro (ed.), vol. xxii of *Studi di musica veneta* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1995); Michael Fend, "'Es versteht sich von Selbst, daß ich von der Oper spreche, die der Deutsche und Franzose will": Zum Verhältnis von Opéra comique und deutscher romantischer Oper', in Herbert Scheider and Nicole Wild (eds.), *Die Opéra comique und ihr Einfluß auf das europäische Musiktheater im 19. Jahrhundert* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1994).

¹⁹ In Berlin, for example, the two main music venues were theatrical (the Nationaltheater and Königliche Oper, brought together under the title Königliche Schauspiele in 1807) and the *Singakademie* also played a prominent role in the city. Italian opera was much discussed in Vienna; see, for instance, 'Neuer Versuch einer Darstellung des gesammten Musikwesens in Wien', *AMZ*, 3/37 (10 June 1801), 622–7; *AMZ*, 3/38 (17 June 1801), 638–43.

musical life into account in this way would disturb conventional accounts of musical nationalism in significant ways, but that lies beyond the scope of this chapter.

The Invention of Romanticism

The advent of the *AMZ* coincided with the golden years of Viennese classicism: Mozart had only recently died, Haydn was flourishing and Beethoven was emergent. Yet the *AMZ* was not published in the great musical centre of Vienna but in Leipzig, then known for business and – importantly – publishing.²⁰ Gottfried Christoph Härtel had taken over the music publishing house of Breitkopf (founded in Leipzig in 1719) in 1795.²¹ Over the next hundred years his firm would publish music by Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Liszt, Wagner and Brahms. As Härtel conceived it (and other publishers soon followed suit), the primary purpose of the *AMZ* was to help sell scores (this is to belittle Härtel's achievements, though: he also founded the *Leipziger Literaturzeitung*, began new complete editions of various composers' works and adopted lithography for printing music).²² Under its first editor, Friedrich Rochlitz (1769–1842), the *AMZ* achieved more than that: it became, as well as an important means of educating the musical public, a way to transmit the reputation of music and musicians around an international network – a network that, in turn, helped define ideas about the cultural characteristics of the nascent German nation.

Rochlitz, with the first issue of the *AMZ*, also established the format for a weekly music journal.²³ First came lead articles, typically on some aspect of aesthetics or the theory of music, or about a new work. These could be serialised over several issues. Then came sections dedicated to reviews of printed music ('Recensionen'), news of musical life in Leipzig and elsewhere ('Nachrichten'), short announcements ('Kurze Anzeigen') including reviews of new scores, miscellaneous items ('Miscellen' or 'Mancherley') and short

²⁰ Leipzig's later reputation as a musical centre partly resulted from this period, when the musical establishment – from music journals to concert series and the Leipzig Conservatoire (Rochlitz influenced all) – were founded. Newly aware of its musical history, the town began to be celebrated as home to Bach, Mendelssohn, Schumann and Wagner.

²¹ A brief early history of the firm is provided in George B. Stauffer, 'The Breitkopf Family and Its Role in Eighteenth-Century Music Publishing', in George B. Stauffer (ed.), *J. S. Bach, the Breitkopfs, and Eighteenth-Century Music Trade* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996). After Rochlitz gave up the editorship in 1818, Härtel took over for ten years.

²² See Ole Hass, 'Introduction to the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, Retrospective Index to Music Periodicals (RIPM)', available at www.ripm.org; Reinhold Schmitt-Thomas, *Die Entwicklung der deutschen Konzertkritik im Spiegel der Leipziger Allgemeinen Musikalischen Zeitung (1798–1848)* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Kettenhof Verlag, 1969).

²³ The format of the *AMZ* is described in Ole Hass's 'Introduction'.

news items ('Kurze Nachrichten' and 'Feuilleton').²⁴ In between might be scattered anecdotes, biographical sketches and humorous pieces. The *AMZ* would sometimes also include an advertising supplement (*Intelligenz-Blatt*), pieces of music and illustrations. Contributions were solicited for the *Intelligenz-Blatt*, but authors were asked to keep in mind the journal's wide readership and not to write anything hurtful: a reminder of the journal's commercial concerns and that it, and its successors, served a relatively close-knit community that, as we shall see, was easily polemicalised.

Many nineteenth-century music journals would serve as mouthpieces for their editors, the majority of whom were their most prolific contributors. Rochlitz, although a respected and active writer himself, was able, with the financial support of Breitkopf und Härtel, also to assemble an impressive array of contributors. They included academics, composers, acousticians and music theorists. From its first issues, the *AMZ* also included regular correspondence from major musical centres: Berlin, Munich, Vienna, Prague and Paris (initially accounts of events in Paris were translated, or provided by German visitors, until Georg Ludwig Peter Sievers became the regular columnist 1817–20). Occasionally reports were received from further afield: London, Barcelona, Warsaw, St Petersburg; even New York and Rio de Janeiro. As vital was correspondence from other German towns, which might give notices of artists soon to arrive, or known in, Leipzig.²⁵

The *AMZ* was an important supporter of Beethoven, its reviewers helping to develop an incisive critical vocabulary to describe and analyse his music. It argued that works such as the Second Symphony required repeat performances in order to be fully appreciated: one testament to the journal's legacy were changes made to programming at the Leipzig Gewandhaus to include complete symphonies (not coincidentally, Rochlitz was on the board of its subscription concert series).²⁶ Perhaps the most influential writer about Beethoven's music, on staff from 1809 to 1815, was polymath E. T. A. Hoffmann (1776–1822). Early contributors to the *AMZ* had advocated a sober and methodical evaluation of musical works, in accordance with Enlightenment values of reasoned debate.

²⁴ Generally, the *AMZ* was aimed at a more specialist readership than the popular feuilletons and entertainment journals which also played an important role in German musical life, as discussed in Ulrich Tadday, *Die Anfänge des Musikfeuilletons: Der kommunikative Gebrauchswert musikalische Bildung in Deutschland um 1800* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1993), p. 67.

²⁵ William Weber comments that music magazines flourished during this era in part because they could access so many well-educated writers who were prepared not to be paid; see *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste: Concert Programming from Haydn to Brahms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 102.

²⁶ For example, see report from Leipzig, *AMZ*, 6/32 (9 May 1804), 542–3. For more on the *AMZ*'s role in concert life see Ulrich Schnitt, *Revolution im Konzertsaal: Zur Beethoven-Rezeption im 19. Jahrhundert* (Mainz: Schott, 1990); Applegate, *Bach in Berlin*.

For example, in an 1802 essay, Hans Georg Nägeli put forward a twofold system, whereby the critic should first consider whether the established rules of composition had been followed before deducing the music's effect on the listener.²⁷ Rochlitz recommended this as a model for evaluating the extent to which a composer's creative intentions matched their work's technical realisation.²⁸ Hoffmann perpetuated these writers' interests in musical technique and formal expectations. His reviews followed the journal's conventions: they were invariably in three parts, with an introduction, analysis and concluding comments about performance and editions. However, he went beyond his predecessors by devising a new poetics of music criticism.²⁹ Although Hoffmann wrote about composers we would now term Classical – the most famous being Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven – the values inscribed in his reviews can be said to have established the main tenets of musical German Romanticism.

Hoffmann's review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, at twenty columns the longest essay then published in the *AMZ*, has been described as 'the most celebrated document in the history of music criticism'.³⁰ In places his prose was unashamedly technical – he used specialist vocabulary to describe themes and harmonies – and he insisted on including multiple music examples. At the same time, he attempted to convey the experience of the music, bar by bar. (Of the symphony's ending he wrote, 'The chord that the listener takes as the last is followed by one bar's rest, then the same chord, one bar's rest, the same chord, one bar's rest, then the chord again for three bars with one ♭ in each, one bar's rest, the chord, one bar's rest, and a C played in unison by the whole orchestra.')³¹ Hoffmann then stepped back to consider the effect of the whole,

²⁷ Hans Georg Nägeli, 'Versuch einer Norm für die Recensenten der *Musikalischen Zeitung*', *AMZ*, 5/14 (29 December 1802), 225–37 and *AMZ*, 5/16 (12 January 1803), 265–74.

²⁸ Friedrich Rochlitz, 'Vorerinnerung', *AMZ*, 5/14 (29 December 1802), 225–7.

²⁹ On the literary, philosophical and political contexts for Hoffmann's music criticism, see Carl Dahlhaus, 'E. T. A. Hoffmanns Beethoven-Kritik und die Aesthetik des Erhabenen', *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft*, 38/2 (1981), 79–92; Karl Michael Komma, 'Ursprünge der modernen Musikanalyse: E. T. A. Hoffmanns Beethoven-Rezensionen', in Wolfgang Budday and Heinrich Deppert (eds.), *Musiktheorie: Festschrift für Heinrich Deppert zum 65. Geburtstag* (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 2000); Abigail Chantler, 'Revisiting E. T. A. Hoffmann's Musical Hermeneutics', *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, 33/1 (2002), 3–30; Elio Matassi, 'The Adaemonic/Daemonic Spirit of Music: E. T. A. Hoffmann's Review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony and the Apology of Instrumental Music in W. H. Wackenroder', *Ad Parnassum: A Journal of Eighteenth and Nineteenth-Century Instrumental Music*, 2/3 (April 2004), 153–62; Stephen Rumph, *Beethoven After Napoleon: Political Romanticism in the Late Works* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), pp. 9–34; Nicholas Mathew, *Political Beethoven* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

³⁰ Ian Bent (ed.), *Music Analysis in the Nineteenth Century, Volume 11: Hermeneutic Approaches* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 141. Hoffmann's review originally appeared, unsigned, in the *AMZ*, 12/40 and 41 (4 and 11 July 1810), cols. 630–42, 652–9. English translations in David Charlton (ed.), *E. T. A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings: 'Kreisleriana', 'The Poet and Composer', Music Criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 235; and by Bent, Charlton and Martyn Clarke in *Music Analysis in the Nineteenth Century*, II, pp. 141–60, both with useful introductions.

³¹ Bent (ed.), *Music Analysis in the Nineteenth Century*, II, pp. 158–9.

using organicist metaphors to emphasise the work's coherence (tree, buds, leaves, blossom, fruit, spring from the same seed, he observed, much as musical motifs grow into themes, even whole symphonies).³² Throughout the review there are revelations of what aestheticians would call the sublime: Hoffmann senses in Beethoven's music 'endless longing'; it reveals 'an unknown realm, a world quite separate from the outer sensual world . . . a world in which he [the listener] leaves behind all feelings circumscribed by intellect, in order to embrace the inexpressible'.³³ Instrumental music's ability to reach beyond words, beyond representation, made it 'the most romantic of the arts'.

Beethoven was far from the only German composer to be discussed at length in the pages of the *AMZ*: Carl Maria von Weber, Louis Spohr and, later, Mendelssohn and Schumann were treated similarly (although the latter not always so positively). So too were French and Italian composers: the piece accorded most space after Beethoven's Fifth Symphony was Rossini's *Guillaume Tell*.³⁴ By comparison with other countries, and through self-reflection, the journal reflected on and cultivated ideas about what it meant to be German, musically speaking.³⁵ While there were calls to advance German-language opera, and for patriotic songs, the genre most strongly associated with expressions of a nascent national identity (at least until mature Wagner) was instrumental music.³⁶ The challenge for critics – as already apparent from Hoffmann's review of the Fifth Symphony – was how to explain the significance of such abstract or, as they came to be referred to, 'absolute', musical works.³⁷

Rochlitz's editorship of the *AMZ* outlasted several other music journals (for example, the *Berlinische Musikalische Zeitung* ran for only eighteen months),

³² On organicism, see D. L. Montgomery, 'The Myth of Organicism: From Bad Science to Great Art', *Musical Quarterly*, 76/1 (1992), 17–66.

³³ Stephen Downes, 'Beautiful and Sublime', in Downes (ed.), *Aesthetics of Music*, p. 86; Mark Evan Bonds, *Music as Thought: Listening to the Symphony in the Age of Beethoven* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), pp. 45–50.

³⁴ A comparison of the reception of Beethoven and Rossini, paying close attention to the role of the musical press, is provided in Nicholas Mathew, 'On Being There in 1824', in Mathew and Walton (eds.), *The Invention of Beethoven and Rossini*.

³⁵ In an 1867 tribute to Breitkopf und Härtel, Alfred Dörrfel described the *AMZ* as having advanced the 'cultural interests of the German nation' at a time when there was a paucity of other journals. Alfred Dörrfel, 'Breitkopf & Härtel', *Signale für die musikalische Welt*, 25/12 (12 February 1867), 189; quoted in Hass, 'Introduction', x.

³⁶ Stephen C. Meyer, *Carl Maria von Weber and the Search for a German Opera* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003); Warrack, *German Opera*; Cecelia Hopkins Porter, *The Rhine as Musical Metaphor: Cultural Identity in German Romantic Music* (Cincinnati: Northeastern University Press, 1996). By 1848, according to Pederson, it was 'the idea of a German musical culture that – gradually and against resistance – became the aesthetic paradigm of absolute music in the nineteenth century' ('Enlightened and Romantic German Music Criticism', 110).

³⁷ Mark Evan Bonds, *Absolute Music: The History of an Idea* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

and until 1818 – when Rochlitz stepped down as editor, though he continued as a contributor for another decade – it was undoubtedly the most respected and influential German-language music journal. Many of its contributors were involved with subsequent publications and would contribute to others. For instance, in 1823, lawyer, theorist and composer Gottfried Weber started the well-respected *Cäcilia: eine Zeitschrift für die musikalische Welt, herausgegeben von einem Vereine von Gelehrten, Kunstverständigen und Künstlern* in Mainz (published by B. Schott's Söhne). Its subtitle – *a newspaper for the musical world, edited by a team of scholars, art experts and artists* – emphasised the communal aspect of the journal: the aim was to create a *Sprachsaal* or meeting place for the exchange of ideas, and articles were scholarly; there were few daily reviews of the kind Weber had written for the *AMZ*. While *Cäcilia* has been credited as the *AMZ*'s main rival, A. B. Marx proclaimed himself heir to Rochlitz with the foundation in 1824 of the *Berliner allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* [*BAM*], in collaboration with the publisher Adolph Martin Schlesinger. Reflecting Marx's theoretical interests, *BAM* contained more analytical articles than reports of concerts, and German music – especially Beethoven's – featured prominently. There were wide-ranging debates on musical comedy, of content in music, and on the role of analysis.³⁸ Another journal deliberately set up in competition with the *AMZ* and *Cäcilia*, this time in Leipzig, was the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* [*NZM*]. When it began in 1834 the *NZM* had four editors but they soon became one, composer and critic Robert Schumann (1810–56).³⁹

Against the Philistines

From its title to the music it covered, the *NZM* emphasised the new. Schumann was determined to make a case for those composers overlooked elsewhere, and to encourage a certain type of composition: Chopin and Berlioz were discussed at length, and Schubert's C Major Symphony (now known as the *Great*) was 'rediscovered' in its pages.⁴⁰ In addition to the usual array of reviews and theoretical and practical articles, Schumann championed

³⁸ A selection of Marx's writings can be found in A. B. Marx, *Musical Form in the Age of Beethoven: Selected Writings on Theory and Method*, ed. and trans. Scott Burnham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). For more on Marx's approach to Beethoven see Scott Burnham, 'Criticism, Faith, and the "Idee": A. B. Marx's Early Reception of Beethoven', *19th-Century Music*, 13/3 (Spring 1990), 183–92; reprinted in Burnham, *Sounding Values: Selected Essays* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010). On the cultivation of German music in the *BAM* see Pederson, 'Enlightened and Romantic German Music Criticism', 117–37.

³⁹ The other editors were pianists Friedrich Wieck, Julius Knorr and Ludwig Schunke. Schumann had contributed articles to the *AMZ* since 1831.

⁴⁰ Schumann's writings are reproduced in Kreisig (ed.), *Gesammelte Schriften über Musik und Musiker*; slightly dated translations of these articles are included in *Schumann on Music*.

the relationship between music and literature.⁴¹ Epigraphs from Shakespeare, Goethe, Jean Paul and Novalis adorned each issue of the *NZM*. What is more, during this period in his career, Schumann adopted a self-consciously literary style of criticism, writing in the names of a ‘Davidsbund’ or ‘League of David’ made up of fictional characters and alter egos for his circle of like-minded artists. As with the biblical David, their adversary was the Philistines, those of mediocre talent and mundane taste who could or would not recognise genius.⁴² Schumann was against ‘empty’ virtuosity; he encouraged the study of early music, especially J.S. Bach; and he hoped for a future music that would encompass the poetic.

Hoffmann’s ‘poetic’ criticism may have influenced Schumann to some degree, but whereas Hoffmann had attempted to describe the way a piece of music was perceived and the emotions it aroused, Schumann endeavoured to write in a manner that would produce an effect similar to the work in question.⁴³ In his famous review of Berlioz’s *Symphonie fantastique* (1835) he conveyed the excitement of first glimpsing the beloved:

That is where he sets eyes on her. I imagine this feminine creature, like the principal idea of the entire Symphony, to be pale, slender as a lily, veiled, silent, almost cold; – but words are lifeless things, whereas his notes have a searing effect upon us, – you can see it written in the Symphony itself: how he rushes towards her and tries to embrace her with all his heart, how he shrinks back, his breath taken away.⁴⁴

This manner of ‘reflective’ criticism – often ironic and multi-voiced – was in keeping with Schumann’s own compositional approach during the decade of his editorship; he composed using the names of his Davidsbund (Florestan, Eusebius, et al.), and his *Novellen*, Op. 21 end with ‘Fortsetzung und Schluß’

⁴¹ More on Schumann’s literary interests with reference to his criticism can be found in Leon B. Plantinga, *Schumann as Critic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967); Thomas Alan Brown, *The Aesthetics of Robert Schumann* (London: Peter Owen, 1969); Ulrich Taddey, ‘Life and Literature, Poetry and Philosophy: Robert Schumann’s Aesthetics of Music’, in Beate Perrey (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Schumann* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); John Macauslan, *Schumann’s Music and Hoffmann’s Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

⁴² Significantly, the *NZM* was not sponsored by a music publisher. The purpose of art had been debated in the pages of the *AMZ*. While it was conceded that music could refresh and stimulate a weary mind, many critics vouched for it being more than the pleasant amusement described by Kant. See, for example, ‘Ist es der Hauptzweck der Musik, uns zur Erholung zur dienen?’ *AMZ*, 4/6 (4 November 1801), 81–7.

⁴³ Bodo Bischoff points out that while Schumann could have had access to earlier issues of the *AMZ* there is no record of whether he actually read Hoffmann’s reviews, although *Kreisleriana* and *Serapion* include substantial portions of them. See Bischoff, *Monument für Beethoven: Die Entwicklung der Beethoven-Rezeption Robert Schumann* (Cologne: Dohr, 1994), p. 243; Peter Uwe Hohendahl, ‘Literary Criticism in the Epoch of Liberalism, 1820–187’, in Peter Uwe Hohendahl (ed.), *A History of German Literary Criticism* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), pp. 195–8.

⁴⁴ Translation: Robert Schumann, ‘[Review of Berlioz: *Fantastic Symphony*] (1835)’, in Bent (ed.), *Music Analysis in the Nineteenth Century*, 11, p. 168.

(‘Continuation and Conclusion’) as if a serialised journal article.⁴⁵ Yet Schumann did not shy away from detailed musical description; in the second part of his Berlioz review he considered, in turn (and with reference to examples from the score):

the viewpoint of *form* (at the level of the whole, of its separate parts, of the period, of the phrase), of *techniques of composition* (harmony, melody, counterpoint, working out, style), of whatever *idea* the composer was striving to convey, and of the *spirit* which governs form, material and idea.⁴⁶

The combination of poetic and technical aspects within one review underlines that Schumann was writing for a specialist audience, not the casual reader.

Despite his florid writing style (and his own compositional practices) Schumann remained sceptical of the extra-musical programmes produced by his contemporaries, arguing that they limited, rather than liberated, interpretation.⁴⁷ Tellingly, he framed his antipathy to the programme of *Symphonie fantastique* in nationalist terms: ‘the Germans, with their sensitive feelings and their aversion to the invasion of privacy, prefer not to have their thoughts led by the nose in this crude way’, he explained; the French, by contrast, are unimpressed ‘by displays of delicate modesty’.⁴⁸ The superiority of German aesthetic appreciation may be represented somewhat sardonically here, but nonetheless Schumann’s comments reflect a tendency among critics the momentum of which grew as the nineteenth century progressed: to associate the higher, ‘purer’ forms of instrumental music with an inherently German spirit.

Musical conceptions of the German nation were not necessarily parochial; indeed, in many ways they were defined on the international stage. Under Schumann’s editorship the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* privileged foreign correspondence over local activities. There were high-profile Paris-based contributors (François-Joseph Fétis, Stephen Heller and Berlioz) as well as extensive reviews of contemporary French operas, reports from British and Dutch music festivals, and reflections on musical life in cities such as Riga, or on the experiences of German musicians in Italy.⁴⁹ One reason for this more

⁴⁵ See Bernhard R. Appel, ‘Schumanns Davidsbund. Geistes- und sozialgeschichtliche Voraussetzungen einer romantischen Idee’, *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft*, 38 (1981), 1–23; John Daverio, ‘Piano Works 1: A World of Images’, in Perrey (ed.), *Cambridge Companion to Schumann*, p. 69.

⁴⁶ Schumann, ‘[*Fantastic Symphony*]’, in Bent (ed.), *Music Analysis in the Nineteenth Century*, II, p. 170.

⁴⁷ For more on Schumann’s views see Jonathan Kregor, *Program Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 81–98.

⁴⁸ Schumann, ‘[*Fantastic Symphony*]’, in Bent (ed.), *Music Analysis in the Nineteenth Century*, Vol. 11, p. 192.

⁴⁹ Michael Heinemann, ‘Korrespondenz aus Danzig: Eine Stadt im Spiege der Berichterstattung der *Neuen Zeitschrift für Musik*’, in Janusz Krassowski and Jolanta Woźniak (eds.), *Musica Baltica: The Music Culture of Baltic Cities on Modern Times/Musikkultur der Ostseestädte in der Neuzeit* (Gdańsk: Akademia Muzyczna im. Stanisława Moniuszki, 2010), pp. 105–12; Jochen Lebelt, ‘Die Widerspiegelung des Musiklebens der ostsächsischen Stadt Bautzen in der *NZfM*: Eine Studie über die

outward-looking perspective was that many of the younger generation of professional musicians the journal promoted toured internationally – including Schumann and his wife Clara, a virtuoso pianist. As Anna Harwell Celenza explains, having connected with sympathetic Danish musicians through the *NZM*, Schumann found he and Clara had a ready band of followers when they visited Copenhagen.⁵⁰

Subscriptions to music journals, though, rarely amounted to the kind of numbers that would constitute an international readership. What seemed more significant, as the century progressed, was the way in which certain journals came to stand for particular aesthetic viewpoints – or, perhaps better, polemics. Schumann's successor as editor of the *NZM*, Franz Brendel (1811–68), put forward a Hegelian view of music history, emphasising the role critics played in determining artistic progress.⁵¹ Under his editorship, and reflecting the upheavals of the 1848 revolutions, the political purpose of music criticism also came under scrutiny in the pages of the *NZM* and sparked debate with the *AMZ*.⁵² While his own essays tended towards the philosophical, and so could be said to be inherently elitist, during the uprisings Brendel advocated that music should be emancipated from its status as a 'luxury of the educated classes'.⁵³

Like Rochlitz, Hoffmann and Schumann before him, Brendel had several other interests besides editing the journal.⁵⁴ These complemented the concerns of the *NZM*, serving as a reminder that music criticism was part of a network of institutions that, through the course of the nineteenth century, supported particular performance, scholarly and professional practices – and that those institutions changed considerably during the second half of the century. Brendel lectured on music history at the University of Leipzig through the 1850s and 1860s, indicating the subject's rising status within higher education (as did Hanslick's appointment as a Professor of Music at the

Beziehungen Robert Schumanns zu Karl Eduard Hering (1807–1879)', in Gerd Nauhaus (ed.), *Schumann-Studien v* (Cologne: Studio, 1996), pp. 153–67.

⁵⁰ Anna Harwell Celenza, 'Imagined Communities Made Real: The Impact of Robert Schumann's *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* on the Formation of Music Communities in the Mid-Nineteenth Century', *Journal of Musicological Research*, 24/1 (2005), 1–26.

⁵¹ For further discussion of Hegelian principles, see William Brazill, *The Young Hegelians* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970); Barbara Titus, 'Conceptualizing Music: Friedrich Theodor Vischer and Hegelian Currents in German Music Criticism', unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Oxford (2005); James Garratt, *Music, Culture, and Social Reform in the Age of Wagner* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 54–70.

⁵² See Pederson, 'Enlightened and Romantic German Music Criticism', 199–204; and Pederson, 'Romantic Music under Siege in 1848', in Ian Bent (ed.), *Music Theory in the Age of Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

⁵³ See his draft petition to the Frankfurt Volks parliament of March 1848.

⁵⁴ He also co-edited, with Richard Pohl, *Anregungen für Kunst, Leben und Wissenschaft* from 1856 to 1861.

University of Vienna in 1861).⁵⁵ He was also a founder and the first president of an early musicians' union, the Allgemeine Deutscher Musikverein, whose annual meetings (the Tonkünstler-Versammlungen) included concerts of new music, and public discussions of the state of music and musicians in Germany and Austria.⁵⁶

In 1859, Brendel declared the advent of a *Neudeutsche Schule* or 'New German School'. The term, like many others, was problematic. Only Wagner was named explicitly, but it was apparent that the other two leading lights were Liszt and Berlioz.⁵⁷ A German exile, a French-speaking Hungarian and a Frenchman hardly seemed like the best representatives of a German school. In one of his first articles for the *NZM*, Brendel had discussed the schools of Leipzig (Mendelssohn), Düsseldorf (Schumann) and Weimar (Liszt).⁵⁸ It cannot be said that the 'New German School' united those various factions, but as Daniel Ortuno has pointed out, for a while it served to connect those musicians who sympathised with the Wagnerian or Lisztian worldview (Berlioz's association with the group, such as it was, was uncomfortable and short-lived).⁵⁹ Brendel's impulse towards unification of activities on a national scale was in keeping with the political manoeuvres of Otto von Bismarck, who was appointed Minister President of Prussia in 1862 and, after a series of wars, formed the German Empire in 1871. Music's role in promulgating cultural nationalism is typically discussed through particular compositions and performances – as exemplified through choral festivals or Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*.⁶⁰ Writing about that music – be it, in Wagner's case, by the composer himself, his acolytes or his detractors – was a vital means

⁵⁵ Thomas S. Grey, in his entry on Brendel in *Grove Music Online*, points out that while he was a respected lecturer and author (his *Geschichte der Musik in Italien, Deutschland und Frankreich* (1852) was revised three times during his lifetime), it is evident from Brendel's writing that his vocation was as a journalist and critic, not as a historian. His focus was the recent past and present, rather than antiquity (Thomas S. Grey, 'Brendel, (Karl) Franz', *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, available at www.oxfordmusiconline.com).

⁵⁶ See James Deaville, 'Organizing German Musical Life at Midcentury: Brendel, Schumann and the Leipzig Tonkünstlerversammlungen und Tonkünstlerverein', in Roe-Min Kok and Laura Tunbridge (eds.), *Rethinking Schumann* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

⁵⁷ In his New Year's article of 1866, *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, 33 (1866). Brendel said that the achievement of the School had ended with Liszt's move to Rome. Further discussion can be found in Detlef Altenburg (ed.), *Liszt und die Neudeutsche Schule* (Laaber: Laaber Verlag, 2006).

⁵⁸ Franz Brendel, 'Robert Schumann with Reference to Mendelssohn-Bartholdy and the Development of Modern Music in General [1845]', trans. Jürgen Thym, in Larry Todd (ed.), *Schumann and His World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

⁵⁹ Daniel Ortuno, 'Liszt's Heirs: The New German School after 1861', paper given at the *Eighteenth Biennial International Conference on Nineteenth-Century Music*, University of Toronto (18 June 2014).

⁶⁰ See Ryan Minor, *Choral Fantasies: Music, Festivity and Nationhood* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Nicholas Vazsonyi (ed.), *Wagner's Meistersinger: Performance, History, Representation* (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2002); Susanna Grossmann-Vendrey (ed.), *Bayreuth in der deutschen Presse. Beiträge zur Rezeptionsgeschichte Richard Wagners und seiner Festspiele*, vols. 1 and 11 (Regensburg: Gustav Bosse, 1977).

not only of encouraging critical engagement but also of reinforcing music's role in public life. Criticism served as the fertilising flesh of the fruit around the kernel of the work, helping to determine whether it would flourish or fail.

The construction of a musical nation was also facilitated by developments in communication technologies in the second half of the nineteenth century. Advances in printing enabled mass reproduction, transforming the daily press and encouraging larger readerships for established publications and the proliferation of specialist or factional journals in the second half of the nineteenth century. The rapid development of photography in the 1840s meant that, as Jürgen Osterhammel points out, while journal readers could never have seen a photograph of Beethoven or Schubert, they could see photographs of Chopin and Rossini.⁶¹ The advent of the electric telegraph in the mid-nineteenth century also quickened the dissemination of international news; once a permanent transatlantic cable was laid in 1866, it became much easier for musicians in Europe to know what was happening in the United States and vice versa. The strong German presence among musicians in American cities – especially New York and Chicago – was supported by critics. In many ways, it can be said that the representation of German musical life around the world – the external view – helped strengthen a stronger sense of nationhood within.

The View from Vienna

Austria renounced its membership of the German Confederation after the Austro-Prussian war of 1866, and hence remained at the head of its own, multinational empire, until the end of the First World War. However, Austrian critics of a liberal political persuasion were no less concerned with musical expressions of Germanic identity than their Leipzig- and Berlin-based counterparts. Vienna's renowned critic Eduard Hanslick (1825–1904) recalled of 1848:

The mighty Storm of the March Revolution almost immediately found a trembling echo in Vienna's artistic life, first in the expulsion of Italian opera. The Italian season was to have begun on 1 April 1848, with Verdi's *Ermani*, but no sooner had the placards been posted than they were defaced or torn down. These demonstrations prompted the Court authorities to postpone, and finally to cancel, the season. Behind this demonstration lay two powerful emotional currents. The first was one of which everyone was conscious and which found open, unashamed expression. This was a general trend towards all that was German – manners, politics, art. Away with the mortal

⁶¹ Jürgen Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Patrick Camiller (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2014), p. 39.

enemies of Germanism! Down with the Italians! The second motive was less conspicuous, but it played an undeniable part. It was of a democratic nature. Italian opera was regarded as an exclusive artistic luxury, as the music of the Court, of the aristocrats, and of the rich. Thus it was the artistic expression of anti-German, and specifically aristocratic, entertainment.⁶²

Hanslick, like many others before and since, chose here to define German qualities by comparison to a foreign other – Italian opera. His emphasis on its undemocratic and elitist nature is also typical of the time, although the extent to which Vienna audiences diversified and expanded during the second half of the nineteenth century has rightly been queried.⁶³

After 1848 Hanslick attempted to reinvigorate the Enlightenment model whereby the critic could guide his reader towards greater understanding and appreciation of music.⁶⁴ He had previously sympathised with Brendel's progressive, philosophical criticism, and as mentioned there were striking parallels between their careers, including that they were both university professors and that they wrote theoretical and cultural-historical texts as well as criticism.⁶⁵ The influence of their journalistic activities can be felt in their historical writings, which reflect their present situation more strongly than conventional scholarly texts. Indeed, Hanslick advocated what he called 'living history' (*lebendige Geschichte*), which emphasised what was actually being heard in Vienna's concert halls. His preference was for new music, rather than established works, and he eschewed the empirical research of his academic colleagues along with their emphasis on early repertoire. Hanslick likened the critic's pen to a camera and the writing of historical essays to taking a photograph, 'to

⁶² Eduard Hanslick reminiscences quoted in Henry Pleasants, 'Edward Hanslick (1825–1904)', in Eduard Hanslick, *Music Criticism 1846–99*, ed. and trans. Henry Pleasants (London: Penguin Books, 1950), pp. 23–4. For more on the impact of 1848 on musical life see Barbara Boisits (ed.), *Musik und Revolution. Die Produktion von Identität und Raum durch Musik in Zentraleuropa, 1848/49* (Vienna: Hollitzer, 2013).

⁶³ Subscriptions to the Vienna Philharmonic Concert Series were limited, both by the small number of events and the size of the hall of the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde*. The resultant high ticket prices meant that the audience was predominantly upper-middle class; indeed, as an anonymous critic put it in 1888, to be a subscriber was 'a mark of good breeding'. See David Brodbeck, *Defining Deutschtum: Politics, Ideology, German Identity, and Music-Critical Discourse in Liberal Vienna* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 12–13.

⁶⁴ See Dana Gooley, 'Hanslick and the Institution of Criticism', *The Journal of Musicology*, 28/3 (2011), 289–324; Hiroshi Yoshida, 'Eduard Hanslick and the Idea of "Public" in Musical Culture: Towards a Socio-political Context of Formalistic Aesthetics', *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, 32/2 (December 2001), 179–99.

⁶⁵ On Hanslick's philosophical and cultural context, see Christoph Landerer, 'Eduard Hanslicks Ästhetikprogramm und die Österreichische Philosophie der Jahrhundertmitte', *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift*, 54/9 (1999), 6–20; Landerer, 'Eduard Hanslick und die österreichische Geistesgeschichte', in Theophil Antonicek, Gernot Gruber and Christoph Landerer (eds.), *Eduard Hanslicks Gedenken. Bericht des Symposiums zum Anlass seines 100. Todestages* (Tutzing, 2010); and Bonds, *Absolute Music*, pp. 140–204.

fix, as it were, *à l'instant*.⁶⁶ Media technology not only changed the way information and reviews were transmitted, this suggests; it also helped critics reconceptualise their role in history.

Another way in which Hanslick was a man of his time – more specifically, a liberal nationalist who played a prominent part in Austrian public life – was his privileging of Germanness, or *Deutschthum*. In his account of musical life in Vienna for the first volume of the ambitious anthropological series *Die österreichisch-ungarische Monarchie in Wort und Bild* (*The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in Words and Pictures*, 1886) Hanslick described the city as a powerful empire in itself: ‘Gentle echoes of Slavic, Magyar, and Italian tunes, enlivening and embellishing rather like miscegenation [*Racenmischung*], gently resound, without distracting from the eminently German character of Viennese music.’⁶⁷ As David Brodbeck observes, for Hanslick, detecting German qualities in a work – seriousness, genuineness, strength – could grant a composer the status of being a German, even if he came from elsewhere in the Empire.⁶⁸ His was a supple, cosmopolitan definition of national identity that did not deny the charms of ‘foreign’ music; an attitude that would put Hanslick at odds with the increasingly chauvinistic political rhetoric around him.⁶⁹

The composer with whom Hanslick is now most closely associated was actually German: Hamburg-born Johannes Brahms (1833–97), who moved to Vienna in the 1860s. The two men first met in 1856, the year Hanslick became the music critic for the liberal daily *Die Presse* (when a breakaway group of editors formed the *Neue Freie Presse* in 1864 he went with them). However, it took some time before Hanslick was fully convinced of Brahms’s merits as a composer; for several years, he found his music too densely contrapuntal and rhythmically complex. Although histories of music tend to caricature Hanslick as a conservative in comparison to supporters of Wagner and Bruckner, it is worth remembering that he was not always the most conservative critical voice in Vienna. The city teemed with music critics writing for newspapers and specialist journals, and as foreign correspondents.

⁶⁶ See Kevin C. Karnes, *Music, Criticism, and the Challenge of History: Shaping Modern Musical Thought in Late Nineteenth-Century Vienna* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 12, 60–1.

⁶⁷ Hanslick, ‘Die Musik in Wien’; quoted in Brodbeck, *Defining Deutschthum*, p. 3.

⁶⁸ Brodbeck, *Defining Deutschthum*, p. 6; Brodbeck here draws on Pieter Judson, ‘Rethinking the Liberal Legacy’, in Steven Beller (ed.), *Rethinking Vienna 1900* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2001).

⁶⁹ Hanslick’s reputation is currently being reassessed, especially from a political standpoint. See for example Margaret Notley, *Lateness and Brahms: Music and Culture in the Twilight of Viennese Liberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Nicole Grimes, Siobhán Donovan and Wolfgang Marx (eds.), *Rethinking Hanslick: Music, Formalism, and Expression* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2013); Andrea Winklbauer and Nick Somers (eds.), *Euphorie und Unbehagen: Das jüdische Wien und Richard Wagner* (Vienna: Metroverlag, 2013); Brodbeck, *Defining Deutschthum*.

Each had – more or less – a different standpoint, and even within a particular publication, critics could disagree.⁷⁰ Among the Brahms sceptics were Rudolf Hirsch of the *Wiener Zeitung*, Selmar Bagge of the *Deutsche Musikzeitung* and Eduard Bernsdorff of Leipzig's *Signale für die musikalische Welt*. The composer found greater support from Hermann Dieters of the *Deutsche Musikzeitung* (who would later write a Brahms biography), Ludwig Speidel, Hanslick's colleague at the *Neue Freie Presse*, and from the Vienna correspondent of the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* (in which Adolf Schubring published extensive analyses of Brahms's music). Examining this range of responses, Michael Musgrave explains that there developed two types of audience for Brahms: one, musically educated, which recognised innovations and technical mastery; the other, a general audience which needed longer to grasp a new work's significance.⁷¹ The same could probably be said of any composer of ambition. The point is that such was the varied and extensive nature of music journalism, critics catered for either audience: they could contribute to erudite discussions about the finer points of Brahms's compositional style, or attempt to explain those qualities in terms a layperson might understand.

Hanslick's reputation as a critic was strengthened by his addressing specialist and general audiences simultaneously. His reviews appeared on the front page of the *Neue Freie Presse*, ensuring him a wider readership than a specialist music journal. A brief read through his reviews of Brahms's four symphonies is revealing. 'Even the layman will immediately recognise it as one of the most individual and magnificent works of the symphonic literature', he wrote of the First Symphony, invoking its 'Faustian conflicts', before remarking on the inferior quality of the Scherzo, whose theme he found 'wanting in melodic and rhythmic charm'.⁷² In comparison to this, 'a work for earnest connoisseurs capable of constant and microscopic pursuit of its minutely ramified excursions', the Second Symphony, reviewed two years later, 'extends its warm sunshine to connoisseurs and laymen alike'.⁷³ By the Third Symphony, premiered in 1883, Hanslick bemoaned his inadequacy, explaining, 'the eloquence of the critic declines in inverse proportion to that of the composer'.⁷⁴ Of the Fourth Hanslick concluded: 'For the musician, there is not another modern piece so productive as a subject for study. It is like a dark

⁷⁰ During the *Vormärz* (pre-1848) period, editors had 'protected' certain performers and moderated reviews. See Gooley, 'Hanslick and the Institution of Criticism'.

⁷¹ Michael Musgrave outlines Brahms's Viennese reception in 'Years of Transition: Brahms and Vienna 1862–1875', in Michael Musgrave (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Brahms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 48.

⁷² Hanslick, 'Brahms's Symphony No. 1 [1876]', *Music Criticism 1846–99*, 125–8.

⁷³ Hanslick, 'Brahms's Symphony No. 2 [1878]', *Music Criticism 1846–99*, 157–9.

⁷⁴ Hanslick, 'Brahms's Symphony No. 3 [1883]', *Music Criticism 1846–99*, 210–13.

well; the longer we look into it, the more brightly the stars shine back.⁷⁵ This relatively rare instance of poetic imagery in Hanslick's writing serves as a reminder of the critical legacy of Hoffmann and Schumann; now, though, the emphasis is less on the work's effect on the listener than on how the listener might engage with the music.

Hanslick coupled the notion that Brahms's music deserved thoughtful, close attention with an evaluation of his forebears (primarily Beethoven) and comparison to his contemporaries. Thus – with shades of Brendel – he embedded Brahms's output within a historical trajectory. Another thread in these reviews is Brahms's Germanness: for example, the First Symphony, despite Hanslick's reservations, is declared 'a possession of which the nation may be proud'. The Second Symphony was praised by Hanslick for not making recourse to 'foreign artistic fields', but this was less a swipe at cosmopolitanism than a reference to composers that made extra-musical reference to poetry or painting. By contrast, Brahms's Symphony was said to be 'purely musical in conception and structure, and purely musical in effect' (ideas Hanslick had pursued in more abstract terms in his *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen*, a further example of the exchange between aesthetic tracts and everyday journalism).⁷⁶ This music provided proof, according to Hanslick, that one could still write symphonies and build on tradition: a deliberate refutation of Wagner, who claimed that since Beethoven the only way for the symphony to progress was for it to transmogrify into (his) opera.⁷⁷

Wagner and Brahms are conventionally cast as antagonists and, to be sure, they pursued very different paths and had very different followings. Hanslick reviewed Wagner's works at length. While he certainly made some negative comments about the music, his greatest disdain was expressed for the cult of Wagner – for the cliques surrounding the composer and the quasi-mystical aspects of performances.⁷⁸ There was also some personal animosity, caused by Wagner's anti-Semitism as expressed in his 1850 essay *Judaism in Music* (an 1869 preface which addressed Hanslick directly), and his caricature of the critic as the character Beckmesser in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*.⁷⁹ The

⁷⁵ Hanslick, 'Brahms's Symphony No. 4 [1886]', *Music Criticism 1846–99*, 243–6.

⁷⁶ Sanna Pederson argues that the term absolute music was adopted as a corrective to programme music in the 1880s (not, as previous musicologists had argued, with Hanslick's 1854 publication) in 'Defining the Term "Absolute Music" Historically', *Music & Letters*, 90 (May 2009), 240–62.

⁷⁷ The alternative to the symphony, the Lisztian 'symphonic poem', Hanslick decried as a 'nonsensical theory'. Hanslick, 'Brahms's Symphony No. 2 [1878]', *Music Criticism 1846–99*, 158.

⁷⁸ Two translations of his Wagner essays are introduced in 'Hanslick contra Wagner: "The Ring Cycle comes to Vienna" and "Parsifal Literature"', translated in Thomas S. Grey (ed.), *Richard Wagner and His World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), pp. 409–25.

⁷⁹ There were performances of Wagner in Vienna in 1860 and 1875, and a Wagner-Gesellschaft was founded by Josef Schalk in 1873; see Amanda Glauert, 'The Reception of Wagner in Vienna, 1860–1900',

more interesting case, though, in terms of assessing the polemics of music criticism in late nineteenth-century Vienna, is the relationship between Brahms and Anton Bruckner (1824–96).⁸⁰ Bruckner began to compose symphonies in the late 1860s, soon after he moved to Vienna to take up a teaching post at the Conservatory. Hanslick hailed his early works as a means to save the great symphonic tradition. By the mid-1870s, however, Hanslick found Bruckner's music too Wagnerian. Personal politics no doubt played a part: Brahms's First Symphony was premiered in 1876, and Hanslick had repeatedly – and ultimately unsuccessfully – endeavoured to prevent Bruckner from being appointed to a professorship at the University. By the following decade, with performances of his Seventh Symphony around Europe, Bruckner had gathered a fervent crowd of supporters, many of whom were also avid Wagnerites.⁸¹

Hanslick may have been an influential tastemaker in Vienna, but he was well aware that his views were not held by all. In his review of Bruckner's Eighth Symphony, he noted that 'Wagner's dramatic style' had been applied to the symphony, with certain pieces, such as the Prelude to *Tristan und Isolde*, having been taken as the model for symphonic construction.⁸² According to Hanslick, short chromatic motifs were repeated 'until the listener is simply crushed under the sheer weight and monotony of this interminable lamentation' and there were ample Wagnerian orchestral effects, from *divisi* tremolo violins to 'Siegfried' tubas. Most objectionable, for Hanslick, was Bruckner's juxtaposition of 'dry schoolroom counterpoint with unbounded exaltation', leading to 'dismal long-windedness' (the Adagio lasted twenty-eight minutes, he complained: as long as an entire Beethoven symphony). Hanslick explained that he had studied the score before attending the dress rehearsal but only discovered its 'mysteries' from the accompanying programme note (by Bruckner's one-time pupil Josef Schalk), which explained its programmatic aspect (something guaranteed to raise Hanslick's bile). Yet Hanslick conceded that the concert was a huge success: 'A stormy ovation, waving of

in Barry Millington and Stewart Spencer (eds.), *Wagner in Performance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

⁸⁰ The relationship between the two composers is discussed further in Hans-Joachim Hinrichsen and Laurenz Lütteken, *Bruckner-Brahms: Urbanes Milieu als kompositorische Lebenswelt im Wien der Gründerzeit – Symposien zu den Zürcher Festspielen 2003 und 2005. Schweizer Beiträge zur Musikforschung* 5 (Bärenreiter, 2006).

⁸¹ Multiple reviews of Bruckner's works are included in Crawford Howie, *Anton Bruckner: A Documentary Biography* (Lewiston Edwin Mellen Press, 2002); the views of his supporters are discussed in Norbert Tschulik, 'Anton Bruckner in der *Wiener Zeitung*: Ein Beitrag über die zeitgenössische Bruckner-Berichterstattung', *Bruckner-Jahrbuch* (1991).

⁸² Hanslick, 'Bruckner's Eighth Symphony [1892]', *Music Criticism 1846–99*, 288–90. On the impact of Viennese criticism on Bruckner's revisions of the Symphony see Bryan Gilliam, 'The Two Versions of Bruckner's Eighth Symphony', *19th-Century Music*, 16/1 (Summer 1992), 59–69.

handkerchiefs from the standees, innumerable recalls, laurel wreaths, etc.!' For a critic dedicated to guiding and reflecting public opinion, such a response was particularly galling.

Hanslick retired from writing regular criticism and lecturing in 1895. The following year Bruckner died; then, in 1897, Brahms. *Fin-de-siècle* Vienna was peopled by a younger generation of musicians, some of whom – Richard Strauss (1864–1949), Gustav Mahler (1860–1911), Alexander von Zemlinsky (1871–1942) – Hanslick would continue to review, though their sensibilities were quite different from his own. The anti-Semitism he had encountered in Wagner's essays became more virulent at the end of the century, with the election of Karl Lueger as mayor of Vienna.⁸³ Nation-building had been fundamental to German-language music criticism through the nineteenth century, but for figures such as Hanslick it had been a nation of the spirit; or, as Hoffman put it, 'a kingdom not of this world'. Now, with the foundation of university departments and the establishment of musicology as an academic discipline, a different kind of musical writing was gaining currency: more technical, and more historically minded.⁸⁴ Along with concert series and mass publications, through the efforts of critics such as Hoffmann, Schumann and Hanslick, music was embedded within, and could even be said to symbolise, German culture: ready for export and for creating empires.

⁸³ For more on the impact of anti-Semitism on musical life, see Nicholas Cook, *The Schenker Project: Culture, Race, and Music Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 140–98; K. M. Knittel, *Seeing Mahler: Music and the Language of Antisemitism in Fin-de-Siècle Vienna* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010); Karen Painter, *Symphonic Aspirations: German Music and Politics, 1900–1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).

⁸⁴ The AMZ became more musicologically oriented in the late nineteenth century under the editorships of Handel scholar Friedrich Chrysander and Berlin librarian Joseph Müller. On the institutionalisation of musicology see Alexander Rehding, 'On the Quest for the Origins of Music in Germany circa 1900', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 53 (2000), 345–85.

Music Criticism in Nineteenth-Century Italy

ALEXANDRA WILSON

‘Unfortunately, music criticism does not exist in Italy.’¹ Such a sweeping statement, uttered in 1900 by the writer Michele Virgilio within the context of a damning critique of Puccini’s *Tosca*, might seem to negate the need for the present chapter. It is, of course, not true. There was plenty of music criticism in nineteenth-century Italy, published in newspapers, in cultural periodicals of a general nature and in numerous specialist music journals and magazines. What Virgilio’s comment reveals, however, is a frustration felt by many turn-of-the-century Italian intellectuals about the prevalence of what might be called ‘dilettante’ criticism, characterised by descriptiveness, venality and provincialism, and the perception that Italian music criticism was lagging behind that of neighbouring France and, in particular, Germany. These limitations are, to some extent, hard to dispute but it is important to recognise the modernist bias that coloured Virgilio’s derision. The more pluralistically minded reception historian of today is willing to acknowledge that, for all its ‘weaknesses’, nineteenth-century Italian music criticism nevertheless offers a vital window onto the repertory, performance practices, audience demographics and preoccupations of the time, telling us a great deal about canon formation, the social business of opera-going and the nationalistic agendas that shaped contemporary attitudes towards music.

Nineteenth-century Italian music criticism differed in two important respects from contemporaneous criticism in neighbouring France or Germany. First, Italian music reviewing was comparatively limited in the early part of the nineteenth century but expanded and diversified immensely following Unification in 1861: thus, the present chapter will inevitably be weighted to some extent towards the latter decades of the century. Second, the history of nineteenth-century Italian music criticism is notable in being,

¹ ‘Ma, pur troppo, in Italia, non esiste critica musicale’. Michele Virgilio, *Della decadenza dell’opera in Italia: a proposito di ‘Tosca’* (Milan: Gattinoni, 1900), p. 15.

for the most part, primarily a history of opera criticism: isolated examples of a more wide-ranging type of music criticism are to be found but are in a distinct minority. This was the natural consequence of an unusually pronounced degree of cultural introspection in the local performing repertory and also of the tight control exercised over music journalism by Italian opera publishers and other parties from the operatic world with vested interests.²

Music criticism was, then, inextricably bound up with operatic practices, just as it was by local journalistic practices, both of which were inherently shaped by Italy's particular politico-geographical circumstances, both prior to and following Unification. In contrast to France, where operatic activity was predominantly concentrated in Paris (at least according to standard narratives of the period),³ Italy's was a decentralised operatic culture. The Italian custom was to stage a number of regional premieres following one another swiftly, performed by different companies, orchestras and conductors. Large opera houses were scattered the length of the Italian peninsula, from Venice in the north-east to Palermo in Sicily; it has been estimated that there were 1,055 Italian theatres in the 1890s and 3,000 by 1907, including many serving small, isolated communities.⁴ Each theatre provided not only entertainment but an important forum for social gatherings, political debate and displays of power within its local community. While some theatres, notably La Scala, took on particular national significance, the importance of the regional theatres cannot be disputed, as may be gleaned from a glance at the diverse range of locations in which Rossini's or Verdi's operas received their premieres. Music criticism could also be found in periodicals and newspapers from all over Italy, although again there tended to be certain cultural 'pockets' where the reviewing industry was particularly vibrant. Particularly noteworthy was Milan, which was the effective musical capital of the Italian peninsula from the beginning of the nineteenth century, where many of the major publishers and agents were based.⁵

² Caterina Criscione, *Luigi Torchi: un musicologo italiano tra Otto e Novecento* (Imola: Editrice La Mandragora, 1997), p. 38. Non-operatic music was very much a minority taste, predominantly favoured by intellectual connoisseurs in large cities: the music of Brahms and even that of Mozart and Beethoven was scarcely known in Italy as late as the 1870s.

³ See Katharine Ellis's work on the musical history of the French regions, including Ellis, 'Mireille's Homecoming? Gounod, Mistral and the Midi', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 65 (2012), 463–509; Ellis, 'How to Make Wagner Normal: *Lohengrin's* "Tour de France" of 1891/2', *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 25/2 (2013), 121–37.

⁴ Fiamma Nicolodi, 'Opera Production from Italian Unification to the Present', in Lorenzo Bianconi and Giorgio Pestelli (eds.), *Opera Production and Its Resources* (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1998), p. 168; John Rosselli, *Music and Musicians in Nineteenth-Century Italy* (London: Batsford, 1991), p. 140.

⁵ Marco Capra, 'La Casa Editrice Sonzogno tra giornalismo e impresariato', in Mario Morini, Nandi Ostali and Piero Ostali (eds.), *Casa musicale Sonzogno: cronologie, saggi, testimonianze*, vol. 1 (Milan: Sonzogno, 1995), p. 244.

Two seminal periodicals loom especially large in the story of nineteenth-century Italian music criticism: the *Gazzetta musicale di Milano* and the *Rivista musicale italiana*. The former merits attention for its longevity and its place at the heart of the Italian musical establishment and the latter for its radical attempt to break with earlier patterns of Italian music criticism. I shall discuss both of these publications in detail later in this chapter. We should not, however, ignore the fact that music criticism appeared in many other types of periodical in nineteenth-century Italy and that these publications also have their historical value, even those that might at first seem to contain ‘bad’ criticism. I shall begin by providing an overview of the periodicals and newspapers in which music criticism was published at various points throughout the century, before analysing the reviewing practices and biases of particular publications, the interactions between the publishing and performing industries, and the ways in which music reviewing intersected with wider cultural and social debates.

Journals and Newspapers: An Overview

Italian music criticism in the earlier part of the nineteenth century was primarily located in periodicals – both wide-ranging arts periodicals and specific music journals – while newspapers were predominantly politically inclined at first but would emerge as an increasingly important forum for discussion about music and the arts more broadly as the century progressed. During the early century, music was typically discussed in periodicals aimed at the intelligentsia that covered a range of cultural topics, including fine art, literature and drama: these included *Il corriere dei teatri*, *La fama*, *Il Figaro*, *La moda* and *Il pirata*.⁶ Some of the discussion about music in these early periodicals with a broad remit was reasonably ‘highbrow’ and philosophical in nature, considering aesthetic questions about, for instance, the influence of French and German music upon Italian music of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.⁷

The 1830s saw the rise of the specialist music periodical, and the drive to establish such publications gathered pace in the 1840s and 1850s: early titles included the *Gazzetta musicale* (established in Naples in 1838), *L'Italia musicale* (Milan, 1847), and the *Gazzetta musicale di Napoli* (1853). As these titles would suggest, music periodicals were set up in a variety of different cities. There

⁶ Capra, ‘La Casa Editrice Sonzogno tra giornalismo e impresariato’, pp. 243–4.

⁷ Andrea della Corte, *La critica musicale e i critici* (Turin: Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese, 1961), p. 456.

was, however, a particular concentration of rather atypical journals in mid-century Florence, a historically important cultural centre. Following the lead of the *Rivista musicale di Firenze*, established in 1840, the Florentine music publishing firm run by Giovanni Gualberto Guidi established the *Gazzetta musicale di Firenze* (1853–5), its successor *L'armonia* (1856–9: subtitled ‘organ of musical reform in Italy’), and *Boccherini* (1862–82), the official journal of the Società del Quartetto, all of which benefitted from contributions by the enlightened intellectual and Verdi scholar Abramo Basevi.⁸ The subtitle of the second of these three journals and the affiliation of the third gives us a clue to the fact that these periodicals were highly unusual, by later Italian standards, in not prioritising opera. Rather, they spoke to and for a niche community of Italian enthusiasts for north European instrumental and orchestral music: Florence had become a particular centre for the performance of such works from 1830.⁹

A great deal more mainstream was the *Gazzetta musicale di Milano*, founded in Milan in 1842 by Giovanni Ricordi, at the suggestion of his son Tito, in order to raise music out of what many perceived to be a subordinate position within Italian culture.¹⁰ The journal ceased publication six years later in 1848 as a result of revolutionary activity in Milan, but was revived between 1850 and 1862. After a further hiatus of four years prompted by low sales, the journal ran again for thirty-six years between 1866 and 1902 and became the musical mouthpiece of post-Unification Italy. The front page of the first issue of the *Gazzetta* consists of three columns of dense text in small font, devoted to a consideration of an ‘introduction to the current state of the musical arts in Italy’.¹¹ But the coverage in these early days was by no means entirely slanted towards Italian music: composers discussed in the initial issues included Thalberg and Gluck. An extended article on ‘Music in Germany’, both instrumental and orchestral, by none other than a young Richard Wagner was serialised over three of the earliest issues,¹² and the journal also featured

⁸ Stefano Castelvechi, ‘Introduction’ to Abramo Basevi, *The Operas of Giuseppe Verdi* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), p. xiii.

⁹ Castelvechi, ‘Introduction’, pp. xiii–xiv. For further reading on the performance and reception of non-operatic music in nineteenth-century Italy, see Roger Parker, ‘“Classical” Music in Milan during Verdi’s Formative Years’, *Studi musicali*, 13/2 (1984), 259–73; Aaron S. Allen, ‘Beethoven’s Music in Nineteenth-Century Italy: A Critical Review of Its Reception Through the Early 1860s’, unpublished PhD dissertation, Harvard University (2006).

¹⁰ Francesco Degrada et al., *Music, Musicians, Publishing: 175 Years of Casa Ricordi, 1808–1983* (Milan: Ricordi, 1983), p. 15.

¹¹ ‘B.’, ‘Introduzione delle attuali condizioni delle arti musicali in Italia’, *Gazzetta musicale di Milano*, 1 (2 January 1842), 1.

¹² Richard Wagner, ‘La musica in Germania (i)’, *Gazzetta musicale di Milano*, 5 (30 January 1842), 19–20; ‘La musica in Germania (ii)’, *Gazzetta musicale di Milano*, 7 (13 February 1842), 26–8; ‘La musica in Germania (iii)’, *Gazzetta musicale di Milano*, 8 (20 February 1842), 31.

translations of articles by Fétis and Berlioz.¹³ The journal was by no means opera-exclusive at this stage, but later on opera would loom much larger, and the journal became increasingly focused upon musical events in Italy and the reception of Italian works abroad. Much of the language was (as elsewhere in the Italian music press) coloured by a nationalistic focus, which would intensify with the passing of the years. That said, even the issues of the journal from the tail end of the century covered important musical events abroad and reprinted stories from foreign music periodicals, most notably *La Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris*. Composers discussed in 1890 alone included less well-known non-Italian figures such as Adolf von Henselt, Franz Lachner and Rudolph von Procházka, alongside the canonical figures of Wagner, Mozart, Schubert and Beethoven.

Speaking to and for the bourgeois opera-going Milanese, the *Gazzetta musicale di Milano* occupied a position at the heart of Italian musical life, and it provides a fascinating window onto the mainstream operatic culture of nineteenth-century Italy. The journal included numerous substantial reviews of premieres and also gave extensive coverage to regional revivals. Issues of contemporary musical debate were discussed, as was music history and musical training and education (conservatoire news was featured on a reasonably regular basis). Although it lacked the academic pretensions of some of the music journals that would emerge at the tail end of the nineteenth century, there is no doubt that the journal was a serious-minded periodical, particularly in its earliest manifestations.

Other music publishers launched rival journals to the *Gazzetta musicale di Milano* later in the century: in 1881 Sonzogno established *Il teatro illustrato* and, a year later, *La musica popolare* (the two would merge in 1886). *Il teatro illustrato* was a serious publication along similar lines to the *Gazzetta musicale di Milano*, which contained historical articles and articles about spoken theatre as well as opera reviews from around Italy and from Paris.¹⁴ The Sonzogno company also used the journal as a vehicle for advertising its competitions for new one-act operas (*Cavalleria rusticana* was the most famous and successful work to win) and for promoting the French operas and operettas it began to introduce to Italian audiences from the 1860s onwards.¹⁵ This illustrates the important role that the press played in fashioning repertoires and the close intersection between different branches of the late nineteenth-century Italian music industry.

A broader range of music journals – some perhaps better referred to as magazines – also began to be established after Unification. In the cases where

¹³ Claudio Sartori, *Casa Ricordi: 1808–1958* (Milan: Ricordi, 1988), p. 55.

¹⁴ Capra, 'La Casa Editrice Sonzogno tra giornalismo e impresariato', p. 254. ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 251.

such publications were not sponsored by music publishers, they tended to be run by other parties with a commercial interest in the opera industry, most notably music agents: well-known agency journals included the titles *Il trovatore*, *Il mondo artistico* and the *Gazzetta dei teatri*. Some of these publications, such as *L'arte melodrammatica* and the *Rivista teatrale melodrammatica*, were little more than recruitment vehicles for the opera industry, listing singers who were attached to particular agencies. Presumably such periodicals were read largely by those employing performers and the singers themselves, rather than by audience members, but they provide useful information for the historian writing about the lifestyle of jobbing singers or concerned with the statistics of opera production. Other agency journals were aimed more directly at the general opera-going audience. Whereas publishing house journals were based in a number of major centres, agency journals were, for the most part, published in a single city, Milan, where the majority of theatrical agents were based.¹⁶ It is worth emphasising that, long after the rise of these varying types of music-specific journal, music also continued to be given detailed attention in serious cultural journals with a broad remit, such as the *Nuova antologia* and *Il marzocco*.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, two interesting and seemingly contradictory developments took place simultaneously in the world of Italian music criticism. On the one hand, music journalism began to 'democratise'. As historian of music criticism Marco Capra has argued, music journalism changed from being something aimed exclusively at a limited, elite readership to something accessible to the masses.¹⁷ This was in part a consequence of the growing importance of the daily press as a locus of music criticism, but the number of periodicals also expanded, and as publishers strove to reach a wider audience, the style of writing began to change. Some publications undoubtedly became more banal: the most high-profile example of this change was the transformation of the *Gazzetta musicale di Milano* in 1903 into a small-format glossy illustrated journal (now published monthly rather than weekly) entitled *Musica e musicisti*, which was in turn superseded in 1906 by the broadly similar *Ars et labor*.¹⁸ These two journals, with their colourful 'Liberty-style' covers (the Italian equivalent of *art nouveau*), were exquisitely

¹⁶ John Rosselli, *The Opera Industry in Italy from Cimarosa to Verdi: The Role of the Impresario* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 139.

¹⁷ Marco Capra, 'Alla ricerca dei periodici musicali: in margine alla pubblicazione del catalogo dei periodici musicali delle biblioteche della Campania', *Rivista italiana di musicologia*, 32/2 (1997), 373.

¹⁸ From 1907 *Ars et labor* was given away free to subscribers to the conservative *Gazzetta di Venezia*, indicating the disposition of Ricordi's target readership. Ricordi flatteringly described the readership of the Venice newspaper as 'intellectually aristocratic' and drawn from 'the most cultured classes'; it claimed that such a readership would appreciate the character and aims of *Ars et labor* (*Ars et labor*, 61/2/12, December 1906, 1065).

presented but there was little disguising a distinct shift of editorial emphasis: Capra has gone so far as to call them ‘devoid of any critical function’.¹⁹ Fashion took precedence over intellectual credibility: they had effectively become general-interest magazines that reflected the contemporaneous growth of Italian consumer culture, with features on travel, sport, current affairs and a wide array of leisure pursuits. The two journals tell us much about the cultural history of 1900s Italy, its pleasures and its prejudices – a sense of voyeuristic exoticism and wishful colonialism is fairly pronounced – but little about music. Music criticism and indeed any type of comment upon music was to be found only rarely, as in-depth reviews were replaced by brief listings.²⁰

The second development that took place at the tail end of the nineteenth century was the rise of a genuinely intellectual type of music journal that went hand in hand with the development of an Italian musicology. Although this might seem to go against the grain, as Italian journalism more broadly was seeking to expand its readership, it is not entirely a surprising development. The foundation of such periodicals was prompted precisely by a dissatisfaction on the part of a small northern intelligentsia with the poor state of wider Italian music criticism. These journals remained aloof from commercial interests and favoured repertoires largely ignored by most Italian music writers: music from northern Europe, contemporary music and early music. They sought deliberately to challenge received wisdom about music: popular Italian opera, and the audiences that enjoyed it, were treated with some disdain. The most significant publication in this bracket, which I shall discuss in some detail below, was the *Rivista musicale italiana* (*RMI*), founded in 1894 by the musicologist, historian and librarian Luigi Torchi. The *RMI* was an early example of a new type of journal that would take off in earnest in the first decade of the twentieth century when, as Luca Somigli suggests, ‘the cultural periodical becomes the laboratory of modernity, the privileged site of intellectual exchange where writers, artists, critics, and philosophers meet to test out new theoretical horizons’.²¹

Music criticism was also increasingly to be found in Italian newspapers as the century progressed. The newspaper industry as a whole developed later in

¹⁹ Capra, ‘Alla ricerca dei periodici musicali’, 373.

²⁰ The publishing firm tried to deny that the repackaging of the journal represented a move downmarket, although an official history of the publishing house would later concede that the change in emphasis had been misguided and that the history of ‘the new monthly is very much less interesting than that of the old *Gazzetta*’: ‘In così vasto panorama tuttavia, l’attività specifica della Casa Ricordi un poco si disperde e per la storia della sua vicenda il nuovo mensile è assai meno interessante della vecchia “*Gazzetta*”’ (Sartori (ed.), *Casa Ricordi*, p. 67).

²¹ Luca Somigli, ‘Towards a Literary Modernity *all’italiana*: A Note on F. T. Marinetti’s *Poesia*’, in Ann Hallamore Caesar, Gabriella Romani and Jennifer Burns (eds.), *The Printed Media in Fin-de-Siècle Italy: Publishers, Writers, and Readers* (London: Legenda, 2011), p. 79.

Italy than in neighbouring European countries and gained impetus from the 1860s and 1870s; as Ann Hallamore Caesar and Gabriella Romani have argued, ‘Most critics agree that the cultural modernization of Italy began soon after the political unification of the country.’²² Newspapers were, generally speaking, the preserve of a fairly small political and intellectual elite for the first half of the century, and even after Unification the market for newspapers was far smaller than in Germany, France or Britain: high illiteracy rates impeded efforts to create a culture of reading. The national illiteracy rate at Unification was 74.7 per cent, rising as high as 90 per cent in some areas of the south,²³ and half of the population remained unable to read in 1900.²⁴ It should be noted, however, that patterns of literacy varied sharply across the peninsula and, in the large urban centres of the north, were as high as in any other Western European city of the day.²⁵

The launch in 1866 by the Sonzogno publishing house of *Il secolo* (a Milanese newspaper aimed explicitly at the middle classes) marked an important turning point in the expansion of the industry, although the readership for newspapers would only really start to grow to any really significant extent around the turn of the twentieth century, as belated industrialisation brought large numbers of people to the major cities.²⁶ In the latter part of the nineteenth century, newspapers began to devote more space to matters other than politics, and the ‘terza pagina’ – the third page, devoted to the arts – began to grow in importance.

The Italian newspaper industry was regional in focus, for obvious historical reasons, and remained so after Unification. Although a cluster of important newspapers sprung up in Milan and Rome in the 1870s – notably the *Corriere della sera* in Milan in 1876 and the *Fanfulla* in Rome in 1871, followed eight years later by its culturally focused sister paper, the *Fanfulla della Domenica* – they did not have a monopoly on opera reviewing.²⁷ Reviews of local opera

²² Caesar and Romani, ‘Introduction’ to Caesar, Romani and Burns (eds.), *The Printed Media in Fin-de-Siècle Italy*, p. 2.

²³ David Forgacs, *Italian Culture in the Industrial Era, 1880–1980* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1990), p. 17.

²⁴ Giovanni Vigo, ‘Gli italiani alla conquista dell’alfabeto’, in Simonetta Soldani and Gabriele Turi (eds.), *Fare gli italiani: scuola e cultura nell’Italia contemporanea, 1, La nascita dello Stato nazionale* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1993), pp. 39, 47.

²⁵ John Davis, ‘Media, Markets and Modernity: The Italian Case, 1870–1915’, in Caesar, Romani and Burns (eds.), *The Printed Media in Fin-de-Siècle Italy*, p. 11. In 1911, while the overall picture had undoubtedly improved, 65 per cent still could not read in Calabria, but only 15 per cent were illiterate in wealthy Lombardy and Piedmont. See Enrico Decleva, ‘Un panorama in evoluzione’, in Gabriele Turi (ed.), *Storia dell’editoria nell’Italia contemporanea* (Florence: Giunti, 1997), pp. 231–2.

²⁶ Forgacs, *Italian Culture in the Industrial Era*, p. 31. For instance, the *Corriere della sera* expanded its circulation from 74,000 in 1900 to 600,000 by 1920 (Forgacs, p. 35).

²⁷ The foundation of the *Fanfulla della domenica* encouraged other newspapers to launch cultural and literary supplements.

productions proliferated in small-town newspapers in the second half of the century, as is testified by the range of reviews that were subsequently reprinted by Ricordi in the *Gazzetta musicale di Milano*. Certain cities had distinct musical identities that shaped the criticism published in the local press, with Bologna, for example, being the city most welcoming to avant-garde and foreign music, notably that of Wagner. Thus, although the regional character of the papers arguably limited the influence of the press as a shaper of national thought, in Italy there was in fact more justification in talking about operas as ‘patriotic’ symbols in which the regions felt that they had a stake.

Bias and Commercial Interests

The world of music reviewing was a political endeavour. Music periodicals represented particular commercial interests, just as the daily press was, towards the end of the century, increasingly tied up with the world of business (everything from steel and armament manufacturers to big banks).²⁸ Music journals were, as we have seen, owned, financed and edited either by music publishers or by theatrical agencies for much of the period. Bias was therefore, from the perspective of the present-day music historian, a significant problem – critics frequently attended performances with a premeditated agenda. However, it was not necessarily regarded as a problem at the time; the practice has to be considered within the context of a cultural economy within which clagues were regularly paid to interrupt performances of operas that belonged to rival publishing houses. Even some daily newspapers had connections to the world of music publishing: most notably, *Il secolo* was run by the Sonzogno firm, and the paper could be guaranteed to support the composers within that particular stable, such as Mascagni and Cilea. A letter of 1890 to Luigi Mancinelli reveals Puccini’s distrust of the partisan press. He had read in *Il secolo* about the resounding success of *Cavalleria rusticana* and wrote: ‘is it all true or is this *Il secolo*’s usual over-blown prose?’²⁹

As one might expect, Puccini was not heard to utter such cynical words when the rival Ricordi-sponsored press lavished similar praise on his own works. The *Gazzetta musicale di Milano* expressed lofty ambitions from the start, asserting its promise that

²⁸ The commercial affiliations of particular Italian newspapers are itemised in Forgacs, *Italian Culture in the Industrial Era*.

²⁹ ‘Lessi sul *Secolo* il riboante successo della *Cavalleria*, i bis, le ovazioni infinite: è tutto vero o il *Secolo* secondo il suo sistema gonfiò?’ (Puccini to Luigi Mancinelli (22 December 1890), in Eugenio Gara (ed.), *Carteggi Pucciniani* (Milan: Ricordi, 1958), p. 52.)

praise will never echo public clamour or ill-founded fame, just as censure will never derive from a desire to encourage the nationalistic vanity of those who (especially when it comes to music) consider as more or less barbaric all the works of those sublime creative minds which did not happen to be born under our splendid Italian sky . . . Needless to say, personal passions or favours will in no way influence our judgement.³⁰

The journal's claims to neutrality are to be taken with a rather large pinch of salt. The *Gazzetta* was, naturally enough, linked closely to the publishing house's own commercial interests and, certainly by the latter years of the nineteenth century, its enthusiasm for the works of Verdi and subsequently Puccini is hard to miss: in Claudio Sartori's words, Verdi and Puccini were Giulio Ricordi's 'point of departure and point of arrival'.³¹ These two composers, and particularly Verdi, also loomed large in the Italian music press more generally. Andrea della Corte goes so far as to argue that 'The history of nineteenth-century Italian criticism, at least up to around 1870, is to a large degree the history of Verdi criticism,' with Verdi's works constantly being compared to those of Donizetti, Meyerbeer or Wagner.³²

The power of the agents within the world of nineteenth-century music journalism should not, meanwhile, be underestimated: the line between the roles of agent and journalist was in many cases distinctly blurred, and the agency journals would take subscriptions from singers and, in John Rosselli's words, '[print] what they were paid to print'.³³ Clearly this climate of partisanship verging on blackmail makes it extremely difficult for the reception historian to distinguish between genuine responses and rapacious falsification. The fact that there were so many agency journals, however, suggests that the practice was regarded as acceptable. Furthermore, the agencies were under the sway of other commercial parties: as a general rule, for instance, the popular music press swallowed and regurgitated Ricordi-sponsored propaganda about its star composers.

Reviewing Practices

The seriousness and analytical incisiveness with which nineteenth-century Italian journals and newspapers approached music and musical culture were highly variable. Many journals aimed at a wide readership, and agency journals

³⁰ Degrada et al., *Music, Musicians, Publishing*, p. 16.

³¹ 'Verdi e Puccini sono il suo punto di partenza e il suo punto di arrivo' (Sartori, *Casa Ricordi*, p. 64).

³² 'La storia della critica italiana nell'Ottocento, almeno fino a circa il 1870, è sommamente la storia della critica verdiana'. Della Corte, *La critica musicale e i critici*, p. 481.

³³ Rosselli, *The Opera Industry in Italy from Cimarosa to Verdi*, pp. 138, 145.

in particular, printed reviews in which analysis was at best superficial and at worst non-existent; it is worth bearing in mind that practically anybody who felt so inclined could set himself up as an agent and no formal music qualifications of any sort were required.³⁴ Assiduous in reporting the attire of the noble ladies in the audience, critics usually limited their assessment of an opera's quality to noting the number of curtain calls it received. There is, however, still something of interest to be gleaned from such seemingly bland reports. Reviews which assessed music and drama purely in terms of audience response can inform us about contemporary operatic practice. Critics documented the numbers which were greeted with rapturous applause, and those which drew only stony silence; audiences were evidently notoriously fickle, sitting in judgement like Roman emperors at the Colosseum. The fact that the number of times that a composer was called to the footlights during the course of an opera's action itself was regarded as a barometer of a work's success indicates that audiences made very little attempt to suspend disbelief. Neither did critics, who paid attention primarily to issues of execution rather than characterisation. Most appear to have regarded operas as pure spectacle, almost as nothing more than feats of musical endurance or athleticism for the singer.

Although appraisive writing was relatively rare, it would be overstating matters to claim that such journals were always blindly uncritical. Better reviews included a judgement of the music and drama and addressed 'guiding' comments to the composer. Journals with a wider remit, such as *La lanterna*, *La frusta teatrale* and *Il mondo artistico*, provided long articles and reviews similar in format to the newspapers, which commented upon the music and libretto, albeit in language tailored to a lay readership. And, for all their weaknesses, nineteenth-century music journals were certainly eagerly awaited by readers. Rosselli notes that 'up to 1848 [music journals] held a central place in the life of the educated classes',³⁵ while the second half of the century witnessed the flourishing of a popular music press aimed at a growing mass of enthusiasts.³⁶

As has already been observed, Italy lagged behind its neighbours in terms of the development of serious music criticism. In Germany and France the 1830s witnessed the foundation of arguably the two most significant nineteenth-century music journals, Schumann's *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* and Schlesinger's *La Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris*, both of which built upon well-established traditions of criticism. At an equivalent date in Italy, and throughout the nineteenth century, music reviewing was a somewhat

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 139. ³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 144. ³⁶ Capra, 'Alla ricerca dei periodici musicali', p. 373.

sporadic affair, largely the preserve of literary figures rather than musicians.³⁷ While the same was generally true of French newspaper reviews, at least in the first half of the century, Kerry Murphy reports that as early as Berlioz's time in France, 'many of the *romanciers* ... were knowledgeable dilettantes, quite discerning in their musical judgments, and able to give reasons for their appreciations ... The dilettante's knowledge of music was quite extensive.'³⁸ It was hard to say the same of Italian dilettante criticism, and dilettante writing lived on right to the end of the century, even if one might point to a broader 'professionalisation' of writing as the Italian cultural industry modernised in the decades after Unification.³⁹

The critics writing for Italian newspapers also tended to fall back upon a tried and tested format in their opera reviews, which consisted of a list of notable people in attendance, a plot summary, a tally of curtain calls and a brief discussion of the singers. This formulaic approach was, in part, a consequence of the fact that, as is very often still the case for newspaper reviews, copy had to be produced within a matter of hours. The fact that the members of the audience loomed so large in press reports (and were usually discussed at the top of a review) tells us much about the high status accorded to opera in nineteenth-century Italian society: the opera house remained, throughout the century, an important social and political meeting place and 'the place to be seen'. The presence of princesses, cabinet ministers and famous artists, authors and composers was also used as an index of an opera's success.

Given the profusion of new operas being performed with great regularity at this time, many of the reviews in the Italian press were of premieres or regional premieres and thus focused more upon the operatic work than its interpretation. Singers were mentioned, but usually in brief and hyperbolic terms: a singer might be referred to as 'exquisite' or 'delicious', but in general little further comment about the specifics of their performance was offered. Whereas present-day reviews focus largely upon production styles – the consequence, of course, of an operatic museum culture and of more diverse and creative approaches to staging⁴⁰ – it is unusual to find any commentary at all upon the visual appearance of an opera's staging in nineteenth-century

³⁷ Capra, 'La stampa ritrovata: duecento anni di periodici musicali', in Alessandro Rigolli (ed.), *La divulgazione musicale in Italia oggi* (Turin: EDT, 2005), p. 66.

³⁸ Kerry Murphy, *Hector Berlioz and the Development of French Music Criticism* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1988), p. 6.

³⁹ Caesar and Romani, 'Introduction', in Caesar, Romani and Burns (eds.), *The Printed Media in Fin-de-Siècle Italy*, p. 1.

⁴⁰ For further reading on the former, see Tom Sutcliffe, *Believing in Opera* (London: Faber and Faber, 1996); and on the latter, see David J. Levin, *Unsettling Opera: Staging Mozart, Verdi, Wagner, and Zemlinsky* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

Italian reviews, and acting was very rarely discussed. Given the primacy of voice in nineteenth-century attitudes towards music, it is perhaps hardly surprising that the theatrical aspect to opera was regarded as secondary to the musical aspect. Having said that, there were many reviews in which detailed musical commentary was also scant; rather, the bulk of the discussion, for a first performance of an opera, was often about the plot. The purpose of a review, in many cases, was to guide a reader through the *content* of an opera rather than to problematise the work in question or to educate the reader in ways of listening critically. In general, critics also refrained from discussing operas in explicitly political terms, even though many were rich in political content and commentary. This is not to say, however, that music critics did not have political biases or that operas were not understood to contain political meaning.⁴¹

The musicologist Oscar Chilesotti, writing in 1900, dismissed the Italian music press as risible, arguing that ‘music criticism in the periodical press would be truly laughable if it were not such a painful subject’.⁴² Such sweeping criticisms about the poor standard of newspaper reviewing are, however, exaggerated; indeed, some of the most skilled reviewers eventually abandoned music journals in favour of the daily press.⁴³ Notably, we might point to the example of the highly respected critic Filippo Filippi, who edited the *Gazzetta musicale di Milano* from 1858 to 1862 but simultaneously took up the post of music critic for *La perseveranza*, where he remained until 1887.⁴⁴ Filippi also reviewed for *L’illustrazione italiana* and *Il mondo artistico* under the pseudonym ‘Dottor Veritas’, illustrating the fact that critics tended to range widely across an array of publications rather than writing exclusively for a single newspaper or periodical.⁴⁵ Critics also often had ‘day jobs’ outside of the world of journalism: *Il secolo* employed Amintore Galli, who was, as well as being a critic, a theorist and musicologist who taught aesthetics at the Milan Conservatoire.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, despite the existence of a number of esteemed critics, there was a growing awareness among members of the Italian musical

⁴¹ Della Corte, *La critica musicale e i critici*, p. 454. I have analysed the ways in which the press politicised Puccini in my book *The Puccini Problem: Opera, Nationalism, and Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

⁴² ‘La critica musicale della stampa periodica farebbe ridere davvero, se non si trattasse di argomento lagrimevole.’ Oscar Chilesotti, *Cronache musicali illustrate*, 28 (1900); cited in della Corte, *La critica musicale e i critici*, pp. 652–3).

⁴³ Marco Capra, ‘Criticism: Italy: 1890–1945’, in Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (eds.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., vol. 6 (London: Macmillan, 2001), pp. 685–6.

⁴⁴ Marco Capra, ‘Filippi, Filippo’, in Roberta Montemorra Marvin (ed.), *The Cambridge Verdi Encyclopedia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 168.

⁴⁵ Della Corte, *La critica musicale e i critici*, p. 513.

⁴⁶ Capra, ‘La Casa Editrice Sonzogno tra giornalismo e impresariato’, p. 254.

establishment that the overall state of Italian criticism was rather weak, even in the later years of the century. As Filippi himself wrote in 1881:

There are critics who are fairly well-educated, enlightened and passionate about art, but they are in an absolute minority, and in the opposing camp there is a rabble of light, superficial writers who adopt the airs of critics, and, opposing all artistic progress, become accessories to ignorance, happy and content to declare to be ugly all that which they do not understand, or do not wish to understand.⁴⁷

Part of the problem was that Italian critics were in thrall to public taste, and to an almost excessive degree. As David Kimbell writes, ‘if a composer wrote operas that thrilled or delighted people all over Italy he was a great composer; if he didn’t he wasn’t, and it cut no ice to read in the newspaper the next day that his modulations were sublime, or his instrumentation deeply scientific’.⁴⁸ Many of the dilettante critics went so far as to ally themselves with the least knowledgeable of their readers, arguing that unschooled audience members were the best judges of art because their impressions were uncontaminated and uncomplicated by any sort of theoretical knowledge. Technical knowledge was commonly held to be a veritable barrier (for both audience members and critics) to hearing music in a ‘pure’ way. The heart was deemed to be vastly more important than the head: thus, the way an opera made one *feel* was all-important and a work’s success could be judged in terms of the amount of tears it prompted. Those reviewers who were not musically literate were not necessarily devoid of musical sense, it was argued, and had a kind of insight into the music that matched that of their readership better than that of the critics whose prose was overly theoretical. This was, of course, an extremely convenient line for the less musically adept reviewers to be promoting: it gave them a justification for writing in a style that was highly impressionistic and for making extravagant claims about a composer’s merits that were rarely backed up by any specific reference to the music itself. Critics often argued that audiences did not *want* technical criticism and caricatured it as being ‘German’ – something that was clearly intended as an insult.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ ‘C’è una critica abbastanza colta, illuminata e appassionata per l’arte, essa è in assoluta minoranza, e nel campo opposto avvi una turba di scrittori leggeri, superficiali, che si atteggianno a critici, e, opponendosi a qualunque progresso dell’arte, si fanno complici dell’ignoranza, beati e contenti di dichiarare brutto tutto quello che non comprendono o che non vogliono comprendere’ (della Corte, *La critica musicale e i critici*, p. 535.)

⁴⁸ David Kimbell, *Italian Opera* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 15.

⁴⁹ I have discussed these issues in more detail elsewhere. See Wilson, *The Puccini Problem*; ‘Defining Italianness: The Opera that made Puccini’, *Opera Quarterly*, 24/1–2 (2008), 82–92; and ‘Music, Letters and National Identity: Reading the 1890s Italian Music Press’, *Nineteenth-Century Music Review*, 7/2 (2010), 99–116.

In the final decades of the nineteenth century the better music critics began to agitate for matters to improve. Debates about the state of criticism raged in the pages of the *Gazzetta musicale di Milano* itself during the spring of 1886, and the next two decades would witness the rise of a new, different type of music criticism. The *Cronaca musicale*, for example, was founded in 1896 in order to promote the serious study of music history (it contained lengthy articles addressing historical, aesthetic and technical issues), with the explicit intention of raising critical standards. The journal's editor, Tancredi Mantovani, argued that there was a causal relationship between criticism and composition: a lack of direction in music criticism was, he argued, encouraging a weak and uncertain state of musical production in contemporary Italy.⁵⁰ (To suggest that Italian opera of the turn of the century was entering a period of decline may now strike some readers as absurd, but this was indeed the perspective shared by a significant minority of elite music critics of the day.) Broadsheets such as *Musica* and *La riforma musicale* also published serious, lengthy reviews and articles on music history, aesthetics, theory and issues of contemporary musical debate, often adopting a fiercely polemical tone.

The new musical commentators of the last years of the century were in many cases librarians, often employed in conservatoires: figures such as Arnaldo Bonaventura, Guido Gasperini, Giovanni Tebaldini and Angelo Solerti, who were authors of serious books on music and who had aspirations to change the way in which music was studied.⁵¹ Their emergence in the field of music criticism coincided with the rise of Italian musicology at the turn of the century, although it was not until 1925 that the first university course in musicology was offered, at Turin.⁵² Inspired by trends in German scholarship, these scholars were primarily concerned with cataloguing the contents of archives and producing modern editions of early Italian music, especially sixteenth-century polyphony.⁵³ To accompany this work, they began to produce specialist journals such as *La rinascita musicale*, which was explicitly devoted to sacred music.

This period also saw the emergence of a new generation of polemical writers who were profoundly dissatisfied with the state of Italian music and of Italian music criticism: some, like Luigi Torchi and Fausto Torrefranca, were more academically inclined, whereas others, such as the composer Ildebrando Pizzetti and the composer-pianist Giannotto Bastianelli, were

⁵⁰ Anon. [presumed to be Mantovani], *Cronaca musicale*, 1/1 (18 February 1896), 1.

⁵¹ Criscione, *Luigi Torchi*, pp. 121–2.

⁵² Nicolodi, 'Opera Production in Italy from Unification to the Present', p. 167; Carolyn Gianturco, 'Musicology, §111, [2]: National Traditions: Italy', in Sadie and Tyrrell (eds.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, vol. 17, p. 510.

⁵³ Criscione, *Luigi Torchi*, p. 120.

principally practitioners. It is into this context that we must place Torchi's *Rivista musicale italiana*, which was founded in Turin, the capital of Italian academic publishing, rather than Milan, the capital of opera-going and of more populist publishing (although the journal would eventually transfer there). Torchi was something of a musical polymath: not only a critic (formerly of the *Gazzetta musicale di Milano*) but also an author of books (including the first Italian study of Wagner), a teacher and a librarian.⁵⁴ The *RMI*, which was published by Fratelli Bocca, Italy's pre-eminent positivist academic publishing house, was more critically incisive than any previous Italian music journal.⁵⁵ Torchi set forth his stall in the first issue with an announcement that the publication would be rigorous, objective and at times severe in its judgements.⁵⁶ Protestations of neutrality are often a smokescreen for partisanship, as we have already seen, but while the *RMI* had an agenda which disposed it towards and against certain repertoires, its content suggests that it remained aloof from the widespread practice of taking money in return for favourable notices. The journal's aspiration was to devote space to the ideas of Italy's most talented music critics, who at that time felt that they had no outlet for their creativity.⁵⁷

The *RMI* sought to differentiate itself from other Italian music periodicals in terms of the repertory that it covered. Contemporary music by the likes of Strauss and Debussy was favoured on the one hand, early music on the other. Torchi was himself an editor of early instrumental and sacred music, and the rediscovery and promotion of early Italian instrumental music were important concerns of the *RMI*. Torchi's status as a Wagner enthusiast – and his hope that Italian opera might itself be remodelled along Wagnerian lines – inevitably led him to promote Wagner's music dramas and theoretical writings in the pages of the *RMI*.⁵⁸ Indeed, we might say that the arrival of Wagner's works in Italy had a hand in prompting a sea change in Italian criticism. Such was the complexity and sophistication of Wagner's music that it baffled the dilettantes: this was an oeuvre that demanded a more sophisticated or professional type of music criticism, and a new generation of competent writers emerged to rise to the challenge. The *RMI*'s pro-Wagner bias was inevitably accompanied by an anti-Verdi/anti-Puccini bias: both composers were almost entirely ignored, save for an article about Verdi's death and a review of *Tosca*.⁵⁹ In the *RMI*'s mission statement its editors

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 9. Torchi's book was *Riccardo Wagner: Studio critico* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1890).

⁵⁵ Contributors included Amintore Galli, Vincenzo Tommasini, Giovanni Tebaldini and Fausto Torrefranca. Criscione, *Luigi Torchi*, p. 77.

⁵⁶ 'Ai lettori', *Rivista musicale italiana*, 1 (1894), 1–6. ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 2, 9.

⁵⁸ Criscione, *Luigi Torchi*, p. 9. ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 72, 96.

declared that while they would devote space to every genre and form of music, however humble or simple, works of a ‘popularising’ nature would not fit the journal’s remit and would therefore be excluded.⁶⁰ Essentially, the *RMI* sought to tell an ‘alternative’ story of Italy’s musical past – as well as to campaign for a starkly different musical future.

The writers that the *RMI* used were often distinguished names from abroad, such as Eduard Hanslick, Romain Rolland and J. A. Fuller Maitland. Articles by French contributors were printed in the original language, reinforcing the point that the journal did not seek to address the average Italian opera-goer, but rather an educated elite. The *RMI*’s reviews were lengthy and contained technical detail – even music examples, more akin to what one might expect to find in an academic journal. The journal followed the following format: ‘memorie’ (historical, philological and archive-focused articles); ‘arte contemporanea’ (consideration of recent works, stylistic and theoretical issues, acoustics, ethnomusicology); ‘recensioni’ (reviews of Italian and foreign books); ‘spoglio dei periodici’ (a summary of articles from a range of Italian and foreign periodicals); ‘notizie’ (news and announcements); ‘elenco di tutti i libri’ (books published) and ‘elenco della musica’ (music received). Books reviewed included titles on music history, criticism, aesthetics, theory, instrumentation, sacred music, ‘Wagneriana’ and editions of music.

The journal’s remit sometimes went beyond music per se: scientists such as Cesare Lombroso contributed articles considering the latest research in physiology, psychology and acoustics. The interdisciplinary nature of the journal pointed the way forward to the early years of the twentieth century, when serious music criticism would find another outlet in the wide-ranging avant-garde cultural journals that flourished in Florence. Particularly significant among these was *La voce* (founded in 1908), in which Torrefranca, Pizzetti and Bastianelli, among others, outlined their plans for the overhaul of the national art form, as part of a broader attack on the values of the Italian bourgeoisie.

In conclusion then, to return to the quotation from Michele Virgilio at the beginning of this chapter, we see that music criticism most certainly did exist in Italy, and in a wide range of different types of format. Indeed, the Centro internazionale di ricerca sui periodici musicali, based in Parma, lists more than seventy-five Italian journals founded between 1800 and 1900 that were devoted to music.⁶¹ Some of these were short-lived and others were different

⁶⁰ ‘Volemmo esclusi i lavori così detti di volgarizzazione che mal si acconcerebbero all’indole della Rivista’ (‘Ai lettori’, *Rivista musicale italiana*, 1 (1894), 3).

⁶¹ Centro internazionale di ricerca sui periodici musicali, available at cirpem.lacasadellamusica.it/cirpem-2.htm.

versions of essentially the same publication under successive guises; nevertheless, the figure remains impressive. The market for literature about music grew across the course of the century, and particularly so in tandem with the post-Unification expansion in opera-going. The readership for serious music criticism along the lines of that published in the *RMI*, on the other hand, would undoubtedly have been restricted, but it would have been composed of an influential beau monde who played an important role in defining taste (or at least attempted to, in the case of the more extreme critics who aspired to lure audiences away from the standard operatic repertoire). The pages of the press became a battleground in which bitter debates were played out not only about the state of criticism but about what Italian music ought to be and whom it ought to be for. By the end of the century, old certainties were coming under question, as critics began to debate whether it was still acceptable or desirable for composers to work more or less within the horizon of expectation of their audiences, long regarded as one of the fundamentals of populist Italian opera composition.

Music Criticism in Imperial Russia

EMILY FREY

Criticism was not a parasitical genre in imperial Russia. In a nation given to regarding its literature as holy writ, with real power to shape both the behaviour of individuals and the sociopolitical organisation of the country, the critic played a role of something like a high priest. During the realist ferment that engulfed Russia in the mid-nineteenth century, coinciding with the rapid expansion of the public press and the rise of professional criticism, a critic's job was not simply to appraise, but also to sermonise: to plumb the central ideas of a work of literature (that literature should be about ideas was a near-universal assumption) and to distil the significance of those ideas in ways that could be applied in real life. According to the Slavist Irina Paperno, the role of a literary critic during the heyday of Russian realism was

to mediate between the literary work and its actualization in reality . . . On this view, the critic is a full co-author of the text (even though his presence is frequently uninvited and unwelcome) . . . [During the age of realism] literature was almost universally regarded as an all-encompassing 'guide to life' . . . and a driving force of social and historical progress; and literary criticism was viewed as an essential part of literature.¹

Many works of Russian literary criticism – among them, Vissarion Belinsky's 'Survey of Russian Literature in 1847', Nikolai Dobroliubov's 'What Is Oblomovitis?' and 'A Ray of Light in a Dark Kingdom', and Dmitri Pisarev's 'Bazarov' – have become classics in their own right, their fame rivalling that of the fictional works they critique. The prestige of literary criticism in imperial Russia owes something to the exigencies of tsarist censorship, which forbade (more or less strictly, depending on who was wearing the crown) the publication of anti-establishment social and political views. The discussion of fiction thus provided an outlet for the left-leaning intelligentsia to consider issues

¹ Irina Paperno, *Chernyshevsky and the Age of Realism: A Study in the Semiotics of Behavior* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), pp. 10–11.

that could not otherwise be debated openly. Critique the society represented in a work of realist literature, after all, and you implicitly critique the society you inhabit in real life. The influence of criticism on Russian history has been enormous; it is little exaggeration to say that the intellectual origins of the Russian revolution were forged in mid-nineteenth century literary criticism.

Compared with those of literature, music's ambitions in Russia have generally been modest. Nineteenth-century Russian composers evinced little of the didactic impulse that characterised so many of their literary colleagues; there is not much in Russian music to compare with the famous epilogues of *War and Peace* or *Crime and Punishment*. Music critics likewise tended to entertain more life-sized aspirations than did their literary counterparts, advocating for revolutions that were usually artistic rather than political in nature. But the high stakes and broad scope of contemporary literary criticism need to be kept in mind when we consider some of the peculiarities of Russian music criticism in the imperial period: the often-strident polemics, the flagrant biases, the frequent detours into philosophy, aesthetics and even ethics. Many music critics saw their task as not so very different from that of their contemporaries among literary critics. For music, they believed, was also about ideas. In 1844, the incipient music and art critic Vladimir Stasov elaborated his views on the purpose of criticism in a letter to his father:

Hitherto all criticism of the arts has consisted of saying: this is good, this is bad, this is not seemly, here are such-and-such errors in costume, here in proportion, etc. No talent is needed for such criticism as this, only a certain degree of *study* and *learning* . . . and consequently all the criticism written up to this time can be quietly destroyed since it is helpful neither to the works themselves nor to those who look at them . . .

Every real work of art . . . bears within itself its *meaning* and its *allotted task*; to reveal both of these for the human race is the task of criticism, and such criticism has not existed for the arts . . . The duty [of criticism] is to extract from the work of art itself its vital idea, *by which* and *for which* the whole work exists with all its beauty and greatness; in short, criticism of the arts must show what works have been created in the world up to now . . . by what means they utter their inner thought, and the *meaning* of this thought for the world, i.e. criticism must show the indispensability of these productions to the world . . .²

Like their literary colleagues, music critics in imperial Russia saw their aims as encompassing more than description and evaluation. By illuminating the 'inner thoughts' of musical works and explaining their significance for the

² Quoted in Gerald Abraham, 'Introduction' to Vladimir Stasov, *Selected Essays on Music*, trans. Florence Jonas (London: Barrie & Rockliff, The Cresset Press, 1968), pp. 9–10.

world, they hoped to shape both the kind of music that was produced and the ways in which people thought about it. They were remarkably successful: the narratives produced by nineteenth- and early twentieth-century music critics would dominate discourse on Russian music, both in Russia and in the West, for over a century.

Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism

Just as there were Russian composers before Mikhail Glinka (1804–57), there were Russian music critics before Vladimir Odoevsky (1803–69), despite the reputation of these two figures as the founders of their respective traditions.³ Prince Odoevsky, an aristocrat with a sparkling education, was a man of diverse enthusiasms. In addition to being a music critic and sometime composer, he was an author of popular fiction, an advocate of railroads, a proponent of educational reform, a member of the Imperial Geographic and Archaeological Societies, an editor of a literary journal, a civil servant and the host of a fashionable literary and musical salon.⁴ But Odoevsky was no musical dilettante. He differed from his predecessors in his fluent command of musical technique, which he combined with a coherent and consistent aesthetic stance. Odoevsky was certainly not the first Russian to write about music, but he was the first music critic in the strong sense of the term. His critical activity spanned, on and off, from the mid-1820s to his death in 1869, and his writings encompassed a wide variety of genres, from concert promotion to reviews, to longer essays to fiction on musical themes. He made occasional contributions to a number of publications, including both daily newspapers such as *The Northern Bee* [Severnaia pchela] and monthly journals such as *Notes from the Fatherland* [Otechestvennye zapiski], and availed himself of a dizzying array of pseudonyms, from his initials, ‘K. V. O.’ (the ‘K’ stands for *kniaz*, the Russian word for ‘prince’) to more fanciful inventions such as ‘P. Bichev’, a name that suggests a scourge or a whip.

Odoevsky does not fit easily into any of the categories into which we are accustomed to sorting nineteenth-century Russian thinkers. Slavophiles regarded him as a cosmopolitan, and Westernisers as a mystic; he both venerated ancient Russian customs and advocated for modernisation and

³ See the first chapter of Tamara Livanova and Vladimir Protopopov’s *Operaia kritika v Rossii*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Izdatel’stvo Muzyka, 1966), for a history of Russian music criticism before Odoevsky.

⁴ For a biography of Odoevsky, see Neil Cornwell, *The Life, Times, and Milieu of V. F. Odoevsky* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1986). For a more specific discussion of Odoevsky’s musical activities, including his criticism, his activities on behalf of music education in Russia and his interactions with Russian and Western composers, see James Stuart Campbell, *V. F. Odoevsky and the Formation of Russian Musical Taste in the Nineteenth Century* (New York and London: Garland, 1989).

reform. He is best known today as a writer of Romantic stories, and the fantastic and musical content of those stories, as well as his reverence for Beethoven and Mozart (particularly the latter's *Don Giovanni*), has earned him the nickname 'the Russian Hoffmann'. He came of age during a heady vogue for German idealism among educated Russian society, and the philosophies of Schelling, Fichte and Hegel left a lasting impression on his thought.⁵ But a straightforward designation of Odoevsky as a Romantic is complicated by the fact that, by the end of his career, he was championing the music of Serov and Dargomyzhsky, the two leading 'realists' of the 1860s. Rather un-Romantically, too, Odoevsky was sceptical of the idea of autonomous art. He believed that art could directly influence social mores: just as good art (which, for Odoevsky, was almost always of German or Russian provenance) could uplift society, so too could bad art usher in moral disease. These dynamics are made explicit in Odoevsky's short story 'Sebastian Bach' (1835), which depicts the visit of a self-promoting Italian singer to the German master. Though finding the Italian's voice 'beautiful, pure . . . bright, dazzling', even 'tempting', Sebastian Bach does not yield to its siren call; he is nonplussed by the lack of 'mathematical necessity' in the melody.⁶ Magdalena Bach, however, is utterly taken in, her seduction legible in the involuntary responses of her body: her pale cheeks, her cold hands, her tears, her trembling. Her moral sense upended, Magdalena abandons her household duties, returning to herself only over the course of several months. The sensual appeal of a beautiful voice was dangerous, Odoevsky believed, for it could put the hearer's rational faculties to sleep. Sonic beauty needed to be allied with upstanding moral content (which Odoevsky thought borne by a deliberate, 'mathematically necessary' melody), or else confusion and degeneration could ensue.⁷ The belief that art had ethical obligations was, of course, a central tenet of Russian realism, and it put Odoevsky in company with his counterparts among literary critics such as Vissarion Belinsky.

But if Odoevsky was not reliably a Westerniser or a Slavophile, a liberal or a conservative, a Romantic or a realist, he was reliably a foe of Italian music. The period of Odoevsky's activity as a critic coincided with the ascendancy of the Italian Opera in St Petersburg, when the tsar's patronage kept the

⁵ For a more general analysis of the influence of German idealism on the early nineteenth-century Russian intelligentsia, see Isaiah Berlin's famous essay 'A Remarkable Decade', in *Russian Thinkers* (New York: Penguin Books, 1979), particularly the section 'German Romanticism in Petersburg and Moscow', pp. 136–49.

⁶ Odoevsky, 'Sebastian Bach', in *Russian Nights*, trans. Olga Koshansky-Olienikov and Ralph E. Matlaw (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1997), p. 184.

⁷ As David Lowe notes, Odoevsky's qualms about the potential moral threats posed by music anticipate those of Tolstoy, the author of *The Kreutzer Sonata*. See David Lowe, 'Vladimir Odoevskii as Opera Critic', *Slavic Review*, 41/ 2 (1982), 312.

imported Italian troupe flush with world-famous singers and lavish sets and costumes.⁸ The Russian troupe, which did not so benefit from the imperial purse, had no hope of matching the Italians in terms of star power, production values and sheer fashionability – a situation that soured the grapes of two generations' worth of Russian musicians. For his part, Odoevsky objected to Italian opera on both aesthetic and social grounds. Odoevsky's aesthetic complaints about Italian opera were the familiar ones: he thought it trivial, cliché-ridden, over-reliant on vocal feats and 'barbaric' orchestral effects, and generally arbitrary, the music forever at odds with the scenario. Reviewing the Russian troupe's production of *Norma* in 1836, Odoevsky remarked:

We cannot share the dilettantes' predilection for the music of Bellini, and especially for *Norma*; in it this composer of musical sighs and tender cabalettas resembles a child who has smeared on a moustache with coal and taken a wooden sabre in his hands, seeking to frighten everyone gathered round ... In *Norma* Bellini is not himself: he wants to produce strong, expressive singing, and under his pen appears a sentimental, fussy romance; poorly acquainted with the orchestra, he does not know how to create bold strokes without *gongs and cymbals*. When will these barbaric instruments disappear from the orchestra?⁹

Even Bellini's celebrated melodies received no praise from this determined critic. Odoevsky considered melody the bearer of national spirit, and in a jeremiad of 1867 he described Italian melody as 'the song of slaves, forced through their tears to entertain a company of Metternichs or else King Bomba'.¹⁰ Even worse, this 'unnatural, constantly lying sort of music' threatened to turn the Russian opera-going public into slaves too.¹¹ Odoevsky lobbied some of his sharpest social criticism at the urban elite who swarmed to the Italian opera, branding them just as mindless and senseless as the music that left them so enraptured. This theme is already present in 'Vexing Days', a short story Odoevsky wrote at the age of nineteen, which depicts the Russian public's fashionable enthusiasm for Rossini's *Tancredi* as a symptom of uncritical herd mentality. For the next forty-five years, his opinion of the social threat posed by Italian opera would remain largely the same. 'What have these thoughtless Italian groans in common with our healthy, virginal, strong musical elements?' he

⁸ For a history of the state-subsidised Italian Opera in St Petersburg and an account of Russian reactions to it, see the chapter 'Ital'yanshchina', in Richard Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically: Historical and Hermeneutical Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

⁹ Vladimir Odoevskii, 'Eshche o predstavlenii Normy', in *Muzykal'no-literaturnoe nasledie* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe muzykal'noe izdatel'stvo, 1956), pp. 149–50.

¹⁰ 'Russkaia ili ital'ianskaia opera?', in *ibid.*, p. 313. ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 314.

thundered in 1867. ‘Probably these tawdry, hollow Italian sounds will knock the sense out of our national feelings.’¹²

Those ‘national feelings’ were of great consequence to Odoevsky. His most lasting contribution to the annals of Russian music criticism is the ‘Hats off, gentlemen!’ reception he gave to Glinka’s *A Life for the Tsar*, a work in whose genesis Odoevsky had in fact played a role.¹³ It was Odoevsky who first hailed Glinka’s opera as a national monument, marking a new era in the history not only of Russian music, but of music in general. Odoevsky considered the significance of *A Life for the Tsar* to lie in its synthesis and elevation of the elements of Russian folk melody – again, for Odoevsky, the carrier of the nation’s spirit. ‘Even before Glinka’s opera’, Odoevsky wrote in his first review of *A Life for the Tsar*:

moderately successful attempts had been made to seek out these general forms of Russian melody and harmony ... But never before has the use of these forms been carried out on such a large scale as in Glinka’s opera. Initiated into all the secrets of Italian singing and German harmony, the composer has penetrated deep into the character of Russian melody! Rich in his own talent, he has demonstrated by this splendid attempt that Russian melody, naturally by turns melancholy, happy and daring, can also be elevated to the realms of tragedy.¹⁴

Striking, here, is the degree to which Odoevsky’s idea of ‘national’ music differs from that of later critics, particularly those associated with the *kuchka* or Mighty Five. Glinka’s opera is ‘a matter ... of genius’,¹⁵ Odoevsky writes, because it had managed to combine sophisticated European technique – the fruit of the composer’s initiation into ‘all the secrets of Italian singing and German harmony’ – with Russian melody. Whatever his phobia of Italian opera (which, as the quotation above indicates, did not necessarily extend to Italian singing), Odoevsky’s conception of national music was not a narrow and xenophobic one. For Odoevsky, *A Life for the Tsar*’s melody, and thus its

¹² Ibid.

¹³ For more on Odoevsky’s involvement in the creation of *A Life for the Tsar*, see Campbell, *V. F. Odoevsky*, pp. 192–6.

¹⁴ ‘Letter to a Music Lover on the Subject of Glinka’s Opera *A Life for the Tsar*’, in James Stuart Campbell (ed.), *Russians on Russian Music, 1830–1880: An Anthology* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 3. Odoevsky published this 1836 review in *The Northern Bee* [*Severnaia pchela*], a newspaper noted for the breadth of its circulation, the scope of its musical coverage and the reactionary politics of its editor, Faddey Bulgarin – a man whom even the genial and diplomatic Odoevsky found difficult to tolerate. The two clashed in print over *A Life for the Tsar*, with Bulgarin arguing that Odoevsky’s effusive praise of the opera was unjustified. (They would do battle again over *Ruslan and Liudmila* in 1842–3.) From 1837 Odoevsky began to publish his criticism and his fiction in more sympathetic venues, especially the *Literary Supplement to the Russian Veteran* [*Russkii invalid*], the *St Petersburg Gazette* [*Sankt-Peterburgskie vedomosti*], and *Notes of the Fatherland* [*Otechestvennye zapiski*].

¹⁵ Campbell (ed.), *Russians on Russian Music, 1830–1880*, p. 3.

character, were Russian, but its form and technique were universal, and *that* was the model to which Russian music should aspire.¹⁶ Forever grumbling about the dilettantism of Russian musicians and audiences, Odoevsky was a lifelong advocate of musical education who helped to draft the charter for the St Petersburg Conservatory, that quintessentially ‘cosmopolitan’ institution that the *kuchka* so ardently opposed.

What is ‘Truth’?

Prince Odoevsky, sharply opinionated but consummately aristocratic, would seem a pussycat next to two critics of the next generation, Alexander Serov (1820–71) and Vladimir Stasov (1824–1906). Befriending each other as teenagers at the Imperial School of Jurisprudence,¹⁷ Serov and Stasov fell out both in private (over Stasov’s romantic entanglement with Serov’s sister) and in print (over their diverging opinions of *Ruslan and Liudmila*).¹⁸ Despite their differences on the matter of *Ruslan*, the two former schoolmates had much in common as critics. Both were hardened musical progressives, proclaiming that musical beauty could not come at the expense of dramatic ‘truth’. Like Nikolai Chernyshevsky and Nikolai Dobroliubov, their contemporaries among literary critics, Serov and Stasov both believed that art had ethical obligations to society, and so ‘truth’ in art was for them a matter of almost sacred importance. Both were virulently anti-Conservatory, believing (*pace* Odoevsky) that European technique could only stunt a Russian musician. Both, too, wrote with a certain belligerent vigour – a quality Gerald Abraham termed ‘*gusto*’¹⁹ and Stuart Campbell ‘vitriolic zest’.²⁰ Measured and even-handed judgements are scarce commodities among their writings; neither Serov nor Stasov was a man to let objective fairness get in the way of rhetorical wallop. Of the two, Stasov is far better known in the West for

¹⁶ For a discussion of the different ideas of nationalism circulating in early nineteenth-century Russia, see Marina Frolova-Walker, ‘Constructing the Russian National Character: Literature and Music’, in *Russian Music and Nationalism from Glinka to Stalin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007). For a consideration of the dynamics of nationalism and cosmopolitanism in *A Life for the Tsar*, see ‘M. I. Glinka and the State’, in Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically*; and Rutger Helmers, ‘*A Life for the Tsar* and *Bel Canto* Opera’, in *Not Russian Enough? Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism in Nineteenth-Century Russian Opera* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2014).

¹⁷ The Imperial School of Jurisprudence, a prestigious training ground for future civil servants, was in Gerald Abraham’s words a ‘hot-bed of musical activity’ that mandated instrumental lessons and participation in the school orchestra. (Abraham, ‘Introduction’ to Stasov, *Selected Essays on Music*, p. 3.) The School produced at least one other Russian musician of note: Piotr Il’ich Tchaikovsky, along with his brother and sometime librettist, Modest.

¹⁸ The history of their critical battles over *Ruslan* is recounted in Richard Taruskin, ‘Glinka’s Ambiguous Legacy and the Birth Pangs of Russian Opera’, *19th-Century Music*, 1/2 (November 1977), 142–62.

¹⁹ Abraham, ‘Introduction’, p. 9. Italics original.

²⁰ Campbell (ed.), *Russians on Russian Music, 1830–1880*, p. 57.

a number of reasons: he had thirty-five years after Serov's death to state his case as loudly as he liked, he attracted an Anglophone disciple, Rosa Newmarch,²¹ who produced some of the first English-language books and articles on Russian music, and towards the end of his life he penned, in Richard Taruskin's words, 'the great synoptical articles that formed the basis for Western reception of Russian music in the early twentieth century'.²² During the 1850s and 1860s, however, Stasov addressed the public only rarely in print; his reputation as a critic rests primarily on those later 'synoptical articles', which will be discussed at the end of this essay. Serov, meanwhile, was the most prolific and respected music critic in mid-century Russia. His skills of musical observation outstripped even his friend Odoevsky's, to say nothing of his rival Stasov's, and for years he eked out a livelihood on the proceeds of his criticism. During the last decade of his life Serov also became one of the most renowned composers in Russia. The smashing success of his patriotic opera *Rogneda* (1865) earned him a pension from Tsar Alexander II, and thus a respite from the graphomaniacal frenzy that had sustained his finances for so long.

Serov's musical writings ran the gamut from concert reviews to polemics to what might frankly be called musicology: extended treatments of various composers – both Russian and Western, living and historical – often supplemented with musical examples. Much of his criticism is concerned with the search for ideals, both operatic and critical. ('The absence of the ideal is death to art!' he wrote in 1863.)²³ In his earliest articles Serov expressed some despair at the low level of Russian musical criticism, which he characterised as dealing mainly in superficial comments about performances and trivia about composers and singers. Music criticism did not stand comparison with Russia's by now robust tradition of literary criticism, he believed, and its advancement required two things. The first was a journal dedicated specifically to music, so that musical works could be discussed in specialist, rather than dilettantish, terms – a criterion that was fulfilled with the founding of the weekly *Musical and Theatrical Herald* [Музыкальни и театральни вестник] in 1856.²⁴ The

²¹ In the summer of 1897, Newmarch travelled to Russia to work under Stasov at the Imperial Public Library; the two would meet again in London in 1900 and the following year in St Petersburg. She carried on an extensive correspondence with both Stasov and Balakirev until their deaths in 1906 and 1910, respectively. For more on Newmarch and her influence on the English reception of Russian music, see Philip Ross Bullock, *Rosa Newmarch and Russian Music in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Britain* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).

²² Richard Taruskin, 'Serov, Alexander Nikolayevich', *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, available at www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed 24 August 2017).

²³ Aleksandr Nikolaevich Serov, *Kriticheskie stat'i*, vol. 111 (St Petersburg: Tipografiia Departamenta Udelov, 1892), p. 1542.

²⁴ Serov had a regular column in the *Musical and Theatrical Herald* for all four years of its operation, and several of his most important articles were published there, including his monumental cycle of articles on

other item Serov believed indispensable to the maturation of Russian music criticism was far more abstract: a set of ideal principles about ‘what *real* (that is excellent) music and *real* (that is excellent) performance ought to be’.²⁵ Music criticism, in other words, could not be merely reactive; it had to be principled, with individual works and performances measured against firmly established critical ideals. Further, Serov continued, ‘beyond the establishment of ideal principles, music criticism must certainly touch upon the bottomless pit of deep aesthetic questions – questions about truth and beauty in art in general’.²⁶ For Serov, the minute details of a particular musical work (for which the perceptive Serov had an unparalleled ear) should serve the critic as points of entry into the realm of ‘universal’ questions. Good criticism, then, was for Serov a matter of moving from the individual to the infinite. He embodied this critical ideal in an astonishing cycle of ten articles on Dargomyzhsky’s *Rusalka* (1856); the cycle juxtaposes in-depth analysis of the music and libretto against a broad aesthetic and historical background.²⁷ In the later 1850s and 1860s Serov’s writings were also influenced by the so-called ‘organic criticism’ of his friend, the conservative literary critic Apollon Grigor’ev, who believed that art was an organic outgrowth of the nation that produced it. On this theory, the small details of a work of art could be related to larger questions of national identity – and Serov was apt to make just those connections in his criticism.²⁸

In terms of musical ideals, the conviction that an opera was primarily a dramatic work was – as Tchaikovsky wrote in 1872, the year after Serov’s death – virtually ‘the motto of his whole career as a critic’.²⁹ This credo clearly owed much to Wagner, and the Russian critic’s immoderate and impolitic enthusiasm for the author of *Opera and Drama* provided his enemies with a convenient cudgel with which to beat him in the 1860s. But Serov’s affinity

Dargomyzhsky’s *Rusalka*. In 1867, Serov and his wife, Valentina, founded their own biweekly journal for musical and theatrical criticism, entitled *Music and Theatre* [*Muzyka i teatr*].

²⁵ Serov, ‘Ital’ianskaia opera v Peterburge’, in *Stat’i o muzyke*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Muzyka, 1984), p. 14.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ The entire cycle is printed in Aleksandr Nikolaevich Serov, *Stat’i o muzyke*, vol. 11b (Moscow: Muzyka, 1986), pp. 42–137. The Soviet music historian Tamara Livanova compares Serov’s *Rusalka* cycle to the famous Pushkin cycle (1843–6) of Vissarion Belinsky, the first professional literary critic in Russia and one of the founders of the realist movement. See Tamara Livanova, *Operaia kritika v Rossii*, vol. 11 (Moscow: Muzyka, 1969), pp. 139–41.

²⁸ For a discussion of Serov’s relationship to the Russian movement known as *pochvennichestvo* (sometimes translated as ‘native soil conservatism’), whose prominent figures included Grigor’ev and Dostoevsky, see Richard Taruskin, ‘*Pochvennichestvo* on the Russian Operatic Stage: Serov and his *Ragneda*’, in *Opera and Drama in Russia as Preached and Practiced in the 1860s* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1981). Serov’s connections with the *pochvenniki* are exemplary of the variance between musical and literary politics in this period: the musical left is here allied with the literary right. Members of the musically progressive Balakirev circle also entertained certain conservative, Slavophilic ideas, despite their affinities for literary leftists such as Belinsky and Nikolai Chernyshevsky.

²⁹ P. I. Tchaikovsky, ‘The Revival of *Ruslan and Lyudmila*’, in Campbell (ed.), *Russians on Russian Music, 1830–1880*, p. 135.

for Wagner was more a matter of sympathy than imitation. Hints of ‘reformist’ ideas about the relationship between words and music were already in the air, after all, present in Odoevsky’s railings against the ‘arbitrariness’ of Italian opera – which Serov was all too happy to amplify in his own writings on Italian music.³⁰ For example, Serov wrote in 1851 that Verdi’s *Ernani* sacrificed the dramatic effectiveness of Hugo’s original play for noisy and tasteless musical effects:

Ernani, Victor Hugo’s famous play, would have been a very decent subject for opera with a *different*, competent development; the gravitation of all interest toward the very last scenes and the passion of these scenes are extremely favourable for musical poetry. But what did Mr. Verdi make use of here? The choirs of robbers and conspirators for their eternal unison ‘fortissimo’, the scene of Karl V in the dungeon for its deafening finale, again with the soloists and choristers all in unison, along with banging tamtams, ringing bells, and firing cannons. The scenes of love and passion, and, finally, the pathetic denouement of the play are given the most superficial and melodramatic treatment, serving as a canvas for the most banal arias, cut out in the well-known Italian manner, and with the same duets and terzets *in unison!*

As Richard Taruskin has pointed out, Serov’s ideas about music and drama were already percolating by 1852, years before he had even heard a note of *Tannhäuser*.³¹ And the practical implications of those ideas, at least as far as one can judge from Serov’s operas of the 1860s, were not always particularly Wagnerian. For other Russian critics, perhaps the most shocking features of *Judith* were the deliberately harsh timbres Serov had demanded of his singers in the name of dramatic ‘truth’, with violent situations calling for violent sounds. In any event, Serov honed his ideas on musical drama in his polemics with Stasov on the relative merits of *A Life for the Tsar* and *Ruslan and Liudmila*, which began to appear in print shortly after Glinka’s death in 1857. This debate continued for the better part of a decade, featuring both critics at their vitriolic best,³² and drew commentary from a wide swathe of the Russian musical universe.

³⁰ Serov, ‘Ital’ianskaia opera’, in *Stat’i o muzyke*, vol. 1, pp. 85–6. Italics original. In the same article Serov asserts that ‘the main character [of *Ernani*] is the *Turkish drum* and its allies, the copper cymbals.’ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

³¹ See Taruskin, *Opera and Drama in Russia*, p. 14. Serov’s Wagnerian ‘conversion’ dates to 1858, when he travelled to Weimar, was captivated by a live performance of *Tannhäuser* (an opera whose score had previously left him cold) and met Wagner himself. He would meet Wagner again during the German composer’s 1863 tour of Russia, which Serov publicised in the Russian musical press.

³² An early salvo, for example, contained this characteristically Serovian slam: ‘In view of the roughness of the language and sometimes the complete inability of the author to set out his stock of ideas in any coherent or elegant fashion, ideas in which one occasionally glimpses a confused flash of truth, it is fairly difficult to guess what [Stasov] is trying to say.’ Serov, ‘*A Life for the Tsar and Ruslan and Liudmila*’, in Campbell (ed.), *Russians on Russian Music, 1830–1880*, p. 106.

The Glinka debate raged with a vehemence that was out of all proportion to the magnitude of Serov and Stasov's differences, which amounted to a contrary prioritisation of progressive musical values. Both preached the gospel of musical 'truth', though they had different ideas about what that truth looked like in practice. At the heart of Stasov's preference for *Ruslan* was that opera's musical audacity: its diversity of style, its flexibility of form, and its greater independence from established operatic convention. 'Above all', wrote Stasov in 1857:

[in *Ruslan*] Glinka was attracted by the combination of diverse elements and different nationalities, of tragic and comic moments, of magic in which the themes of horror, grace, and strangeness are all manifested, of the fusion of west and east, north and south – [which provided] the possibility and even the necessity of using expressions and forms that are still unknown in the world of European music.³³

To this Stasov added a host of other tendentious justifications that fluctuated, and not infrequently reversed themselves, over the course of the debate.³⁴ Even in this early essay, however, Stasov attempted to forestall what he knew would be a likely line of attack, adding: 'What does it matter if all of these tasks, fulfilled with masterly and ingenious art, do not cohere into one solid whole, but instead appear as a series of separate pictures?'³⁵

Serov, naturally, countered that *Ruslan*'s undisputed musical glories could not make up for its slapdash plot, which he described as 'only a thread upon which Glinka wanted to string his musical pearls and diamonds'. And, he continued:

on the scales of strict *organic criticism* can a necklace like this strung arbitrarily on one thread from pearls and stones which are precious certainly but alien one to another, can such a necklace match the inexhaustible profound treasures of *an organic unity* in a creation which is poetic, which has grown up and blossomed forth magnificently from one creative idea, as from a seed?³⁶

For Stasov at this point in time, operatic 'truth' meant above all musical innovation, and in particular the transcendence of conventional form, which the realist literary critic Nikolai Chernyshevsky had famously declared the

³³ Vladimir Stasov, *Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka*, ed. Vladimir Protopopov (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Muzykal'noe Izdatel'stvo, 1953), p. 212.

³⁴ See Taruskin, 'Glinka's Ambiguous Legacy', for a discussion of the vagaries of Stasov's position.

³⁵ Stasov, *Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka*, p. 212.

³⁶ Serov, 'A *Life for the Tsar* and *Ruslan and Lyudmila*', in Campbell (ed.), *Russians on Russian Music, 1830–1880*, p. 117. Italics original. One thing Stasov and Serov could agree upon was that the politics of *A Life for the Tsar* – which smacked of the repressive Tsar Nikolai I's (r. 1825–55) doctrine of Official Nationality (Orthodoxy, Autocracy, Nationalism) – were distasteful; Serov once derided the opera as 'kvass-patriotic'.

opposite of ‘real’ emotion.³⁷ For Serov, however, ‘truth’ meant primarily musico-dramatic coherence, a banishment of that ‘arbitrariness’ that was so characteristic (in Russian critics’ minds, at least) of Italian opera.³⁸ These two visions of operatic ‘truth’ were hardly incompatible, and indeed Serov had explicitly linked musico-dramatic cohesion with the avoidance of convention in the preface to his opera *Rogneda*, writing that his ideal of ‘dramatic truth in tones’ had led him ‘to sacrifice “conventional” beauty, the “jewelled” refinement of musical form’.³⁹ In the war over *Ruslan*, however, the crack between Serov and Stasov’s positions became a chasm.

If the battle over what constituted ‘truth’ in Russian opera was not resolved in this debate, the matter of *Ruslan*’s reputation largely was – in Serov’s favour. Tchaikovsky, an infrequent critic whose output was remarkably fair-minded and insightful, was among the first to note the fact. In 1872, Tchaikovsky claimed it ‘impossible to avoid the conclusion that Serov’s criticism is the more profound and the more rational ... [for] everyone knows that major works of art are evaluated not so much by the strength of the immediate creativity shown in them as by ... the successful fusion of an idea with its external expression’. But whatever the various merits of Glinka’s two operas, as Taruskin has argued, the lasting impact of this high-profile critical controversy was to get everyone in the Russian operatic world talking about the relationship between music and drama, an issue that would have profound effects on musical composition and criticism in Russia for decades hence.

Music and Words

Two of those who cut their teeth on the *Ruslan* controversy were a pair of young critics destined to become rivals: César Cui (1835–1918) and Herman Laroche (1845–1904). Unlike with Serov and Stasov, whose mutual antipathy had its roots in personal rather than ideological conflict, Cui and Laroche’s rivalry was founded on solid aesthetic grounds. Cui, who had inherited Stasov’s blind hatred for all things Serovian, turned professional critic in 1864 with an article in defence of *Ruslan*. He became the journalistic mouthpiece of that band of proud autodidacts variously known as the *kuchka*, the Mighty Five, or the New Russian School, who were implacably opposed to the

³⁷ ‘Emotion and form are opposites’, Chernyshevsky declared in 1855’s ‘The Aesthetic Relation of Art to Reality’ – the bible of the realist movement and perhaps the most influential Master’s thesis ever penned. Chernyshevsky, ‘The Aesthetic Relation of Art to Reality’, in *Selected Philosophical Essays* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1953), p. 347.

³⁸ Tchaikovsky, ‘The Revival of *Ruslan and Lyudmila*’, in Campbell (ed.), *Russians on Russian Music, 1830–1880*, p. 136.

³⁹ Aleksandr Nikolaevich Serov, *Izbrannye stat’i*, vol. 11 (Moscow: Muzgiz, 1957), p. 65.

use of traditional musical forms. Laroche, who penned his own Glinka article three years later in 1867, was an early product of the St Petersburg Conservatory (he was a member of the second graduating class, a year behind Tchaikovsky) who taught music theory and history at both his alma mater and the Moscow Conservatory in later years. A cosmopolitan and a traditionalist, Laroche believed that the healthy development of Russian music depended on a mastery of Baroque and Renaissance counterpoint. As regular music critics for two of St Petersburg's broadest-circulating daily newspapers (Cui for *Sankt-Petersburgskie vedomosti* and Laroche for *Golos*), the two would clash many times throughout their long careers. While their differences were countless, among the most significant were their diametrically opposed conceptions about the relationship between words and music.

Cui's articles for *Sankt-Petersburgskie vedomosti*, written anonymously under the insignia of three asterisks, were relentlessly partisan, and his bias was widely commented upon by his contemporaries. As Robert Ridenour reports, in 1864 Cui's own newspaper printed a notice distancing itself from his judgements and offering 'to provide space for any reasonable objection to the opinions of the associate for music criticism, which can seem . . . too extreme and harsh'.⁴⁰ Laroche, too, made a veiled but unmistakable reference to Cui's critical procedures in his review of Tchaikovsky's *Mazeppa*, accusing his rival of measuring all operas by a *kuchkist* yardstick: 'The reviewer will take as the norm some single opera, sometimes of his own manufacture, sometimes written by a friend, will look for similarities and differences in Tchaikovsky, where it's longer and where shorter, where it's louder and where softer, and will then draw up a balance sheet'.⁴¹ To the end of his career Cui remained all but incapable of finding merit in the works of composers outside his circle, and his acid pen produced no shortage of quotable jabs at the expense of Serov, Rubinstein and Tchaikovsky. Reviewing *Evgeny Onegin* in 1884, Cui remarked: 'There are people who are constantly bemoaning their fate and recounting their illnesses with special enthusiasm. In his music Mr Tchaikovsky also bemoans his fate and recounts his illnesses'.⁴² A lifelong aficionado of Schumann, Cui regarded the *kuchka* as a kind of Davidsbund in need of protection from the forces of Russian philistinism, and as a critic he laboured ever to provide that defence. 'My goal', he wrote later in life, 'consisted in propagandizing our ideas and in vindicating the composers of

⁴⁰ *Sankt-Petersburgskie vedomosti* (December 1864); quoted in Robert C. Ridenour, *Nationalism, Modernism, and Personal Rivalry in Nineteenth-Century Russian Music*. Russian Music Studies 1 (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1981), p. 115.

⁴¹ Laroche, 'P. Tchaikovsky's *Mazeppa*', in James Stuart Campbell (ed.), *Russians on Russian Music, 1880-1917: An Anthology* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 23.

⁴² Cui, 'Notes on Music', in Campbell (ed.), *Russians on Russian Music, 1880-1917*, p. 250.

the New Russian School . . . [who] had revolted against the time honoured laws of routine, disrespected the authorities, and so on. All of this called forth the public's hostility toward us and especially toward me as the mouthpiece.⁴³ The central tenets of the New Russian School, and thus of Cui the critic, were nowhere near as iconoclastic as the quote above indicates. Like Serov before him, Cui was adamantly anti-Conservatory, publishing several screeds against that institution in the later 1860s. He was just as adamantly anti-Italian opera – though, as we have seen, that attitude was only *de rigueur* among Russian musicians of the time.

Just what Cui was *for*, rather than against, is more difficult to specify. Taruskin has linked the vagueness of Cui's aesthetics with the critic's determined partisanship: any set of musical principles that validated the works of Glinka and the *kuchka* and disqualified those of Serov and Tchaikovsky would have to be pliant if not completely arbitrary.⁴⁴ There was one work, however, that Cui esteemed above all others. Dargomyzhsky's opera *The Stone Guest*, written in 1868–69 under the approving eye of the *kuchka*, was in Cui's mind a watershed in the history of music. *The Stone Guest*, Cui wrote in 1868, 'is the first conscious attempt to create a contemporary opera-drama without the slightest compromise; this will be the codex to which Russian composers will direct questions concerning . . . the truthful setting of the text'.⁴⁵ The 'truthfulness' of Dargomyzhsky's text setting appears for Cui to have lain in *The Stone Guest's* sensitive declamation and its flexible, songlike 'melodic recitative', which Dargomyzhsky used throughout in place of traditional musical forms. The music of *The Stone Guest* was designed to sound improvisatory, as if adapting itself continuously and immediately to the nuances of the text (an 1830 verse drama by Pushkin that Dargomyzhsky set verbatim). This sort of marriage of music and words, Cui believed, was the condition towards which contemporary opera ought to strive. Even by the late 1870s, when Cui admitted in his book *La Musique en Russie* (a *kuchkist* history of Russian music written for a Western audience) that the verbatim setting of literary masterpieces was not, perhaps, the most viable compositional method, *The Stone Guest* remained for the critic a *locus classicus* of good operatic practice.⁴⁶

⁴³ Tsesar Kiui, 'Pervye kompozitorskie shagi Ts. A. Kiui', in Tsesar Kiui, *Izbrannyye stat'i*, ed. I. L. Gusin (Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe Muzykal'noe Izdatel'stvo, 1952), p. 547.

⁴⁴ See the chapter "'Kuchkism" in Practice', in Taruskin, *Opera and Drama in Russia*, especially pp. 345–51.

⁴⁵ Tsesar Kiui, 'Kamennyi gost' Pushkina i Dargomyzhskogo', in *Izbrannyye stat'i*, p. 147.

⁴⁶ 'In general', advised Cui, 'it is better to avoid such texts by great poets [as *The Stone Guest* by Pushkin], for though their intrinsic beauty may render them seductive in the eyes of musicians, they are not made for music. A truly lyrical text, which lends itself favourably to the development of vocal melody, is, on the whole, that which should be principally sought in a libretto' (César Cui, *La Musique en Russie* (Leipzig: Zentralantiquariat der DDR, 1974), p. 108). The fact that Cui felt the need to make this statement at all betrays the remarkable literary bent of Russian opera during this period. He does not speak of having

Other composers' recitatives were invariably and invidiously compared against Dargomyzhsky's model: the recitatives of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sadko* amounted to 'something halfway between the meaningless recitatives of, for example, Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and the melodic recitatives of, for example, Dargomyzhsky',⁴⁷ while those of Tchaikovsky's *Eugeny Onegin* were 'not the recitatives of Dargomyzhsky ... which reinforce the meaning of the most important phrases of the text and give them special power and expressiveness'.⁴⁸ Even Rimsky's *Mozart and Salieri*, an opera written in deliberate (though not unqualified) homage to Dargomyzhsky, could not satisfy Cui's standards for meaningful recitative:

For all its merits, *Mozart and Salieri* lacks the most important – there is no melodic recitative ... there is not a single characteristic phrase that merges forever with its text in our memory. People will object that it is impossible to write melodic phrases to a prosaic text ... in response, I lay before them *The Stone Guest*.⁴⁹

One searches Cui's writings in vain for what, musically speaking, distinguishes Dargomyzhsky's recitatives from anyone else's – though musical specifics were a thing with which this critic rarely dirtied his hands. Cui's own operas provide still fewer clues on what for him constituted operatic 'truth'. Indeed, the distance between Cui's music and his own critical dictates – to say nothing of the rather quirky and singular methods of his beloved *Stone Guest* – has been frequently observed by commentators in both Cui's time and ours.⁵⁰ Such ambiguities aside, one *idée fixe* that persisted in Cui's criticism over the years was the notion that good music was music that *meant* something, music that combined deeply and insolubly with text and idea.

Laroche's first foray into criticism dates from the same year as Cui's – 1864 – when, as a teenaged music theory student, he took to the pages of *The Northern Bee* [Severnaia pchela] to defend the St Petersburg Conservatory against Serov's attacks.⁵¹ As Anton Rubinstein, the director of the Conservatory,

a new text created specifically to serve as an opera libretto, with designated arias and recitatives, but rather of composers *seeking* an appropriate text that would allow for moments of lyrical expansion.

⁴⁷ Cui, 'Sadko, Opera/Heroic Ballad (*Opera-Bilina*) by Mr Rimsky-Korsakov', in Campbell (ed.), *Russians on Russian Music, 1880–1917*, p. 56.

⁴⁸ Cui, 'Notes on Music – *Eugene Onegin*', in *ibid.*, p. 251.

⁴⁹ Tsesar Kiui, 'Moskovskaia chastnaia russkaia opera. *Motsart i Sal'eri* A. S. Pushkina i N. A. Rimskogo-Korsakogo', in *Izbrannye stat'i*, p. 497.

⁵⁰ For a comparison of Cui's operatic ideals with two of his actual operas (*William Ratcliff*, whose composition occupied Cui for most of the 1860s, and *Angelo*, composed between 1871 and 1875), see Taruskin, "'Kuchkism" in Practice: Two Operas by César Cui', in *Opera and Drama in Russia*.

⁵¹ Laroche's anonymous letter to the editor was published on 8 May 1864, five days before the future critic's nineteenth birthday. It is reprinted in Campbell (ed.), *Russians on Russian Music, 1830–1880*, pp. 89–91.

had forbidden students and faculty from participating in musical polemics, this caper nearly got Laroche expelled from the very institution for which he advocated. After a four-year stint in Moscow, where he developed a joint professional identity as pedagogue and critic, he returned to Petersburg in the autumn of 1871 to assume a regular critic's position with *Golos*, a newspaper popular among the liberal bourgeoisie. *Golos* offered extensive musical coverage from a perspective that sympathised with Laroche's own: the two main critics already on staff were Feofil Tolstoy (pen name 'Rostislav'), a mid-ranking civil servant and musical dabbler who was a dependable foe of Russian music's 'realist' tendencies, and Alexander Famintsyn (1841–96), a professor of music and aesthetics whom Musorgsky had satirised in his song 'The Classicist' (1867).⁵² In Laroche, however, *Golos* acquired a conservative critic with both the musical chops and the rhetorical panache to stand up to the critical titans on the other side of the aesthetic aisle. Especially after Serov's death in 1871, the young Laroche would become the main critical voice opposing Cui and Stasov.

Laroche relished his role as the progressives' bête noire. In a country where, in Taruskin's words, 'even Romanticism had to be called realism',⁵³ Laroche proudly championed the cause of aesthetic beauty over dramatic 'truth'. ('What a Moloch is [the contemporary demand for] "dramatic truth", and how much musical beauty, how many composers' talents it has devoured in our day in its insatiability!' wrote Laroche in an 1889 review.⁵⁴) In the face of Serov and the *kuchka*'s anti-academicism, Laroche paraded his education – and not just that which he received in the Conservatory. His articles, extravagant in their allusions to classical mythology and European literature, often begin at professorial remove from the musical works in question. 'Perhaps the reader will resent me telling too hackneyed an anecdote, but I cannot resist quoting an apocryphal dictum of the dying Hegel,' reads the opening line to Laroche's review of Tchaikovsky's opera *Mazeppa*.⁵⁵ Unlike those of his *kuchkist* rival, Cui, Laroche's allegiances were more to his conservative, Hanslickian aesthetics than to a particular composer or school. In general sympathetic to the works of his friend and schoolmate Tchaikovsky, Laroche did not spare Tchaikovsky the critical rod when he saw fit.⁵⁶ He was capable, too, of

⁵² Famintsyn's tenure at *Golos* postdated Rubinstein's at the Conservatory; thus he was not subject to Rubinstein's ban on Conservatory staff and students contributing to the press.

⁵³ Taruskin, *Opera and Drama in Russia*, p. xiv.

⁵⁴ Laroche, 'P. Tchaikovsky's *Mazeppa*', in Campbell (ed.), *Russians on Russian Music, 1880–1917*, p. 21.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁵⁶ For example, even in *Evgeny Onegin*, Laroche's favourite of all Tchaikovsky's operas, the critic detected 'an act of violence against [Pushkin's] poetic work'. Laroche, 'Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* in the Conservatoire's Production', in Campbell (ed.), *Russians on Russian Music, 1830–1880*, p. 246.

recognising that there could be good and bad among musical conservatives and progressives alike, writing in his review of Rimsky-Korsakov's opera *Snegurochka*:

It is possible in criticism to be a very shallow Hanslickian and a very honourable follower of Bernhard Marx. In composition it is possible to be a very splendid Wagnerian and a very dull classicist. In performance it is possible to play the piano exquisitely in Field's manner and vilely in Rubinstein's.⁵⁷

This admission, however, did not prevent him from systematically under-rating the works of the *kuchka*, and in particular those of Musorgsky. Laroche's condescending judgements on the composer of *Pictures at an Exhibition* have aged rather badly, and Rimsky-Korsakov – who of all the original *kuchka* might have been the most sympathetic to the views of a fellow Conservatory professor – never forgave him for them. In his memoirs Rimsky linked Laroche's poor review of *Boris Godunov* with Musorgsky's slide into despair and alcoholism, the disease that killed the composer at the age of forty-two. On Laroche's own death in 1904, the normally diplomatic and dispassionate Rimsky-Korsakov had this to say: 'Laroche, once famous among us as a music-critic, but in reality a copy of Eduard Hanslick, died after having dragged out a pitiful existence . . . His activity was mere grimace and gesticulation, lies and paradoxes, exactly like his Viennese prototype.'⁵⁸ Among his enemies, Laroche's open admiration for Hanslick has thus proved no less useful than Serov's Wagnerism.

One way in which Laroche did not differ from his left-leaning counterparts was that his idea of criticism was no less 'philosophical' than theirs. He drew no firm distinction between music criticism and music aesthetics, referring frequently to aesthetics in his reviews and devoting several newspaper articles to the aesthetic theories of German writers such as August Wilhelm Ambros and, of course, Eduard Hanslick. In 1880, too, Laroche translated an abridged version of *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen* into Russian, complete with a lengthy and glowing translator's preface.⁵⁹ Laroche parted ways with all other major Russian critics, however, in denying that music carried ethical content – or

⁵⁷ Laroche, 'A New Opera from the Young Russian School. *Snegurochka* by A. Ostrovsky and N. Rimsky-Korsakov, staged by the Private Opera Theatre', in Campbell (ed.), *Russians on Russian Music, 1880–1917*, p. 45.

⁵⁸ Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov, *My Musical Life*, ed. Carl van Vechten, trans. Judah A. Joffe (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1942), pp. 409–10.

⁵⁹ Laroche's preface to the abridged translation is printed in German Avgustovich Larosh, *Sobranie muzykal'no-kriticheskikh statei*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Tipo-Litografiia I. N. Kushnerev i Ko., 1913), pp. 334–61. For a history of Hanslick reception in Russia, see Olga Panteleeva, 'Formation of Russian Musicology from Sacchetti to Asafyev, 1885–1931', unpublished PhD dissertation, University of California, Berkeley (2015), 38–73.

indeed, that music was well suited to carrying any sort of ‘content’ whatsoever. ‘Music is not an art of expression’, he wrote,

[and] by forcing her to *speaking* and *depicting*, we are doing violence to her nature, that she finds her true power and beauty where she is completely free of poetic pretensions. The greatest models of musical drama are no more than compromises between the nature of art and our age’s striving to illustrate stage action musically, compromises in which the composer is obliged at every turn to hold the balance between opposing demands, to walk a tightrope.⁶⁰

Laroche was virtually alone among Russian music critics in considering opera a compromised and debased form rather than the very summit of musical art. Nor, for that matter, did Laroche highly esteem programme music, the proclivity for which Stasov had identified as one of four factors distinguishing the composers of the New Russian School.⁶¹ He took strong exception to his fellow critics’ attempts to supply programmes for instrumental works without suggestive titles or accompanying text, calling such a practice ‘oneiro-mancy, divination, palmistry, prophecy – whatever you like, only not music criticism’.⁶² While Cui had argued that music and words should bind to form an organic expressive unit, for Laroche such a merger – as well as any expectation that music should be ‘expressive’ at all – could only constitute an adulteration of music’s power. Though a great admirer of literature, and even an occasional literary critic, Laroche held that music and words ought to occupy entirely separate realms.

Empire’s End

Of the other music critics active in late imperial Russia, two bear brief discussion. Mikhail Ivanov (1849–1927, not to be confused with his near contemporary, the composer Mikhail Ippolitov-Ivanov) was a critic in the Larochean mould. It was Ivanov, in fact, who produced the first complete Russian translation of Hanslick’s *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen*, five years after the publication of Laroche’s abridged version. Known for his sarcastic and sometimes poisonous tone, particularly in his reviews of the former members of the *kuchka*, Ivanov found himself on the receiving end of many a composer’s ire. (According to reports, his obituary of Musorgsky in *New Time* [Novoe vremia] – by that time a daily newspaper with a conservative, statist

⁶⁰ Laroche, ‘P. Tchaikovsky’s *Mazeppa*’, in Campbell (ed.), *Russians on Russian Music, 1880–1917*, p. 20.

⁶¹ See ‘Our Music’, in Stasov, *Selected Essays on Music*, pp. 73–4.

⁶² ‘Predislovie perevodchika k knige Ganslika *O muzykal’no-prekrasnom*’, in Larosh, *Sobranie muzykal’no-kriticheskikh statei*, vol. 1, p. 358.

reputation – even occasioned a coffin-side row with Stasov.)⁶³ More significant was Nikolai Kashkin (1839–1920), whose reviews and articles in such newspapers as *Russkie vedomosti* and *Moskovskie vedomosti* spanned a period of nearly sixty years. An intimate of Tchaikovsky's from the 1860s, Kashkin was a fellow professor at the Moscow Conservatory, where he taught courses in history, theory and piano. Like Tchaikovsky himself, whose sporadic dabbles in music criticism produced some real gems, Kashkin was both a perceptive and an equitable critic, and his reminiscences of Tchaikovsky remain indispensable sources of information on the composer. Kashkin's writing, less ostentatious than Laroche's and less energetic than Serov's, was no less secure than theirs in its command of musical detail. What Kashkin lacked in literary élan, he made up for in dependability and fair-mindedness – rare qualities indeed among music critics of his time.

But the world of Russian music in the imperial period was dominated by big personalities, and there was none bigger than Vladimir Stasov. In 1901, the septuagenarian critic produced his magnum opus, a lengthy treatise entitled *Art in the 19th Century*. Most of the text is devoted to various visual arts: painting (given by far the most detailed treatment), sculpture and architecture, of which Stasov's father Vasily was a famous early nineteenth-century practitioner. Stasov only gets to music in the last quarter of the treatise, and his discussion of Russian music occupies just nine of the document's seventy-seven total chapters. Those nine chapters, however, are the basis for many of the most enduring myths about music in imperial Russia. In them, Stasov summarised – and fixed his own, peculiar slant on – many of the debates that had concerned Russian music critics since the time of Odoevsky.

Stasov's rather disingenuous strategy throughout *Art in the 19th Century* was to depict his party as Russian music's eternal underdogs. The critic's martyr complex, already evident in the maudlin title of one of his articles on *Ruslan and Liudmila* ('A Martyr of Our Time'), reaches Olympian heights in *Art in the 19th Century*. He describes the artists he admires most, from Glinka to Musorgsky, as having all been misunderstood and rejected by a public with corrupt, Italianate tastes and 'critics (for example, Herman Laroche), who seek in music only beauties, saccharine melodies . . . and traditional musical forms'.⁶⁴ What Stasov often forgets to mention is that perhaps the two most prolific critics of the century, Serov and Cui, were both staunchly anti-Italian

⁶³ Ivanov's obituary is reprinted in Alexandra Orlova (ed.), *Musorgsky Remembered*, trans. Véronique Zaytzeff and Frederick Morrison (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), pp. 136–9. Stasov's rival obituary of the composer appears in Vladimir Stasov, *Izbrannye sochineniia*, vol. 11 (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1952), pp. 117–18.

⁶⁴ Vladimir Stasov, 'Iskusstvo XIX veka', in *Izbrannye sochineniia*, vol. 111, p. 730.

and anti-tradition – though Stasov, naturally, denies Serov's progressive credentials. The acerbic pen of Cui, too, had ensured that the members of Stasov's party were never just the passive victims of hostile traditionalists: they had a means of dispensing scorn as quickly as they collected it. As for Serov, who after all could not be easily assimilated to the aestheticist camp of Laroche, Stasov deals with him briefly and dismissively, branding him an untalented composer whose renowned music criticism amounted to nothing more than 'barnfuls of countless delusions, mistakes, flip-flops, endless changes, and inconsistencies'.⁶⁵ Without acknowledgement, Stasov concedes Serov's point that the lack of drama in *Ruslan* prevents Glinka's 'greatest creation ... [from] having the right to call itself "the first opera in the world"',⁶⁶ but in the very next lines he diagnoses *Don Giovanni*, *Fidelio* and *Der Freischütz* with the same shortcoming, and questions whether drama is really the alpha and omega of opera. Operatic 'truth', as far as Stasov is concerned here, is not a matter of dramatic coherence. He defines the term much as Cui had done, locating it in 'the inseparable combination of words and music, the truth of intonation, brought up to the highest level of naturalness and vitality'.⁶⁷ This was a narrow and peculiarly *kuchkist* version of the 'truth', one that anointed Musorgsky and Dargomyzhsky as the quintessential Russian realists and delegitimised Serov (who was by that point thirty years dead and in no position to defend himself).

Stasov's vision of musical nationalism, perhaps the most influential element of *Art in the 19th Century*, was similarly narrow and partisan. His image of Russian music's *Ur*-nationalist, Glinka, is the very opposite of Odoevsky's: while Odoevsky had seen in his friend's music a healthy synthesis of Russian melody and cosmopolitan technique, Stasov depicted the composer – who had spent the last thirteen years of his life in the West, and died in Berlin – as a downright provincial, all but untouched by European decadence. Glinka's thoroughgoing Russianness apparently sprang from his remote (and, in Stasov's hands, highly sentimentalised) upbringing, where he could absorb the salubrious tones of Russian folk music in perfect rustic seclusion. With a wave of his hand Stasov dismissed the effects of Glinka's four-year musical apprenticeship in Europe: according to Stasov, all Glinka had learned in Italy was to despise Italian music, and from Germany he had taken 'just enough' to give him a fluent technique without destroying his spontaneous Russianness.⁶⁸ The danger of too much 'German' learning was that it could turn one into a cosmopolitan, which was for Stasov the baneful business of the Conservatory. In *Art in the 19th Century* the dividing line between the

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 744. ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 721. ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 729. ⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 718.

nationalists and the Conservatorians appears absolute: no one who had had Conservatory training, particularly during Anton Rubinstein's tenure as director, could be considered truly Russian. And so Stasov's treatise identifies Tchaikovsky as 'one of the most determined opponents of the "Balakirev party"', and even an 'enemy',⁶⁹ this despite the fact that Tchaikovsky's relationship with the *kuchka* had been perfectly cordial during the entire period when that group really could have been considered a united 'party', despite the fact that near the end of his life Tchaikovsky identified the former *kuchkist* Rimsky-Korsakov as 'the one among living Russian composers whom I love and value above all others',⁷⁰ and despite the fact that Tchaikovsky's childhood had been spent in a provincial town no less rustic and remote than Glinka's birthplace. On account of his Conservatory training, Tchaikovsky, who might have fulfilled Odoevsky's image of the ideal musical nationalist, becomes for Stasov 'a cosmopolitan and an eclectic from head to toe' who had 'no elements of "nationalism" in his musical nature'.⁷¹ Nationalism in music, then, was no longer a matter of elevation and inclusivity as it had been in Odoevsky. It was, rather, a matter of a quasi-mystical folkishness that excluded all outside influences, a nationalism defined by insularity and ineffability.

But Stasov's views, so ascendant in twentieth-century accounts of the Russian 'classical' repertoire, were never monolithic in their own time. Music criticism in imperial Russia was characterised above all by its passionate polemics, its philosophical debates and its well-matched rivalries. It came of age along with the musical tradition it described, its pugilistic style helping to establish that tradition as something worth arguing about.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 728.

⁷⁰ 'Beseda s Chaikovskim v noiabre 1892 g. v Peterburge', in Petr Il'ich Chaikovskii, *Muzykal'no-kriticheskie stat'i*, ed. V. V. Iakovlev (Moscow: Muzgiz, 1953), p. 372.

⁷¹ Stasov, *Izbrannye sochineniia*, vol. III, p. 746.

· PART III ·

CRITICAL INFLUENCE AND INFLUENCES

Critiquing the Canon: The Role of Criticism in Canon Formation

LAURA HAMER

The Gatekeepers of the Canon

Music critics wield great power. Their writing influences public opinion and contributes to how audiences receive works. They focus attention upon specific works and musicians, thus justifying these as most worthy of public recognition and debate. They help works to achieve repeat performances, and thereby to establish their places within the performing canon. In the age of recorded sound, they influence sales and affect charts. Although some claim that with the recent rise of ubiquitous digital critical commentary (much of it amateur) professional critics have lost their traditional authority, online criticism continues to exercise considerable sway. In a very real way, critics have been – and continue to be – the gatekeepers of the canon. As Roy Shuker has observed, ‘popular music critics . . . function as significant gatekeepers and as arbiters of taste’.¹ For the purposes of the present discussion, we can usefully extend this comment to embrace music critics of all genres. Through their writing, critics decide who should be included within, and who should be excluded from, the canon. Criticism invests the works contained within any canon with a high degree of cultural capital; thereby further entrenching these works’ places within their respective canons. As Mark Everist has commented, ‘texts and documents which articulate the reception of a work are similar – in many cases identical – to those that are responsible for imparting value to the work, and hence for its inclusion in, or exclusion from, the canon’.² Within this process the concept of genre hierarchy is crucial, as canons tend to be dominated by specific genres, and these in turn are constructed as possessing the highest values of cultural capital. Works within other genres are thus often denigrated as being of lower cultural worth, and effectively excluded from canon formation.

¹ Roy Shuker, *Understanding Popular Music*, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 83.

² Mark Everist, ‘Reception Theories, Canonic Discourses, and Musical Value’, in Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (eds.), *Rethinking Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 378–9.

This chapter examines the role which critics play in canon formation. Discussion is focused upon the contentious, yet somehow ephemeral, notion of canonical values, and the part that criticism plays in exclusion and marginalisation from the canon. As it would be impossible to survey the role played by criticism in the formation of every single musical canon, the nineteenth-century Austro-German classical and later twentieth-century rock canons are taken as illustrative examples. These two specific musical canons have been chosen as both, within their respective spheres of classical and popular music, have been viewed as sitting at the pinnacle of the genre hierarchy (although there are also, of course, good grounds to dispute these claims). Furthermore, they have both been heavily invested with (different forms of) cultural capital. They have been seen as embodying gold standards against which to judge everything else. Prior to the broadening out of music scholarship since the 1980s, the Austro-German-dominated classical music canon was, of course, seen as *the* music canon. Although this is now (thankfully) far from still being the case, examining the role that critics played in constructing that canon is still a revealing exercise. Interestingly, the canonical values which critics developed to describe works contained within the nineteenth-century Austro-German canon still echo strongly in the criticism of other musical canons (especially rock) to this day. In the case of rock, the role that criticism has played in its canon formation is, moreover, intriguingly under-explored.³

Defining Canonical Values

Although (historically) consideration of the canon within music scholarship focused very much upon Western art music, the existence of multiple musical canons – usually specific to particular genres – has now long been acknowledged. Critical discourse is vital to shaping the values and contents of each of these. All have their own specialised critical platforms, forums and/or press through which reception is formed, debated and disseminated. As early as 1983, Joseph Kerman claimed that ‘repertoires are determined by performers,

³ Carys Wyn Jones’s *The Rock Canon: Canonical Values in the Reception of Rock Albums* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008) makes an important contribution to this area, although it is slight on considerations of actual criticism. As Wyn Jones states in her introduction ‘canons in popular music have not been explored in detail in academic literature, and the general position of the academic study of popular music towards canons has been ambivalent’ (p. 1). In his seminal text *Understanding Popular Music*, Roy Shuker has also made the case that ‘the music press has received surprisingly little attention in academic popular music studies. General accounts of the development of pop/rock make considerable use of the music press as a source, while largely ignoring its role in the process of marketing and cultural legitimation’ (p. 86). To this we can usefully also add canon formation. Although now dated, Simon Frith’s consideration of ‘The Music Press’ within his *Sound Effects: Youth, Leisure and the Politics of Rock ‘n’ Roll* (New York: Pantheon, 1981) remains an important source.

canons by critics'.⁴ William Weber, however, has cautioned that 'we must never forget that many factors other than criticism came into play in the establishment of works in repertoires'.⁵ It is undeniably true that a complex matrix of other factors, including performance and programming practices and preferences, and historical circumstances, have also played important roles in the process of canonisation. Critics, however, remain the gatekeepers. Their writing not only records their own reception, but also shapes wider audience reception, as critical discourse actively shapes an audience's *Erwartungshorizont* (horizon of expectations).⁶

David Beard and Kenneth Gloag have commented that 'canonical values are ... implicitly active in shaping writing on music'.⁷ Explicit definitions of what these 'canonical values' consist of, however, are rare. Beard and Gloag have further observed that 'the notion of a canon is inextricably linked with aesthetic value. The works that are considered to belong to the canon do so because they embody what for some constitute eternal qualities and transcendent dimensions'.⁸ Everist has claimed that 'locations of reception overlap substantially with contingencies of value'.⁹ Yet notions of how to define these 'aesthetic values', 'eternal qualities', 'transcendent dimensions' and 'contingencies of value' remain, at best, somewhat hazy.

Carys Wyn Jones has warned that 'drawing up an inventory of canonical criteria is potentially misleading since canons rely on a nexus of perceived greatness rather than a list of rules for canonicity'.¹⁰ She has, nonetheless, identified a number of 'similar qualities' (for which we might substitute 'canonical values') which canonical works 'tend to share'.¹¹ In particular she has identified that such works are 'believed to possess great aesthetic strength' and that 'perceived truths, and associated authenticity, remain important markers of value in canons'.¹² She has further observed that 'perhaps the most important and unifying criterion of all canons is that canonical works must above all be original' and that 'complexity is also a valued quality in a canonical work'.¹³ In addition, she has commented that 'secondary literature ... plays a vital role in canon formation and perpetuation ...

⁴ Joseph Kerman, 'A Few Canonic Variations', *Critical Inquiry*, 10 (1983), 107.

⁵ William Weber, 'The History of Musical Canon', in Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (eds.), *Rethinking Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 350.

⁶ The *Erwartungshorizont* was a term coined by the German literary theorist Hans Robert Jauss. In Jauss's theory of reception it refers to the expectations which a reader (or, when applied to music, listener) applies to a work to understand and interpret it. These cultural expectations are specific to their historical moment. Thus readers (or listeners) from different generations understand and value the same works differently.

⁷ David Beard and Kenneth Gloag, 'Canon', in *Musicology: The Key Concepts* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 33.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 33. ⁹ Everist, 'Reception Theories', p. 402. ¹⁰ Wyn Jones, *The Rock Canon*, p. 14.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 15. ¹² *Ibid.* ¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

Canonical works require secondary material to support their position of greatness in the ongoing debate of value judgment in the arts.¹⁴ Although Wyn Jones limits her definition of 'secondary literature' to 'commentaries and analyses, anthologies, catalogues of works, edited editions of seminal texts, biographies of authors, centenary festivals and celebrations, and the translation of works into other languages',¹⁵ to these it is important to add criticism. In the case of music in particular, it is via criticism that a work's canonical status is established. As Weber has observed, 'the product of canonization is the bestowal of authority upon certain pieces of music. If repertory constitutes the framework of canon, then critical discourse empowers it.'¹⁶ But how do critics decide which works to 'bestow authority upon' and how do they decide which values to celebrate?

Critics must choose vocabulary to describe aspects of works they wish to praise (or denigrate). As Sandra McColl has commented, 'music critics continually find themselves in a situation of having to find words to explain and justify their reception of music. Consciously or unconsciously, any attempt to verbalize one's reaction to a piece of music will involve bringing to bear one's aesthetic predispositions.'¹⁷ As the vocabulary which critics choose to describe attributes of works that they consider desirable becomes established within critical discourse, these words and phrases become synonymous with canonical values. Over time these canonical values come to represent the cultural capital which the works they are applied to are considered to possess.

Criticism, Canon Formation and Marginalisation

Music criticism, via the articulation of cultural capital through critical discourse, functions as a powerful tool of marginalisation and exclusion. As Beard and Gloag have commented, 'this process of exclusion highlights the reality that the canon acts as a source of cultural power and as such it becomes a mechanism through which non-canonical music is excluded from the public domain'.¹⁸ Although criticism may at first appear to be impartial, a judgement based purely on a particular work's merits, this is rarely the case. Even a cursory glance at the Western art music canon reveals how homogenous it is. Given criticism's key role in canon formation, exclusion along the lines of gender, race, ethnicity and class takes on an invidious light.¹⁹ Those who are

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 18. ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 18–19. ¹⁶ Weber, 'The History of Musical Canon', p. 350.

¹⁷ Sandra McColl, *Music Criticism in Vienna 1896–1897: Critically Moving Forms* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 170.

¹⁸ Beard and Gloag, *Musicology*, p. 33.

¹⁹ See my 'The Gender Paradox: Criticism of Women and Women as Critics', Chapter 14 in the current volume, for a detailed consideration of the systematic use of gendered criticism to exclude women from music's canons.

excluded from the canon via critical discourse find themselves effectively culturally disenfranchised.

In his well-known and highly controversial defence of the literary canon, *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages* (1994), Harold Bloom staunchly proclaims that ‘I am not prepared to agree with the Marxists that the Western Canon is another instance of what they call “cultural capital”’.²⁰ In *The Western Canon* Bloom presents an impassioned argument for the (literary) canon’s authority. His study places Shakespeare at the centre, and considers twenty-six authors (including Chaucer, Milton, Goethe, Austen, Tolstoy, Proust and Joyce) in relation to him. Bloom seeks to identify ‘the qualities that made these authors canonical’.²¹ In his consideration of these work’s canonical values, Bloom also staunchly defends their authority against those scholars who believe in critiquing the canon and opening it up. Bloom denigrates these as the ‘School of Resentment’, and counts among their numbers ‘Feminists, Afrocentrists, Marxists, Foucault-inspired New Historicists, or Deconstructors’.²² Bloom claims that ‘some recent partisans of what regards itself as academic radicalism [i.e. the “School of Resentment”] go so far as to suggest that works join the Canon because of successful advertising and propaganda campaigns’.²³

Although it is vital to historicise Bloom’s polemic within the canon wars of the 1980s and 90s, critics effectively do advocate for particular works and musicians. It is through this that criticism contributes so successfully to musical canon formation. Given criticism’s tendency to exclude or marginalise particular groups of musicians along the lines of gender, race, ethnicity and class, it is hard not to disagree with Bloom’s assertion that ‘those who oppose the Canon insist that there is always an ideology involved in canon formation; indeed they go further and speak of the ideology *of* canon formation, suggesting that to make a canon (or to perpetuate one) is an ideological act *in itself*’.²⁴ Although critics rarely have complete control over what they write about, their control over how they write feeds directly into canon formation. Any attempt to ignore the ideological dimensions of canon formation is, at best, naive.

Forging Lasting Canonical Values: The Nineteenth-Century Tradition

The development of music criticism and the rise of canon formation occurred concurrently in the later eighteenth and earlier nineteenth centuries. As Robin Wallace has commented, ‘it is . . . shortly after the first appearance of

²⁰ Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages* (London: Macmillan, 1994), p. 37.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1. ²² *Ibid.*, p. 20. ²³ *Ibid.* ²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

works by Beethoven in Germany that serious music critics gained their first permanent forum'.²⁵ Thus it is unsurprising in some ways that Beethoven became central to the emerging musical canon. Music criticism became more widespread within daily newspapers from the later eighteenth century onwards. Meanwhile journals dedicated exclusively to music also began to emerge. *Die Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, established in Leipzig in 1798, containing reviews of new works and performances, became the first specialist music journal. It became a model for other publications which quickly began to appear throughout Europe. At the same time, the rise of public concerts – intended to satisfy the cultural and social needs and aspirations of the burgeoning middle classes – was also intimately connected to canon formation. Here music critics played key roles in determining which works should be deemed worthy of repeat performance, and thus inclusion in the emerging performance canon. Katharine Ellis has observed that 'A work's "contemporaneity" – defined by its acceptance as repertoire – was essential to its status as canonic, but its canonicity was argued and defended by practitioners of two new disciplines: musicology and music criticism'.²⁶ The terms 'canon', 'canonical' and 'canonicity' themselves were not actually used by nineteenth-century critics. In their place, as Ellis has further commented, 'the words "classic", "model" and "masterpiece" were conferred upon music which had achieved, or was deemed worthy of achieving, canonic status'.²⁷ Indeed, as Wyn Jones has observed, 'general use of the word "canon" as a collection of prized works has only become common in the last 30 years'.²⁸

The centrality of Beethoven to the canon which emerged in the earlier nineteenth century has long been acknowledged. As Beard and Gloag have observed, 'the concern with a critical response and evaluation of new and recent music became a recurrent preoccupation through the Romanticism of the nineteenth century, with the music of Beethoven being the most clearly defined object of attention'.²⁹ Wallace, meanwhile, has commented that 'Beethoven was almost at once, and universally, recognized as a composer of genius, and this recognition is reflected in practically everything that was written about him during his lifetime'.³⁰ E. T. A. Hoffmann's well-known review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony (1807–8), published in *Die Allgemeine*

²⁵ Robin Wallace, *Beethoven's Critics: Aesthetic Dilemmas and Resolutions During the Composer's Lifetime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 4.

²⁶ Katharine Ellis, *Music Criticism in Nineteenth-Century France: La Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris, 1834–1880* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 5.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 5–6.

²⁸ Wyn Jones, *The Rock Canon*, p. 6. As Wyn Jones's study was published in 2008, it is now closer to forty years.

²⁹ Beard and Gloag, 'Criticism', in *Musicology*, p. 42. ³⁰ Wallace, *Beethoven's Critics*, p. 1.

musikalische Zeitung in 1810, is still widely regarded as having been immensely influential in establishing not only a tradition for German-language criticism of the composer but also a tradition for how Beethoven's music should be received. Hoffmann's comments in his slightly later essay 'Beethoven's Instrumental Music' (1813) – that 'Beethoven's instrumental music opens up to us the realm of the monstrous and the immeasurable . . . this wonderful composition [the Fifth Symphony], in a climax that climbs on and on, leads the listener imperiously forward into the spirit world of the infinite!' – co-opts Beethoven's symphony to the romantic aesthetic of the sublime (already firmly established within literature but newly emerging in music).³¹ Hoffmann proclaimed that:

When we speak of music as an independent art, should we not always restrict our meaning to instrumental music, which, scorning every aid, every admixture of another art (the art of poetry), gives pure expression to music's specific nature, recognizable in this form alone? It is the most romantic of all the arts – one might say, the only genuinely romantic one – for its sole subject is the infinite.³²

Thus Hoffmann celebrated pure autonomous instrumental music, liberated from poetic text to give it meaning, and from court, civic or ecclesiastical patronage to provide it with purpose or function.³³ Accordingly, he helped to establish Beethoven's symphonies as the bedrock of the performance canon, and shaped future writing – and thus understanding – about the composer's music.³⁴

Discussion of Beethoven dominated nineteenth-century German-language musical and aesthetic discourse, just as Austro-German works dominated the simultaneously emerging performance canon. As a widely disseminated writer, Hoffmann's views had a powerful influence upon subsequent generations of critics. Successive commentators on Beethoven's music sought to identify what Scott Burnham has characterised as 'a set of dynamic values for composition that attempt to account for what was deemed new and compelling in Beethoven's music'.³⁵ It is in these that we find the vestigial forms of canonical

³¹ E. T. A. Hoffmann, 'Beethoven's Instrumental Music' (1813); cited from Oliver Strunk, *Source Readings in Music History*, trans. Strunk, Leo Treitler (General Editor), revised ed. (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1998), pp. 1194–5.

³² E. T. A. Hoffmann, 'Beethoven's Instrumental Music' (1813); cited from *ibid.*, p. 1193.

³³ For a detailed consideration of Hoffmann's aesthetics, see Abigail Chantler, *E. T. A. Hoffmann's Musical Aesthetics* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

³⁴ Hoffmann's comments also inverted the traditional artistic hierarchy between music and poetry, for once placing music firmly at the top. This helped to establish music as the most important, and most romantic, of the art forms throughout the nineteenth century.

³⁵ Scott Burnham, *Beethoven Hero* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 66.

values. A concept of musical form which was perceived as organic, progressive and developmental became central. Emphasis upon form, as Burnham comments, allowed ‘musical thinkers like E. T. A. Hoffmann and A. B. Marx . . . to make the same claims for musical works that had been made by leading romantic critics for the literary works of authors such as Shakespeare and Goethe’.³⁶ The concept of a canon of literary works – within which both Shakespeare and Goethe were recognised cornerstones – was already well established. Thus these literary analogies may have further helped to legitimise the concept of a musical canon, with Beethoven as its focus. Burnham has further stated:

The importance of the motive as a type of seed begins to be stressed, and thematic development gains precedence as a means of achieving the newly touted aesthetic goal of a unity that integrates the greatest possible degree of variety. Sonata form emerges as the chief vehicle of this type of unity, just as the *Bildungsroman*, with *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* as its most celebrated exemplar, had emerged within literary studies. Musical composition in this its highest manifestation began to be characterized by a thematic process of development in which every episode (and later every note) was essential to the overall design. The musical process that seems to press inexorably forth to transcendent and exhaustive closure brings about an emphasis on the notion of necessity and organic unity.³⁷

This emphasis upon motivic development, organicism and form helped to reinforce the notion of the fixed, autonomous musical work; a crucial criterion for the formation of a canon of closed musical works.

This is not to suggest that all commentators on Beethoven celebrated these values in the same way. As the canonical status of his music became entrenched, it also allowed a spectrum of different readings.³⁸ For Wagner, the inclusion of words in the Ninth Symphony paved the way for the ‘artwork of the future’, whereas for Hanslick, Beethoven’s music represented beautiful form.³⁹ For German-language critics, Beethoven’s music, especially his symphonies, became the benchmark against which all other works’ worthiness for inclusion in the canon was judged. Advocating for Schubert in an article written for *Die Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* in 1835, for instance, Schumann compared Schubert’s piano writing to that of Beethoven, even suggesting that Schubert’s innovations in that field surpassed those of Beethoven:

³⁶ Ibid. ³⁷ Ibid., pp. 66–7.

³⁸ On Beethoven’s importance in the role of canon formation in early nineteenth-century Austro-Germany, see also Tia DeNora, *Beethoven and the Construction of Genius: Musical Politics in Vienna 1792–1803* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997).

³⁹ Richard Wagner, *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft* (1849); Eduard Hanslick, *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen* (1854).

Particularly as a composer for piano, he [Schubert] has something more to offer than others, in certain ways, more even than Beethoven (however marvellously the latter, in his deafness, heard with his imagination). This superiority consists in his ability to write more idiomatically for the piano, i.e. everything sounds as if drawn from the very depths of the instrument, while with Beethoven we must borrow for tone color, first from the oboe, then the horn, etc.⁴⁰

Deriving from writing on Beethoven, emphasis upon form continued to be an important focus for German-language music criticism throughout the nineteenth century. In her detailed study of *fin-de-siècle* Viennese music criticism, *Music Criticism in Vienna 1896–1897: Critically Moving Forms*, McColl has commented that ‘of all the criteria which appear and reappear in judgements of the value of musical works, that of structure is the nearest to concrete’.⁴¹ As she observes further, ‘although critics are apt to disagree as to whether the large-scale structure of a piece is coherent, this remains the most concrete criterion for the evaluation of music’. Handling of form as a canonical value upon which to base an exalted critical criterion took on a (somewhat ugly) politicised context in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, as the ability to control large-scale form was firmly identified as a Germanic quality.

Within a contemporary political climate in which nationalism was on the rise within the Habsburg Reich, with many minority ethnic groups asserting their rights to their own languages and cultures, the politically conservative reacted with Germanising tendencies and an assertion of the supposed inherent superiority of Germanic culture. Critics were not immune to this. In their hands, music written by those outside the Austro-German mainstream was either appropriated or Othered. For instance, the well-known cultural Germanocentric, Heinrich Schenker, attempted in 1897 to co-opt the Bohemian composers Smetana and Dvořák to the Austro-German tradition:

Smetana and Dvořák ... succeeded more happily in bringing their national music into a system than did the Russian artist [Tchaikovsky]. The system is naturally that of German art, for this is best able to solve the principal problem of the logical development of a piece of music. So it was first of all Smetana, who with his brilliant predisposition towards the classical simply applied the German system to Bohemian music, and because he understood the German logic of music as it were in its necessity and sensibleness as no other, it was granted to him to present Bohemian music in a perfection which will not be surpassed. Since then Dvořák has also succeeded, always with the German

⁴⁰ Robert Schumann, *Die Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, 3 (1835), 208; cited in Leon B. Platinga, *Schumann as Critic* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1967), p. 220. Translation by Platinga.

⁴¹ McColl, *Music Criticism in Vienna*, p. 170.

system as a basis, in nearly every field of composition, in the naturalization of his national tone. His chamber music in particular, with all its Bohemian roots, is blessed with such outstanding German virtues that it justly seems to us most highly attractive.⁴²

Beyond critical interest in form, McColl has also identified that *fin-de-siècle* Viennese critics were concerned with, what she has termed, ‘music’s lofty purpose’.⁴³ Again this connects to an established German-language romantic critical tradition which sought to elevate music to metaphysics and can be traced back to Hoffmann. McColl has further identified that for *fin-de-siècle* Viennese critics, originality – balanced against respect for tradition – was also an important canonical value. Thus the critics, cast in their roles as gatekeepers, determined who should be included within and who should be excluded from the canon. As McColl puts it, the critics identified as ‘carrying about with them the whole weight of the musical tradition, of which they saw themselves as guardians’.⁴⁴

The nineteenth century also saw the emergence of the composer-critic. These were active throughout the period, and include such figures as Berlioz, Weber and Wolf. As composers themselves, these critics have come to be viewed as authoritative commentators on the music of others, and their critical writings often played key roles in canon formation. Better known for most of his lifetime for his criticism rather than his music, Schumann remains a prime example of the nineteenth-century composer-critic. Schumann co-founded *Die Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* in 1834 and edited it from January 1835 until July 1844.⁴⁵ Through his writing, Schumann actively constructed himself as a crusader for serious, progressive music. His prose is saturated with elevations of canonical values, whilst he denigrated what he considered to be artistically valueless, commercialised, populist music.⁴⁶ In particular, the contemporary cult of the piano virtuoso, which, with its empty showmanship he felt exemplified this, was anathema to him. Leon Plantinga has characterised Schumann’s writing style as ‘vigorous idealism, partisanship, and, often, irreverent impetuosity’.⁴⁷ Schumann himself described his rabble-rousing motivations for co-founding *Die Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* in his own collected edition of his critical writings in 1854 thus:

⁴² Heinrich Schenker, *Die Neue Revue* (26 November 1897), 654; cited from McColl, *Music Criticism in Vienna*, p. 176. Translation by McColl.

⁴³ McColl, *Music Criticism in Vienna*, p. 176. ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

⁴⁵ Plantinga’s *Schumann as Critic* remains a key and perceptive source on Schumann’s criticism.

⁴⁶ In this, Schumann’s critical writing is curiously similar to later twentieth-century rock music criticism.

⁴⁷ Plantinga, *Schumann as Critic*, p. 3.

At the end of 1833 a few musicians in Leipzig, mostly young men, found themselves together as though by accident every evening. They met principally to enjoy each other's company; but they were also fully as interested in exchanging their ideas about the art that was for them the food and drink of life – music. The state of music in Germany was at that time hardly gratifying. Rossini still ruled the stage; Herz and Hüntten, almost by themselves, held the field in piano music. And yet only a few years had passed since Beethoven, C. M. von Weber, and Franz Schubert had lived among us. Mendelssohn's star, it is true, was rising, and wonderful things were heard of a Pole, Chopin. But it was only later that they began to exert a lasting effect.

Then, one day, an idea occurred to these young hotheads: 'Let us not look and on and do nothing! Take action and improve things! Take action, so that poetic qualities may again be honored in this art.' In this way originated the first pages of a new musical journal (*neue Zeitschrift für Musik*).⁴⁸

In 1839, Schumann proclaimed in *Die Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* that his most important duty as a critic was 'to promote those younger talents, the best of whom are called "romantic"'.⁴⁹ In particular he championed Schubert, Mendelssohn and Chopin, composers he admired greatly. Although the place of each of these is now secure within the canon, Schumann's critical writing on them bolstered their reception and helped to establish this. Writing about Schubert in 1835, when the composer was not well known (as Schumann reminds us), for instance, he insisted that:

Now we come to our favourites, the sonatas of Franz Schubert [A Minor, D845; D Major, D850; and B \flat Major, D617]. Many know him only as a lieder composer, though most people, by far, hardly even know his name. We can make only certain sketchy points here. It would require whole books to show in detail what works of pure genius his compositions are. Perhaps there will be time for this some day.⁵⁰

Schumann's sentiments intriguingly foreshadow the detailed analyses and considerations of Schubert's music which would follow in the twentieth century, when he was recognised as a leading composer of his generation. In the case of Chopin reception, Schumann also functioned as a trailblazer. Writing in 1841, for example, he described Chopin's B \flat Minor Sonata, Op. 35 thus:

To look at the first measures of the sonata last named [Chopin's B \flat Minor Sonata, Op. 35], and yet to have doubts about its authorship would be

⁴⁸ Robert Schumann, *Gesammelte Schriften* (1854); cited from Platinga, *Schumann as Critic*, pp. 3–4. Translation by Platinga.

⁴⁹ Robert Schumann, *Die Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, 10 (1839), 1; cited from Platinga, *Schumann as Critic*, p. 219. Translation by Platinga.

⁵⁰ Robert Schumann, *Die Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, 3 (1835), 208; cited from Platinga, *Schumann as Critic*, pp. 219–20. Translation by Platinga.

a disgrace for a good critic. For only Chopin begins thus, and only he ends thus: from dissonance, through dissonance, to dissonance. And yet there is a good deal of beauty in this piece.⁵¹

Thus composers, in their dual roles as critics, were also able to act as gatekeepers of the canon, the careful curation of which they had an invested interest in.

Rock Criticism: Constructing Rock's Cultural Significance

Turning now to rock criticism, a number of intriguing parallels emerge in relation to desired canonical values, exclusion and criticism's role within canon formation, alongside several interesting differences. As new popular musical genres emerged, so did specialised publications. (For an insightful account of the development of the popular music press, see Simon Frith's 'Writing about Popular Music', Chapter 26 in the present volume.) Critical popular music criticism did not emerge in the UK until the later 1960s/early 1970s. Prior to this, the popular music press focused on providing news of the latest stars to an assumed teenage audience, with much coverage reading like rehearsed press releases. Frith has previously observed:

The British music papers and record companies saw themselves as having the same interests. Music press 'news' was news of the latest recording stars, the latest entrants to the charts; all such stars were equally important and their importance lasted precisely as long as their chart success . . . The 1950s music papers functioned like the film fans' magazines of the 1930s . . . keeping pop fans informed of who was doing what and where.⁵²

The impetus for the development of critical rock reception came from two directions. First, in December 1963 William Mann published his famous (to some, infamous) review of The Beatles in the arts pages of *The Times*. In a language clearly derived from analytically informed classical music criticism, Mann praised The Beatles thus:

The outstanding English composers of 1963 must seem to have been John Lennon and Paul McCartney, the talented young musicians from Liverpool whose songs have been sweeping the country since last Christmas . . . I am not concerned with the social phenomenon of Beatlemania, which finds expression in handbags, balloons and other articles bearing the likeness of the loved ones, or in the hysterical screaming of young girls whenever the Beatle

⁵¹ Robert Schumann, *Die Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, 14 (1841), 39; cited from Platinga, *Schumann as Critic*, p. 232. Translation by Platinga.

⁵² Frith, *Sound Effects*, pp. 166–7.

Quartet performs in public, but with the musical phenomenon . . . the songs of Lennon and McCartney are distinctly indigenous in character, the most imaginative and inventive example of a style that has been developing on Merseyside during the past few years . . . harmonic interest is typical of their quicker songs . . . and one gets the impression that they think simultaneously of harmony and melody, so firmly are the major tonic sevenths and ninths built into their tunes, and the flat submediant key switches . . . Those submediant switches from C major into A \flat major, and to a lesser extent mediant ones (e.g. the octave ascent in the famous ‘I Want to Hold Your Hand’) are a trademark of Lennon–McCartney songs.⁵³

Although numerous popular music scholars have denigrated Mann’s review for being couched in the language of classical music criticism and analysis – and a solid argument could be made that this is neither an appropriate methodology nor an adequate vocabulary for popular music – it must be remembered that, at the time that he wrote it, a critical British rock language had not yet been developed. What it is also crucial to acknowledge is that Mann was among the first to take popular music seriously and to treat it as a valid form of cultural expression.

The second impetus came from the development of a new breed of reflective rock criticism from the United States. This critically aware rock criticism first emerged in the underground music press. Frith has commented:

Rock turned out to be the basic form of underground culture, but in becoming so it was imbued with an ideology that was at marked variance with previous notions of pop: rock was valued for its political stance, its aggression, its sexuality, its relationship to cultural stance. The music that was most despised and mistrusted by the underground press was precisely the commercial, successful, teenage pop that had been essential to the development of the British press. Rock was defined as the music that articulated the values of a new community of youth; it was opposed to the traditional values of show biz; and as the appeal of the underground spread from its original bohemian roots so did this notion of rock . . . underground papers were important as the source of what became the dominant ideology of rock.⁵⁴

A clear genre hierarchy subsequently emerged between ‘authentic’ rock music and ‘commercialised’ pop music, with rock music frequently constructed as an authentic, non-commercialised expression of artistic and aesthetic strength. Stuart Borthwick and Ron Moy, however, have commented on the contradiction inherent within this situation:

⁵³ William Mann, ‘What Songs the Beatles Sang’, *The Times* (27 December 1963), available at www.beatlesbible.com (accessed 19 June 2016).

⁵⁴ Frith, *Sound Effects*, pp. 168–9.

Rock, as a term, was coined to differentiate the music and attitudes of both performer and audience from the 'pop' and 'commercial' form. This rock/pop binarism can be viewed as a false bifurcation on a number of levels ... However, it did serve to reflect the growing fragmentation of the audience for popular music into what we might term 'taste hierarchies' often based upon class, gender, geographical or ethnic distinctions.⁵⁵

As Wyn Jones has also commented, 'rock is sometimes presented as the more artistically serious counterpart of pop'.⁵⁶ Despite its obvious fallacy, this pop/rock genre hierarchy runs deep in popular music discourse and criticism. It tends to privilege rock music within the popular music canon and genre hierarchy as the more culturally authentic form of popular music and to steep it in (counter-)cultural capital.

Wyn Jones has observed that 'from the mid-1990s onwards there has been a growing suggestion of a canon in the reception of rock music'.⁵⁷ As evidence she points to 'the swell in the number of rock music histories, lists (and books) of greatest albums'.⁵⁸ Although Wyn Jones focuses her argument upon the reception of albums, her argument can easily be extended to embrace rock criticism in general. On canonical values, she comments that:

The most immediate way in which rock writing displays canonic tendencies is in the language used to describe its subject matter. Canonical words mingle with more vivid, everyday spoken language; the terms 'masterpiece', 'classic', 'genius', 'artist', 'test of time', and 'sublime' all appear regularly ... Originality, in its various different guises, is as much a hallmark of greatness in rock music as in literature and classical music.⁵⁹

Although it might appear natural to Wyn Jones that rock music criticism should have borrowed its canonical values from literature and classical music, it is worth briefly considering the justification for this. It is not particularly likely that rock critics, *en masse*, would be deeply aware of nineteenth-century classical music criticism. Possibly the canonical values of literature and classical music had so fully permeated wider cultural discourse by the 1960s that they were almost unconsciously absorbed into rock criticism. The same canonical values were adopted as the most desirable qualities of rock music too.

In another parallel to nineteenth-century criticism, Wyn Jones has also identified the centrality of the struggling outsider figure: 'again and again albums are regarded as direct expressions of the artists who made them, cast in

⁵⁵ Stuart Borthwick and Ron Moy, *Popular Music Genres* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 61–2.

⁵⁶ Wyn Jones, *The Rock Canon*, p. 40. ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 25. ⁵⁸ *Ibid.* ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 29–30.

the role of troubled Romantic genius, and perceived truths and honesty of expression become markers of value'.⁶⁰ This image of the disturbed outsider figure who has come – in an almost Messianic style – to lead us into music's promised land is well exemplified in a review of a performance by Cranes written by Simon Price for *Melody Maker* in July 1990:

Cranes, the most important band of the new decade ... they evoke *abused childhood*, the point where infancy takes flight from the torture and damage inflicted by adults, and from the iron mould of oncoming maturity. Cranes take refuge in *introversion*, exploring the uncharted areas of the mind ... Their minimalist/maximalist metallic funeral marches induce physical *terror*. Between songs, no one dares speak – stunned into hushed awe. A backwards human pulse introduces the monumental neo-classical chords of 'Focus Breathe', and I realise how unexpected and undeserved Cranes are in 1990. This, at last, is the resumption of a forgotten alley – the early Eighties' decadent 'luxury' of experimentalism – which we have denied ourselves for too long. This, at last, is the perfect soundtrack to a New Europe of autobahns and forests, statues and opera houses ... Just as we were all losing hope, Cranes give cause for renewed faith, kicking rock one step ahead of dance music ... Cranes are in another world, out there on their own. Next to them, hardly anyone *matters*. I have seen the future. This is the beginning of the new Ice Age.⁶¹

Price's florid prose clearly positions the members of Cranes as uneasy outsider figures. His evocations of classical music and concern to historicise them within a musical tradition are designed to confer cultural value. The allusion to Cranes 'kicking rock one step ahead of dance music', meanwhile, reinforces the genre hierarchy which privileges rock above all other forms of popular music. (It is difficult to escape the irony, however, that despite this flamboyant proclamation of their coming significance – and although they did achieve some moderate success – Cranes did not become 'the most important band' of the 1990s!)

Wyn Jones has also observed an often related tendency within rock criticism to construct 'canonic' songs and albums as the autonomous product of a single individual, generally the lead singer-songwriter, and to downplay the input of others, including band members, session musicians, sound engineers, agents and producers. As she expresses it:

This ideal of autonomous vision is played out in descriptions of these albums that suggest that the singer/songwriter is in truth an *auteur*, responsible for all

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 36.

⁶¹ Simon Price, 'Cranes, ICA, London', *Melody Maker* (7 July 1990); Liverpool Hope University Popular Music Resources Centre, Press Clipping [n. p].

aspects of its creation . . . What these accounts tend to ignore is the division of labour involved in making albums, even for solo artists . . . However, the concept of the authenticity of music written by the performer based on his (or her) own experiences is such familiar trope in rock music reception that accounts of albums by groups as opposed to individual artists are often reduced to accounts of the main singer-songwriter.⁶²

Another echo of nineteenth-century reception commonly found in rock criticism is a trend to appreciate the music's artistic and aesthetic strength over any commercial value. As Wyn Jones puts it:

Although rock albums are clearly commercial works, the reception of these albums often makes a point of emphasizing their aesthetic strengths above any commercial success . . . Since canonical works are meant to be made of pure artistic motivation, the canon is based on values other than commerce . . . In the field of rock music it is harder to separate art from commerce since wealth visibly attaches itself to successful artists and albums are clearly commercial products. However, the reception of this music underplays such a connection . . . Accordingly, the reception of . . . rock . . . tends to reflect the non-commercial, aesthetic ambition of canons more than the ephemeral disposability of rock music, thus creating one of the most glaring contradictions between canonic and rock ideology.⁶³

Or as Borthwick and Moy comment, 'how can an act that sells millions of albums be considered "uncommercial"?'⁶⁴

The tension between artistic integrity and commercialism inherent in rock criticism is further problematised by the often symbiotic relationship between the popular music press and the music industry. As Frith has commented:

Most rock writers are . . . almost completely dependent on the record business. Their news, their interviews, their access are provided by record companies . . . there is continuous job mobility between rock journalism and rock publicity – record company press departments recruit from the music papers, music papers employ ex-publishers; it is not even unusual for writers to do both jobs simultaneously.⁶⁵

An important aspect of rock criticism is providing an evaluation of particular acts and new releases to readers (who are also, of course, potential buyers). This further exacerbates the conflict between rock criticism as ideology and commercial enterprise. Shuker has discussed this opposition thus:

⁶² Wyn Jones, *The Rock Canon*, pp. 37–9. ⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 30–40.

⁶⁴ Borthwick and Moy, *Popular Music Genres*, p. 61. ⁶⁵ Frith, *Sound Effects*, p. 173.

Music critics act as a service industry to the record industry, lubricating the desire to acquire both new product and selections from the back catalogue. Both the press and critics, however, also play an important ideological function. They distance popular music consumers from the fact that they are essentially purchasing an economic commodity, by stressing the product's cultural significance. Furthermore, this function is maintained by the important point that the music press is not, at least directly, vertically integrated into the music industry (i.e. owned by the record companies). A sense of distance is thereby maintained, while at the same time the need of the industry to constantly sell new images, styles and product is met.⁶⁶

Conclusion: Criticism, Hagiography and Canon Formation

As with the case of the centrality of Beethoven criticism to the nineteenth-century classical music canon, a formidable hagiography developed around the reception of 1960s rock music which deeply affected rock's canon formation. Again, criticism helped to entrench one dominant genre, time and ideology as the gold standard against which all subsequent rock must be judged. Rock criticism is frequently nostalgic and retrospective, valuing aspects of new acts which recall the 'great' rock bands of the past. Commenting specifically on *Rolling Stone* in 1981, Frith has identified that:

Rolling Stone writers . . . tend to judge records according to their relevance for a rock community that no longer exists. Because that community – 1960s youth culture – is gone, the critical question becomes: Can this artist, this piece of music, provide the experience of that community *in itself*? Hence the emphasis on artistic purposes and skills, the equation between emotional intensity and rock excellence. This approach has two consequences. First, it is essentially conservative: it looks to music to recreate the past – the most important rock cultural figures for the paper are the same now as they were when it started . . . Second, it is essentially mystical: the rock experience – 'the magic that can set you free' – is never described but endlessly referred back to as some mythical adolescent moment against which all subsequent rock moments can be judged. Punk, for example, was eventually welcomed by *Rolling Stone* not for what it said, not for its political or social stance, but because it offered the authentic rock 'n' roll buzz – the Clash were just like the Stones!⁶⁷

This tendency to legitimise new acts by situating them within a rock tradition continues into the twenty-first century. For instance, in January 2006 Paul Morley, writing about Secret Machines in *The Telegraph*, described and

⁶⁶ Shuker, *Understanding Popular Music*, p. 98. ⁶⁷ Frith, *Sound Effects*, p. 176.

critiqued them through evoking a whole myriad of established, past rock bands:

From their haircuts, it's not immediately clear what specific period of music Secret Machines are obsessed by. The haircuts could place them in the 1960s Kinks or the early 1970s Sparks. They throw shapes like mid-1970s New York bands such as Television and the Patti Smith Group . . . They take one particular history of rock – a straightforward indie-ish one that goes from late-1960s English pop via early-1970s glam and punk, 1980s post-punk and 1990s grunge and post-rock, from The Who to Radiohead, from Bowie to Spiritualised – and embroil it with influences that don't usually fit inside the indie model. They refer to epic Floyd and Zep . . . not afraid to mix deranged punk economy with grandiose scheming and dreaming . . . Somehow, among all this spooky, spinning history, Secret Machines are themselves getting closer and closer to transcending the spectacular sequence of transcendent music that has inspired them. If they make it, they could be as great as anything that has influenced them, and possess haircuts they can truly call their own.⁶⁸

The quasi-biblical reference to transcendence – albeit downplayed by the everyday quip about hairstyles – reinforces the special cultural status granted to those permitted entry to the rock canon.

Thus critical rhetoric creates a fearsome hagiography around canonical acts and works. It props them up as the benchmark against which all others must be measured. In this guise, criticism is clearly an ideological pursuit, and one intimately connected to canon formation. Ultimately canons are supposed to represent the greats within any one given genre. (Whether they actually do or not is, of course, a matter for debate.) Critics, in their roles as gatekeepers, play a fundamental part in determining which works and musicians come to be considered as the canonical gold standards against which all other works within their field must be judged. By investing these with canonical values such as non-commercialised aesthetic and artistic strength, authenticity, originality, complexity, organicism, progressiveness and individual genius, their rhetoric imbues those chosen with cultural capital and power, whilst marginalising or excluding others. The preservation of canonical values first exulted in the nineteenth century – aesthetic and artistic strength, originality, individual genius, etc. – reveals how strongly the cultural priorities of that era continues to cast a shadow into the current age. Although I have been able to consider only two musical canons in any depth here, critical gatekeepers, via their roles in constructing cultural values and directing public tastes, are always fundamental to canon formation.

⁶⁸ Paul Morley, 'Secret Machines', *The Telegraph* (29 January 2006), 33.

Comparing Notes: Recording and Criticism

CHRISTOPHER DINGLE

In London on my way to Italy I had some talks in the Savile billiards-room with Robin Legge, the musical critic of the *Daily Telegraph* ... [who] said suddenly: 'Why don't you write me an article about the gramophone? Let me have it as soon as you can.' That suggestion from Robin Legge after he had just potted the brown made that moment one of the most decisive moments in my life.
Compton Mackenzie, *My Life and Times* (1966)¹

It would be absurd now to suggest that recordings were not a legitimate subject for music criticism. For some genres, they are arguably the primary focus of reviews and comment, whether these appear in newspapers, magazines, journals, online or are broadcast. At the time Compton Mackenzie conceived *The Gramophone* in September 1922, the notion of reviewing records was far from established.² Forty-five years had passed since Thomas Edison's invention of the phonograph in 1877 and commercial recordings had started to be produced in significant quantities in the 1890s. Moreover, the years immediately after the end of the First World War saw a substantial expansion of activity for the record companies. However, according to Mackenzie's perception in his entertaining autobiography, Robin Legge (*Daily Telegraph*) and Percy Scholes (the *Observer*) 'were the only musical critics who had as yet recognized that such an instrument as the gramophone existed, and occasionally noticed some new record'.³ Nor was this situation peculiar to Britain, for record reviews were equally scarce, if not non-existent, in US newspapers and those from continental Europe. Just as recording has fundamentally transformed how music in general is composed, performed,

I am profoundly grateful to Sophie Redfern for her ferreting on my behalf for various sources that feed into this chapter and some insightful comments on it. It should be noted at the outset that, as a member of the review panel for *BBC Music Magazine* since 1994, I am a participant in, as well as an observer of, aspects of this particular field.

¹ Compton Mackenzie, *My Life and Times: Octave Five 1915-1923* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1966), p. 232.

² *The Gramophone* became plain *Gramophone* in June 1969. This chapter uses the title relevant to the period under discussion.

³ Mackenzie, *My Life and Times, Octave Five*, p. 232.

heard, mediated and understood, it has also specifically affected criticism in profound ways. The criticism of recordings constitutes a prime exemplar of what Mark Katz refers to as the concept of the ‘phonograph effect’, that is, the ways in which the ability to capture and reproduce sound influences musical life.⁴ It is not merely that there is something additional to review, that recordings have encouraged and facilitated engagement with new genres and repertoires, or even that recording has changed approaches to performance, but also that they have stimulated changes of method, language and understanding for music criticism itself.

This chapter starts with consideration of some ways in which the criticism of recordings is distinct from that of live performance, then moves onto a broadly chronological exploration of the emergence of recordings as an object for criticism. The *London Times* is a thread through this discussion, acting as a case study of changing attitudes within a key newspaper, while other titles naturally also feature along the way, notably *The Gramophone*. In the latter part of the chapter, two controversies act as a catalyst for discussion of issues and challenges specific to reviewing recordings.

Differences Between Live and Record Reviewing

In some respects, the criticism of recordings is simply an adaptation of concert reviewing with its twin elements of chronicle and judgement. There is clear overlap between a live concert and an audio recording for the reviewer, but there are also significant differences of approach and intention that are set out in Table 13.1.

In terms of chronicling, whereas concert reviews recount what has happened at an event, the record review is more akin to the preview, informing the reader of new opportunities for experiencing music. With recordings, the element of critique is of a specific performance that can, in principle, be shared by all readers, rather than one ephemeral exemplar: concert reviews refer to the past, record reviews to an eternal present. As a consequence, the review helps to establish a reputation for the recording itself, so that reference is made to Glenn Gould’s 1955 recording of Bach’s *Goldberg Variations* as distinct from his 1981 version or those by numerous other performers. This has exaggerated the trend towards concentrating on discussion of performance that had already begun with the canon formation of the nineteenth century.

⁴ Mark Katz, *Capturing Sound: How Technology Has Changed Music* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004), p. 3.

Table 13.1 *Key traits of concert and record reviewing*

Concerts	Recordings
Ephemeral event experienced once	Artefact heard multiple times
Immediate impression of an historical event	Considered view of performance that can still be heard
Performers (and audience) can be observed	Performance is acousmatic
Evaluation of a unique event	Performance can be placed in direct comparison with others
Contributing to reputation from multiple events	Strong element of consumer advice for specific product in addition to general reputation

Thanks to recordings and broadcasts, critics of both live and recorded performances can now assume that readers are familiar with much music or could easily become so. Moreover, because record reviews discuss artefacts that continue to be sold, compilations in book form continue their usefulness to the reader. When reading what Newman or Cardus wrote about a particular performance of Sibelius or Wagner, it is possible to critique their writing and to consider whether their view of the music differs from current perceptions. However, their judgements about the performance can, at best, only provide clues as to whether they would be shared today. By contrast, *Gramophone* now has a monthly ‘Classics Reconsidered’ feature in which two current critics discuss a notable historical recording in the context of its original review.

The ability to listen more than once to a recording has significant practical implications for the critic. To start with, deadlines tend to be appreciably more generous with recordings, being at least a week or two rather than a day or even just an hour or so for concerts. Whereas there is an imperative to publish reviews of concerts and gigs as soon as possible after the event, it is still worthwhile printing a perceptive review of a recording several months after its release date. Crucially, it is not necessary to reside in the metropolis to access the music, significantly broadening the potential pool of critics. For the first few years of *The Gramophone*’s existence, Compton Mackenzie was resident on the tiny island of Jethou, in the Channel Isles, communication while there being exclusively via small boat.

The fact that records could be listened to anywhere represented vastly increased access to music for all, with a concurrent enlarging of the potential

readership for reviews. This, allied to the fact that there was now a choice of competing performances for purchase, has meant that, from the outset, it has usually been imperative for record critics not just to report and critique, but also recommend from among the alternatives. The critic needs to cater both for those on a limited budget seeking advice on which is *the* recording to buy and those wanting insight on whether to add a newcomer to those already on their shelf. As early as 1935, the *American Music Lover*⁵ used a system of star ratings for popular records and *The Gramophone* did the same for jazz and swing from 1936. Star ratings were adopted in numerous pop, rock and jazz magazines, but it was not until the late 1980s that their use became widespread both in classical magazines and reviews in broadsheet newspapers.

One consequence of recordings entering critical discourse was that a new generation of non-specialist critics appeared at the very time that, with varying degrees of success, newspaper criticism had been attempting to professionalise. As noted in *The Times* in 1929: 'One of the chief functions of the gramophone and its records is to supply the semi-musical with a library. Few of us can read satisfactorily from a score; we need to hear the notes as well as to see them.'⁶ Compton Mackenzie was open about the limitations of his own musical training and that, at least initially, *The Gramophone* was written by enthusiasts, though it is worth remembering he was a professional writer with numerous books to his name by the time *The Gramophone* was launched. Regardless, his manner of record reviewing raises eyebrows:

My quarterly review of records running to about six thousand words would have been an impossible task if I had not learnt to listen to records being played while I was writing a book . . . Without it I should never have been able to maintain my rate of production. I would know at once if [my secretary] Nellie Boyte had put on the wrong side of a record and was listening critically all the while. Yet I was able nevertheless to concentrate on my writing.⁷

It is worth remembering at this point that, save for those with a dutiful secretary to assist, listening to recordings was punctuated every four or five minutes by the need to change the sides of the record. More sustained listening only became possible from 1948 with the approximately twenty-three minutes per side of the long player (LP).

The comparative possibilities of record reviewing were apparent early on. A December 1922 review of a recording of Beethoven's 'Emperor' Concerto,

⁵ The successor, in essence, of *Phonograph Monthly Review* (founded 1926), and the brief *Music Lovers' Guide*. The title eventually became *American Record Guide*.

⁶ Unsigned, 'The Musician's Gramophone. Bach, Brahms Beethoven', *The Times* (2 April 1929), 14.

⁷ Compton Mackenzie, *My Life and Times: Octave Six 1923-1930* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1967), p. 15.

for instance, characterised soloist Frederic Lamond's approach as being 'Beethoven as seen through another personality, albeit one very much in sympathy with, and appreciative of, his art' before contrasting it with that of Harold Bauer's, who had appeared in several concerts in November and who 'gives us the essence of Beethoven's music as a universal rather than a personal experience'.⁸ It was natural, and part of the *raison d'être* of *The Gramophone* to parse the differences between rival recordings of works, such as this 1937 round-up of available versions of Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*:

The Albert Hall Orchestra's flute seems more matter-of-fact: the sun is not so cordial. Philadelphia's spaciouly speaking flute seems to be mirroring itself in a lake ... For the full-scale sweep and swirl, the effulgence of the whole garden's perfume, the Philadelphia; for perhaps an even subtler fragrance, at moments, the Straram.⁹

While such comparisons are now a natural part of musical discourse, and were not entirely absent before the advent of recording, they marked a profound shift in critical sensibility. Even as late as 1940, the critic in *The Times* observed that 'Comparisons are said to be odious, and criticism generally avoids them. Gramophone connoisseurs, however, do not, and one of their favourite occupations is to compare readings and recordings.'¹⁰

While most of the differences between concert and record reviewing noted in Table 13.1 are self-evident, the acousmatic aspect of recordings, the ability to hear music without musicians present, is now such a pervasive and natural part of everyday life that it is easy to overlook. The solid artefact of a recording paradoxically enables the music to become completely disembodied and portable. As if to compensate for the lack of a visible performer, early writing and criticism of recordings often referred to the gramophone as an instrument. This habit may initially have reflected scientific interest in Edison's invention, but mutated as recordings began to proliferate at the turn of the twentieth century to suggest that having a gramophone in the house was equivalent to possessing a piano.

Early Coverage

While it was not until the 1920s that reviewing records became commonplace, the phenomenon of recording was certainly discussed. News of Edison's

⁸ Unsigned [From A Correspondent], 'New Gramophone Records. Piano Reproductions', *The Times* (1 December 1922), 10.

⁹ W. R. A [William Robert Anderson], 'Second Reviews', *The Gramophone* (May 1937), 525.

¹⁰ Unsigned, 'The Gramophone. A Tallis Fantasia', *The Times* (6 August 1940), 6.

invention drew significant comment on both sides of the Atlantic, featuring widely in the US press in November 1877. These reports were picked up in the UK by the *Liverpool Mercury* at the end of the month, spreading to London and elsewhere by January 1878.¹¹ A flurry of articles followed demonstrations of the phonograph in London at the Crystal Palace and at the Royal United Services Institution in the spring of 1878. Recording then largely drops from view for about a decade, reflecting in part the fact that Edison put his invention to one side while developing the electric light. Even after the advent of his improved phonograph and Emile Berliner's gramophone, discussion of recording before the turn of the twentieth century was primarily limited to sporadic reports of exhibitions, scientific lectures and business application of these talking machines, with shortcomings often being to the fore: 'The phonograph, ingenious as it is, cannot at present be regarded as anything more than a philosophical toy . . . not one of the useful purposes of every-day life has been subserved by this remarkable machine.'¹² Mention of music in this period was generally restricted to noting the use of national anthems or similar patriotic songs in demonstrations.

Even once recordings of music, notably classical music, began to proliferate in the 1900s, with artists such as Adelina Patti, Nelly Melba and Enrico Caruso being prominent in the catalogue of the Gramophone and Typewriter Company, the notion of reviewing the records themselves simply did not occur. Rather, the earliest exemplars of recordings being reviewed are where they appear as part of a 'gramophone concert'. These events, which were covered by newspapers from as early as 1904,¹³ were organised by the nascent record companies to display the technology and the latest recordings:

The result was a considerable surprise to many of those present, the programme including reproductions of the voices of many of the most eminent singers of today . . . The long programme of new records contained much admirable singing admirably reproduced . . . the records vary in quality, but all are good, and some of them are delightful.¹⁴

On occasion the recordings were accompanied by a live piano or even an orchestra.¹⁵ Whatever the nature of the event, at least as much of the comment centred on the quality of the reproduction achieved, a natural concern given not only that the technology was still in its infancy but also that advertisements lauded the reality of the recordings. A concert at the Savoy Hotel in

¹¹ Liverpool was the principal port for trade with the United States.

¹² Unsigned, 'Recent Developments in Acoustical Science', *The Times* (19 August 1878), 4.

¹³ See, for instance, Unsigned, 'The Gramophone', *The Times* (25 March 1904), 5.

¹⁴ Unsigned, 'Opera on the Gramophone', *The Times* (21 May 1906), 4.

¹⁵ See, for instance, Unsigned, 'A Gramophone Concert', *The Times* (2 May 1909), 12.

London went so far as to place the voices of Clara Butt and Kennerley Rumford on record alongside their live performances of the same repertoire, resulting in critical insight of potential value to current-day scholars:

Had we not just listened to the singers *viva voce* we should certainly have declared the gramophone's a wonderful imitation . . . But with Mme Clara Butt's tones still ringing in our ears it was impossible not to notice that it had introduced a faint nasal tinge into her lower notes and tightened some of her higher notes so as to give the impression that her throat was not fully open. . . . An odd little weakness on the instrument's part is its inability to pronounce sibilants – it lisps.¹⁶

Such comments are corroborated by a review from the end of acoustic era that also notes a distorting effect on the contralto voice: 'Miss Leila Megane makes a success in two of Mr. Bantock's "Songs of Egypt," avoiding in these that "scoop" into which the lower contralto notes are sometimes perverted by the gramophone.'¹⁷

Critical Concerns

The quality of the reproduction was often the primary factor in judging the success or otherwise of a particular disc. In fact, it was not unusual for shortcomings to be attributed to the technology rather than the musicians, as in this review of Thibaud and Cortot's record of Franck's violin sonata: 'There are occasional passages in the later [*sic*] where the recording makes the E string playing uncertain.'¹⁸ The improvement in quality by 1940 is clear from a review of Vaughan Williams's *The Lark Ascending*: 'The recording (by Decca) is conspicuously good since one can hear the pull of the bow on the string and the tone is both pure and full even on the highest notes – only the triangle cuts a poor figure!'¹⁹

It should be remembered that another recording medium was prevalent in the first three decades of the twentieth century: player pianos. Until the mid-1920s, the poor quality and difficult studio conditions of audio recording meant that solo piano repertoire was far more likely to be committed to piano roll than discs or cylinders, along with transcriptions of chamber and orchestral works.²⁰ The overwhelming majority of these remain unknown to

¹⁶ Unsigned, 'A Gramophone Concert', *The Times* (5 October 1909), 11.

¹⁷ Unsigned, 'New Gramophone Records. Mozart's Fourth Violin Concerto', *The Times* (13 April 1925), 8.

¹⁸ Unsigned, 'Gramophone Notes. Additions to Chamber Music', *The Times* (17 February 1925), 12.

¹⁹ Unsigned, 'The Gramophone. Music Round the Map', *The Times* (1 June 1940), 4.

²⁰ For more on this in relation to French repertoire, see Christopher Dingle, 'Players and Pianos: An Overview of Early Recorded Resources for the French Piano Repertoire', in Scott McCarrey and Lesley Wright (eds.), *Perspectives on the Performance of French Piano Music* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014).

modern listeners as they have not been realised for audio recordings. Improvements in audio quality even before electric recording meant that demand was already on the decline, so that the inclusion of a Player Piano supplement with *The Gramophone* in June 1924 lasted only until March 1925.

A sign of the increasing acceptance of audio recording in the years after the First World War is reflected in the fact that two elements of the service for the burial of the Unknown Warrior at Westminster Abbey on Armistice Day 1920 were captured: Kipling's 'Recessional' and 'Abide with me'. Intriguingly, the Columbia Gramophone Company used an 'electrical process', five years earlier than commercial electrical recordings were generally available (albeit by a different technology).²¹ The years after the First World War also saw signs of how recordings enabled artists to have international profiles, making them familiar figures before stepping foot in a country. Reviewing Jascha Heifetz's first appearance in Britain at the Queen's Hall, London, on Wednesday 3 May 1920, the critic in *The Times* noted that the violinist 'brought a huge audience ... because his fame had preceded him in a series of gramophone records ... [which] instantly convinced people that here was something exceptional in the art of violin playing'.²² The critic went on to bemoan the fact that Heifetz did not play any substantive works, missing the opportunity to build on what was already known through the records. By the time of Amelita Galli-Curci's first London performances, not only had recordings ensured that her fame preceded her, leading to sell-out recitals at the Royal Albert Hall, but they also raised expectations that, in the view of *The Times* critic, were met only partly:

It is possible that the artist who, like Mme Galli-Curci, is blest with the perfect recording voice and style may find that it brings moments of embarrassment. Only the unblemished record goes out from the shop, and it creates a standard to which she must live up on the concert platform ... Generally what one admires about Mme Galli-Curci is that she can do so much with a voice confined to one colour, and that a pale one.²³

Such observations reflect a keen awareness of which types of performer were most effective without the visual stimuli of live performance and within the restricted soundworld of the gramophone:

Cortot seems to understand the limitations of the gramophone better than any other solo pianist, or is it that the natural crispness of his style is

²¹ There are several reports, notably Unsigned, 'Gramophone Records by Electricity. Memorial of Unknown Warrior's Funeral', *The Times* (8 December 1920), 14.

²² Unsigned, 'A New Violinist. Jascha Heifetz at Queen's Hall', *The Times* (6 May 1920), 14.

²³ Unsigned, 'Mme Galli-Curci. First Concert at The Albert Hall', *The Times* (13 October 1924), 12.

sympathetic to the medium? Paderewski, in recent records of favourite things from Chopin . . . seems to forget the impersonality of the disk [*sic*]. Many players partly enact their music, so that for the perfect appreciation of what we hear we need to see the movement of head and hands. Certainly, his rendering of the familiar A \flat Prelude comes disjointedly in the gramophone's disembodied echo, and exhibits the liberties a great artist takes with his score rather than the qualities which justify him in taking them.²⁴

Years later, Neville Cardus reflected that for certain artists, even those whose recordings are revered, the extraordinary impact of their live performances died with them: 'I would implore everybody who listens to Kathleen Ferrier on record – no matter how much they are charmed by her voice – to remember that they are experiencing only 50 per cent of her.' He goes on to cite Karajan as someone where much less was lost.²⁵

The potential threat posed by recordings to broader musicality, even culture in general, has been a periodic refrain from various composers and musicians, so it is little surprise to find critics occupied by similar concerns at an early stage:

The gramophone is listened to just because it is a gramophone; as the cinematograph is watched just because it is a cinematograph. In both cases mechanical ingenuity is taking the place of art as a source of amusement: and it is doing this because we have learnt to be merely passive enjoyers of art and have lost all knowledge of the true delight of art, which can come only to those who practise it.²⁶

If this 1910 reflection is prophetic of, for instance, Britten's 1964 Aspen speech declaring the loudspeaker an enemy of music and outside true musical experience,²⁷ others saw recordings as a catalyst for greater attentiveness:

There is an excellent gramophone record of Kreisler and Zimbalist playing together Bach's concerto for two violins. Their differences of detail are clearly distinguishable, and to appreciate it is a more complete lesson in phrasing than the most thorough verbal analysis could be. It compels the hearer to active participation in the art, and that is listening as distinct from hearing.²⁸

Such comment from 1921 demonstrates that, while Compton Mackenzie's characterisation of the paucity of interest in records among the press in 1922

²⁴ Unsigned, 'The Musician's Gramophone. Beethoven, Schumann, Mendelssohn', *The Times* (12 July 1929), 12.

²⁵ Robin Daniels, *Conversations with Cardus* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1976), pp. 230–1.

²⁶ Unsigned, 'Mechanical Amusement', *The Times* (7 September 1910), 9.

²⁷ Benjamin Britten, 'On Receiving the First Aspen Award', speech given on 31 July 1964 at Aspen Music Festival, Colorado. The speech is reproduced in full on the festival website: www.aspenmusicfestival.com/benjamin-britten (accessed 30 September 2017).

²⁸ Unsigned, 'The Future of the Gramophone. Converted Musicians', *The Times* (23 July 1921), 8.

was broadly true, Legge and Scholes were not actually the only UK critics to have shown an engagement with records. The *Musical Times* began a monthly 'Gramophone Notes' feature in January 1921, over six years before the German equivalent, *Die Musik*, began its 'Mechanische Musik' section in October 1927. Written by 'Discus', 'Gramophone Notes' opened with confirmation that consumer advice was a strong impetus, referring to a letter from a reader who 'warns me in a friendly way that what gramophone users require is candid information as to what records are satisfactory from a musical point of view'.²⁹ Similarly, by February 1922, *The Times* had recognised the need for regular critical engagement with the gramophone:

A great number of people buy gramophones without having any very clear idea of what use to make of them, beyond a vague sense that it will be nice to 'turn it on' in a dull moment. It is thought that an occasional short article here may suggest some of the more definite uses.³⁰

Periodic reviews began to appear a fortnight later, several months before Mackenzie's fateful game of billiards:

Among the more recent acquisitions of the gramophone repertory the records of Elizabethan madrigals, ballets, and other choral songs made by the English Singers for 'His Master's Voice' seem peculiarly valuable and interesting . . . these records are very good music, good in the sense that they are music originally made for people of ordinary musical capacity to enjoy, sung by a first-rate combination of singers, who have on the whole been extraordinarily successful in transferring their performance to the disc.³¹

Nonetheless, if Mackenzie's memory of events typically brushes over the nuances, the launch of *The Gramophone* remains a significant moment in record reviewing.

Mackenzie, whose own exploits would be barely credible in one of his many novels (including work in military intelligence and helping found the Scottish National Party while being the sole resident of Jethou in the Channel Islands), had only recently discovered the potential of recordings and combined his customary energy with the zeal of the convert. The article for *The Telegraph* requested by Robin Legge in the Savile Club billiards room appeared on 22 September 1922, but an encouraging letter from Legge the day before prompted more ambitious plans: 'I began to wonder if it might not be a good idea to bring out a monthly magazine devoted to the gramophone. I recall that

²⁹ 'Discus', 'Gramophone Notes', *Musical Times* (1 January 1921), 40–1.

³⁰ Unsigned, 'Gramophone Music. Encouragement of Close Listening', *The Times* (23 February 1922), 10.

³¹ Unsigned, 'Madrigals on the Gramophone. Records by the English Singers', *The Times* (9 March 1922), 10.

at about half-past five on the afternoon of this notion's occurring to me I saw the planet Venus over Monte Solaro.³² To some, including Mackenzie's brother-in-law, Christopher Stone, the timing was less auspicious as the advent of the wireless appeared likely to render the gramophone obsolete. Stone was eventually prevailed upon to invest in the magazine, which duly launched in April 1923.³³ Mackenzie himself was initially dismissive of the wireless, stating in the opening editorial of the first edition: 'We shall have nothing to do with Wireless in these columns. Our policy will be to encourage the recording companies to build up for generations to come a great library of good music.'³⁴ A meeting with John Reith, the Managing Director of the recently formed British Broadcasting Company,³⁵ was the catalyst for a change of heart by Mackenzie prompted by their shared desire to promote 'good music'.³⁶ Indeed, in 1929 he set up *Vox*, a sister magazine to *The Gramophone* devoted to radio criticism, but it received the support of neither the radio manufacturers nor the *Radio Times* and only lasted a few issues.³⁷

The potential educational benefits widely perceived in recording prompted strong debate about taste and the quality of the music being disseminated. Some bemoaned the dangers of recordings spreading poor music, by which was generally meant dance and jazz records:

But how good is the thing which we now enjoy? Musical pleasure of a kind is undoubtedly now more widely distributed than ever, but discrimination is still rare. Europe, without Prohibition, imports musical drugs from America.³⁸

The prevalent view among commentators, though, was an enthusiastic embrace of the gramophone's potential for educating the public and providing access to 'good' music. In the early years, it was usual for the first few paragraphs of a review in *The Gramophone* to be a descriptive introduction to the music in the manner of a programme note even for commonplace repertoire (it should be remembered that recordings were not accompanied by any booklet or sleeve notes at this time). As Percy Scholes wrote to Compton Mackenzie, 'it seems admirable that fine music should no longer remain the private preserve of a tiny body of initiates'.³⁹ Similarly, Axel B. Johnson's

³² Mackenzie, *My Life and Times: Octave Five*, p. 235. ³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 235, 250.

³⁴ Compton Mackenzie, 'Prologue', *The Gramophone*, 1/1 (1923), 1.

³⁵ The British Broadcasting Company was formally dissolved on 31 December 1926 and the British Broadcasting Corporation was created on 1 January 1927 by Crown Charter, Reith's new designation being Director General.

³⁶ Mackenzie, *My Life and Times: Octave Five*, pp. 251–2.

³⁷ Mackenzie, *My Life and Times: Octave Six*, pp. 178, 197–8, 204, 206.

³⁸ Unsigned, 'Ubiquitous Music. Jazz and the Gramophone', *The Times* (31 July 1926), 10.

³⁹ Mackenzie, *My Life and Times: Octave Six*, p. 20.

editorials for *The Phonograph Monthly Review* (October 1926–March 1932) are littered with references to ‘the cause of music’ and ‘the movement’.⁴⁰ Others were more zealous: a headline in *The Times* in July 1921 proclaiming with relish “‘Popular” Records Now Unpopular’.⁴¹ The article, signed ‘A Correspondent’ observed that ‘With the technical improvement [in the gramophone] there has come an artistic improvement, and with the latter there has come a further improvement in popular taste.’ Purporting to draw on information from an industry insider, the article goes on to note that ‘far better business was being done with records of good pieces of music’ and that ‘Wagner, Stravinsky, and the Russian composers seemed to be most in favour at present’.⁴² In a similar vein, Smith C. McGregor wrote an editorial article for *Etude*, a US magazine, seeking to provide advice for the uninitiated in starting a record collection, explaining that:

‘Unbalanced’ record collections are a common failing among phonograph owners. You probably know several people who have expensive phonographs and plenty of records, but who do not seem to get full enjoyment from them. There are a great many such record collections, especially outside the cities; for country people, as a rule, do not have the opportunity to attend concerts and otherwise become familiar with the best music. And unless good music predominates in a collection, the owner is not going to receive lasting pleasure from it.⁴³

The antipathy towards jazz and other ‘light’ music was commonplace between the wars. As late as April 1937 Compton Mackenzie railed in *The Gramophone*: ‘Most of the light music and dance music of the time is the work of pickpockets, not artists, or rather of nasty little boys who steal the sticky sweets of other nasty little boys.’⁴⁴ If Mackenzie wore his prejudices on his sleeve, one unsigned article in *The Times* on the direction of music marks an early exemplar of the argument against the ‘great man’ view of history (though possibly out of a wish to undermine claims of greatness for contemporary figures), disputing the importance of individuals in influencing taste:

One has to consider that music of one sort or another enters the lives of millions where formerly it affected hundreds . . . All these new conditions

⁴⁰ See, for instance, the editorial for the third issue: *The Phonograph Monthly Review*, 1/3 (December 1926), 99.

⁴¹ Unsigned [From A Correspondent], ‘The Gramophone Habit. “Popular” Records Now Unpopular’, *The Times* (22 July 1921), 7.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Smith C. McGregor, ‘Twelve Foundation Stones for Your Record Collection’, *The Etude* (May 1921), 339. The complete run of *Etude* (1883–1957), compiled by Dr Pam Dennis, is available at digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/etude/ (accessed 7 March 2018).

⁴⁴ Compton Mackenzie, ‘Editorial’, *The Gramophone* (April 1937), 460–2.

are creating new tendencies, which are far more powerful than the experiments of a group of composers, however clever they may be. Some of these tendencies threaten disaster, others hold out hope of a wider artistic life, but all strike hard at the doctrine of the divine right.⁴⁵

Despite Mackenzie's antipathy, *The Gramophone* included reviews of popular genres (light, swing, jazz and even rock) with varying regularity until the 1990s. Similarly, dance and popular records were regularly featured from the outset of record reviewing in newspapers, including *The Times*, and with no hint of disparagement.⁴⁶

The popularity of gramophone records of dance music is increasing rapidly, and during the last month a large number of admirably played selections of this kind have been issued by the Columbia, the Gramophone, and the Æolian companies.⁴⁷

In terms of *The Gramophone*, just as the income from popular artists has often subsidised recordings of substantial classical works, Mackenzie came to recognise the economic imperative of including this music. In this respect, it is likely that he was persuaded by Cecil Pollard, who, having left a firm of accountants for *The Gramophone* in 1925, was essentially responsible for the day-to-day running of the magazine until his death four decades later, negotiating numerous financial and logistical challenges. While popular genres were a vital part of *The Gramophone's* business model, as Simon Frith has observed, *Melody Maker* (launched 1926) and *Rhythm* (launch 1927) were far more influential for British collectors of jazz records.⁴⁸ Similarly, as Mark Racz observes in Chapter 24 of this book, *Downbeat* and *Metronome* emerged in the 1930s from the numerous fanzines. Since recordings were the principal means for many of hearing jazz, the limited timespan of the 78 rpm disc, as mediated through the observations of critics, came to define the initial understanding of what constituted a genre actually founded on much longer improvisational forms. A generation later, pop, and especially rock, came to be delineated first by the 7-inch single, then by the span of an LP. In the words of Frith, 'to be a rock critic was to be a record critic'.⁴⁹ The advent of rock criticism spawned new magazines, notably *Rolling Stone*, though in the UK *Melody Maker* reinvented itself for the new market.

⁴⁵ Unsigned, 'Modern Tendencies in Music. The Composer's Estimate', *The Times* (17 July 1920).

⁴⁶ For more on this, see Simon Frith, 'Writing about Popular Music', Chapter 26 in this book.

⁴⁷ Unsigned, 'New Gramophone Records. Beethoven's Ninth Symphony', *The Times* (28 March 1924), 12.

⁴⁸ Simon Frith, 'Going Critical: Writing About Recordings', in Nicholas Cook, Eric Clarke, Daniel Leech-Wilkinson and John Rink (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Recorded Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 278.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 267.

The Times: A Case Study

Back in the 1920s, newspapers were still working out how to tackle recordings. From August 1924 record reviews in *The Times* were given a specific column, 'Gramophone Notes', which generally appeared monthly. The column was eclectic, featuring not just classical and dance music, but also Morris and other folk music, the Aldershot Tattoo and even an early keep fit record in the form of a pair of discs released to 'to teach listeners "physical jerks" and exercise'.⁵⁰ While critical comments appeared, the column was primarily an elegant litany informing readers of what had been released. A qualitative change occurred in April 1928 with the appearance of a new column, initially called 'The Gramophone', then, from August the same year, 'The Musician's Gramophone'. It is a title reflecting the retrenchment of snobbery, for it was concerned exclusively with classical music. The column considered just three or four discs in detail, providing substantive comment on the performances and giving catalogue numbers, first of all at the bottom, then, from February 1929, incorporated into the body of the review. As with its predecessor, 'The Musician's Gramophone' was broadly monthly, though not every month, and it was occasionally more frequent. The length was similarly variable, generally being 600 to 800 words, but it could be over 1,200 words or barely 300. This was record reviewing much as it is still practised today: 'Kreisler, great player that he is, constructs his tone, constructs his rhythm; Szigeti's come from him. Therefore his rendering of [Brahms's] Concerto . . . less uniformly magisterial than Kreisler's, has a supple rhythmical vitality which brings us very near the secret of the constructive evolution of the work. Kreisler is rectilinear, Szigeti yielding.'⁵¹

As might be expected, the Second World War brought changes, with the length of reviews in what was by now 'The Gramophone' column dropping to less than 350 words in the early years of the war. Although clearly an oasis from dwelling on contemporary events, a periodic refrain is the potential for recordings to compensate for the reduced opportunities to experience live performance: 'There will be no opera at all in London this May . . . Opera lovers may console themselves with complete recordings of quite a number of the operas we usually hear in the summer.'⁵² Similarly, just over a year later, there is understandable yearning: 'It is a reminder of happier times to put on the new records of Verdi's *Otello* that have come to us from America during

⁵⁰ Unsigned, 'Gramophone Notes. The Aldershot Tattoo', *The Times* (29 July 1926), 10.

⁵¹ Unsigned, 'The Musician's Gramophone. Stravinsky, Borodin, Ravel, Brahms', *The Times* (21 May 1929), 10.

⁵² Unsigned, 'The Gramophone. Operatic Fare', *The Times* (27 April 1940), 4.

May, the very time when we should normally be going to Covent Garden to hear it.⁵³ ‘The Gramophone’ column varied from monthly appearances to flurries of activity, such as in the summer of 1941, when it appeared on 5, 6, 15, 26 and 28 August and then on 3 September. Thanks to continued paper rationing, the length rarely went much beyond 500 words, even in the decade after the war.

With the advent of long-playing records, record reviews from March 1951 simply appeared under bespoke headers, losing ‘The Gramophone’ as an identifying feature. It returned as a title in the mid-1950s. The column broadly doubled in length and moved from appearing once or twice monthly, usually on a Tuesday, to almost every week on Saturdays. From June 1956 it periodically featured a round-up of jazz records, initially ‘from a correspondent’ and becoming in December 1962 ‘from a music critic’, a reflection of the paper’s move towards having a bespoke jazz critic. It might have been thought that popular music would gain similar acceptance following William Mann’s landmark positive appraisal of The Beatles in December 1963,⁵⁴ but it was only with the release of *Sgt Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* in 1967 that an album was reviewed on release rather than discussed in retrospect.⁵⁵ With the following year’s *The Beatles* (commonly known as the White Album), Mann’s informed admiration prompted him to open with the declaration that ‘The most important musical event of the year occurs today’ and conclude without any hint of sarcasm that ‘no other living composer has achieved so much this year’.⁵⁶ Nonetheless, Mann’s reviews of the later albums by The Beatles were distinct from the ‘Records’ column (as ‘The Gramophone’ had become by the late 1960s), which remained devoted to classical music with periodic jazz input. Spring 1970 marked the addition of folk and rock criticism with two writers from *Melody Maker*, Karl Dallas and Richard Williams joining the paper. An early statement of intent, and confirmation that there was no collective view among the critics, came with that year’s Critics’ Choice feature. Paul McCartney’s first solo album *McCartney*, nestled among Wagner, Debussy, Tavener and Henze in Mann’s selections, supported by the claim that ‘If the Beatles are finished, history will surely regard McCartney as their musical genius, the writer of their most progressive and viable music.’⁵⁷ Williams, by contrast, stated provocatively

⁵³ Unsigned, ‘The Gramophone. Verdi’s “Otello”’, *The Times* (1 July 1941), 6.

⁵⁴ Unsigned [‘From Our Music Critic’ (William Mann)], ‘What Songs the Beatles Sang’, *The Times* (27 December 1963), 4.

⁵⁵ William Mann, ‘The Beatles Revive Hopes of Progress in Pop Music’, *The Times* (29 May 1967), 9.

⁵⁶ William Mann, ‘The New Beatles Album’, *The Times* (22 November 1968), 9.

⁵⁷ William Mann, ‘Critics’ Choice: Records of the Year’, *The Times* (28 November 1970), 19.

that the second album from Canadian-American group The Band ‘has more good songs than Lennon and McCartney have ever written’.⁵⁸

In February 1974, *The Times* moved to a ‘Records of the month’ feature, essentially collating what had previously been weekly columns, variously by one of Alan Blyth, Joan Chissell, Max Harrison, John Higgins William Mann or Stanley Sadie, onto a single monthly page. For the remainder of the decade, this was almost exclusively classical in orientation. Contrary to common perceptions, when jazz and rock versions of the feature started to appear in October 1982, this was essentially additional coverage, appearing in different weeks from the classical records. Weekly reviews returned in the autumn of 1986, but this time with classical, rock and jazz all represented – the essence of the format that has endured to the present, with the periodic addition of other genres such as world and country music.

Changing the Landscape

The more established status given to rock and jazz from this point on may have been influenced by a new UK broadsheet, *The Independent*, which had dedicated sections for each genre, while the appearance of new magazines such as *Q* and *Uncut* also impacted on the priorities of newspaper record reviewing. Although the number of jazz and, especially, rock discs being reviewed grew significantly, this was not generally at the expense of classical coverage. Rather, the number of recordings reviewed grew overall. Regardless, space for reviews was always an issue. As with concerts, there are more recordings released each month than even dedicated magazines can accommodate. From the start, *The Gramophone* included round-up features traversing several recordings alongside the reviews dedicated to individual releases. The pressure has also applied to newspapers. Interviewed by Jennifer Skellington, Paul Griffiths recalled: ‘There was a time when I had to do a lot of little record reviews [for *The Times*], certainly in the late 1980s . . . I think all newspapers find this a problem, that it’s very difficult to give adequate space to recordings because there’s so many coming out.’⁵⁹ The challenge for editors in the face of the substantial volume of recordings released is persistent. In recent years, this has led to developments such as *BBC Music Magazine* including two pages of ‘brief notes’, where the disc in question is discussed in a mere twenty-five to thirty words. This reviewing equivalent of a Haiku

⁵⁸ Richard Williams, ‘Critics’ Choice: Records of the Year’, *The Times* (28 November 1970), 19.

⁵⁹ Jennifer Skellington, ‘Transforming Music Criticism? An Examination of Changes in Music Journalism in the English Broadsheet Press from 1981 to 1991’, unpublished PhD thesis, Oxford Brookes University (2010), 428.

serves its purpose in terms of at least informing readers that a release exists with some indication of its merits or otherwise. From the perspective of the artists and record companies, any review is better than no review, though it is increasingly striking that record reviews of any genre are relatively brief in newspapers, whereas book reviews have tended to retain their length.

As Symes has noted, the evidence for whether record reviews actually influence sales, for good or ill, is contentious, at best.⁶⁰ Anecdotally, the press officer for one leading classical record label was emphatic that the only discernible spike in sales came after a disc was featured on BBC Radio 3's *Record Review* programme.⁶¹ Aside from the fact that this may have been flattering talk for an undoubtedly influential individual, this does not mean that reviews in magazines have no influence on sales. A radio programme is generally heard at a single, specific time and date, whereas a magazine may be bought and read at any time during the month of its issue, or even quite some time later.

This raises the question of who is writing the reviews and who is reading them. In the early days it may have been true, as Katz claims, that women bought the phonographs,⁶² but Symes states with some justification that 'those who write for record magazines are mostly male, as are their readers',⁶³ and Frith similarly observes that record collecting and the associated review-dominated magazines are a 'man's world'.⁶⁴ Certainly *Gramophone* retained the air of its origins in the Savile Club, of male-dominated affluent exclusivity, both perceived and real, for much of the twentieth century. In reality it was never a male only preserve, with Faith Mackenzie (F#) contributing from the first issue and Joan Chissell another prominent writer, but these were the exceptions that proved the rule. Changes in printing methods in the late 1980s saw a raft of new challengers to *Gramophone*, such as *CD Review* and *Classic FM* magazine. Perhaps most significant, though, was *BBC Music Magazine*, which despite association with the national broadcaster, avoided any sense of the old boy network through an openness to new writers and, especially, a far better gender balance. For instance, at editorial level, its founding editor, Fiona Maddocks, created a team where eight of twelve editorial staff were women, with senior roles in subsequent years being filled by figures such as Helen Wallace, Harriet Smith, Claire Wrathall, Amanda Holloway and Rebecca Franks, to name but a few. While jazz and world music have largely fallen by the wayside in *Gramophone*, they still feature in

⁶⁰ Colin Symes, *Setting the Record Straight: A Material History of Classical Recording* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), p. 205.

⁶¹ In a conversation with Andrew McGregor, presenter of *Record Review*, and myself at the 2016 BBC Music Magazine Awards.

⁶² Katz, *Capturing Sound*, pp. 57–8. ⁶³ Symes, *Setting the Record Straight*, p. 177.

⁶⁴ Simon Frith, 'Going Critical', p. 276.

the pages of *BBC Music Magazine*, even if the content is primarily oriented towards classical music. In this respect it broadly reflects the mix of music on BBC Radio 3. That may be unsurprising, but it is remarkable nevertheless that a magazine that is putatively about music, without any qualifier, on behalf of an organisation as all-encompassing as the BBC, is not concerned with the music genres the corporation broadcasts on its other radio stations.

Even more so than newspapers, the landscape of magazines featuring record reviewing is littered with short-lived titles. *Gramophone* is uncommon not only in enduring but also in managing to outlast the title's association with the technology of the time.⁶⁵ As Symes observes, changes in recording technology have tended to prompt new magazines named after the latest format.⁶⁶ For instance, in tandem with its golden anniversary, *Gramophone* launched the short-lived *Cassettes & Cartridges*, while the advent of compact discs spawned *Digital Audio* (later *CD Review*) and *Classic CD*. Similarly, BBC Radio 3's *Record Review* programme became *CD Review* in September 1998, a title that became increasingly untenable in the face of SACDs, Blu-ray audio, downloads and streaming. However, it appears to have been the unexpected revival of vinyl that prompted a reversion to *Record Review* at the beginning of 2016. In this context, it is striking that the musical associations of long-lasting titles in France, *Diapason* (launched 1956), and the United States, *Fanfare* (launched 1977), both pre-date the recording era. It is also notable that the two principal classically oriented survivors of the proliferation of UK magazines in the early 1990s are not named after a recording format, but established broadcast brands, *Classic FM Magazine* and *BBC Music Magazine*.

In the mid-1980s, following over a decade of reports and false dawns, a new dimension became possible for the criticism of recordings with the advent of home video. There were confident predictions in some quarters that this would replace audio recording. Releases started to appear in 1982, just a year before the launch of the compact disc, but it was not until April 1986 that *Gramophone* began reviewing them. While cassettes and discs of operas and concerts, as well as documentaries, ensured that video reviewing became a significant strand in the classical sphere, it has remained a relatively incidental aspect of rock criticism.

Critical Scandals

The late 1980s and 1990s saw the marketing of some classical artists in the manner of the pop sphere. The release of Nigel Kennedy's 1989 recording of

⁶⁵ *American Record Guide* is another, though it ceased publication between 1972 and 1976.

⁶⁶ Symes, *Setting the Record Straight*, p. 162.

Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* set the ball rolling, followed soon after by The Three Tenors' success following their appearance at the Italia 90 football World Cup. From the other side came recordings of 'classical' works by Paul McCartney, notably *Liverpool Oratorio* in 1991. Such releases inevitably posed challenges for reviewers. With extensive publicity cultivating a narrative that these releases were breaking the stuffy world of classical music, any caveats about the quality of the performances of The Three Tenors or Nigel Kennedy or the music of *Liverpool Oratorio* risked being taken as evidence that classical reviewers were high-minded and elitist. This narrative reached its high (or low) point with the release of Vanessa Mae's album *The Violin Player*, with associated singles, by the pop arm of EMI. Taking the sexualised marketing pioneered by Ofra Harnoy the previous decade several steps further, Mae was packaged for the pop market. The promotional team of Mae and EMI protested over the refusal on principle of the classical press, notably *Gramophone* and *BBC Music Magazine*, to carry reviews. This shunning of a young artist trying to engage a new audience for classical music appeared to epitomise the snobbishness of the classical press, and is even cited as such by scholars such as Colin Symes.⁶⁷ While some critics were indeed sceptical, this was, in fact, an artificially constructed controversy as the records in question were released as 'pop' products and not sent to classical critics. When EMI classical released Mae's *The Classical Album* in 1996, *Gramophone* and *BBC Music Magazine* both reviewed it.

A scandal a decade later was potentially more damaging for it struck at a fundamental and necessary assumption made a priori by any record reviewer. Since the advent of editing in the late 1940s, it has been known that many recorded performances are essentially artificial constructs. This may be dropping-in certain moments where infelicities occurred, but can extend in extreme cases to the entirety being an assemblage of moments, like an audio jigsaw. Even supposedly live recordings are routinely touched up, to cover either intrusive audience noise or obvious errors in the performance, a prominent example of the latter being Horowitz's 1965 comeback recital at Carnegie Hall, where some minor slips magically evaporated when an LP of the concert was released by CBS.⁶⁸ Nonetheless, it is assumed that the performances on a disc are by the named artists. This was fundamentally undermined when a stream

⁶⁷ Symes, *Setting the Record Straight*, p. 201, n. 25.

⁶⁸ The unedited recital was eventually released by Sony in 2003.

of CDs from the pianist Joyce Hatto started to appear on the newly formed Concert Artist label.

Discs from Hatto had appeared several decades before on the Saga label, but, according to interviews she gave shortly before her death and the publicity provided by the label, her activities had long been confined to the studio on account of the cancer that was now in its final stages. The performances on the recordings were spectacular and came with fulsome tributes from Hatto's concert-giving days by figures such as Britten, Cortot, Hindemith, Richter, Rubinstein, Tippett and Vaughan Williams. Combined with the emotive back story, it seemed a harshly overlooked exceptional talent had finally been recognised in her dying days thanks to her loving husband capturing her heroic feats of pianism made under the shadow of terminal illness. With over ninety discs, encompassing swathes of Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Chopin, Schumann, Liszt, Rachmaninov, the Chopin–Godowsky studies, Prokofiev and even Messiaen, it is little wonder that Jeremy Nicholas described her in a *Gramophone* appreciation as 'one of the greatest pianists I have ever heard'.⁶⁹ Similarly, reviewing the set of Messiaen's *Vingt regards sur l'enfant-Jésus*, Bryce Morrison purred that 'Her playing recreates Messiaen's vision with a fervour and a generosity unknown to even her finest competitors . . . she achieves a musical honesty and integrity that resists all compromise.'⁷⁰

Unfortunately, almost without exception, the performances on the discs were those of other pianists. Her husband, William Barrington-Coupe, had simply taken and remixed existing recordings, altering the sound in a manner akin to changing a wine's bouquet. For instance, the Messiaen performance was actually the recording by Paul Kim made for the Centaur label with the piano made to sound closer and a change in resonance. When the fraud was exposed by *Gramophone*, aided by Pristine Audio, some were quick to heap derision on the likes of Nicholas and Morrison and question the integrity of the entire basis of reviewing if experts could not detect such a fake. While they may regret their hyperbole, they were simply taken in by a conman preying on their understandable desire to believe a ruthlessly exploited human interest story with a consequent loss of critical distance.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Jeremy Nicholas, 'Joyce Hatto: Piano Dreams', *Gramophone* (March 2006), 67.

⁷⁰ Bryce Morrison, 'Messiaen: *Vingt regards sur l'enfant-Jésus*', *Gramophone* (December 2006), 92–3.

⁷¹ In a phone conversation shortly before the fraud was exposed, Barrington-Coupe told me that he was convinced the effort of completing the Messiaen recording had shortened his wife's life. A few minutes later, he stated that she had also recorded Messiaen's even larger cycle *Catalogue d'oiseaux*. With Morrison's glowing review of the *Vingt regards*, he presumably perceived a further opportunity to profit from Kim's complete Messiaen set.

Beyond the 'Objective' Microphone

In a sense, the Hatto fraud exploited the potential for certain recorded performances to move beyond the normal bounds of criticism and expose the fallacy of the objective comparison of recorded artefacts. Every live performance is exceptional, in that it is an irrecoverable experience unique to those in attendance. By fixing sound, recording suggests the possibility of a particular performance being contemplated free from the possibly distorting effect of the event and listened to purely for the music. The context of some live performances means that the usual critical faculties are, if not suspended, then of reduced relevance. One clear example would be the 'Ode to Freedom' performance of Beethoven's Symphony No.9 conducted by Leonard Bernstein in Berlin on 24 December 1989 just after the Berlin Wall came down.⁷² The same applies to certain recordings that are either historic (rather than just historical) or have an exceptional hinterland. Alongside the disc released of the Bernstein concert, instances might include Bruno Walter's live recording of Mahler's Ninth Symphony made with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra in January 1938 just weeks before the Anschluss, or Dinu Lipatti's last recital, given while severely ill. Once the circumstances are known, it would be pointless including such recordings in a blind listening for their significance does not reside in the sound alone. Other recordings acquire historic status either through the participation or imprimatur of the composer, the significance of certain performers or simply being the first of a particular work or repertoire. In the case of Pablo Casals and the Bach solo cello suites, his recording might even be considered an ur-performance, in that it arguably created a performing tradition. There are also, of course, plenty of recordings that are regarded as historic simply for the excellence of the performance. Except that, even here, it can become unclear whether what is heard is coloured by the reputation, the classic status, possibly considered through rose-tinted glasses.

The point is that the criticism of recordings is, and has always been, inherently canon-forming, not just in terms of repertoire, but also specific performances of any given piece. This can be seen as early as Percy Scholes's *First Book of the Gramophone Record* which, along with its sequel, explicitly set out to assist the novice in building a library of key works from Byrd to the present (i.e. 1924) in reliable recordings.⁷³ It is an approach subsequently

⁷² Bernstein had the chorus replace 'Freude' (joy) with 'Freiheit' (freedom) for the hastily arranged concert, which featured performers from East and West Germany, the United States, USSR, UK and France.

⁷³ Percy A. Scholes, *The First Book of the Gramophone Record* (London: Oxford University Press, 1924); *The Second Book of the Gramophone Record* (London: Oxford University Press, 1925).

adopted by books such as *The Record Guide*,⁷⁴ *The Stereo Record Guide* (the forerunner to *The Penguin Guide to Recorded Classical Music*),⁷⁵ *The Rolling Stone Record Guide*⁷⁶ and *The Penguin Guide to Jazz*⁷⁷ (to name but a few). The explicit use of recordings cited as benchmarks has been a regular feature of record reviewing from its earliest days, but it has become increasingly tempered by the realities of an ever-expanding catalogue. Whether in the pages of *Gramophone* or one of the book-length guides to recordings, it has long been recognised that, even if a single recommendation is required, there may be additional important performances that suit different needs. The ever-increasing number of recordings for even relatively unusual repertoire means that it is increasingly rare for the long-running ‘Building a Library’ feature on BBC Radio 3’s *Record Review* to include all the currently available recordings for the work in question, and certainly not all those ever made. For the jazz critic, recent years have seen the canon of a given artist’s recordings made more complex not only by increasingly prevalent issues of performances captured for radio broadcast, but also numerous alternate takes to those originally released.

As Mark Katz has observed, recording has made musical sound something tangible, reified through the products in which it is captured and the processes involved in playing them.⁷⁸ That remains true, though the rise of downloads and streaming has reintroduced an element of its former ephemerality, not just in terms of the lack of a physical artefact, but also the transitory nature of streaming in particular. These new media question the notion of the recording as a solid, collectible, permanent artefact. While there is no reason why such new formats and media for hearing music should not be the subject of critical attention, they pose challenges that are, as yet, unresolved. It is not just that music critics themselves are used to dealing with discs, but that many of the operating practices of the music industry that has grown up in the era of recordings are also built around the production and marketing of physical formats. It is striking that, especially for classical music, discs rather than downloads or streaming overwhelmingly remain the predominant subject of reviews, not just in physical magazines and newspapers, but also online journals and blogs. Whereas there is no single authoritative recorded performance for most classical music, since the LP, the album has effectively acted as the urtext in pop and rock, the fundamental source, against which live

⁷⁴ Edward Sackville-West and Desmond Shawe-Taylor, *The Record Guide* (London: Collins, 1951).

⁷⁵ Edward Greenfield, Ivan March, Robert Layton and Denis Stevens, *The Stereo Record Guide*, 9 vols. (Blackpool: Long Playing Record Library, 1960–74).

⁷⁶ Later *The Rolling Stone Album Guide*. It was published between 1979 and 2004.

⁷⁷ First published in 1992. ⁷⁸ Mark Katz, *Capturing Sound*, pp. 9–10.

performance is compared and judged. The unexpected revival of vinyl demonstrates that a traditional readership still exists, while formats such as audio-only Blu-ray can accommodate the entirety of Wagner's *Ring* on a single disc. However, consumers are now increasingly purchasing tracks rather than albums, fundamentally changing the relationship between what is reviewed and what readers may actually hear. Nearly a century after the advent of *The Gramophone*, engagement with recorded music increasingly resembles the fragmentary nature of the acoustic era with its emphasis on individual songs, movements and excerpts. Despite the extraordinary technological advances and vast back catalogues, the work of record critics from all genres is far from done.

The Gender Paradox: Criticism of Women and Women as Critics

LAURA HAMER

In May 2014 a storm erupted in the British classical music world when five established male critics fat-shamed Irish mezzo-soprano Tara Erraught, who was performing Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier* at Covent Garden. Instead of focusing upon Erraught's technique or interpretation, the critics ridiculed her physique. Writing in the *Financial Times* Andrew Clark referred to Erraught as 'a chubby bundle of puppy-fat'; Michael Church in *The Independent* and Rupert Christiansen in *The Telegraph* both described her as 'dumpy'; Andrew Clements in *The Guardian* called her 'stocky'; and Richard Morrison in *The Times* characterised her as 'unbelievable, unsightly and unappealing'.¹ Although these sexist comments drew widespread condemnation, they are symptomatic of a centuries-old tendency for empowered male critics to fail to produce objective assessments of female musicians. When writing about women, critics have inclined to rely upon cultural stereotypes and to focus upon the performing female body, either to ridicule (as in the case of Erraught) or to sexualise. Whilst these general traits are discernible across a wide spectrum of critics' evaluations of female musicians, it is important to bear in mind Marcia J. Citron's caution that 'it is probably simplistic merely to speak of women's reception as some monolithic concept'.² As gender has so strongly affected the criticism of women musicians, it would be impossible to provide a comprehensive survey of their reception across all types of music and at all points in music history. Thus the following discussion is focused upon general trends which have affected the criticism of women musicians, both historically and from a contemporary context. The chapter concludes with a consideration of women as music critics.

¹ Norman Lebrecht drew these comments together for the blog Slipped Disc; see 'Singers in Uproar over Critical Body Insults at Glyndebourne' (19 May 2014), available at slippedisc.com (accessed 11 March 2018).

² Marcia J. Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon*, 2nd revised ed. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), p. 183.

The Gender Paradox

Despite general acceptance of the complex nature of gender identification, the concept of gender duality – with the Universal constructed as male and the Other as female – has been particularly prevalent in the criticism that women musicians have received. As Leo Treitler has commented, ‘from early on music history has been guided by gender duality in its description, evaluation, and narrative form’.³ Even in the supposedly objective realms of theory and analysis, the so-called masculine and feminine subjects of sonata form and ‘strong’ masculine and ‘weak’ feminine cadences are familiar. In her pioneering work on music’s gendered semiotics, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender and Sexuality*, Susan McClary noted that ‘music theorists and analysts quite frequently betray an explicit reliance on metaphors of gender (“masculinity” vs. “femininity”) and sexuality in their formulations’.⁴

The brand of gender duality that has particularly affected criticism has tended to be heavily influenced by cultural gender stereotypes, with ‘masculine’ music and genres constructed as strong, powerful and frequently public; and ‘feminine’ music and genres as soft, gentle and often private. Women’s engagement with music as inscribed via criticism implies a marked gender paradox. Women’s musical activities have not been judged on the same grounds as those of men. Writing about music as a whole, women musicians, and the music of women, draws upon long-held dualities of Universal versus Other.

Trends and Stereotypes

Marcia J. Citron’s seminal work on the exclusion of women composers from the musical canon and the particular role which criticism has played within this has been extremely useful in shaping the thinking underlying this chapter.⁵ Citron has opined that ‘women have been subjected to gender-linked evaluation, placing them in a “separate but not equal” category that has widened the gulf between themselves and the homogenous canon’.⁶ The gender paradox has been marked in the criticism of women composers who ‘were criticized as being true to their sex if their music exhibited supposedly

³ Leo Treitler, ‘Gender and Other Dualities in Music History’, in Ruth A. Solie (ed.), *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1993), p. 23.

⁴ Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender and Sexuality* (Minnesota and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), p. 10.

⁵ See Marcia J. Citron, ‘Gender, Professionalism and the Musical Canon’, *Journal of Musicology*, 8/1 (1990), 102–17; Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon*.

⁶ Citron, ‘Gender, Professionalism and the Musical Canon’, 108.

feminine traits, yet derided as attempting to be masculine if their music embodied so-called virile traits'.⁷ McClary has also neatly summarised this trend thus:

The music that has been composed by women . . . has often been received in terms of the essentialist stereotypes ascribed to women by masculine culture: it is repeatedly condemned as pretty yet trivial or – in the event that it does not conform to standards of feminine propriety – as aggressive and unbefitting a woman.⁸

This can usefully be extended from referring specifically to women composers to encompass all female musicians.

Before the twentieth century, women critics were very rare. Historically, as Citron has observed, 'the critical establishment has been overwhelmingly male'.⁹ This has meant 'the absence of a female voice', and that 'male modes of discourse have formed the basis of professional criticism'.¹⁰ For aspirant female critics this has also meant the absence of role models. As Citron further comments, 'the authority vested in the male critic has implications for women composers . . . who may find themselves objectified by the patriarchal subjectivity of the critic'.¹¹ The concept of the male gaze of the critic is useful here, as this has resulted in an empowered male observer passing judgement upon a female creator. This can result in a number of issues: in a 'patronizing posture', as Citron observes,¹² or in sexualisation.

When we consider the criticism of women musicians, we need to bear in mind that a large part of women's music-making has not been captured. Published criticism has tended to focus upon the public sphere of the concert hall or the opera house, frequently constructed as masculine sites of performance and reception. Historically, much women's music-making often took place within the private sphere of the home, conversely understood as a feminine site of performance, and only a small proportion of women's music was published. As critics rarely wrote about private performances or unpublished works, only a small proportion of women's musical activity has been documented in reviews. Citron has commented on this 'scarcity of written reception', and observed that 'written reception has belonged to the public sphere . . . many women, however, have channelled their creative energies into other areas, including music for pedagogy, children, and social gatherings in more intimate settings. Formal criticism has generally passed over such activities'.¹³

⁷ *Ibid.*, 109. ⁸ McClary, *Feminine Endings*, p. 18.

⁹ Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon*, p. 181. ¹⁰ *Ibid.* ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 182. ¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 187.

Citron's writings on women and reception highlight one further useful caveat when considering music criticism: pervasive assumptions linking gender and genre. The concept of genre hierarchy within Western art music – which persistently privileges large-scale public genres over small-scale private ones – was effectively enshrined in music criticism. Citron has commented that 'reviewers regularly made a gender/genre association and as a result invariably cast negative aspersions on pieces in smaller forms'.¹⁴ Due to a complex range of factors, including access to music education and opportunities for performances and publication, women composers (historically) tended to concentrate upon smaller musical genres. As a result they were caught in a critical trap which denigrated their efforts virtually by default. Thus the gender paradox not only dictated which genres women were able to write in but also controlled how critics viewed those works.

Although Citron's comments on genre and criticism are concentrated on Western art music, her ideas can usefully be extended to embrace popular music. As the vast majority of popular music is highly gendered, how women interact with popular genres – which have themselves been constructed as masculine or feminine – as songwriters and/or performers, and how critics describe their activities also rely heavily on underlying assumptions between gender and genre.

Negotiating the Image of the Male Genius

Criticism about women musicians has also had to negotiate the complex notion of the genius. Since the time of music's emancipation from state and ecclesiastical patronage, and the emergence of autonomous music in the early nineteenth century, the concept of the heroic genius has gained a strong foothold in criticism. However, the figure of the genius was invariably and irrevocably constructed as male. As Citron has commented:

In music and the other arts, genius has meant power, status, authority and quality, and it has managed to perpetuate itself because of the almost mystical associations it evokes. The creator as divine and other-worldly has reinforced ideologies of masculinity and acted to suppress the possibility of a female creator.¹⁵

To further problematise the issue, the otherworldliness of the male genius often placed him on the edge of conventional sanity. As Marion Leonard has commented, 'historically in art, music and the media, links have been drawn

¹⁴ Citron, 'Gender, Professionalism and the Musical Canon', 110.

¹⁵ Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon*, p. 185.

between creativity and madness'.¹⁶ Specifically, male creativity and madness have been strongly linked. (The enduring image of Beethoven as the heroic, quasi-divine genius exemplifies this trend particularly strongly.) Female madness – embodied by such figures as the female hysteric or the madwoman in the attic – has long been condemned within Western rhetoric as a signifier of instability, dangerousness and sickness. Madness in women has not marked them as creative geniuses, but has served as a strong device to cast them as Other. Writing about the representation of rock musicians in print, Leonard has further noted that 'the notion of mental torment is used in reviews of male musicians to construct a profile of the tortured romantic artist'; however, 'associations with mental ill health are called upon by journalists to dismiss or "other" female performers'.¹⁷

We must approach reviews of female musicians with caution. They are anything but objective critiques of women's music and/or performing abilities. Reviews of women draw upon a long tradition of gender duality. They tend to position women and their music as Other. They are informed by discourses which make strong assumptions about gender and genre, and understandings of creativity as being intrinsically male. They only capture a small amount of women's musical activities. Thus reviews of women musicians must be read through a gendered lens which assumes objectification, trivialisation or sexualisation, and which acknowledges the prevalent tendency to place them in an unequal category.

Historical Perspectives

The following discussion of the criticism of women musicians is divided into historical perspectives and changing critical trends in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This is to take account of the very different social context within which women functioned prior to the twentieth century. Considerations of historical critical trends are focused on the nineteenth century, as this was the period during which music journalism developed rapidly. Before the emergence of organised feminism in the later nineteenth century, issues of women's rights were virtually unheard of. Strict gender codes were in place. Women largely lacked the basic political and legal rights – such as voting and controlling their own property and money – that are now, in the West, taken for granted. Contemporary theological, political and

¹⁶ Marion Leonard, *Gender in the Music Industry: Rock, Discourse and Girl Power* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 69–70.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

philosophical discourses and societal attitudes constructed a woman's proper place as being in the home. Women of the middle and upper classes were effectively debarred from public and professional life.¹⁸ Such gender-polarised social conventions posed serious issues for aspirant women musicians.

Widespread understanding of creativity and genius as essentially masculine attributes were particularly problematic for the reception of nineteenth-century women composers.¹⁹ The reviews which greeted Clara Wieck-Schumann's Piano Trio, Op. 17 (1846) exemplify the gendered tropes which generally described women's works. On 5 April 1848, *Die Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* published the following comments: 'Women rarely attempt the more mature forms because such works assume a certain abstract strength that is overwhelmingly given to men. Clara Schumann, however, is truly one of the few women who has mastered this strength'.²⁰ These remarks must be read with the pervasive nineteenth-century gender/genre assumptions in mind. Chamber music was constructed as a 'mature form'. As such it was understood as a masculine genre. The special status that was frequently accorded to Wieck-Schumann – as a female musician who had 'mastered' masculine musical 'strength' – is evident. This places her within a discernible critical trend to view such women as 'honorary men'.

A later review, which appeared in *Die Schlesische Zeitung* on 23 December 1877, commented:

Does not the Trio of Clara Schumann give us a veiled picture of her husband as a youth? Except that all the coarseness and energy of that striking head has been softened into feminine features . . . had that G-minor Trio turned up posthumously, half of us would have considered it to be one of his earliest works. Every creative mind has two sides, a male, giving one and a female, receiving one; the Trio points predominantly in the later direction and hence to its true origin.²¹

The comments that Wieck-Schumann's Trio could be mistaken for a work by Schumann foreshadow accusations (largely made by earlier twentieth-century Schumann biographers) that he must have written her compositions. The

¹⁸ It was common for working-class women to work.

¹⁹ See Scott Burnham, *Beethoven Hero* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Tia DeNora, *Beethoven and the Construction of Genius: Musical Politics in Vienna, 1792–1803* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997).

²⁰ Unsigned, *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, 50 (5 April 1848), 232–3; cited and translated in Nancy B. Reich, *Clara Schumann: The Artist and the Woman*, revised ed. (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001), p. 312.

²¹ Unsigned, *Schlesische Zeitung* (23 December 1877); cited and translated in Reich, *Clara Schumann: The Artist and the Woman*, p. 312.

common binary opposition between masculine attributes ('coarseness', 'energy') and 'feminine softness' are clear. In this context, the extension of gender duality to an active, creative masculine half of the mind and a passive, receptive feminine half (tropes familiar in many contemporary reviews of female performances) is ironic considering that Wieck-Schumann was the composer. Such comments act to negate her active agency as the creator. Active as pianist and composer, Wieck-Schumann ran a double gauntlet by exposing herself to contemporary critics' views of women participants within both fields.

Women active as professional performers in the nineteenth century posed a complex set of gendered issues and paradoxes for their (largely) male critics. Firstly, women performing professionally for money directly confronted the social convention which dictated that working for a living should be a masculine pursuit. Secondly, professional women performers challenged the idea that learning music as a social ornament (but not as a profession) was an essential part of a woman's education. Thirdly, women who performed in public – literally making spectacles of themselves – ran the risk of the old association between public performance and sexual availability.²²

In an age which actively sought to confine women's bodies, public female display via the act of musical performance posed challenges both for women performers and their male critics. Often linked to sexualisation, physical appearance is frequently commented upon in reviews of female performers. To take just one example, the following review of the Wiener Damenorchester which appeared in *The New York Times* in 1874 illustrates that this critic was more focused upon the (female) musicians' appearance than on their performance abilities:

The orchestra presents a *coup d'œil* attractive enough to compel the sternest critic to lay down his pen, supposing he may have anything unkind to say. But, happily, the Viennese ladies, with their uniformity of pretty costumes and (may it be added) their uniformity of pretty faces, are no mere pretenders.²³

The critic's condescending admission that the (professional) women within the orchestra were not mere musical 'pretenders' rings off grudging praise. The use of the male pronoun (his pen) accentuates both the assumed gender of critics and the authority of their male gaze. This critic clearly felt that physical

²² Associations between performance and sexual availability affected women musicians less than actors and dancers.

²³ Unsigned, 'The Viennese Ladies' Orchestra', *The New York Times* (27 July 1874), 6; cited in Julie C. Dunbar, *Women, Music, Culture: An Introduction* (New York and London: Routledge, 2011), p. 134.

appearance should form a large part of the evaluative criteria of female musicians.

Writing specifically about female pianists and their male critics in mid-nineteenth-century Paris, Katharine Ellis has commented that ‘metaphors of prophetesses and priestesses abound, reinforcing the idea of woman as vessel for divine truth, serving the cult of the work’.²⁴ This trend to construe women as mediums serving the sacred cult of the artwork (invariably created by a male composer) allowed critics to portray female musicians as non-threatening, passive interpreters and not active creators. Such comments were widespread in reviews of female performers throughout the nineteenth century all over Europe and North America.

Stationary and Shifting Rhetorical Trends in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries

Although a number of rhetorical trends present in the criticism of women musicians shifted throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, a surprising number that had become entrenched during the nineteenth century – notably gendered language, sexualisation and gender/genre assumptions – continued to mark reviews. Whilst it is undeniable that the social roles of women have changed dramatically since the turn of the twentieth century and employment rights have improved radically, it is vital to acknowledge the non-linear nature of women’s history. Each successive wave of feminism has been subjected to a backlash, similar in effect to the domestic resettlements which followed the freer lives available to women during both World Wars.²⁵ Although gender equality is now often assumed for Western women, post-feminist discourses suggest a more complex picture. Early twenty-first-century popular culture often presents feminism as a bogeywoman that actually threatens young women. Contemporary media images of women – and musicians are no exception – are marked by their high levels of sexualisation.

Gendered language continued to be commonplace in reviews of women musicians up to the mid-twentieth century. An anonymous review of a 1955 revival of *Salome* at Covent Garden which appeared in *The Times*, for example, expressed unmasked horror at Christel Goltz’s ‘undignified’ portrayal of Strauss’s eponymous character:

²⁴ Katharine Ellis, ‘Female Pianists and Their Male Critics in Nineteenth-Century Paris’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 50 (Summer–Autumn, 1997), 371.

²⁵ See Susan Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War against Women* (London: Vintage, 1992).

Some of the horrors have been vouchsafed to her audiences already, and connoisseurs may be glad to know that she still rolls herself off the cistern and across the stage, but some are new, and others are executed with even more repulsive effect . . . Mme Goltz might, without sacrificing the thrills, dignify her portrayal a trifle.²⁶

The works of female composers, up to the mid-twentieth century, also continued to be subjected to gendered analysis and condescending praise, as is evident in a review of a concert of new chamber works given by the British Society of Women Musicians in April 1950. Bridget Fry's *Cinq Chansons du Moyen Age* were criticised for 'coquetry at the end', whilst Ann Hamerton's *Three Night Songs* were described as 'Fauré-esque'.²⁷ Likening the works of women composers to 'coquetry', an adjective traditionally associated with flippant, seductive female behaviour, and also praising them for being derivative of the style of male composers are both trends that have characterised reviews of women composers' music since at least the eighteenth century.

By the later twentieth century, however, reviews of classical women musicians written on more equal terms with their male counterparts were increasingly becoming the norm. In a review of Jacqueline du Pré's performance of a cello transcription of Franck's Violin Sonata written in 1970, for example, Stephen Walsh described her interpretation in *The Times* as having 'brought to the sonata an intensity and warmth of line which few violinists could expect to equal'.²⁸ Stanley Sadie, in a similar vein and also writing in *The Times*, described Janet Baker's singing as 'beyond praise' in a glowing review of a 1975 production of Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito* at Covent Garden.²⁹ To take just one example that suggests that female composers are less likely to face gender-biased criticism in the early twenty-first century, electro-acoustic composer Manuella Blackburn's first CD, *Formes audibles*, received laudatory, and gender-neutral, praise from (among others) Stuart Marshall. Writing for *The Sound Projector*, he described the release as a

spellbinding selection of surgically sculpted, swiftly shifting sounds and tunnelling [*sic*] tones, cosmic flourishes and vacuumed hushes; all emulsified by a convulsive cohesiveness that obviates any hint of homogeneity, while marking every tone as Blackburn's own . . . These six pieces are as hypnotising in their brief moments of luxuriance as in their explosions of visceral morphology, and will yield their manifold mysteries for much time to come.³⁰

²⁶ Unsigned, 'Covent Garden Opera', *The Times* (6 July 1955), 6.

²⁷ Unsigned, 'Society of Women Musicians', *The Times* (3 April 1950), 2.

²⁸ Stephen Walsh, 'Frank Transcribed', *The Times* (17 August 1970), 11.

²⁹ Stanley Sadie, 'La clemenza di Tito', *The Times* (11 February 1975), 7.

³⁰ Stuart Marshall, 'A Six-Part Syntax of Sound', *Sound Projector* (13 October 2013), available at www.theoundprojector.com (accessed 7 November 2015).

Although classical female composers and performers are now treated on more equal terms with their male colleagues – though a certain degree of sexualisation remains in the publicity images of performers such as Vanessa Mae – the same is not true for conductors. Despite the presence of a number of internationally renowned women, including Marin Alsop, JoAnn Faletta and Siân Edwards, conducting remains one of the most male-dominated fields. When Alsop became the first woman to conduct the Last Night of the Proms on 7 September 2013, the Royal Albert Hall was decorated with pink ‘it’s a girl’ balloons and streamers. Although these decorations were (presumably) intended as a celebration of Alsop’s achievement, it is hard not to read them as, at best, patronising, or, at worst, offensive. (It is difficult to imagine the Royal Albert Hall being festooned with blue balloons for a male conductor.) Writing in *The Guardian*, Fiona Maddocks (passing over the unfortunate connotation of the decorations) commented:

With the pink balloons and pastel-coloured streamers, the Prommers decorated the conductor’s podium with a powerful message: ‘It’s a girl!’ The girl in question, 56-year-old American Marin Alsop, was the first woman to conduct the Last Night of the Proms . . . She took it in her stride . . . Of all Last Nights in recent memory, this was the most enjoyable, the least hysterical and the most warm-hearted. Taking on the tricky end-of-term speech, Alsop showed who was wearing the trousers, in this case her usual discreet black suit with a flash of scarlet at the collar and cuffs.³¹

Intriguingly, Maddocks, herself an important voice among contemporary female music critics, draws on the old tradition of commenting upon (and thus ascribing some sort of spurious significance to) a woman musician’s clothing. Unfortunately, the photograph that appears above the online version of Maddock’s review features not Alsop but the mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato, who appeared as a soloist. The photograph is accompanied by the inopportune caption advising that ‘[DiDonato] caused gasps when she walked on dressed in a shimmering Vivienne Westwood dress’.³² It would appear from this review that sexualisation is still alive and well within some quarters of the classical music press.

³¹ Fiona Maddocks, ‘Last Night of the Proms – Review’, *The Guardian* (8 September 2013), available at www.theguardian.com (accessed 7 November 2015). Alsop conducted the Last Night of the Proms for a second time on 12 September 2015.

³² *Ibid.*

Pop and Rock's Gendered Discourse

The criticism of women in the field of popular music remains highly gendered.³³ If anything, the sexualisation of female popular musicians seems more rampant than ever. The gender paradox which underlies so much of the criticism of women musicians cuts deep into the heart of popular music itself, in the form of a marked gender/genre association between pop music (often feminised) and rock music (often masculinised). Pop has been constructed as inconsequential, trivial, inauthentic and unserious; rock has been constructed as an authentic and serious form of music, heavily imbued with genuine countercultural capital. This intriguingly recalls the critical rhetoric that was historically employed to trivialise women's music.

Kembrew McLeod has located the masculinisation of rock criticism in the 1960s counterculture from which it partly evolved. He has commented:

The 1960s counterculture ethos that celebrated attributes associated with masculinity . . . dismissed as counterrevolutionary or unprogressive cultural expression typically the domain of women. With men defining the discourse of the civil rights and antiwar movements – and of the counterculture, more generally – not surprisingly, men dominated these areas of activism. And because these discourses of the counterculture heavily influenced the rock community, the terms for entry into this area of cultural production were defined early on as, to quote James Brown, a 'man's man's man's world'. In the critics' sincere commitment to connect their vision of a better world to a particular version of popular music (their version), they unwittingly created the discursive conditions that helped reproduce gender inequality.³⁴

Echoing these sentiments, Sheila Whiteley has commented:

The counter culture's marginalisation of women in rock is . . . particularly disturbing. Apart from biting social and political commentaries from such performers as Joan Baez, Buffy St Marie and Peter, Paul and Mary, and the success of such frontline performers as Mama Cass (The Mamas and the Papas), Grace Slick (Jefferson Airplane) and Janis Joplin . . . both the lifestyle and the musical ethos of the period undermined the role of women, positioning them as either romanticised fantasy figures, subservient earth mothers or easy lays.³⁵

McLeod has analysed the adjectives used to describe rock music and organised them into a series of 'semantic dimensions'.³⁶ He has commented:

³³ I am indebted to Mike Brocken for many stimulating conversations about women and popular music.

³⁴ Kembrew McLeod, 'Between Rock and a Hard Place: Gender and Rock Criticism', in Steve Jones (ed.), *Pop Music and the Press* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), pp. 108–9.

³⁵ Sheila Whiteley, *Women and Popular Music: Sexuality, Identity and Subjectivity* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 23.

³⁶ McLeod, 'Between Rock and a Hard Place', p. 97.

The dimensions employed to favorably describe an artist or album (aggressive intensity, violence, rawness, simplicity, personal expression, seriousness, tradition, authenticity and originality), as well as those used to dismiss an artist (softness, sweet sentimentalism, blandness, slickness, formulaic unoriginality, and commercialism), tell a story. That is, the *way* [McLeod's emphasis] critics employ these ideas within the discursive space of reviews tells a story.³⁷

Although McLeod claims that some of the dimensions that he has identified are 'not inherently gendered' (positing instead that it is the way that they are used within rock discourse that is),³⁸ it is difficult to accept this, if one takes the long view of the criticism of women musicians. The adjectives (dimensions) which he has identified have been used to exult male creative genius and to trivialise women's music since at least the early nineteenth century. Presumably rock critics unconsciously developed a strikingly similar rhetoric, as they were most likely unaware of nineteenth-century (classical) gendered critical tropes. Ideas about appropriate gender roles and modes of cultural expression were, however, deeply encoded, and remained firmly entrenched, in Western society in the 1960s. The counterculture, for all its revolutionary boasts, ironically continued to enforce conservative gender roles.

The highly masculinised counterculture that developed around rock, which critics have been complicit in perpetuating, has made it notoriously difficult for women to be taken seriously within this genre. The review of Janis Joplin's posthumously released final album, *Pearl*, by Jack Shadoian, which appeared in *Rolling Stone* on 18 February 1971, in prose which was dense with the assumed (though ill-defined) artistic, musical and aesthetic value of true authentic rock music, initially granted her honorary-man status (a common critical tendency to describe 'exceptional' female musicians).³⁹

Janis was a heavy, and had incredible presence whether at the top or bottom of her form. She was a remarkable, if erratic, singer, and she proved it, live and on record. Anyone who exhibits qualities of greatness earns certain privileges – not critical immunity so much as the right to be forever removed from inconsequentiality . . . you listen, and you care, because you know that whatever is going down is genuine and may contain a revelation.⁴⁰

Despite the identification of a Joplin as a rock 'heavy', the description of her as an 'erratic singer' recalls marked critical tendencies to other women musicians by associating their creativity with madness or mental ill health. The

³⁷ Ibid., p. 108. ³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Consider, for example, the review quoted above of Wieck-Schumann's Piano Trio, Op. 17 that appeared in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* on 5 April 1848.

⁴⁰ Jack Shadoian, 'Janis Joplin: *Pearl*', *Rolling Stone* (18 February 1971), available at www.rollingstone.com (accessed 8 November 2015).

review (which also stands as a quasi-obituary) continues by removing her creative agency, granting musical authority instead to the (male) bands and producers that she worked with:

With Big Brother, Janis was free to leap and range; the band was always there to break any falls ... 'Kozmic Blues' was bound to be a disappointment ... Janis seemed displaced. The new band didn't help much and her voice, subjected to studio clarity, sounded more strained than expressive. Her style, too, transplanted to a tighter setting, seemed overblown and uncontrolled ... Full Tilt Boogie, the band that backs her on *Pearl* ... are simply a better band and more congenial to Janis, which is a big reason why *Pearl* is more satisfying ... It is also clear that Paul Rothschild was working hard to find the right material and the right context for Janis, to shape her gifts and give them direction and balance ... Her urge for drama, sometimes too hasty and spurting – not developed and sustained – is controlled by the solid foundation Full Tilt Boogie provides. She stays in control, and invitations to hysteria notwithstanding, gives a fantastic performance.⁴¹

Thus her talent is presented as an instinctive musicality (bordering on madness) that needs to be reined in and shaped by men. Her creative agency is removed through the familiar trope of feminine expression being controlled by rational masculine logic.

Rock critics have also used their reviews to reinforce passive and submissive roles for women. For example, a review of Joni Mitchell's *Blue* by Timothy Crouse that appeared in *Rolling Stone* on 5 August 1971 dwelt heavily upon her (assumed) feminine fragility and sensitivity:

Joni Mitchell's singing, her songwriting, her whole presence give off a feeling of vulnerability ... *Blue* is loaded with specific references to the recent past ... [It] is the chronicle of Joni, a free-lance romantic, searching for a permanent love ... In comparing love to communion, Joni defines explicitly the underlying theme of *Blue*: for her love has become a religious quest, and surrendering to loneliness a sin ... 'Blue' more than any of the other songs, shows Joni to be twice vulnerable: not only is she in pain as a private person, but her calling as an artist commands her to express her despair musically ... on *Blue* she has matched her popular music skills with the purity and honesty of what was once called folk music and through the blend she has given us some of the most beautiful moments in recent popular music.⁴²

Although Crouse undoubtedly admires Mitchell and considers *Blue* a fine album, he presents her as a passive *femme fragile*, interpreting the well-

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Timothy Crouse, 'Joni Mitchell: *Blue*', *Rolling Stone* (5 August 1971), available at www.rollingstone.com (accessed 8 November 2015).

known autobiographical aspects of the album as her search for fulfilment through male love. Thus he presents her in a non-threatening light; she is using music to pursue a traditional feminine path, not to pose a serious rivalry with her male peers.

Women as Critics

Despite a few isolated cases of women active as music critics in the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries, female music critics were a rarity prior to the Second World War. The slow emergence of women as music critics directly parallels their wider situation in mainstream journalism. As Deborah Chambers, Linda Steiner and Carole Fleming have observed, 'women had to overcome many obstacles to get into the newsroom'.⁴³ The gender paradox is once again apparent in relation to women's entry into journalism. As Chambers, Steiner and Fleming have further commented, 'women occupied a subordinated "ghetto status" . . . They were often confined to marginal areas of news – fashion, domestic issues and a form of "society news" . . . essentially glorified gossip about the lives of the rich and famous'.⁴⁴ Throughout most of the nineteenth century, journalism was not considered to be a suitable job for a woman. Newspaper reporting was often viewed as a rough trade, and thus not a suitable profession for an educated woman. The aggressive and masculinised space of the newsroom was deemed an inappropriate space for ladies.

By the late nineteenth century, however, a new type of 'women's journalism' appeared. The invention of the telegraph in 1844, and the development of the railway, dramatically increased newspapers' circulation. The expansion of advertising – which specifically targeted middle-class women as consumers – led to the expansion of newspapers. The increase in newspapers' contents and circulation, along with increased reliance upon advertising revenue, motivated editors – who largely viewed women as passive consumers of news not active producers of it – to hire 'women journalists' or 'girl reporters' (as they were generally called) to supply items designed to be of primary interest to female readers. Thus women were engaged to write about fashion and domestic issues, society gossip, human interest stories, and to fill the new 'women's pages'. With few exceptions (in 1892 Flora Shaw, for example, became the first woman to be appointed to the permanent staff of *The Times*, and Emilie

⁴³ Deborah Chambers, Linda Steiner and Carole Fleming, *Women and Journalism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 33.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 15–16.

Peacocke was the first full-time woman reporter active on Fleet Street), women rarely obtained opportunities to write about political or economic news, which were actively constructed as masculine interests. The tight control of the dissemination of information (via the 1914 Defence of the Realm Act in the UK) and the ban on sending women reporters to the Front during the First World War did not greatly enhance their status as journalists. It was not until male military conscription during the Second World War that places for women journalists opened up, and it was not until the later twentieth century that they gained greater opportunities to write across the full spectrum of news stories, including politics, economics, business and world affairs.

Music criticism is a highly specialised type of journalism. Surveying the situation of female music critics in the United States in the early 1980s, Barbara Jepson commented that ‘critics, like conductors, have traditionally been viewed as authority figures, and newspaper journalism has been a male preserve until recently’.⁴⁵ Whilst this is generally true, there have been some notable exceptions.

The presence of early pioneers is particularly striking in the French musical press. Lia Duport and Thérèse Wartel were both active in mid-nineteenth-century France. In the early years of the twentieth century, the composer Armande de Polignac contributed a series of articles to the new music journal *Le Mercure musical*, for which Colette also occasionally wrote.⁴⁶ During the interwar period, Suzanne Demarquez, Madeleine Portier, and Lucie Delarue-Madrus regularly contributed to a range of French musical publications. In the UK, Dame Ethel Smyth, never one to shy away from traditionally male-dominated fields, turned her hand to music criticism on several occasions.

A surprising number of women were active as critics in the United States in the first half of the twentieth century. It is difficult to know how many American women wrote criticism during the nineteenth century, as the vast majority of US reviews before 1900 were either anonymous or initialled.⁴⁷ However, the *Baltimore Sun* employed a May Garrettson Evans as music critic from 1888 to 1895. In the years following the First World War, a number of women held posts with important American newspapers, including Isabel Morse Jones, who served as music critic and editor for the *Los Angeles Times* from 1925 to 1947, and was also musical correspondent for *Musical America*

⁴⁵ Barbara Jepson, ‘Women Critics in the United States’, in Judith Lang Zaimont, Catherine Overhauser and Jane Gottlieb (eds.), *The Musical Woman: An International Perspective* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1983).

⁴⁶ For a consideration of Armande de Polignac’s music criticism, see Laura Hamer, ‘Armande de Polignac: An Aristocratic Compositrice in *Fin-de-Siècle* Paris’, in Paul Fryer (ed.), *Women in the Arts in the Belle Époque: Essays on Influential Artists, Writers and Performers* (Jefferson and London: McFarland, 2012), pp. 178–9.

⁴⁷ Jepson, ‘Women Music Critics in the United States’, p. 245.

from 1940 to 1947, and Claudia Cassidy, who worked as arts critics for the *Chicago Journal of Commerce* from 1925 to 1941 and was later music and drama critic for the *Chicago Tribune*. Harriet Johnson worked as head music critic at the *New York Post* from 1943 to 1986,⁴⁸ and Minna Lederman worked as sole editor of *Modern Music* from its founding in 1924 until 1946.

Opportunities for female music critics in the United States actually retracted in the second half of the twentieth century. Successive waves of reduction in the circulation of print newspapers since the 1960s – combined with the standard practice of newspapers only hiring one or two staff critics (often combing music with at least one other art form), and otherwise relying on freelancers – resulted in stiff competition for an ever decreasing number of full-time positions. In the UK, several women have held influential positions within classical music criticism since the later twentieth century. Joan Chissell, became the first female music critic to be employed by *The Times* in 1948. She continued to work for *The Times* until 1979, becoming one of the three staff music critics in the early 1960s.⁴⁹ At the time of writing, Fiona Maddocks occupies the post of Chief Classical Music Critic at *The Observer*.⁵⁰

Women critics in popular music have experienced considerable gender-specific barriers. Writing in 2002, McLeod commented that, ‘the field of rock criticism in North America is still dominated by men’.⁵¹ Over a decade later, this situation is not much improved, and is not restricted to North America. Leonard has observed a ‘discernible masculinist style’ of rock criticism.⁵² Pondering the various reasons for this, she has noted that the majority of rock publications ‘are targeted primarily towards a male readership’; thus ‘it is perhaps unsurprising that the prose style adopted within these publications is generally masculinist in tone, geared towards the idealised male reader’.⁵³

Reflecting on the dearth of female popular music critics in 1996, Caroline Sullivan, however, expressed herself surprised that ‘more girls don’t try it’.⁵⁴ Sullivan, who, as rock and pop critic for *The Guardian* since the mid-1990s occupies a position of considerable influence, claims, in the same essay, that she has experienced very little sexism (and that at the hands of a female press

⁴⁸ Johnson was, in fact, the second woman to be hired as head music critic by the *New York Post*. Olga Samaroff had briefly held the post from 1926 to 1927.

⁴⁹ Joan Chissell also wrote for *Gramophone* and broadcast for the BBC. See Kenneth G. Fry, ‘Lives Remembered: Joan Chissell’, *The Times* (23 February 2007), available at www.thetimes.co.uk (accessed 25 October 2015).

⁵⁰ Maddocks was previously founding editor of *BBC Music Magazine*.

⁵¹ McLeod, ‘Between Rock and a Hard Place’, p. 93.

⁵² Leonard, *Gender in the Music Industry*, p. 67. ⁵³ Leonard, *Gender in the Music Industry*, pp. 67–8.

⁵⁴ Caroline Sullivan, ‘The Joy of Hacking: Women Rock Critics’, in Sarah Cooper (ed.), *Girls! Girls! Girls! Essays on Women and Music* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), p. 138.

officer). In a striking extension of Leonard's 'discernible masculinist style' of rock journalism, however, Sullivan has attributed the masculinised subcultures of many popular music magazines – 'whose pages reek of male bonding and footie references'⁵⁵ – as being off-putting to many would-be female popular music critics. She continues, 'the problem . . . is finding women who want to do it'.⁵⁶

It is (partly) possible to attribute the difficulty in finding potential female critics to the working conditions and job pressures. Critics work long and unsociable hours, with a lot of their work taking place during the evenings and at weekends. As Sullivan has commented:

[Another] difficulty is the unsocial hours, and having to go to shows alone . . . It isn't reviewing gigs on my own that I dislike – that happens to us all as friends tire of the novelty of going to concerts for free. It's all the late-night travel . . . There's nothing more dismal than waiting for a night-bus in Wembley on a freezing night.⁵⁷

Karen Monson has offered a curious echo of these sentiments, from a classical music perspective:

There is no reason to keep to a regular 9-to-5 schedule at the office, since that is neither the time nor the place where the serious work of the job is done . . . This sounds great until you realize that you are free in the daytime and your friends are not . . . Most of us . . . have to get used to eating at 6 or 6:30 p.m. and then running to get to the concert on time, filled with enough energy and adrenalin to keep going until the review is finished and submitted (which can be at 1 or 2 a.m.) . . . Most of the time . . . the chair next to me, my second ticket, belonged to my coat.⁵⁸

Critics work under constant deadline pressure, are under pressure to keep up with the latest musical trends and must learn to cope with angry reactions from aggrieved musicians and, sometimes, fans.

In addition to the strain that such a lifestyle places upon a critic's social life, it also places a considerable burden upon home and family life. As many women continue to bear the primary responsibility for childcare, the critic's professional reality can easily appear daunting to women who also hope to have families. Monson has commented that

⁵⁵ Ibid. ⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 139.

⁵⁷ McLeod, 'Between Rock and a Hard Place', p. 143. It is important to note that late-night travel can present dangerous situations for women alone.

⁵⁸ Karen Monson, 'Byline Monson: Music Critic', in Judith Lang Zaimont, Catherine Overhauser and Jane Gottlieb (eds.), *The Musical Woman: An International Perspective, Volume 11: 1984–1985* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1987), pp. 62–3.

I have been quoted as saying that a woman cannot have a family and be a music critic at the same time . . . I was not quite correct. It would be possible, but it would be hard . . . Some women have done it, and more will do it in the future. Having never tried the combination, I can only say that I cannot imagine getting home at 2:00 a.m. to a sleeping husband and a fussy child, trying to unwind from the evening's work, and being able to nap only until the baby awakened or the copy desk phoned to check some fact or misspelling.⁵⁹

Female music critics might also feel less able to relocate to take a better position, if it meant moving a family and/or disrupting a partner's career. Such concerns over relocating to obtain a better and/or more senior position might help explain why, despite the fact that there are relatively high numbers of junior women critics and freelancers, they are still under-represented at the highest levels of the profession. Few hold positions as head critics or music editors with either national newspapers or specialised music magazines.

For women who do succeed as critics, a further important issue for them to negotiate is how they should write about and review women musicians. Here women critics have to tread a fine line. They have to negotiate perceptions of favouritism and/or partisan feminism. Of the women critics that Jepson interviewed, many reported 'going out of their way to give preconcert publicity, in the form of a photo, profile, or interview, to women composers and conductors. The reasons cited were that such individuals are still a rarity in their communities, and they believed these women have been discriminated against in the past.'⁶⁰ As she has further commented, however, 'even the most ardent feminists rebelled at the notion of giving less-than-honest reviews to music by women'. On many occasions women have been assigned to cover female musicians, under the assumption that a common sex gives a review more authority. This practice has exacerbated the critical tightrope that female critics in such positions have to brave. Politics aside, some female critics have preferred reviewing women for a wide range of reasons, including feeling more comfortable with other women. Sullivan has commented that:

I prefer interviewing women . . . The task of gaining someone's trust . . . when you've only just met them . . . seems easier when you're the same sex . . . You can approach the interview as a conversation rather than an interrogation . . . it's the spirit of comradeship, however spurious that may be. Because of the obstacles most of them have had to surmount, women artists are more interesting . . . Generally . . . women are better, more obliging interviewees,

⁵⁹ Karen Monson, 'Byline Monson: Music Critic', p. 66. Changing working practices may help here, as it is no longer the universal norm that copy goes in straight after a concert.

⁶⁰ Barbara Jepson, 'Women Critics in the United States', pp. 261–2. It is important to position Jepson's study within the wider contemporary political context of the Women's Liberation Movement.

possibly because, like the rest of girlkind, they were raised to try to please . . . But I sometimes find myself tolerating artistic mediocrity in women when I wouldn't in a man. I've never written an unjustified favourable review, but occasionally I'll find reasons to excuse an uninspired performance.⁶¹

Despite the various pitfalls which female critics must negotiate when reviewing women, it is possible that a greater degree of objectivity is achieved in their reviews purely through the empowered male gaze being removed.

Conclusion

The criticism of women musicians has been and continues to be anything but objective. Criticism of women musicians has tended to be highly gendered, and to place them in an unequal category to their male colleagues. Critics have tended to trivialise, sexualise and Other women musicians and their music. Although some women critics have obtained a considerable degree of success, they remain under-represented at the most senior levels of their profession. The strong gendering and sexualisation apparent in popular music criticism is particularly disturbing, as this serves as one of the most powerful teaching tools about appropriate gender roles, behaviours and modes of cultural expression for young people. The continued gendering of music criticism is reflective of the deeply embedded and wide-scale gender bias that remains rampant within the music industries. This is one of the most serious impediments to gender equality that female musicians continue to face. Although this may be driven by economics, until steps are taken to address it, women musicians will continue to operate within an unequal environment that heavily affects their reception.

⁶¹ Sullivan, 'The Joy of Hacking: Women Rock Critics', p. 144.

· PART IV ·

ENTERING THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Music Criticism in the United States and Canada up to the Second World War

MARK MCKNIGHT

The development of serious music criticism in Canada and the United States has paralleled in many ways the more general growth of music in the two nations. Musical independence from Europe came somewhat later than in the other arts. Eurocentric critics based their evaluative criteria on European models; even today vestiges of this subservience remain. Nevertheless, reviews in the United States and Canada have usually been more reportorial than their European counterparts, which tend more towards analysis and reflection; as a result, the focus has been on timeliness and objectivity, although certainly biases are by no means absent.

For many early Americans, classical music was synonymous with sacred music. This association was due largely to such men as Lowell Mason (1792–1872) and Thomas Hastings (1784–1872), who both had a profound influence on the development of American music in the nineteenth century. Mason and Hastings were raised in the eighteenth-century tradition of New England psalmody and village singing schools, yet they were each motivated to reform what they saw as the musical crudities of the earlier Yankee psalmody (William Billings, Daniel Read et al.). Active as educators, composers, choral directors, tune book compilers and publishers, Mason and Hastings vigorously promoted the edifying value of music throughout their long lives. Hastings, in addition, wrote what is considered the first significant treatise on musical criticism by an American, titled *A Dissertation on Musical Taste*;¹ he also published a short-lived journal, *The Musical Magazine* (1835–7), and wrote for other periodicals. Hastings's views on music were extremely conservative, but they were also grounded in the writings of Burney and the French *encyclopédistes*, reflecting eighteenth-century progressivist ideas. Additionally, Hastings held the firm conviction that musical taste required careful cultivation, and that it was the musician's duty to foster a greater appreciation of music by first

¹ Thomas Hastings, *Dissertation on Musical Taste* (Albany: Websters and Skinners, 1822; revised 1853).

meeting the public on its own grounds ('as he finds it') and then gradually progress to 'higher levels of comprehension and appreciation'.²

Hastings's early treatise notwithstanding, music criticism did not develop from learned treatises; instead it was tied to the rise of the American newspaper industry. Serious, substantive music criticism did not appear regularly in US newspapers before the mid-nineteenth century. Prior to the 1830s, American newspapers were intended mainly for the elite classes. Most were classified as political, hyper-partisan in nature or as essentially advertising organs for the mercantile community, although some papers gradually began to exhibit features of both types, with many ads, but also political commentary and sometimes reviews of music and other arts. Daily papers were normally published six days a week with subscription rates of around ten dollars annually, which put them out of reach for most working Americans.³ Weekly papers, such as the New York *Albion*, begun in 1822, were somewhat cheaper and did include music reviews. The *Albion*, in fact, billed itself as a 'British, Colonial, and Foreign Weekly Gazette' that included 'distinct and proper' coverage of 'Poetry, history, music and the Drama', with much content reprinted from European sources.⁴ Despite its greater attention to the arts, coverage of music in the *Albion* included much uninformed commentary focused mainly on performance and execution with little critical insight into the music itself. Like most other similar reviews, the pieces in the *Albion* were generally unsigned, with obligatory references to the 'beauty and fashion' of the attendees. Such commentary tells us a great deal about music in early nineteenth-century New York, not only regarding the typical critic's lack of musical knowledge, but also in the focus on opera as a marker of wealth and status. New Yorkers considered opera as the venue, according to Vera Brodsky Lawrence, for prosperous bachelors to find eligible brides, as well as a place for 'electioneering, stock-jobbing, and gossiping'.⁵

Other US cities, principally Boston and Philadelphia, were much more serious and sedate, according to the influential critic W. S. B. Mathews. Looking back on this early period from later in the century, Mathews wrote that New Yorkers before 1850 were mainly concerned with 'showiness and frivolity', preferring 'spasmodic brilliancy' over the 'higher musical lines'

² James E. Dooley, 'Introduction' to Thomas Hastings, *Dissertation on Musical Taste* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1974), p. xiv.

³ Mark N. Grant, *Maestros of the Pen: A History of Classical Music Criticism in America* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), pp. 9–10.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁵ Vera Brodsky Lawrence, *Strong on Music: The New York Scene in the Days of George Templeton Strong, 1836–1875, Volume 1: Resonances, 1836–1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 496; *New-York Herald* (30 January 1848), quoted in Grant, *Maestros of the Pen*, p. 8.

demonstrated by Philadelphians or Bostonians. This difference, he observed, was due to the wealthy class of New Yorkers called the ‘Upper Ten Thousand’, or ‘Upper Ten’, upon whose patronage opera largely depended.⁶

As with their early American counterparts, most early reviews in Canadian newspapers also tended to be reportorial, commenting as much on the non-musical elements of a concert – the beauty and fashion of the audience and performers, or even the refreshments offered at intermission. Reviewers often used empty rhetorical flourishes to disguise their lack of musical knowledge. In his history of early Toronto, D. C. Masters observed that music criticism in that city in the mid-1800s was ‘written with a simplicity and naïveté, which suggests the efforts of a modern rural paper to do justice to some artistic efforts of the local inhabitants, written probably by the local clergyman’s wife or some other lady of cultural pretensions . . . Something good had to be said of everyone although the compliments at times appeared slightly strained’.⁷ Canadian music historian Helmut Kallmann, in his landmark *History of Music in Canada 1534–1914*, cited from an unnamed Montreal newspaper during this period comments in reviews regarding “‘extremely difficult pieces performed with marked success” or an artist who “played with quiet ease and grace characteristic of that gentleman’s performance and elicited hearty applause from his hearers”’. ‘These samples’, Kallmann noted, ‘are typical of many written in equally non-committal [*sic*] and florid style.’⁸ Reporting on performances by the Holman English Opera Company at Gowan’s Opera House in Ottawa in 1875, the critic of the *Ottawa Free Press* noted: ‘The scenery was really beautiful, the dresses of the ladies and gentlemen of the Company gorgeous to a degree which few would expect a travelling company to be in possession of. The music incidental to the piece was ably executed by Mrs. Harriet Homan who is an able conductor, and to whom much of the success of the opera is due . . . Mr. Gowan’s fine orchestra was present and played several choice selections between the acts.’⁹ An 1875 review in the *Ottawa Free Press* of the visiting Boston Philharmonic Club, performing the overture to Rossini’s *Tancredi*, solos for horn and violin, along with vocal selections and Mozart’s Piano Quartet in G Minor, commented: ‘There was a very large and very select audience . . . It looks as though our citizens had

⁶ W. S. B. Mathews, *A Hundred Years of Music in America*, reprint ed. (New York: AMS Press, 1970; first published Chicago: G. L. Howe, 1889), p. 64.

⁷ D. C. Masters, *The Rise of Toronto, 1850–1890* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1947), p. 94, quoted in Helmut Kallmann, *A History of Music in Canada 1534–1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1960), p. 108.

⁸ Kallmann, *A History of Music in Canada 1534–1914*, p. 108.

⁹ *Ottawa Free Press* (4 February 1875), quoted in Elaine Keillor, ‘Musical Activity in Canada’s New Capital City in the 1870s’, in John Beckwith and Frederick A. Hall (eds.), *Musical Canada: Words and Music Honouring Helmut Kallmann* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), p. 127.

finally come to the conclusion to show their appreciation of really first class talent, and by this means secure for Ottawa a better order of talent than we have hitherto been favoured with . . . Mozart's Quartet held the interest of the audience to the end although it was exceedingly long.¹⁰ Though lacking in substance, these early accounts nonetheless reflected a sincere appreciation for art music by both reviewers and audiences, as a critical awareness of music began to emerge with the increasing frequency of touring companies.

While support for classical music and opera in New York remained principally under the domain of the Upper Ten Thousand, the birth of the penny press, around 1830, signalled the beginning of a revolution that profoundly changed the American newspaper industry, including music criticism. Selling on the streets for one penny, and featuring less partisan, more sensationalistic human interest stories that appealed – and were affordable – to the working classes, these penny papers also had education as one of their main goals. As the field of penny dailies grew more crowded, publishers looked for new ways to attract subscribers. James Gordon Bennett (1795–1892), who had previously served as a music and drama reviewer for the *New-York Enquirer*, founded in 1835 what would become one of the most influential penny dailies in the country, the *New-York Morning Herald*. Bennett had an almost evangelical vision for what he thought the *Herald* should be: ‘What is to prevent a daily newspaper from being made the greatest organ of social life? Books have had their day – the theatres have had their day – the temple of religion has had its day. A newspaper can be made to take the lead of all these in the great movements of human thought and human civilization.’¹¹ As an astute businessman, Bennett also saw coverage of the arts and music as one way to set his own newspaper apart, and so he printed a regular amusements column that actively voiced support for opera and musical events, thereby providing his readers, many of whom could not afford to attend such happenings, at least the opportunity to appreciate them vicariously.

These early years of music criticism in New York were a rough-and-tumble period in many respects, as competition heated up with more and more penny dailies entering the field. Publishers and writers frequently sued each other for libel, often charging their rivals with accepting bribes from performers for favourable notices. Despite all of the loud protestations, there was, however, much truth to these charges, present-day notions of journalistic integrity having yet to become the norm. The ‘paid puff’, whereby critics received

¹⁰ *Ottawa Free Press* (13 January 1875), quoted in Keillor, ‘Musical Activity in Canada’s New Capital City in the 1870s’, p. 129.

¹¹ James Gordon Bennett, [Editorial], *New-York Morning Herald* (19 August 1836), quoted in Grant, *Maestros of the Pen*, pp. 12–13.

remuneration or other compensation for favourable reviews, was pervasive. The *Boston Musical Gazette* in 1847 reprinted an anonymous letter to the *London Musical World* charging that such popular touring virtuosos as violinist Ole Bull and pianist Leopold de Meyer, among others, had purchased their fame and success in America largely through their efforts at buying off US critics: 'Nothing, indeed, can surpass the despicable corruptibility of the American press. For one line of truth there are a dozen lines of falsehood in almost every paper.'¹² Such practices did, in fact, greatly influence the public's reception of these European artists, many of whom capitalised on the critics' 'puffery'. In his memoirs, newspaperman Charles T. Congdon recalled the gullibility of Americans during this early period, and how Ole Bull 'took advantage of our uneducated condition'.¹³ He continued, 'as a historian, I may set down the fact that we all made asses of ourselves; that we thought nonsense, talked nonsense, and printed nonsense about this Norwegian'. That de Meyer and, especially, Bull, were widely recognised as performers of the first rank in Europe raises the question as to why paying off critics would have been necessary in the first place; perhaps it was just the 'cost of doing business' in America during this time, and it may speak more about Americans' lack of musical knowledge or interest than it does about the talents of the performers themselves.

Although most reviews of musical performances were anonymous, some writers resorted to the long-standing journalistic practice of using literary or stylised pseudonyms. One such critic, whose true identity is still unknown, wrote for the *New-York American* in the 1820s under the byline 'Musœus'. Musœus's reviews stand apart as revealing a higher level of musical acumen than others from the time. The reviewer wrote with obvious knowledge of his subjects and frequently provided constructive criticism to the performers; at other times, however, his opinions could turn more caustic, providing what historian Mark N. Grant has called a 'New York City archetype . . . that has held to this day'.¹⁴

The idea that the critic should educate as well as report was clearly evident in the admonitions Musœus proffered to readers and performers alike in his reviews. It was also a role that most other serious critics were beginning to undertake as well. Chief among them was Henry Cood Watson (1816–75), generally regarded as the first person in the United States to earn his living primarily as a music critic. Watson wrote for and edited a number of

¹² Anon., *London Musical World* (31 October 1846), reprinted in the *Boston Musical Gazette* (4 January 1847), quoted in Grant, *Maestros of the Pen*, p. 22.

¹³ Charles T. Congdon, *Reminiscences of a Journalist* (Boston: James R. Osgood, 1880), p. 196.

¹⁴ Grant, *Maestros of the Pen*, p. 14.

New York publications starting in the 1840s, eventually succeeding William Henry Fry as the *New York Tribune's* music critic in 1863. A member of a musically prominent English family, Watson arrived in New York in 1840 and quickly established himself in the New York arts community, writing on music and art, penning poems and librettos, editing and even composing. He was also active in the formation of various music societies in New York, including the American Musical Fund Society and the Mendelssohn Union.

Although musical activity in New York during the 1840s was growing more and more robust, the level of professionalism, if the writings of the critics are any indication, still left a great deal to be desired. Watson himself observed this lack of competence and set about to raise the standards, forthrightly and sometimes without a great amount of tact. Upon his appointment as critic for the *New World* in 1841, Watson declared his intention 'to cleanse out this Augean accumulation and to establish in its place a healthy principle that shall revolutionize the state of music in the city'.¹⁵ Watson's reviews were perceptive, plainly pointing out the deficiencies he heard and offering constructive yet oftentimes severe and uncompromising assessments of a trained and exacting professional, without the empty flourishes that marked so much music criticism of this time. Richard Grant White (1822–85), a highly regarded literary critic, also wrote intelligently on music, for the *Morning Courier and New York Enquirer* and for *Century* magazine. Though criticised by Watson for his lack of musical knowledge, White's reviews nonetheless displayed a degree of erudition that was also free from overly hollow verbiage.

As musical activities in the United States continued to increase in number and improve in quality, the level of music criticism also began to rise. In New York, the burgeoning number of critics offered a variety of insights and opinions, sometimes turning into heated and lively exchanges. Often these journalistic battles involved the Philadelphia-born journalist-composer William Henry Fry (1813–64), one of the most significant figures in nineteenth-century American music history. Fry started his career working for his family's newspaper, the *National Gazette and Literary Register*, in the 1830s, while launching his career as a composer, writing operas and other large-scale works in a decidedly derivative Italianate style. Following an assignment in Paris as correspondent for the *Tribune* (1846–52), Fry returned to the United States and served as the *Tribune's* music critic until shortly before his death. Back in New York, Fry launched an unprecedented series of eleven lectures on music he underwrote himself, in which he employed a large orchestra, chorus, band and several soloists to illustrate his concepts, primarily through his own

¹⁵ Henry Cood Watson, *New World* (4 December 1841), quoted in Grant, *Maestros of the Pen*, p. 17.

compositions. An ardent advocate for American composers, his dual roles as composer and critic sometimes came into conflict; his insightful evaluations were often coloured by his own ambitions to be accepted as a serious composer, and he frequently clashed with the New York musical establishment.

By nature provocative and quick with a barb, Fry was himself frequently the focal point of criticism, particularly in his dogmatic views on his own music. Among his principal opponents was British transplant Charles C. Bailey Seymour (1829–69), chief music critic for the *New York Times* for nearly two decades. Reviewing the ‘Grand Finale’ of Fry’s path-breaking lecture series in 1852–3, during which Fry angrily decried the lack of support for American composers, Seymour drily observed: ‘When we in this country shall have produced a great work of Musical Art, we have little fear that the public will pass it slightly, or refuse to hear it at all.’¹⁶ Prominent composer and writer Richard Storrs Willis (1819–1900) also weighed in, diplomatically praising Fry for his audacity and originality. Nevertheless, Willis felt, Fry was much too undisciplined, lacking ‘synthesis, continuity, method’, and far too impetuous: ‘In short, we know of no more brilliant and interesting speaker than Mr. Fry; but he is inconsistent and contradictory, and sometimes gets on both sides of a question in the same paragraph . . . [H]is feelings often carry him away, and his desire or tendency to say biting things causes him to contradict himself most openly.’¹⁷

The feud between Willis and Fry escalated the following year in what writer Vera Brodsky Lawrence has called ‘the musical battle of the century’.¹⁸ This latest episode involved the performance, the previous December, of several of Fry’s orchestral pieces, including his hyper-programmatic holiday work the *Santa Claus* Symphony, by French conductor-composer Louis-Antoine Jullien, whose highly touted orchestra was then touring America. Willis called *Santa Claus* ‘a good Christmas piece: but hardly a composition to be gravely criticised like an earnest work of Art. It is a kind of *extravaganza* which moves the audience to laughter, entertaining them seasonably with imitated snowstorms, trotting horses, sleigh-bells, crashing whips, etc.’¹⁹ Willis’s casual dismissal of the work infuriated Fry, who issued a long and scathing letter to Willis, which Willis dutifully printed. Fry excoriated Willis for calling his

¹⁶ [Charles C. Bailey Seymour], *New York Times* (10 February 1853), quoted in Vera Brodsky Lawrence, *Strong on Music: The New York Scene in the Days of George Templeton Strong, 1836–1875, Volume 11: Reverberations, 1850–1856* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 386.

¹⁷ Richard Storrs Willis, ‘Mr. Fry’s Lectures’, *Musical World and New York Musical Times* (19 February 1853), 114–16, quoted in Lawrence, *Strong on Music, Vol. 11: Reverberations*, pp. 386–7.

¹⁸ Lawrence, *Strong on Music, Vol. 11: Reverberations*, p. 387.

¹⁹ Richard Storrs Willis, ‘Musical News from Everywhere’, *Musical World and New York Musical Times* (7 January 1854), 5–6, quoted in Lawrence, *Strong on Music, Vol. 11: Reverberations*, p. 378.

work a mere extravaganza, when in reality, Fry proclaimed, it was the most serious of works. He then followed with an almost stream-of-consciousness tirade condemning both Beethoven and Mozart for their deficiencies in expressing mirth in music, and declaring Weber's overture to *Der Freischütz* as far superior to Beethoven's 'Eroica' Symphony. Moreover, Fry blasted the leaders of the German-dominated New York Philharmonic Society, arguing that they had consistently ignored American compositions. Fry went so far as to call the Society an 'incubus on art', and denounced it for never having 'asked for or performed a single American instrumental composition during the eleven years of its existence'.²⁰

In his next issue, Willis issued a rejoinder to Fry's charges, point by point, while continuing to insist that *Santa Claus* was merely an extravaganza. Willis concluded on a somewhat patronising note, assuring Fry that he admired the composer's 'genius', but declaring that it was 'genius astray. You are wrong in your views of Art . . . You are a splendid frigate at sea without a helm.'²¹ The war of words between the two critics continued for several more rounds and with increasing intensity, each refusing to concede a point. As Lawrence noted, Fry's condemnation of Willis and the Philharmonic for callously ignoring American composers has been embraced by some twentieth-century scholars as 'the archetypal Declaration of Rights for American Music and Musicians'. But, she notes, Fry's outbursts smacked more of simple petulance, 'an uninhibited display of self-glorification intermingled with an outpouring of personal grievances, frustrations, wounded vanity, boastfulness, bitterness, abusiveness, defensiveness, offensiveness, pretentiousness, idiosyncratic pronouncements, and an apparently unappeasable hunger for adulation'.²²

Though the writings of these early critics demonstrate their musical knowledge and keen insights, some of their perceptions – such as Fry's belittling of Mozart and Beethoven – may strike present-day readers as wildly off the mark. In his writings Fry frequently expressed his own ideas of the primacy of

²⁰ William Henry Fry, 'Mr. Fry's Letter to Mr. Willis (New York Tribune Office: January 10th, 1854)', *Musical World and New York Musical Times* (21 January 1854), reprinted in *Dwight's Journal of Music*, 4/18 (4 February 1854), 138–40. Fry's assertions were not quite accurate; George Frederick Bristow, a Philharmonic violinist as well as a composer, offered a swift rebuttal to Fry's statement, noting, rather sarcastically, that the Society had indeed, perhaps 'by mistake or accident', in its eleven years of existence once played a single American composition, one of his own overtures. Perhaps not fearful of biting the hand that fed him, Bristow added with further indignation: 'What is the Philharmonic Society in this country? Is it to play exclusively the works of German masters, especially if they be dead? . . . Or is it to stimulate original art on the spot?', quoted in Richard Crawford, *America's Musical Life* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001), p. 329.

²¹ Richard Storrs Willis, 'Reply to Mr. Fry, of the *Tribune*', *Musical World and New York Musical Times* (28 January 1854), 37–9, reprinted in *Dwight's Journal of Music*, 4/22 (4 March 1854), 171–3.

²² Lawrence, *Strong on Music*, Vol. 11: *Reverberations*, p. 480.

programmatic over absolute music: in a January 1854 review of the New York Philharmonic Society's performance of Schumann's Symphony No. 2 and Mendelssohn's overture *Meeresstille und glückliche Fahrt*, he criticised Schumann's use of such an 'antiquated' form, declaring that Schumann had by no means improved on his model, Beethoven, and adding that Schumann was 'inferior to his master'.²³ According to Fry, Schumann's symphony was a 'sheer waste of powder' marked by a 'lack of melody'. Likewise, he declared Mendelssohn's overture as 'destitute of a singular musical idea', and 'equally inferior in conception and execution'. Fry noted furthermore that 'if Mendelssohn's musical voyage was undertaken to steer clear of an idea, he has done so'.²⁴ Melody, it seems, was indeed one of the most important critical elements during this time, not only for Fry. Watson, writing on Verdi in the *Albion* in 1847, unfavourably compared Verdi's melodies with those of Bellini or Donizetti, noting that they seemed to have been written 'under restraint, that is, as though they were composed under the most impressive remembrances of the masters of his school who had gone before him'. Watson continued by criticising Verdi's 'passion for instruments of brass and percussion . . . This love of noise is the curse of our modern writers; with the Italians it is mere noise without substance . . . It will be a happy day for music when writers return to Mozart's simplicity!'²⁵

The divergent perceptions that nineteenth-century critics and audiences held towards now canonical composers and works is of course one of the main benefits in studying reception. Equally informative is seeing how the canon came to be. What makes Beethoven today more esteemed than Spohr, for example? Setting aside the opinions of Fry, Beethoven's *ne plus ultra* status in the composer pantheon stems in large part from nineteenth-century writers and critics whose views of the composer and his works elided with their own conception of music as an almost quasi-religious emotional expression that transcended any attempts at verbal articulation. Though many Americans continued to view music, as W. S. B. Mathews put it, as 'exemplifying gospel teachings',²⁶ some American literati and musical elite, principally in New England, began to approach it from a more humanistic perspective, appreciating the science of music but also recognising what they saw as its transcendent powers. The American Transcendental movement of the 1830s and 40s, led by such intellectuals as Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–82) and Margaret Fuller

²³ Quoted in Mark McKnight, 'Music Criticism in the *New York Times* and the *New York Tribune*, 1851–1876', unpublished PhD dissertation, Louisiana State University (1980), 63–4.

²⁴ McKnight, 'Music Criticism', 64.

²⁵ *Albion* (6 March 1847), quoted in Grant, *Maestros of the Pen*, p. 19.

²⁶ Mathews, *Hundred Years*, p. 35.

(1810–50), rejected religious rituals and creeds along with the Calvinist idea of humans as inherently sinful beings. Likewise, the Transcendentalists eschewed eighteenth-century rationalist thought in favour of a personal, intuitive relationship with the Divine.²⁷ Central to their aesthetic was the primacy of European art music – especially the symphonies of Beethoven – which they promoted with near religious zeal.

Among the greatest champions of Beethoven in the United States in the decades immediately following his death was the prominent American writer John Sullivan Dwight (1813–93). Dwight, a graduate of Harvard College (1832), trained for the ministry and was ordained as a Unitarian minister in 1840. Despite his initial clerical ambitions, his interests in music and his subsequent acquaintance with members of the Transcendentalist movement then sweeping New England led Dwight instead to a career as music journalist, a role that suited him much better. He joined the utopian communal enterprise Brook Farm, located in West Roxbury, Massachusetts, and founded by former Unitarian minister George Ripley and his wife, Sophia, in 1841. There Dwight taught music and Latin, and began writing columns on music for the *Dial*, the foremost journal of the Transcendentalist movement, and the Associationist magazine *The Harbinger*. His greatest contribution to American music criticism, however, rests with his own periodical, *Dwight's Journal of Music*, which he edited between 1852 and 1881.

In the journal's prospectus, Dwight stated that his aim was to include not only reviews of the latest concerts, but also more substantive critical analyses, historical and biographical sketches, notices of new music, and articles on music education and all musical genres, in addition to occasional pieces on literature and the fine arts: 'The *tone* [is] to be impartial, independent, catholic, conciliatory, aloof from musical clique and controversy, cordial to all good things, but eager to chime in with any powerful private interest of publisher, professor, concert-goer, manager, society, or party.'²⁸ It was clear that Dwight was neither satisfied with the state of classical music in the United States nor in the journalistic coverage it was being given. Moreover, he saw art music as 'an important saving influence' in the young democracy: 'very confused, crude, heterogeneous is this sudden musical activity in a young, utilitarian people. A thousand specious fashions too successfully dispute the place of true Art in the favour of each little public.' To facilitate this salvation, he

²⁷ One of the few women music critics of this period, Fuller, though primarily known for her literary criticism, also contributed thoughtful, practically oriented reviews, first to the *Dial* (1840–44), then to the *New York Tribune* (1844–6).

²⁸ Quoted in George Willis Cooke, *John Sullivan Dwight: Brook-Farmer, Editor, and Critic of Music* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1969; first published Boston: Small, Maynard, & Co., 1898), p. 147.

wrote in the first issue, required ‘a regular bulletin of progress; something to represent the movement, and at the same time to guide it to the true end’.²⁹ Though based in Boston, Dwight had as his goal to advocate for classical music throughout the United States. ‘This paper would make itself the “Organ” of no school or class, but simply *an* organ of what we have called the musical *movement* in this country; of the growing love of deep and genuine music,’ which for Dwight meant the German classical tradition he held as supreme.³⁰

Dwight’s *Journal*, published weekly until 1869 and every two weeks thereafter, regularly included reports on musical happenings from correspondents across the country as well as Europe, often reprinting articles, in translation, from major European periodicals. Dwight had a stable of regular contributors, including Beethoven biographer Alexander Wheelock Thayer, Transcendental writer and journalist George W. Curtis, and William F. Apthorp, later principal music critic for the *Boston Evening Transcript* for many years. And though he continued to favour German classics, Dwight dutifully reported on more modern trends (Verdi and Wagner, for example), and even included coverage of more ephemeral and popular idioms. An ardent foe of slavery, he also wrote with sympathy towards African American music. He published without hesitation notices of the earliest publications of Negro spirituals, including a prescient review by the editor of the *New York Weekly Review*, who claimed, in citing public reception of the Fisk Jubilee Singers after the Civil War, that at last ‘the American school of music has been discovered’.³¹

Despite Dwight’s lofty aims at bringing Americans to a greater appreciation and understanding of classical music, the development of music in the country did not follow the path Dwight had envisioned or for which he had so assiduously laboured. Never very profitable, Dwight’s *Journal* obtained more stable support when he arranged for prominent Boston music publisher Oliver Ditson & Co. to take over the publication and distribution of the journal in 1859, allowing Dwight to retain editorial control. Resisting Ditson’s pressure to adopt a more popular tone, however, Dwight severed ties with that company in 1879, and set up a similar arrangement with another Boston publisher, Houghton, Osgood, and Co., but that partnership failed to keep the *Journal* afloat. Dwight published the last issue of his *Journal* on 3 September 1881. In that final issue he expressed his somewhat bitter disappointment in having failed in his mission:

²⁹ [John Sullivan Dwight], ‘Introductory’, *Dwight’s Journal of Music*, 1/1 (10 April 1852), 4. ³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ [John Sullivan Dwight], ‘Negro Folk Songs’, *Dwight’s Journal of Music*, 32/26 (5 April 1873), 411–12.

The truth is, we have for some time been convinced that there is not in this country now, and never has been, any adequate demand or support for a musical journal of the highest tone and character . . . A journal which devotes itself to art for art's sake, and strives to serve the ends of real culture, however earnestly and ably, gets praise and compliment, but not support.³²

Although Dwight felt he had failed to see his vision of music in America realised, his influence was great on the readers he did reach, as Grant has observed, 'a select but influential audience of community leaders, university and literary people, and others in position to implement, sometimes directly, sometimes indirectly, many of his ideas'.³³ Perhaps Dwight's greatest contribution, in the end, is the window he provided future scholars on a period of rich and vibrant development in America's musical life, even though that development did not happen as he had hoped.

The end of Dwight's *Journal* in 1881 occurred during the period of American history – between Reconstruction and the First World War – that has frequently been called the Gilded Age.³⁴ As America advanced economically and industrially, men of great wealth, largely unencumbered by the federal income taxes or governmental regulations of later generations, saw their personal fortunes multiply, while they and their families displayed their riches ever more conspicuously – building ornate, lavishly furnished mansions, taking extravagant voyages abroad and, like New York's antebellum Upper Ten, patronising the arts and music, particularly the opera. Because of this attention from the elite classes, music in America, as Joseph Horowitz has observed, gradually assumed the reputation as 'queen of the arts'.³⁵ The status of music critics, particularly in America's large metropolitan dailies, rose concomitantly. Indeed, this era in many ways may be seen as a 'golden period' for American music criticism, as music critics became, according to Horowitz, the 'leading embodiments of taste and opinion'.³⁶ Never before or since, in fact, have music critics enjoyed such a prominent and important role in shaping American musical taste.

Although music criticism in American newspapers generally improved, both in the amount and quality of coverage, a number of critics, in New York, Boston and Chicago, are remembered today for their exceptional

³² [John Sullivan Dwight], 'Valedictory', *Dwight's Journal of Music*, 41/1051 (3 September 1881), 123–4.

³³ Grant, *Maestros of the Pen*, p. 52.

³⁴ Writers Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner coined the term in their 1873 novel *The Gilded Age: A Tale of Today* to satirise what they perceived as a myriad of social problems and greed disguised by a thin layer of gold.

³⁵ Joseph Horowitz, *Classical Music in America: A History of Its Rise and Fall* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2005), p. 3.

³⁶ Horowitz, *Classical Music in America*, p. 63.

careers, some well into the twentieth century. They are often referred to collectively as the 'Old Guard', a term first applied to them by Oscar Thompson. In Boston, which considered itself the true cultural capital of America, the Old Guard included two leading critical luminaries, William Foster Apthorp (1848–1913) and Philip Hale (1854–1934). Apthorp and Hale both enjoyed privileged upbringings and Ivy League educations, Apthorp at Harvard, where he studied with influential composer and organist John Knowles Paine, and Hale at Yale. In addition, both men had extensive performing backgrounds. Before turning full-time to criticism, Apthorp taught piano at New England Conservatory. Hale, having spent five years of music study in Europe and despite passing the bar and practising law for a few years, supported himself as a church organist until he settled in Boston and began writing reviews for the *Boston Post* in 1890; he moved to the *Boston Journal* the following year.

Apthorp, as noted previously, gained much of his early training writing for *Dwight's Journal of Music*, as well as for the literary magazine *Scribner's Monthly*. In 1881, the year *Dwight's* folded, he began his long association with the *Boston Evening Transcript*, a tenure than ended in 1903. From 1892 to 1901 he also served as programme annotator for the Boston Symphony Orchestra. In addition, he published several books on music and edited Scribner's *Cyclopaedia of Music and Musicians* (New York, 1888–90). Though sometimes characterised, perhaps unfairly, as ultra-conservative and reactionary, Apthorp in fact held a centrist position, revering the classics championed by his mentor Dwight, while also promoting Wagner and American composers, though he condemned Dvořák's 'New World' Symphony and Edward MacDowell's 'Indian' Suite for using what he considered 'barbaric' materials. Apthorp, like many of his predecessors, felt deeply about the power of music as an ameliorating agent in people's lives, and, unlike some of his peers, he was basically self-effacing regarding his role as tastemaker, noting that 'the critic can easily learn more from artists than they are likely ever to learn from him'.³⁷

Equally conservative, if not so modest, Apthorp's colleague-rival Philip Hale held similar negative views on Dvořák and nationalistic music and also championed American composers. An ardent Francophile, unlike Apthorp and others, Hale in fact disdained Wagner and German music and musicians in general, noting disparagingly that German composers and singers 'subsist mainly upon pork, veal, cabbage and beer . . . The diet of your average German is indigestible; it puffs out logy men. Could a sparkling operetta in the French

³⁷ Quoted in Grant, *Maestros of the Pen*, p. 72.

style be written after a year's stay at a German boardinghouse?³⁸ Hale also displayed a bias against programmatic works, preferring absolute music, and though he championed Debussy, the extra-musical elements in such works as *La Mer* troubled him.³⁹

Hale's career in Boston spanned several decades, and he wrote for a succession of Boston papers, including the *Post* (1890–91), *Journal* (1891–1903) and *Herald* (1903–33). In addition, he served as Boston correspondent for the *Musical Courier* (1892–98) and edited the *Musical Record* (1897–1901), the *Musical World* (1901–2) and the two-volume collection *Modern French Songs* (Boston and New York, 1904). Hale's principal contribution, however, was in his role as programme annotator for the Boston Symphony Orchestra (1901–34), for it was Hale, as Grant has observed, 'who did the most to develop orchestra programme annotator as an occupational genre for music critics ever since'.⁴⁰ In his long association with the BSO, Hale wrote notes for close to a thousand works. Though others, such as Apthorp, had written programme notes before Hale began, Hale became the model for all subsequent annotators. He approached this species of writing differently from his subjective reviews, which were often quite opinionated; his job here was to provide objective descriptions, including a 'play-by-play' narrative of the piece, as well as offering concert-goers a vivid sense of the composer's personality and mien. As an example, his depiction of composer Franz Schubert, in his programme notes for the composer's 'Unfinished' Symphony:

Schubert was a clumsy man, short, round-shouldered, tallow-faced, with a great shock of black hair, with penetrating though spectacled eyes, strong-jawed, stubby-fingered. He shuffled in his walk, and he expressed himself in speech with difficulty. He described himself as unhappy, miserable; but his practical jokes delighted tavern companions, and he was proud of his performance of *The Erlking* on a comb.⁴¹

Yet even in his annotations, Hale could not sometimes escape his penchant for archness: in the same passage on Schubert, Hale continued by extolling the virtues of the composer's lieder, claiming that 'no one has treated the passion of love more purely'.⁴² Then he gets down to the business at hand, beginning

³⁸ *Boston Home Journal* (26 April 1890), quoted in Horowitz, *Classical Music in America*, p. 64.

³⁹ Horowitz, *Classical Music in America*, p. 65. ⁴⁰ Grant, *Maestros of the Pen*, p. 75.

⁴¹ Philip Hale, 'Franz Peter Schubert', in John N. Burk (ed.), *Philip Hale's Boston Symphony Programme Notes: Historical, Critical, and Descriptive Comment on Music and Composers* (Garden City: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1936), pp. 261–5. The online Boston Symphony Orchestra Archives allows access to the BSO programme books at: collections.bso.org/digital/collection/PROG.

⁴² Hale, 'Franz Peter Schubert', p. 264.

his discussion of the symphony by exhorting: 'Let us be thankful that Schubert never finished the work. Possibly the lost arms of the Venus of Milo might disappoint if they were found and restored.'⁴³ While his annotations may not have been as widely read as his newspaper reviews, nonetheless, they reflected the important role of critics, especially the 'Old Guard', in forming the musical canon: 'to be hailed by Hale into BSO annals was to be incorporated by other annotators and professional music appreciationists ever after into the composer pantheon'.⁴⁴

While Apthorp and Hale were pontificating on all things musical in Boston, Old Guard critics in other cities were also guiding the musical tastes of Americans. In New York the list began with Fry and Watson's successor at the *Tribune*, John R. G. Hassard (1836–88), whose ardent promotion of Wagner did much to fuel Wagnermania during this period. Hassard wrote for the *Tribune* from 1866 to 1884, just when resistance to Wagner's 'Music of the Future', decried by earlier critics, was breaking down. Whereas thirty years earlier Henry Watson had shunned Verdi's brassy excesses for the more melodious operas of Rossini, Bellini and Donizetti, Hassard's critical assessment of the latter's *La figlia del reggimento* in 1874 tells us much about the tastes of New York audiences at this time:

it may be questioned, however, whether not merely this bright little opera of Donizetti's . . . but the whole class of works it represents, has not seen its day. People are no longer content with the music over which one gently smiles. They look for more stimulating entertainments – tears, madness, agony, and heroism at the opera house, and the heartiest sort of farce on less pretentious stages.⁴⁵

Hassard's assessment of Wagner's *Lohengrin* when it premiered at the Academy of Music, New York's principal opera house, in March 1874 (and also in Italian!), was equally insightful; Hassard called this performance 'of the very first importance in the field of art', and perceptively observed that Wagner's work was not an opera, but 'a new form, an "Art-work"'.⁴⁶ If Wagner's music dramas were to succeed in New York, he continued, the public would have to learn to judge each work as a whole, rather than the 'attractiveness of individual scenes'.

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 261–5. ⁴⁴ Grant, *Maestros of the Pen*, p. 77.

⁴⁵ [John R. G. Hassard], 'The Opera: *La figlia del reggimento*', *New York Tribune* (8 October 1874), 6, quoted in McKnight, 'Music Criticism', 405.

⁴⁶ [John R. G. Hassard], 'Wagner's *Lohengrin*', *New York Tribune* (23 March 1874), 7, quoted in McKnight, 'Music Criticism', 403; Hassard in his review also noted correctly that *Lohengrin* had in fact been produced three years earlier by a German opera company at the Stadt Theatre, but he dismissed that production as strictly 'for the Germans' and attracting 'little attention from the native population.'

The acceptance of Wagner continued to grow; three years later several New York papers dispatched their critics to Bayreuth to report on the highly anticipated premiere of Wagner's *Ring des Nibelungen*, perhaps the decade's most significant operatic event. Hassard declared the performance of the cycle to be 'one of the most stupendous successes the stage has ever witnessed . . . nothing in the remotest degree approaching the grandeur and effectiveness of what we are now hearing has ever been presented on the lyric stage. The victory of Wagner is overwhelming.'⁴⁷ The *Times* critic, Frederick A. Schwab (1844–1927), was no less effusive in his praise of the cycle, but he did express some doubt as to the practicalities of transferring Wagner's concept of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* to New York, and he observed that full appreciation of Wagner's *Ring* required prior study and 'the intent to labor . . . This may be the temper of the music-lover of the future, but it is certainly not that of the music-lover of the present.'⁴⁸

Following Hassard and Schwab in New York were a group of critics, Henry E. Krehbiel (1854–1923), Henry T. Finck (1854–1926), William J. Henderson (1855–1937) and James Gibbons Huneker (1857–1921), whose careers and writings are seen today as encapsulating the full essence of the *fin-de-siècle* New York musical scene. These Old Guard critics continued the advocacy for Wagner that Hassard had initiated, yet they each left their mark on music in New York in different ways, not only by their newspaper reviews, but also through their many other writings.

Krehbiel was born in Michigan to German-American parents and raised in Cincinnati, Ohio. He studied law and was self-taught in music, though he possessed a thorough musical knowledge. Unlike his Ivy League-educated colleagues, he never attended college. Krehbiel came to New York in 1880 and was soon hired by the *Tribune* as assistant music critic, before replacing the ailing Hassard in 1884. Krehbiel stayed at the *Tribune* for forty-three years, retiring in 1923. He was a prolific author, penning a dozen books in addition to his journalistic writings. Chief among these was his translation and completion of Thayer's *Life of Ludwig van Beethoven*.⁴⁹ His *How to Listen to Music* was frequently reprinted; his two-volume history of opera in New York, *Chapters of Opera*, and *More Chapters of Opera*, remains a landmark of its kind.⁵⁰ Often

⁴⁷ [John R. G. Hassard], 'Wagner at Bayreuth', *New York Tribune* (23 August 1876), 1–2, quoted in McKnight, 'Music Criticism', 411.

⁴⁸ Frederick A. Schwab, 'The Baireuth Festival' [*sic*], *New York Times* (14 August 1876), 5, quoted in McKnight, 'Music Criticism', 411.

⁴⁹ Alexander Wheelock Thayer, *The Life of Ludwig van Beethoven*, eds. Hermann Deiters and Hugo Riemann, trans. Henry Edward Krehbiel (New York: Beethoven Association, 1921).

⁵⁰ Henry Edward Krehbiel, *How to Listen to Music* (New York: C. Scribner's, 1896); *Chapters of Opera* (New York: H. Holt, 1908); *More Chapters of Opera* (New York: H. Holt, 1919).

called the dean of New York music critics, Krehbiel championed Dvořák and was a leading advocate of nationalism in music. Among his most important contributions was his promotion of ethnic music, especially that of African Americans, during a time when many critics displayed what Krehbiel called an ‘ungenerous and illiberal attitude’ towards African American music, a statement voiced in the preface to his path-breaking study, *Afro-American Folksongs: A Study in Racial and National Music*.⁵¹

Unlike Krehbiel, Henry T. Finck and William J. Henderson were Ivy League graduates, Finck at Harvard and Henderson at Princeton. Finck, like Krehbiel the Midwest-born son of German immigrants, studied with John Knowles Paine at Harvard before spending several years in Germany and Austria; he helped finance his studies abroad by writing articles on music for American papers. Also an ardent promoter of Wagner, Finck spent the majority of his long career as music critic for the *New York Evening Post* and *The Nation*, retiring after forty-three years. Of somewhat more genial temperament than his peers, he viewed his role as that of the enthusiastic advocate, and he sometimes despaired of having to give a negative review. Finck’s wife, Abbie Cushman Finck (1868–1940), frequently collaborated with Finck and is thought to have written many of the reviews attributed to her husband.

William J. Henderson, whose lengthy career spanned fifteen years at the *Times* (1887–1902) and another thirty-five at the *New York Sun* (1902–37), in addition to his Princeton studies also received training in voice and piano. Besides his newspaper reviews, Henderson wrote music appreciation books, operetta librettos, some volumes of verse and fiction, and even books on seamanship and sailing – his *Elements of Navigation* was used as a training manual by the US Navy in the First World War. Unlike his predecessor at the *Times*, Frederick Schwab, whose sometimes questionable journalistic practices harkened back to an earlier era, Henderson was highly respected, particularly with regard to vocal music and opera, as well as for his plain, clear but often stinging prose. Though revered among his peers and the music-loving public in New York as one of the ‘grand old men’ of music criticism, Henderson, like most of the other Old Guard members, was never able to come to terms with modern music, and in his later years he seemed increasingly out of touch with contemporary currents.

Not so James Gibbons Huneker, whose status as perhaps the most enlightened of the Old Guard, and the most versatile, is demonstrated by his prolific output – more than twenty books and myriad writings on music, art, drama

⁵¹ Henry Edward Krehbiel, *Afro-American Folksongs: A Study in Racial and National Music* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1914).

and literature, in addition to his reviews in numerous New York and Philadelphia newspapers and magazines. Equally proficient as a critic in all artistic areas, he described himself as ‘steeplejack of the arts’ in his autobiography *Steeplejack*.⁵² Despite his varied interests, music remained the focal point of Huneker’s critical writings. A man of enormous, polymathic intellect, his lack of a college education did not hamper the course of his career. Early attempts at apprenticing for the law were soon replaced by his desire to become a concert pianist, but after several years of study, his work as freelance journalist for the *Etude* and other music journals showed Huneker the path to his true calling. Where Henderson’s forte was opera, Huneker’s was the piano; he published a highly acclaimed biography of Chopin and edited volumes of Chopin’s piano music. Huneker could sometimes be less than kind towards other music critics, but was generally regarded as a critic’s critic; Irving Kolodin, writing in 1960, declared Huneker among all the Old Guard critics to be ‘the universal choice as elder statesman . . . not only for erudition and wit, but also for the racing fluency of his writings’.⁵³

Although the Boston–New York axis continued to be central to classical music in America, as the country expanded westward, musical activities began to intensify in a number of Midwestern cities. The most influential centre for music criticism outside New York or Boston was Chicago, where two New England-born music critics, W. S. B. Mathews (1837–1912) and George Putnam Upton (1834–1919), led much of the musical growth. Mathews, a piano teacher and organist, had little formal education but was highly literate in the arts and music. He began his journalistic career by contributing articles to *Dwight’s Journal of Music* under the pseudonym ‘Der Freyschutz’ – his reports on musical activities in Chicago helped bring the city national exposure – and later he was a fervent advocate for music in his adopted hometown. He set out to inform people ‘back East’ that although Midwesterners had initially been slow to respond to ‘the art enthusiasm’ of those who laboured on behalf of music in their cities, ‘when they did, however, awoken to the dignity and importance of musical culture, they met the zeal of those who pointed out the way, with an equal enthusiasm and with ardent, liberal and generous appreciation’.⁵⁴ Mathews worked as music critic for the *Chicago Tribune* from 1877 to 1886 and also wrote for other Chicago dailies during this time; later he edited the magazine *Music* (1891–1902) and contributed more than five hundred articles to the *Etude* and other music

⁵² James Huneker, *Steeplejack* (New York: C. Scribner’s, 1920).

⁵³ Irving Kolodin, ‘Huneker’s Hundredth’, *Saturday Review* (30 January 1960), 53.

⁵⁴ Mathews, *Hundred Years*, p. 82.

journals. Like the others, Mathews also wrote books – his *Hundred Years of Music in America*, the first comprehensive history of American music, provides a wealth of information on nineteenth-century musical life in the United States.⁵⁵ Mathews's insightful writings show a critic who was forward-thinking and progressive yet thoroughly grounded in the Western European musical tradition, and one whose prodigious output was unmatched.

George P. Upton, by contrast to Mathews, had an Ivy League pedigree, but no formal musical training. Nonetheless, his influence on music in Chicago during his life was large. As longtime critic (writing under the pseudonym 'Peregrine Pickle') for the *Chicago Tribune* (1863–81) and then senior editor for that paper (1881–1905), he tirelessly promoted music, especially local musical groups, and was instrumental in founding the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in 1891, lobbying strongly for the hiring of conductor Theodore Thomas, the leading orchestral conductor in America.

Chicago continued its rise in musical importance throughout the early twentieth century. As the Old Guard passed away and the Gilded Age faded into the Jazz Age, a new generation of critics emerged. These younger critics wrote in leaner, more direct prose and were, as a group, more open to contemporary music, if not always championing it. In Chicago, the leading critic and successor to Upton and Mathews was Claudia Cassidy (1899–1996), who wrote authoritatively – and often vituperatively – on music, dance and drama for various Chicago dailies for forty years, including a twenty-three-year run at the *Chicago Tribune* (1942–65). On the West Coast, Chicago native Alfred Frankenstein (1906–81) had an even longer tenure at the *San Francisco Chronicle* (1934–75), where the level of his influence recalled that of the Old Guard critics a generation earlier. John Rosenfield (1900–66) also had a similar reputation and impact in Dallas, where he began writing the 'Amusements' column for the *Dallas Morning News* in 1925. Rosenfield's writings on music and the arts made him the leading cultural voice for the Southwest. He was also active in helping to revive the Dallas Symphony in the mid-1920s, and in the selection of its conductors.

In Canada, the first significant music critic to appear was the French-Canadian composer, conductor and choirmaster Guillaume Couture (1851–1915). Couture, the first Canadian to be admitted to the Paris Conservatoire, trained there under Romaine Bussine and Théodore Dubois. Once back in Canada, he wrote highly penetrating reviews in both national languages for various Montreal papers, including *La Minerve*, *Revue de Montréal*, *La Patrie* and the *Montréal Star*. His exacting standards and often

⁵⁵ Ibid.

harsh critiques of local musicians made him unpopular in some quarters, and Couture left Montreal for Paris in 1876 to become choirmaster at Ste-Clotilde, the church where César Franck served as organist. Couture returned to Montreal the following year, however, and set about cultivating the growth of music in his native city, directing church choirs, conducting, teaching, and composing with vigorous intensity until his death in 1915. Couture's student Léo-Pol Morin (1892–1941), the next major French-Canadian composer-critic, also studied in Paris, immersing himself in the musical life of that city and forming close friendships with Maurice Ravel, Ricardo Viñes and Alexis Roland-Manuel in the years immediately following the First World War. After returning to Montreal in 1925, Morin maintained an active career teaching, composing and writing about music. He helped found *Le Nigog* (1918), a short-lived yet influential journal devoted to contemporary literature and the arts; that journal exposed young Canadians to French modernism. Later Morin wrote for *La Patrie* (1926–9), *La Presse* (1929–31) and *Le Canada* (1933–41).

Leading Anglophone critics during this time in Canada included J. D. Logan (1869–1929), Augustus Bridle (1868–1952) and Hector Charlesworth (1872–1945). Charlesworth, a journalist and arts commentator, reviewed music for Toronto's *Mail and Empire* and later edited and provided music criticism for *Saturday Night*, Canada's premiere weekly. Bridle and Charlesworth were among the first to write on and assess Canadian composers; Logan, a poet, literary critic, and aesthete, explored the foundations of Canadian criticism. Other critics included Thomas Archer (1899–1971), who wrote for the Montreal *Gazette* for almost forty years and also provided commentary for New York Philharmonic concert broadcasts on the CBC; H. P. Bell (1872–1961), music and art critic for the *Montréal Daily Star* and the *Daily Herald*; S. Roy Maley (1897–1967), critic for the Winnipeg *Tribune*; Vancouver *Sun* critic Stanley Bligh (1883–1975); and George J. Dyke (1864–1940), who wrote for the Vancouver *World* under the pseudonym 'Gamba'. Besides Morin, other French-language critics from this period included Gustave Comte (1874–1932), Eugène Lapierre (1899–1970), Marcel Vallois (1898–1991), Omer Létourneau (1891–1983) and Léo Roy (1887–1974). Although few enjoyed very long publishing runs, also appearing during the later nineteenth century were journals devoted to music, including *Le Canada musical*, *Musical Canada*, *TCM Conservatory Bi-Monthly*, *L'Album musical*, *La Lyre* and *Le Passe-temps*, the longest-lived Canadian music periodical (1895–1935, 1945–9).

Back in New York, many of the Old Guard would enjoy careers lasting well into the 1920s and even 30s, by which time their now-conservative opinions

made them increasingly out-of-step with newer currents. Lawrence Gilman (1878–1939), who began at *Harper's* magazine in 1901 and succeeded Krehbiel at the *Tribune* from 1923 until his death, may be seen as a transitional figure, advocating, like his predecessors, for Wagner, but also championing, much as Huneker did, the French impressionists, and even such ultramodern composers as Edgard Varèse. Richard Aldrich (1863–1937), who began his career in New York in 1891 as Krehbiel's assistant at the *Tribune*, was appointed music editor at the rival *Times* in 1902, where he remained until his retirement in 1923. Aldrich's writings were marked by their wit and refinement, and he was also generally more receptive to modern trends. His most important legacy lies in his role in raising the profile of the *Times* as the pre-eminent newspaper for music criticism in America.

That legacy was continued by Olin Downes (1886–1955). Downes, who brought a populist tone to classical music, enjoyed one of the longest careers of any American music critic. He worked at the *Boston Post* as music critic from 1906 to 1924 before moving to the *New York Times*, where he served as critic until his death. He was one of the first to exploit the new medium of radio, providing commentary for broadcasts of the New York Philharmonic and Boston Symphony. His popular broadcast-intermission Opera Quiz programmes for the Metropolitan Opera made him a national celebrity in the 1940s. Because of his national exposure, and in part because of market attrition, Downes's tenure at the *Times* reflected his position as the most influential critic in the country, but many of his opinions and views on contemporary music now seem outdated – he praised Gershwin and Shostakovich but vehemently denounced Stravinsky and Schoenberg, calling the latter's *Five Pieces for Orchestra* 'very horrible' and 'the music of raw and tortured nerves'.⁵⁶ Writing on Stravinsky's first appearance in the United States in 1925, Downes commented that the Russian composer had failed to live up to the expectations created by *Le Sacre du printemps*: 'there is little question that the bewildering rise of Igor Stravinsky from apparent creative nonentity to the position of composer of the *Sacre du printemps* has been followed by a decline fully as rapid and destructive of the high hopes of those who believed that in him there was a prophet of a new age'.⁵⁷ By contrast, Downes gave his most ardent support for Sibelius, whose reception in America was to a great extent the result of Downes's tireless championing of the composer among American

⁵⁶ Olin Downes, 'Schoenberg's Five Pieces for Orchestra in Boston', in *Olin Downes on Music*, ed. Irene Downes (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1957), pp. 47–58.

⁵⁷ Downes, 'Stravinsky Visits America at Forty-three', in *Olin Downes on Music*, p. 95.

conductors. Musicologist Glenda Dawn Goss has noted that Downes ‘preached the gospel of Sibelius as salvation for the twentieth-century soul’.⁵⁸

Also making his mark on the radio as well as in print was the composer-critic Deems Taylor (1885–1966), who succeeded Huneker at the *New York World* in 1921. Taylor reached millions across America as a commentator for New York Philharmonic and Metropolitan Opera broadcasts throughout the 1930s and 40s, and his books on music, largely based on his own radio talks, were also popular. Though Taylor was generally sympathetic to modernism, his own music was academically post-Romantic, and while well received during his time, it was soon forgotten after his death.

Despite the fact that a few critics during this time avidly promoted it, much avant-garde music continued to experience resistance from the mainstream press, with a few exceptions. Among the rare early supporters of the new music were writer-photographer Carl van Vechten (1880–1964), also one of the first to write on modern dance as well as black music, and Paul Rosenfeld (1890–1946), who wrote intelligent and persistent essays championing avant-garde currents, including literature and the arts, in a number of literary and progressive magazines (*Seven Arts*, *New Republic*, *Vanity Fair* and *The Dial*, among others). Rosenfeld also wrote for the most important journal devoted to new music at this time, *Modern Music*, founded by the League of Composers, formed in 1923 for the purpose of promoting contemporary music. One of the founding members of the League, Minna Lederman (1896–1995), served as sole editor of the journal from its founding in 1924 until it ended in 1946. A number of prominent American composers wrote frequently for her journal (originally called *League of Composers’ Review*), among them Virgil Thomson, Aaron Copland, John Cage, Elliott Carter, Roger Sessions and Leonard Bernstein. She also solicited articles from such major European composers as Arnold Schoenberg, Béla Bartók and Alban Berg. According to Joan Peyser, Lederman ‘probably shaped pre-World War II American music more than any single composer did’.⁵⁹

Peyser notes that while *Modern Music’s* first issues were modelled after such European publications as *La Revue musicale*, with short articles by European scholars and an international focus, *Modern Music* soon ‘took on an idiosyncratic American tone: fresh, brash, brusque, contentious’, a tone primarily due to the composers – mostly young and American – Lederman invited to write for the magazine.⁶⁰ It was this composer’s perspective that set *Modern Music*

⁵⁸ Glenda Dawn Goss, *Jean Sibelius and Olin Downes* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1995), p. 57.

⁵⁹ Joan Peyser, ‘A Power Broker Who Helped Shape American Music’, *New York Times* (25 December 1983), H17, 20.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 17.

apart from other American music criticism of the time and provided American composers with a vehicle to promote – and defend – not only their own music but also to write perceptively about all current musical developments and genres, including jazz and the new technology of sound recording.

Although many of Lederman's regular composer-contributors were gifted and accomplished writers on music, Virgil Thomson (1896–1989) was one of the few who enjoyed equally distinguished professional careers both as composer and as newspaper critic. After gaining acclaim for such works as *Four Saints in Three Acts* (1927–8), *The Plow that Broke the Plains* (1936) and *The River* (1937), Thomson began writing for the *New York Herald Tribune* in October 1940 and remained there until he stepped down in 1954. Thomson's prose in his reviews matched his compositional style – plain, clear and direct, but also frequently marked by a dry wit. He focused less on performance than on composition, and often had sharp words for classical music's star system as well as for management. A pronounced Francophile, his frequently expressed disdain for 'the Germanics' was no doubt coloured by his early years studying in Paris. Thomson also fostered the discipline of criticism, helping to found the New York Music Critics Circle and the national Music Critics Association of North America. Thomson's philosophy of music criticism was simple and straightforward, like his music and prose: as Grant observed, Thomson felt that the best music critics were good musicians who can write well, rather than good writers who can play music.⁶¹ His writings were published during his lifetime and afterward in a number of collections, most recently and significantly in The Library of America's *The State of Music and Other Writings*.⁶²

Although the Second World War often provides a convenient line of chronological demarcation for many historical surveys, in the case of American music criticism the division is especially apt. The continued demise of major US dailies only intensified after the war, with Downes and Thomson in New York as the twin pillars of substantive and influential music criticism in the immediate post-war period. By then, the days of the 'paid puff' were long gone, but so too were the 'golden years' of music critics as popular celebrities, whose lengthy musings and opinions were followed eagerly by the general public. Classical music itself was being transformed, as serialism claimed ascendancy, leaving most audiences and many critics far behind. New forms of media and entertainment also played a role in this evolution, with the

⁶¹ Grant, *Maestros of the Pen*, p. 252.

⁶² Virgil Thomson, *The State of Music and Other Writings*, ed. Tim Page (New York: The Library of America, 2016).

rise of television and the development of LP recordings in the immediate post-war years greatly impacting live performances and concert attendance nationwide. With a few exceptions – notably, Harold Schonberg (1915–2003), powerful *New York Times* critic from 1960 to 1980, whose crusade for the revival of nineteenth-century performance practice led to a surge of interest in it by performers and scholars – contemporary music criticism has tended more towards objective reporting and analysis and away from personal agendas. But the role that music critics played in the development of a vibrant musical culture, both in the United States and Canada, is one that should not be underestimated.

Music Criticism in Portugal: Towards an Overview

PAULO F. DE CASTRO

The problem of Portuguese music is not only a problem of creation, but also one of criticism.

Fernando Lopes Graça¹

The history of music criticism in Portugal is only slowly emerging as a field of musicological inquiry, owing in part to the lack of a systematic inventory of the relevant source materials, but also, no doubt, to the inherited view of the nineteenth century (if not the twentieth) as a period of decadence following a purported ‘golden age’ of Portuguese music – a view amounting to a foundation myth of Portuguese musicology that has only recently begun to be challenged.² A reversal of this perspective was first articulated by the composer, essayist and critic Fernando Lopes Graça, who claimed provocatively, as early as 1935, that the nineteenth century had been, on the contrary, ‘the most fruitful, the one with the strongest and most beneficial consequences’, providing the country with the first outline of a modern musical life, less exclusively centred in the court, the church and – in theory, at least – the Italian opera.³

Among the typical milestones of this renewal, reflecting the advances of political liberalism and the development of a true public sphere, Lopes Graça (like most historians since then) singled out the creation of the Sociedade Filarmónica by the composer and pianist João Domingos Bomtempo (1822), the founding of the Lisbon Conservatoire (1835) and the overhaul of the

¹ Fernando Lopes Graça, ‘Criação e crítica na música portuguesa’, *A música portuguesa e os seus problemas*, 1 (Lisbon: Caminho, 1989), p. 33. Portuguese spelling is normalised; all translations are my own.

² For an introduction to the history of music in Portugal, see Rui Vieira Nery and Paulo Ferreira de Castro, *História da música (Sínteses da cultura portuguesa)* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, Casa da Moeda, 1991); also available in English, French and Mandarin versions. On the implications of the idea of national decadence for Portuguese musicology, see Paulo Ferreira de Castro, ‘O que fazer com o século XIX? Um olhar sobre a historiografia musical portuguesa’, *Revista portuguesa de musicologia*, 2 (1992), 171–83.

³ Fernando Lopes Graça, ‘A música portuguesa no século XIX’, *A música portuguesa e os seus problemas*, 1 (Lisbon: Caminho, 1989), p. 65.

S. Carlos Theatre's management under the wealthy dilettante Joaquim Pedro Quintela, Count of Farrobo (1838–40).⁴ However, a typically 'progressive' musical culture of a bourgeois stamp was slow to develop in Portugal, especially as regards the establishment of public concert series, the cultivation of the classical repertoire or the ever-elusive nationalisation of the opera theatre. As we shall see, such concerns, reflecting a long-standing aspiration towards the reform of public taste, the convergence with North and Central European models of artistic organisation and the musical construction of identity, would provide the essential background for the practice of music criticism – especially in its more 'idealist' manifestations, which, like all aesthetic-ideological forms of discourse, must themselves be understood as a shaping force in musical life.

In Portugal as elsewhere the development of music criticism has been closely linked to the flourishing of the periodical press, in its various forms: the daily or weekly newspaper, the literary or cultural journal or the music periodical as such, all of them providing platforms for the activity of the music critic.⁵ Questions of authorship and readership of course loom large in any approach to criticism, whether it is addressed to the general reading public or to a more specialist, even a professional audience; whether critics lay claim to some kind of professional qualification or see themselves as intuitive connoisseurs – although clear-cut distinctions cannot always be made in this domain, leaving room for a variety of rhetorical and communicational strategies to be reckoned with. Whatever form it may assume, however, music criticism tends to thrive on the production of differential schemata (beautiful versus ugly, imitation versus imagination, foreign versus national, traditional versus modern, serious versus frivolous, etc.), each historical period being to an extent

⁴ The S. Carlos Theatre, inaugurated in 1793, had been the focus of Italian opera in Lisbon, followed at a distance by its Porto counterpart, the S. João Theatre, opened in 1798. On the history of the S. Carlos, see Francisco da Fonseca Benevides, *O Real Teatro de S. Carlos de Lisboa. Desde a sua fundação em 1793 até à actualidade. Estudo histórico* (Lisbon: Castro Irmão, 1883); Benevides, *Memórias 1883–1902* (Lisbon: Ricardo de Sousa e Sales, 1902); Mário Moreau, *O Teatro de S. Carlos: Dois séculos de história*, 2 vols. (Lisbon: Hugin, 1999); and, from a sociological perspective, Mário Vieira de Carvalho, *Pensar é morrer ou O Teatro de São Carlos na mudança de sistemas sociocomunicativos desde fins do séc. XVIII aos nossos dias* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, Casa da Moeda, 1993). See also Luísa Cymbron, *Olhares sobre a música em Portugal no século XIX: Ópera, virtuosismo e música doméstica* (Lisbon: Colibri, 2012).

⁵ On the history of the Portuguese press, see José Tengarrinha, *Nova história da imprensa portuguesa das origens a 1865* (Lisbon: Temas e Debates, Círculo de Leitores, 2013); and Jorge Pedro Sousa, Helena Lima, Antonio Hohlfeldt and Marialva Barbosa (eds.), *A History of the Press in the Portuguese-Speaking Countries* (Porto: Media XXI, 2014). For bibliographical information on Portuguese periodicals, see Biblioteca Geral da Universidade de Coimbra, *Publicações periódicas portuguesas existentes na Biblioteca Geral da Universidade de Coimbra*, 3 vols. (Coimbra: Biblioteca Geral da Universidade, 1983/1991/2001); José Manuel Motta de Sousa and Lúcia Maria Mariano Veloso, *História da imprensa periódica portuguesa: Subsídios para uma bibliografia* (Coimbra: Biblioteca Geral da Universidade, 1987); Gina Guedes Rafael and Manuela Santos (eds.), *Jornais e revistas portuguesas do século XIX*, 2 vols. (Lisbon: Biblioteca Nacional, 2002); Mário Matos e Lemos, *Jornais diários portugueses do século XX: Um dicionário* (Coimbra: Ariadne, 2006).

characterised by its predominant polarity; the fact that these and other polarities often disguise larger issues of authority and power should come as no surprise.

A Precursor

Properly speaking, the rise of music criticism in Portugal is a typical nineteenth-century phenomenon. Before that time, there is only scant evidence of music being regarded as a worthy subject of discussion in the periodical press, the development of which was itself marred by the country's prevailing social, economic and political conditions under the absolutist regime, eventually abolished in 1834. Typically, the primitive *gazetas* were small in size, mainly fulfilling an informative or a recreational function. Circulation of the *gazetas* was limited to the upper echelons of society, and for a long time there was little incentive to broaden their editorial scope, so that reputable men of letters tended to look down on journalistic work. The spread of the Enlightenment would nevertheless leave its mark in the Portuguese press, as shown in a number of publications devoted to the propagation of the latest advances in the sciences and the arts, one of which, the *Gazeta literária* of Father Francisco Bernardo de Lima (1761–2), is not without musical relevance.⁶ Throughout its pages, references to subjects as varied as dramatic poetry, Italian opera, acoustics and music theory can be found, the most interesting piece being a review (June 1762) of *Il trascurato*, a *dramma giocoso* (music presumably by Vincenzo Ciampi, with interpolated material by Pergolesi) staged in Porto's public theatre, which served as the springboard to some extended remarks on the aesthetics and civic function of the opera theatre. Lima shows himself well acquainted with the theories of the French *philosophes* and their appraisal of sentiment and naturalness as essential aesthetic values; he discusses the peculiarities of libretto-writing and the question of operatic verisimilitude, firmly advocating a view of music – both vocal and instrumental – as an imitation of the ‘natural signs’ of the passions (in what amounts to an unacknowledged borrowing from the Abbé Du Bos' *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et sur la peinture*, whose references to French opera must have puzzled Lima's readers). Regarding the actual Porto performance, Lima pointed out that the *prima donna's* virtuosity had elicited admiration rather than emotion from the audience, thus drawing on a clear-cut

⁶ Full title of the first issue: *Gazeta literária ou Notícia exacta dos principais escritos, que modernamente se vão publicando na Europa. Conforme a análise, que deles fazem os melhores críticos, e diaristas das nações mais civilizadas* (Porto: Na Oficina de Francisco Mendes Lima, 1761); later published in Lisbon.

differential paradigm – ‘artificial’ versus ‘expressive’ music – well-attuned to the first stirrings of the age of sensibility.⁷

Periodicals of an encyclopedic character, appealing to an emerging bourgeois reading public and the growing taste for a lighter kind of erudition, were to become more popular with the approach of the new century. That the dissemination of Enlightenment ideals – and with it, the exercise of criticism – was subject to the vagaries of the status quo, however, can be inferred, for instance, from the negative opinion put forward by the General Intendent of the Police as late as 1813, regarding the licensing of a new periodical, on the argument that such publications tended to spread ‘the poison of criticism, that has upset great nations’.⁸ Predictably, the history of the press would closely follow the vicissitudes of the country in the early decades of the nineteenth century, throughout the convoluted sequence of foreign occupation, political strife, civil war and the loss of Brazil as a colony.⁹

Music in the Public Sphere

With the impact of the 1820 Liberal Revolution and the consolidation of the freedom of the press after 1834, Portuguese periodicals entered a new phase, marked by the quick multiplication of titles in circulation, together with the number of their readers; as a journalist was to put it in the following decade, ‘this century is made of paper’.¹⁰ The trend coincides with the establishment of the political partisan press, fostered in part by the return of journalists and intellectuals previously exiled in England and France. This new generation of activists and ideologists was quick to embrace the press as a tool for the development of a civic consciousness, in tandem with a call for the reform

⁷ Francisco Bernardo de Lima, *Gazeta literária*, 11 (June 1762), 99. See also Manuel Carlos de Brito, *Opera in Portugal in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 110ff; and Paulo Ferreira de Castro, ‘Sobre os primórdios da crítica musical em Portugal’, in Manuel Pedro Ferreira and Teresa Cascudo (eds.), *Música e história: Estudos em homenagem a Manuel Carlos de Brito* (Lisbon: CESEM/Colibri, 2017).

⁸ Cited in Tengarrinha, *Nova história da imprensa*, p. 107.

⁹ Musical activity in the country remained relatively intense throughout the period, although press coverage of musical events does not seem to have been extensive. Perhaps surprisingly, some of the most detailed chronicles of Portuguese musical life until c.1825 can be found in the Leipzig *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, whose Lisbon informants must have included some musically active members of the local German community. See Manuel Carlos de Brito and David Cranmer, *Crônicas da vida musical portuguesa na primeira metade do século XIX* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, Casa da Moeda, 1990); Francesco Esposito, ‘Lisbona 1822: La vita musicale attraverso la stampa periodica’, *Revista portuguesa de musicologia*, 10 (2000), 31–81; ‘Os primeiros passos em direção à crítica musical: Algumas considerações sobre a presença da música na imprensa da Lisboa liberal (1822–1855)’, in *Música e história*.

¹⁰ In the period between the Revolution of September 1836 and the end of 1841 (the most radical and consequential phase of the liberal regime) alone, over 200 new periodicals made their appearance in the country (Tengarrinha, *Nova história da imprensa*, p. 508). Quotation from *O espelho do palco*, 1 (1 September 1842), 1.

of public instruction, a project that would henceforth mobilise (and often frustrate) the country's political energies. Among the arts, theatre in particular – in its double function as education and entertainment – had a crucial role to play, thus giving rise to a close and enduring association between the worlds of theatre and journalism, with immediate consequences for the practice of criticism. Since opera was to remain the true focus of musical life for a long time to come, it was only natural that music criticism should have developed in the shadow of theatrical criticism, not infrequently the province of journalists with a personal stake in theatrical business, making it sometimes hard to distinguish criticism from propaganda (or partisan polemics, as the case may be). At any rate, at a time when genuine music periodicals were rare or non-existent in Portugal, music criticism was frequently to be found in publications nominally devoted to the theatre.

It is only fitting that the figure largely responsible for the organisation of both the National Theatre and the Lisbon Conservatoire, the author and liberal politician Almeida Garrett, should also have played a relevant role as a critic, paving the way for countless imitators throughout the nineteenth century and beyond.¹¹ Not surprisingly, Garrett's criticism relates to music via the opera stage, as exemplified in a review of Mercadante's *Didone abbandonata* (to a Metastasian libretto), published in the daily *O Português* in 1827.¹² In this review, the first part of which consists of a discussion of previous dramatic adaptations of the Virgilian episode, Garrett displays the deep Classicist roots of his sensibility, never disowned in spite of his Romantic proclivities. He praised Mercadante for the choice of libretto and a concern for literary standards unusual among contemporary Italian composers, noting how the 'delicate and vague sensations of the poem' had been faithfully rendered by the musician. The critic also found words of praise for the performance, singling out the prima donna for her vocal and dramatic artistry (stressing the naturalness and expressiveness of her acting, in terms that a man of the Enlightenment would have found congenial), adding some interesting comments on the insufficient archaeological truth of the costumes, but above

¹¹ Garrett was entrusted in 1836 with the plans for the foundation and organisation of a National Theatre, which, as a school of good taste, was meant to contribute to the civilisation and moral improvement of the Portuguese nation. He served as Inspector-General of National Theatres and Spectacles – the highest position in the State theatrical apparatus – between 1836 and 1841. For a handy survey of theatrical life in the period, see Ana Isabel Teixeira de Vasconcelos, *O teatro em Lisboa no tempo de Almeida Garrett* (Lisbon: IPM, Museu Nacional do Teatro, 2003).

¹² Unsigned [attrib. Garrett], 'Teatro de S. Carlos. (Ópera, *Dido abandonada* ...)', *O Português* (28 April 1827), 416–17. The presence of Mercadante in Lisbon in the years 1827–28 must have stimulated the activity of local publicists, as can be inferred from the debates on the relative merits of Mercadante and his Portuguese rival J. E. Pereira da Costa, which found an echo in the pages of *O Constitucional* in the early months of 1828, followed by a war of pamphlets. The case seems typical of a time when critical debate could easily degenerate into personal feud.

all, chiding the audience over what he deemed their anarchic enthusiasm (the habit of interrupting the performance with extemporaneous applause), a sign of the new standards of polite conduct in society that were part and parcel of the critic's 'civilising' zeal. Garrett's example seems to have inspired a plethora of followers, with the sudden proliferation of new periodicals (however short-lived) devoted to theatrical and musical activity, among them *O entreacto* (1837, 1840), *Atalaia nacional dos teatros* (1838), *O desenhadoativo teatral* (1838), *Revista teatral* (1839, followed by other periodicals bearing the same title), *A sentinela do palco* (1840–1), *O espelho do palco* (1842), *A fama* (1843), *O raio teatral* (1843), *O espectador* (1843, 1844 and 1848–51), *Revista dos espectáculos* (1850–7) and the slightly later *Crónica dos teatros* (1861–80), together offering a lively cross-section of critical writing (or what passed for such) in the mid-century.¹³

Some of those periodicals are also valuable for their coverage of the activities of philharmonic societies, responsible for a noticeable surge in amateur and semi-professional musical practice in the liberal era. Significantly, by 1850, a critic from *O espectador* would claim that the love of music had spread among the Portuguese public in a prodigious fashion, as 'one of the most outstanding features of the progress of our civilisation'; whereas a fellow-critic from the *Revista dos espectáculos* wryly deplored the decline of the theatre at a time when 'a contagious musical fever [was] seizing the country, victoriously invading even the least philharmonic theatres of Lisbon'.¹⁴ Probably as a result of this development, the 1850s would see the publication of the first specialist music periodicals, such as *O trovador* in 1855 (followed by *O Rigoletto [sic]* in 1856), two titles obviously echoing the growing local popularity of Verdi as an opera composer (a popularity soon to be denounced as too exclusive).¹⁵ Interestingly, in the inaugural issue of *O trovador*, the pianist and composer Emílio Lami denounced the lack of musically authoritative voices in the press, calling for a more professional kind of criticism at a time when, as he put it, music was increasingly regarded as a social necessity rather than a mere pleasure, thus staking out a new position for the musical specialist in the cultural sphere.¹⁶ In the meantime, a combination of chronicle and

¹³ For an overview of theatrical periodicals in Portugal, see Luís Francisco Rebello, 'Jornais e revistas de teatro em Portugal', *Sinais de cena*, 1–2 (June–December 2004), 69–71, 56–8.

¹⁴ 'Filarmónicas', *O espectador* (2nd series), 15 (8 December 1850), 118; 'Teatros nacionais', *Revista dos espectáculos*, 1/10 (16 November 1850), 1.

¹⁵ See Biblioteca Nacional Portugal, *Verdi em Portugal 1843–2001: Exposição comemorativa do centenário da morte do compositor*, exhibition catalogue (Lisbon: Biblioteca Nacional – Teatro Nacional de S. Carlos, 2001).

¹⁶ E. Lami, 'Da necessidade e conveniência dum jornal musical em Lisboa', *O trovador. Jornal musical, literário, e de variedades*, 1 (12 May 1855), 1–3. Incidentally, Lami's references to French authorities denote the all-pervading influence of French critical models in Portugal at the time.

criticism came to define the ever-popular, French-inspired *feuilleton*, regularly cultivated in both the general and the specialist press by a number of prominent *littérateurs*. The most important mid-century daily, *A Revolução de Setembro* (1840–92), for instance, counted some highly successful *feuilletonistes* among its collaborators, such as António Pedro Lopes de Mendonça and Júlio César Machado, who would often choose theatrical and musical subjects for their articles.¹⁷ In Porto, the prolific novelist Camilo Castelo Branco was also an active provider of *feuilletons* for the local press.

‘Philosophical’ Music

A more genuinely Romantic note is sounded in the press echoes of the Count of Farrobo’s management of the Lisbon opera on the threshold of the 1840s, during which, in a conscious effort to emulate Parisian fashions, the French repertoire of *grand opéra* for the first time began to compete with the Italian standards for public attention (even though only Italian versions were used locally). For a brief period, opera productions in the S. Carlos Theatre attained an unprecedented degree of artistic coherence and overall lavishness, lending a new brilliance to Lisbon’s social and music-theatrical life. Among the works then premiered, Auber’s *La muette de Portici*, Meyerbeer’s *Robert le diable* (both 1838) and even Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* (1839) loom large, the latter’s exceptional status as a ‘classic’ work signalled by an extended presentation article in the *Diário do Governo* (5 January 1839). However, the spectacular impact of *Robert* far surpassed that of Mozart’s work at the time, firmly securing Meyerbeer’s reputation as a ‘German’ (or ‘philosophical’) composer, and thus providing criticism with a new differential paradigm that seems to prefigure the Wagnerian wave later in the century (the epithet ‘philosophical’ being increasingly applied to all music with lofty aesthetic credentials). The recently launched *Jornal do Conservatório* set the tone in its second issue (15 December 1839), with an enthusiastic review of Meyerbeer’s ‘fantastic and sublime work’, in which ‘novel musical harmonies’ were made to enhance all that was ‘astounding, passionate, sentimental, religious and terrible’ in the old legend, thus investing music with an imaginative power that resolutely announced the threshold of a new age. Less predictably, the review also placed the composer in the lineage of the great Viennese triad of Haydn, Mozart and

¹⁷ Other widely read newspapers featuring music reviews included the long-lived *Jornal do comércio* (1853–1976) and *O comércio do Porto* (1854–2005). For some samples of Mendonça’s writing, see António Pedro Lopes de Mendonça, ‘Revista de Lisboa. Fisiologia do Teatro de S. Carlos’, *A Revolução de Setembro* (3 March 1849), 1–3; ‘Revista dos espectáculos’, *A Revolução de Setembro* (16 June 1849), 1–2, in which, apropos a concert by the Polish pianist A. Kotski, the critic rhapsodises on the idealistic nature of music as an art, as opposed to the materialist outlook of the modern world.

Beethoven – a lineage that, despite the lip-service paid by a few critics, had yet to take deep roots in Portuguese musical culture. The somewhat crude stereotyping of ‘Italianism’ versus ‘Germanism’, as easily politicised ciphers for ‘routine’ (conservatism) and ‘progress’ (evolution, ‘the future’) respectively, was to remain in place well into the twentieth century, re-emerging whenever critics sought to denounce the perceived backwardness of Portuguese cultural life. Interestingly, towards the end of the century, there were signs that French influence was destined to provide the most viable alternative to such a manichean opposition, as a kind of artistic *juste milieu*.¹⁸

The usual polarities, nonetheless, preside over the *feuilletons* of the future novelist Eça de Queirós for the *Gazeta de Portugal* (1866–7), as well as his unsparing assessment of Portuguese theatre in *As farças* (December 1871), in which he shows himself an antagonist of Italian operatic ‘sensuousness’ and an advocate of the somewhat nebulous, Romantic idea of German music that he shared with the majority of his progressive contemporaries – without however paying due attention to Wagner. (On the other hand, Eça’s satiric bent made him an enthusiastic admirer of what he termed Offenbach’s ‘philosophy in song’.)¹⁹ Although Wagnerian ‘symphonic’ excerpts had been sporadically played in orchestral concerts since the 1860s, and his scores privately studied by a handful of devotees, a closer acquaintance with Wagner’s work would only begin in earnest after the local premiere of *Lohengrin* in 1883.²⁰ Wagner was to reach true cult status around the turn of the century, thanks to a number of committed critics and publicists, among whom were Jaime Batalha Reis, José de Arriaga, António Arroio, José Júlio Rodrigues and Aarão de Lacerda (running the gamut of ideological positions, from positivism to mysticism), alongside the prime mover in Porto musical life, Bernardo Moreira de Sá, and the distinguished pianist José Viana da Mota, a Liszt pupil and a highly respected collaborator of the *Bayreuther Blätter* and other publications during his prolonged sojourn in Germany.²¹

¹⁸ See, for instance, Manuel Ramos, *A música portuguesa* (Porto: Imprensa Portuguesa, 1892). For a dissenting voice, see P. P., ‘A música alemã e a música latina’, *A arte musical*, 1/33 (21 July 1874), 1–2.

¹⁹ Eça de Queirós, ‘Sinfonia de abertura’, ‘O Macbeth’, ‘Mefistófeles’, *Textos de imprensa 1 (da Gazeta de Portugal)* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, Casa da Moeda, 2004), pp. 65–74, 75–83, 155–61; Queirós, *As farças. Crónica mensal da política, das letras e dos costumes* (Cascais: Principia, 2004), pp. 28–9, 302–11. On the subject of music in Eça de Queirós’s work, see Mário Vieira de Carvalho, *Eça de Queirós e Offenbach. A ácida gargalhada de Mefistófeles* (Lisbon: Colibri, 1999).

²⁰ See for instance the series of articles published in the journal *O Ocidente* from 1 March 1883, signed V. de D. (= Jaime Batalha Reis), in connection with this premiere.

²¹ On Portuguese Wagnerism, see Mário Vieira de Carvalho, *Pensar é morrer*, pp. 131ff; and Paulo F. de Castro, ‘Wagnerism at the Edge: Some Aspects of Richard Wagner’s Impact on Portuguese *Fin-de-Siècle* Culture’, in Luca Sala (ed.), *The Legacy of Richard Wagner: Convergences and Dissonances in Aesthetics and Reception* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012).

The topic of artistic nationalism was also increasingly discussed in the press, even though palpable musical results in this area tended to remain meagre, owing, no doubt, to the limited number of performance opportunities and a lack of clarity about what should count as typically Portuguese in music. Calls for a mythic return to the purity of national song resounded from time to time, as for instance in an article (probably penned by the poet António Feliciano de Castilho) in the widely read *Revista universal* (1841) deploring the corrupting influence of Italian opera on national music,²² whereas fado (the typical Lisbon urban song genre), if at all discussed in the press, tended to be dismissed on account of its demoralising effect and its associations with prostitution. Throughout the nineteenth century, opera remained very much the province of Italian companies (apart from a feeble tradition of comic opera in Portuguese), the creation of a national musical idiom remaining an elusive aim in spite of a few isolated attempts, usually thwarted by the lack of institutional support and the insufficient level of public interest. At any rate, in a review of an opera by the composer Sá Noronha in 1868, the critic Andrade Ferreira bluntly pointed out that the label ‘national’ was still tantamount to bad publicity for a product of Portuguese art or industry.²³ Such debates, and the discursive strategies underwriting them, were largely carried over into the next century.

Criticism Comes of Age

In many respects, the years 1865–70 marked a watershed in the history of Portuguese culture, with the emergence of a group of artists and intellectuals (the so-called ‘Geração de 70’, to which Eça and Batalha Reis belonged) who saw as their mission the systematic scrutiny of the country’s endemic problems, thus expressly foregrounding criticism as a prerequisite of social, political and cultural regeneration. Calls for reform in all spheres of public life were given added resonance by technological and communicational advances, as reflected in the industrialisation of the press and the beginnings of modern informative journalism, with the launching of the newspaper *Diário de notícias* in 1864. Music too was to embrace the spirit of the times. A number of operas by Portuguese composers reached the stage with some measure of success (sometimes exploring national themes, as in the works of Alfredo Keil), and the question of the organisation of a national opera theatre became a topic of public discussion. Orchestral and

²² Unsigned, ‘Progressos da música italiana’, *Revista universal*, 6 (4 November 1841), 66–8.

²³ José Maria de Andrade Ferreira, ‘O arco de Santana’, repr. in *Literatura, música e belas-artes*, 11 (Lisbon: Rolland e Semiond, 1872), pp. 261–8.

chamber concerts became more and more frequent (although always on a modest scale by European standards): ‘classical concerts’ under guest conductors (Barbieri, Colonne, Dalmau, Bretón and Rudorff), for instance, were organised by the Musicians’ Association from 1879, while foreign touring orchestras began to include Lisbon and Porto in their schedules in the wake of the Berlin Philharmonic (under Nikisch) in 1901 – even though regular concert series by relatively stable local orchestras did not become a reality before 1911–12. All in all, musical life showed signs of a considerable renewal, under the banner of progress, modernisation and the recognition of music as an agent of social harmony, thus instigating a true wave of missionary zeal in the press.²⁴ As early as 1867, the journal *Crónica dos teatros*, for instance, announced a change in its editorial policy, henceforth increasing the coverage of opera and music (while ceasing to report on bullfights); three years later, the German-schooled Joaquim de Vasconcelos became responsible for the journal’s music section, setting new, idealistic standards of criticism, as exemplified in a stern review of a Mass by Emílio Lami that had the ring of a manifesto.²⁵ As might be expected, the most active phase of music criticism in the country coincided with the expansion of music periodicals (usually the property of music publishers or professional associations), of which the most significant were the *Gazeta musical de Lisboa* (Lence and Viúva Canongia, 1872–6), *Eco musical* (T. S. Pinto dos Reis, 1873–4), *A arte musical* (Montepio Filarmónico, 1873–5), *Crónica musical* (J. A. Pinto, 1877–8), *Perfis artísticos* (Associação Música 24 de Junho, 1881–3), *Amphion* (A. and J. Neuparth, 1884–7 and 1890–8), *Gazeta musical* (J. Amann, 1884–6), *Gazeta musical de Lisboa* (J. G. Pacini, 1889–97), *A arte musical* (J. M. Barreto, 1890–1), *A arte musical* (M. A. Lambertini, 1899–1915) and *Eco musical* (J. M. Cordeiro, 1911–31).²⁶ Naturally, theatre periodicals, such as the *Revista teatral* (1885 and 1895–6), *Eco artístico* (1911–20) and *Jornal dos teatros* (1917–32), continued to report on musical events, as did cultural magazines and daily newspapers, too numerous to be cited here.²⁷

²⁴ See Maria José Artiaga, ‘Continuity and Change in Three Decades of Portuguese Musical Life 1870–1900’, unpublished PhD thesis, Royal Holloway, University of London (2007); João Silva, *Entertaining Lisbon: Music, Theater, and Modern Life in the Late 19th Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

²⁵ Unsigned [second presumed to be Joaquim de Vasconcelos], *Crónica dos teatros*, 7/9 (6 September 1867), 1; ‘Missa do sr. E. Lami’, *Crónica dos teatros*, 10/12 (24 December 1870), 1–3. In the prologue to his major work *Os músicos portugueses: Biografia – Bibliografia*, 2 vols. (Porto: Imprensa Portuguesa, 1870), pp. xiii–xiv, Vasconcelos openly deplored the absence of true music criticism in the country, as opposed to what he called the ‘school of mutual praise’, a derogatory catchphrase propagated by the ‘Geração de 70’.

²⁶ See Isabel Maria Freire de Andrade, ‘Edições periódicas de música e periódicos musicais em Portugal’, *Boletim da APEM*, 62 (July–September 1989), 47–50 (although her listing of periodicals is not exhaustive). For the twentieth century, see the entry ‘Periódicos de música’, in Salwa Castelo-Branco (ed.), *Enciclopédia da música em Portugal no século XX*, 111 (Lisbon: Temas e Debates, Círculo de Leitores, 2010), pp. 990–98.

²⁷ For an introduction to the history of the press in the First Republic (1910–26), see A. H. de Oliveira Marques, *Guia de história da 1ª República Portuguesa* (Lisbon: Estampa, 1981). Among the most relevant newspapers, one may cite the conservative *Diário ilustrado* (1872–1911), *Novidades* (1885–1923) and *O dia*

Questions of authoritativeness remained very much at the forefront of critical discourse in the early part of the twentieth century. The most striking development around the *fin de siècle* was probably the fact that, increasingly, music criticism became the province of musicians rather than *littérateurs* – or, to put it differently, musicians themselves for the first time came to aspire to the status of intellectuals. Leaving behind such precursors as Júlio Neuparth and Adriano Mereia, the outstanding representatives of the new class of musician-intellectual, other than the previously cited Moreira de Sá and Viana da Mota, were the composers Luís de Freitas Branco and Fernando Lopes Graça, whose work as music critics would set new standards for the entire century.²⁸

Luís de Freitas Branco (1890–1955), who came of an aristocratic family, benefitted from a cosmopolitan education (completed in Berlin as a pupil of Humperdinck), being much influenced as a youth by an uncle with literary and theatrical connections. As a composer, Freitas Branco evolved from a youthful attachment to late Romanticism, via Impressionism, to a somewhat academic commitment to neoclassicism, under the impact of the movement known as Integralismo Lusitano (a Portuguese variant of the Action Française), which was to leave a persistent trace in his personality as an artist and an intellectual. In spite of his personal allegiance to the monarchy (eventually abolished in 1910), he found himself increasingly drawn to the political left after the 1926 military coup that ushered in several decades of authoritarian rule. Although not primarily interested in folk music, he advocated a nationalist-classicist aesthetic, based on his firm belief in an epochal renaissance of the Latin spirit (thus enacting a ‘dialectical’ reversal of the inherited nineteenth-century dichotomy), which transpires in many passages from his critical writings.²⁹ A precocious talent, he wrote his first critical review for the *Diário ilustrado* on the 26 March 1907 (a rather pert assessment of an opera by a much senior composer, provocatively couched in highly technical language), and continued to produce criticism throughout his life, for the daily as well as the specialist press, alongside a substantial musical and literary output. In 1930 and 1950 respectively, he became director of the journals *A arte musical* (new series) and *Gazeta musical*, two of the most

(1887–1927), whereas *O século* (1881–1978), *O mundo* (1900–27), *A luta* (1906–23), *República* (1911–75) and *Diário de Lisboa* (1921–90) were prominent Republican dailies. The later *Diária da manhã* (1931–71) eventually became the organ of Salazar’s single-party regime.

²⁸ The list of twentieth-century Portuguese composer-critics further includes Rui Coelho, Francine Benoit and Joly Braga Santos, the latter Freitas Branco’s best-known disciple.

²⁹ See for instance the essays Freitas Branco, ‘A música e o pensamento latino’, *De música*, 1/2 (August 1930), 1–3; and ‘A hora do pensamento latino’, *Arte musical*, 3/97 (10 September 1933), 2. See Alexandre Delgado, Ana Telles and Nuno Bettencourt Mendes (eds.), *Luís de Freitas Branco* (Lisbon: Caminho, 2007).

influential Portuguese music periodicals of the twentieth century – a sure sign of Freitas Branco’s unmatched intellectual prestige among musicians. Both titles remain prime sources for the history of music-critical discourse, which, especially from the 1930s, increasingly addressed the impact of radio and recorded music³⁰ – although at first in a rather defensive spirit, as many professional musicians and music critics reacted to the new technologies, and to the new music economy they made possible, with extreme suspicion.

Freitas Branco’s one-time pupil Fernando Lopes Graça (1906–94), encountered at the beginning of this chapter, was by far the most articulate Portuguese musician of his generation. A man of deep left-wing convictions, he was to take an intransigent stance against Salazar’s dictatorship, while pursuing a highly individual path as a composer, his musical style aiming towards a synthesis of Portuguese folk music and the modernism of Debussy, Stravinsky and Bartók, sometimes inflected by a personal approach to atonality. His critical mind and wide culture were matched by a genuine literary talent, making his prose a model of clarity and acumen, as well as polemical sharpness, as can be seen in his many contributions to the journals *Seara nova*, *Presença* and *O diabo*, among others.³¹ Lopes Graça’s writings touch upon virtually all the major issues of Portuguese musical life, such as the social responsibility of the artist, the conflicting forces of nationalism and cosmopolitanism, the impact of modernism on the European periphery, the political uses of folklore and the vexed question of ‘Portugueseness’ in music. His views were to resound throughout the subsequent history of music criticism in Portugal.³²

A Golden Age of Criticism?

In the second half of the twentieth century, Portuguese musical life benefitted from the establishment in Lisbon of a powerful institution, the Calouste

³⁰ The national broadcasting station (Emissora Nacional de Radiodifusão) was officially established in 1935. For an overview of the history of broadcasting in Portugal, see Manuel Deniz Silva, ‘Rádio’, in Salva Castelo-Branco (ed.), *Enciclopédia da música em Portugal no século XX*, IV, pp. 1080–7.

³¹ The journals *Seara nova* (1921–79) and *Presença* (1927–40) count among the most important twentieth-century Portuguese literary and cultural journals. See Clara Rocha, *Revistas literárias do século XX em Portugal* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, Casa da Moeda, 1985); Daniel Pires, *Dicionário da imprensa periódica literária portuguesa do século XX*, 2 vols. (Lisbon: Grifo, 1996 and 1999/2000).

³² See in particular Fernando Lopes Graça, *A música portuguesa*, 1 and its companion volumes, as well as Lopes Graça, *Talia, Euterpe e Terpsicore* (Lisbon: Caminho, 1990). A selection of the composer’s critical writings has been published as Lopes Graça, *Páginas escolhidas de crítica e estética musical* (Lisbon: Prelo, n.d.). Recent literature on Lopes Graça includes Mário Vieira de Carvalho, *Pensar a música, mudar o mundo: Fernando Lopes-Graça* (Porto: Campo das Letras, 2006); Teresa Cascudo, *A tradição como problema na obra do compositor Fernando Lopes-Graça: Um estudo no contexto português* (Seville: Doble J, 2012); Ricardo António Alves and Teresa Cascudo (eds.), *Fernando Lopes Graça e a Presença* (Cascais: Câmara Municipal de Cascais/Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, Casa da Moeda, 2013).

Gulbenkian Foundation (created in 1956), whose broad outlook helped to widen the cultural horizons of the previous decades by increasing the country's exposure to international artistic and musical trends, thanks to its own concert programming and a generous programme of grants and exchanges. Following the re-establishment of democracy in 1974 and the accession to the EEC in 1986, Portugal underwent major political, social and cultural changes, reflected in the modernisation of the country's infrastructure and a degree of convergence with European standards in the domains of education and culture, as well as in consumption patterns. As a result, and in spite of the fluctuations in the country's official arts policies, at least the two main cities, Lisbon and Porto, witnessed a surge in musical activity in the last three decades of the twentieth century, marked by the great variety of genres, repertoires and discourses on offer.

In a new internationalist age, critical focus within the field of art music tended to shift away from neoclassical, folkloristic and identitary concerns towards urbanism, modernism and the avant-garde, although the asymmetries in the country's musical development remained a topic widely discussed in the press. Journals specifically devoted to art music entered a period of relative decline, but ample coverage of musical life was nevertheless given by the generalist press throughout the period, in widely read daily newspapers (or their arts supplements) such as *O comércio do Porto*, *O Primeiro de Janeiro* (1868–), *O século*, *Jornal de notícias* (1888–), *Diário de notícias*, *Diário de Lisboa*, *Diário popular* (1942–91), *A capital* (1968–2005), *O diário* (1976–90) and *Público* (1990–), in the weekly *Expresso* (1973–), and in cultural journals such as *Jornal de letras e artes* (1961–70) and *JL-Jornal de letras, artes e ideias* (1981–). Among prominent critics of art music were Francine Benoît, Macario Santiago Kastner, José Blanc de Portugal, Manuel de Lima, João José Cochofel, João de Freitas Branco³³ and Mário Vieira de Carvalho, although a detailed assessment of critical writing in the late twentieth century remains beyond the scope of this chapter. Several journals devoted mainly to popular music made their appearance from the late 1960s, such as *Mundo da canção* (1969–85), *Musicalíssimo* (several series in the 1970s and 1980s), *Música & som* (1977–89), *Seze* (1978–95) and *Blitz* (1984–), but on the whole there was little overlap in critical practice (and, presumably, in readership) between the 'art' and 'popular' spheres, with perhaps a middle ground occupied by jazz. More recently, the concept of 'Lusophony' (*lusofonia*) – the idea of a community of Portuguese-speaking nations, including Portugal,

³³ Between 1958 and 1973 João de Freitas Branco was the director of yet another series of the journal *Arte musical*, henceforth the organ of the Juventude Musical Portuguesa (Portuguese branch of the *Jeunesses Musicales*), itself established in 1948.

Brazil, Angola, Mozambique and Cape Verde, among others – has lent a new dimension to the discussion of musical topics in the context of post-colonialism, immigration and multiculturalism.³⁴

Even before the end of the millennium, there were signs that the digital revolution, in Portugal as elsewhere, was to have a profound and lasting impact on all facets of musical life, including, of course, the structure of the music market itself. With regard to music criticism, the most obvious consequence of the crisis of the traditional press and the expansion of so-called social media has been the shrinking of space given to music reviews in generalist newspapers, partly replaced since the late 1990s by digital platforms such as the weblog ('blog') – whose ephemerality, incidentally, renders listings instantly obsolete and may prove a huge challenge to documentation and research purposes in the future. What long-term consequences the democratisation of technological access and the current mystique of immediacy will entail remain to be seen, although it would appear that new forms of participatory criticism could develop out of the relatively fluid, non-hierarchical structures of the new media. In any case, it is difficult to imagine the total disappearance of the critic either as a reinforcer of prejudice or as a producer of difference, as long as there will be an audience for music, the sheer amount of music made available by the Internet making it almost inevitable that someone, at some point, should assume the role of the 'expert' listener for the benefit of some section of the public, and thus ensure the survival of criticism as a viable option in the age of post-everything. In this too, Portugal will most likely mirror global trends.

³⁴ On popular music journalism in Portugal, see Pedro Nunes, 'Good Samaritans and Oblivious Cheerleaders: Ideologies of Portuguese Music Journalists Towards Portuguese Music', *Popular Music*, 29/1 (2010), 41–59. Although not primarily concerned with music criticism, the following articles contain relevant materials on the local reception of jazz: Pedro Roxo, 'Jazz and the Portuguese Dictatorship Before and After the Second World War: From Moral Panic to Suspicious Acceptance', in Bruce Johnson (ed.), *Jazz and Totalitarianism* (New York: Routledge, 2016); Pedro Roxo and Salwa Castelo-Branco, 'Jazz, Race, and Politics in Colonial Portugal: Discourses and Representations', in Philip V. Bohlman and Goffredo Plastino (eds.), *Jazz Worlds/World Jazz* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2016). For a survey of recent developments, see 'Do século xx ao século XXI: processos, práticas musicais e músicos emergentes', appendix to Salwa Castelo-Branco (ed.), *Enciclopédia da música em Portugal no século xx*, IV, pp. 1361–92. This reference work also includes individual entries on a number of music critics.

Spanish Music Criticism in the Twentieth Century: Writing Music History in Real Time

EVA MOREDA RODRÍGUEZ

This chapter examines how the documenting and reflecting on current musical life carried out by two Spanish music critics whose careers spanned most of the twentieth century – Adolfo Salazar (1890–1958) and Federico Sopeña (1917–91) – provided a crucial foundation for the historiography of Spanish music after 1900. For decades, Salazar and Sopeña have shaped our thinking about Spanish twentieth-century music; their works are still regarded as authoritative to a considerable extent and they are frequently cited as secondary sources in studies of Spanish music. Indeed, it is only in the last decade that their writings and biographies have started to be examined with a view to identifying and critiquing the master narratives they crafted to present and explain Spanish music of the twentieth century: the music they were immersed in and, in some cases, turned into history almost from the moment they heard it for the first time.¹ This chapter aims to discuss how Salazar and Sopeña, through their engagement with music criticism, crucially shaped understandings of twentieth-century Spanish music. In order to do so, I will examine both Salazar’s and Sopeña’s careers, some of their writings, and the historical, sociocultural and political contexts which informed their work.

Important here is that Spanish musicology and Spanish music criticism developed during the nineteenth century across completely antagonistic but sometimes separate paths, which Salazar and Sopeña managed at times to bring together. Modern Spanish musicology is typically considered to have

¹ Javier Suárez-Pajares, ‘Joaquín Rodrigo en la vida musical y la cultura española de los años cuarenta. Ficciones, realidades, verdades y mentiras de un tiempo extraño’, in Javier Suárez-Pajares (ed.), *Joaquín Rodrigo y la música española de los años cuarenta* (Valladolid: Glares, 2005); María Palacios, *La renovación musical en Madrid durante la dictadura de Primo de Rivera: El Grupo de los Ocho (1923–1931)* (Madrid: Sociedad Española de Musicología, 2008), p. 14; María Palacios, ‘El Grupo de los Ocho bajo el prisma de Adolfo Salazar’, in María Nagore, Leticia Sánchez de Andrés and Elena Torres (eds.), *Música y cultura en la Edad de Plata 1915–1939* (Madrid: ICCMU, 2009); Javier Suárez-Pajares, ‘Adolfo Salazar: luz y sombras’, in Nagore, Sánchez de Andrés and Torres (eds.), *Música y cultura*; Eva Moreda Rodríguez, ‘Federico Sopeña: los años formativos’, in Teresa Cascudo and María Palacios (eds.), *Los señores de la crítica Periodismo musical e ideología del modernismo en Madrid (1900–1950)* (Seville: Doble J., 2011); Igor Contreras, ‘El “empeño apostólico-literario” de Federico Sopeña: sueños, lecturas y reivindicaciones musicales’, in Cascudo and Palacios (eds.), *Los señores de la crítica*.

been founded by Felipe Pedrell in the late nineteenth century. Pedrell's research interests focused on early Spanish sacred music and Spanish folklore, for a very specific reason: according to the Pedrellian narrative, Spanish music had flourished in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but it had then entered a period of decline, mostly because of the influence of Italian theatrical music, especially during the nineteenth century. Pedrell's musicological and archival work was supposed to unveil a number of treasures of Spanish music which would inspire a Spanish musical renaissance in which Pedrell himself participated by composing a number of Spanish operas.² Pedrell's ideas remained highly influential during the twentieth century, with his student Higinio Anglés establishing himself as one of the most active and prolific Spanish musicologists after Pedrell's death in 1922; Anglés was named founding director of the Instituto Español de Musicología when it was founded by the Franco regime in 1943. It was not that every Spanish musicologist followed the Pedrellian narrative *au pied de la lettre* – for example, from the 1910s onwards, Spanish theatrical music of the eighteenth century attracted the attention of a number of researchers, such as José Subirá, Julio Gómez and Roberto Gerhard – but, in any case, musicology was widely regarded in Spain as the study of the musical past, which may or may not include the nineteenth century but certainly did not include contemporary music.

Like Spanish musicology, Spanish music criticism developed in the nineteenth century, with the earliest known Spanish concert review being published by the Barcelona newspaper *El Brusi* in 1819.³ Initially, music criticism simply documented musical life in Spain rather than reflecting on it. Early examples include José María Carnerero's pioneering writings on music in Queen Isabella's court for the magazine *Cartas españolas* (1831–32) and the first Spanish music periodical, *La Iberia musical* (1842), which focused mostly on Italian opera.⁴ Even though Pedrell abhorred Italian opera, Spanish audiences thought differently. Nevertheless, writers on music soon felt a desire to engage in a more in-depth approach aimed not only at documenting but also at explaining and reflecting. The Asociación Musical of Madrid had in 1843 a column of concert reviews in the periodical *La Iberia musical y literaria*, but the members of the Asociación wished to have a space for more reflective, less immediate writing, and so the magazine *El Anfión matritense* was born with the

² Felipe Pedrell, *Por nuestra música* (Barcelona: Heinrich & Co., 1891), p. 17.

³ María del Valle de Moya Martínez, 'Aproximación a la crítica musical madrileña del último tercio del siglo XIX', *Ensayos: Revista de la Facultad de Educación de Albacete*, 12 (1997), 166; Emilio Casares Rodicio, 'La crítica musical en el XIX español: Panorama general', in Emilio Casares Rodicio and Celsa Alonso (eds.), *La música española en el siglo XIX* (Oviedo: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Oviedo, 1995), p. 464.

⁴ Casares Rodicio, 'La crítica musical', p. 466.

aim of ‘clarifying lines of thought’ (*aclarar las doctrinas*).⁵ In the subsequent decades, music criticism evolved into a tool not only for explaining and reflecting on the present, but also for suggesting improvements and trying to bring them to life. Several music magazines in Madrid (*Gaceta musical de Madrid, La zarzuela, La España artística, La ilustración musical hispano-americana*) wholeheartedly supported the development of a truly national tradition of Spanish opera; and, in Barcelona, music critics such as Pau Piferrer were furthering the nascent nationalist ideals of the *Renaixença* through their writings on traditional music.⁶

Both Salazar and Sopena can be regarded as part of this tradition of activist music criticism committed to achieving tangible results for Spanish music and musicians, mostly through asking for increased governmental support and intervention. Indeed, Salazar and Sopena were so convinced that governmental support was crucial in reinvigorating Spanish music that they both held offices in the governments they lived under: Salazar was a member of the Junta Nacional de Música y Teatros Líricos under the Second Republic (1931–6), and Sopena was secretary of the Comisaría de Música under Francoism from 1940 to 1943, and then Comisario from 1971 to 1972. Moreover, they both explicitly embraced music criticism *in opposition* to music historiography or musicology: Salazar was frequently scornful of Spanish musicologists⁷ whom he ironically labelled ‘the wise men of the archives’,⁸ and in one of his memoirs Sopena congratulated himself that he had chosen music criticism as opposed to musicology as a path to intervention: ‘When I see our “official” musicologists who are unable to write true history from the archives, I am almost glad that I did not fall into the Roman nets of Anglès.’⁹

Before I proceed to discuss Salazar’s and Sopena’s careers in more detail, as well as some of their writings, it is worth pointing out a further similarity. Sopena and Salazar were outliers in the landscape of Spanish music criticism of the twentieth century, in that they were primarily music critics. Most other Spanish critics of this period were composers, performers, music teachers, musicologists, journalists, authors and even medical doctors who also wrote music criticism. Indeed, for most of the twentieth century, with Spanish musical life being scarcely professionalised and articulated, it was usual for musicians to hold a variety of music-related jobs. Nevertheless, this does not mean that those

⁵ Juan Manini, ‘Asociación Musical’, *La Iberia musical* (1 January 1843), 3.

⁶ Xosé Aviñoa, ‘La crítica musical: donde el oficio absorbe la función’, in Cascudo and Palacios (eds.), *Los señores de la crítica*, p. 359.

⁷ See Adolfo Salazar, ‘El estado de la música española al terminar el primer año de la República’, *El sol* (1 January 1932), 6; Salazar, ‘La República y el Cancionero de Barbieri’, *El sol* (14 April 1933), 35.

⁸ Salazar, ‘Musicología’, *El sol* (20 February 1934), 5.

⁹ Federico Sopena, *Escrito de noche* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1985), p. 176.

who wrote music criticism did so for financial reasons only; many understood it as an extension of their professional practice in other areas or as a patriotic or political duty. Salvador Bacarisse's writings for the newspapers *Crisol* and *Luz* from 1931 to 1934 were in many ways an extension of both his work as a composer committed to new music and his involvement in the reorganisation of Spanish musical life through the Junta Nacional de Música y Teatros Líricos.¹⁰ On 29 March 1939, the day after Franco's troops entered Madrid putting an end to almost three years of conflict, Joaquín Turina, despite his health having severely deteriorated during the Spanish Civil War, promptly turned up at the headquarters of *El debate*, ready to go back to his post as staff music critic and contribute as such to the reconstruction of a devastated country.¹¹ Composer Julio Gómez, who after the war lost his job as staff music critic for the newspaper *El liberal*, wrote in his column in the magazine *Harmonía* that he regarded himself as a music critic and would be happy to write daily concert reviews again if someone offered him a suitable position.¹² Whereas most critics regarded writing music criticism as a significant part of their professional and artistic identity rather than as something they did on the side, Salazar and Sopena were practically the only ones who chose the written word as their main mode of engaging with Spanish musical life, present and future.

1914–1936: Adolfo Salazar

Salazar briefly tried his hand at composition, having studied under Bartolomé Pérez Casas in Madrid and Ravel in Paris, before developing an interest in music criticism. In 1914 he joined, together with well-known figures of Spanish music such as Manuel de Falla, the staff of *Revista musical hispano-americana*, becoming editor from 1915 until the magazine ceased publication in 1918. It was also in 1918 that Salazar got the appointment he would become known for: that of staff music critic at *El sol*. *El sol* was no ordinary newspaper in the media landscape of early twentieth-century Spain; it was more expensive than most of its direct competitors and, as a consequence, its print run was lower and it was circulated less widely. However, it did manage to carve a very successful niche for itself among the cultured minorities who were less interested in football and bullfighting than they were in literature, the visual arts or art music.¹³ In an attempt to adapt itself to the tastes of its

¹⁰ Christiane Heine, 'La crítica musical de Salvador Bacarisse en *Crisol* y *Luz* (1931–1934)', in Cascudo and Palacios (eds.), *Los señores de la crítica*, pp. 198–202; pp. 242–3; pp. 251–2.

¹¹ Joaquín Turina, *Diary* (1 January–31 December 1939), unpublished, Fundación Juan March, Madrid.

¹² Julio Gómez, 'Comentarios del presente y del pasado', *Harmonía* (April–June 1944), 3.

¹³ Cascudo and Palacios (eds.), *Los señores de la crítica*, p. xii.

readers, *El sol* was the first newspaper in Spain to take music criticism seriously and hired Salazar in an attempt to offer its readers a high-quality music section.¹⁴

Salazar, therefore, despite his liberal politics, wrote for an elitist newspaper. His interest in international musical modernism – with a particular focus on French neoclassicism, impressionism and Stravinsky’s objectivism – can be regarded as elitist as well, and certainly was by some of his contemporaries, such as Julio Gómez, who advocated a return to Spanish musical traditions as the path to renovating Spanish contemporary music.¹⁵ Nevertheless, Salazar’s focus on contemporary music should not be regarded as detached from the sociocultural context he lived in; it was informed by a desire to engage in an ongoing conversation about some of the country’s problems. Spain had lost its last colonies in 1898, marking the starting point of a debate that occupied successive cohorts of intellectuals up until the beginning of the Franco regime: namely, how to modernise Spain, or how to be modern while remaining Spanish. Solutions ranged from fully adopting European ideas and trends to going back to the essential and traditional values of Spain.

In these debates, contemporary music was not solely the province of musicians and music critics, as other intellectuals committed to the renovation of Spain interested themselves in music as well. The most influential of such intellectuals was probably the philosopher José Ortega y Gasset,¹⁶ who developed the concept of the dehumanisation of music. He argued that modernist music placed an emotional distance between the composer and his audience, who were thus unable to comprehend it,¹⁷ and that modern art and music were dehumanised because they were directed exclusively to the elites and were thus devoid of the importance, transcendence and appeal to the broader public they had enjoyed in the nineteenth century.¹⁸ Salazar and the young composers writing new music in Madrid at the time, collectively known as Grupo de los Ocho (‘Group of Eight’),¹⁹ embraced Ortega y Gasset’s

¹⁴ Francisco Parralejo, ‘Jóvenes y selectos: Salazar y Ortega en el entorno europeo de su generación (1914–1936)’, in Cascudo and Palacios (eds.), *Los señores de la crítica*, p. 68.

¹⁵ Beatriz Martínez del Fresno, *Julio Gómez: una época de la música española* (Madrid: Instituto Complutense de Ciencias Musicales, 2003), p. 23.

¹⁶ See Carol A. Hess, *Manuel de Falla and Modernism in Spain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Parralejo, ‘Jóvenes y selectos’, p. 88.

¹⁷ See José Ortega y Gasset, ‘Musicalia’, *El sol* (8 March 1921), 3.

¹⁸ See José Ortega y Gasset, *La deshumanización del arte* (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1925).

¹⁹ Members of the Grupo de los Ocho include: Salvador Baccarise, Julián Bautista, Rosa García Ascot, Ernesto Halffter, Rodolfo Halffter, Juan José Mantecón, Gustavo Pittaluga and Fernando Remacha. It must be taken into account, nonetheless, that the Grupo was a rather loose association of composers, conceived as a way to promote and disseminate their works rather than an alliance established on the basis of a shared aesthetic and artistic outlook.

concept of dehumanisation to an extent as a reaction against the perceived excesses of nationalism and romanticism.²⁰

Salazar's commitment to not only documenting the present but also to shaping it is obvious from his love of polemics with other critics and his involvement with the Junta Nacional de Música.²¹ Nonetheless, even his documenting of musical events was more than just that. While it has been claimed that Salazar was not a historian,²² there transpires in his writings a desire to construct grand narratives for the interpretation of Spanish music. The clearest and most illustrative example is Salazar's defence of Ernesto Halffter from 1925 onwards, after Halffter was awarded, at only twenty years of age, the government's Premio Nacional de Música (National Prize for Music) for his *Sinfonietta*. Salazar did not simply see in Halffter a great, even an exceptional composer but also a key figure to be inserted in the narrative of Spanish music; Salazar claimed that Halffter had absorbed Pedrell's commitment to founding a school of truly Spanish music, and he presented Halffter as Falla's heir as well as the composer who had finally freed Spanish musical nationalism from folklore in a way which was suitable for a country that was slowly entering modernity.²³

Salazar's canonisation of Ernesto Halffter did not only involve music criticism. Indeed, Salazar was one of the few music critics at the time to write monographs on Spanish contemporary music, in which Halffter was similarly awarded a prominent place, namely in *La música contemporánea en España*.²⁴ Salazar's music reviews were therefore not intended to be ephemeral: they were the basis for a historiographical narrative heavily based on 'hero' figures such as Pedrell, Falla and Halffter that has substantially informed musicological thinking in Spain even to the present.²⁵ Perhaps more interestingly, it must be noted that other dominant assumptions in Spanish musicology have

²⁰ Emilio Casares Rodicio, 'Música y músicos de la Generación del 27', in Emilio Casares Rodicio (ed.), *La música en la Generación del 27: Homenaje a Lorca 1915-1939* (Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura/INAEM, 1986), p. 25; Rodolfo Halffter, 'Manuel de Falla y los compositores del Grupo de Madrid de la Generación del 27', in Antonio Iglesias (ed.), *Rodolfo Halffter: Tema, nueve décadas y final* (Madrid: Fundación Banco Exterior, 1991), p. 412.

²¹ Parralejo, 'Jóvenes y selectos', p. 72; María Cáceres-Piñuel, '"Una posturita estética que no representa sino un frenazo": El discurso crítico de Subirá en torno al neoclasicismo (1929-1936)', in Cascudo and Palacios (eds.), *Los señores de la crítica*, pp. 261-4.

²² Cascudo and Palacios (eds.), *Los señores de la crítica*, p. xiii; Suárez-Pajares, 'Adolfo Salazar: luz y sombras', pp. 201, 208.

²³ Elena Torres Clemente, 'El "nacionalismo de las esencias": ¿una categoría estética o ética?', in Pilar Ramos López (ed.), *Discursos y prácticas musicales nacionalistas (1900-1970)* (Logroño: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de La Rioja, 2012), pp. 37-8; Ruth Piquer Sanclemente, 'El semanario *España* (1915-1924) y la crítica musical: Novecentismo y renovación', in Ramos López (ed.), *Discursos y prácticas musicales nacionalistas*, p. 93.

²⁴ Adolfo Salazar, *La música contemporánea en España* (Madrid: Ediciones La Nave, 1930), pp. 247-55.

²⁵ Suárez-Pajares, 'Adolfo Salazar: luz y sombras', p. 209; Torres Clemente, 'El "nacionalismo de las esencias"', p. 37.

been based on partial or incomplete readings of Salazar's writings. Although he was for decades portrayed as a champion of all new Spanish music and especially of the Grupo de los Ocho,²⁶ in reality it was only Ernesto Halffter who got Salazar's almost unconditional support, with the other seven receiving far less attention and understanding.²⁷

In order for Salazar's narratives to become influential, Salazar himself had to be regarded as an authoritative, impartial, almost hegemonic witness of musical life in 1920s and 1930s Madrid. Paradoxically, this 'Salazar legend' only started to develop under Francoism, while Salazar was in exile in Mexico. When Salazar died in October 1958, some of the most prominent figures of Spanish music praised him in their obituaries as a tireless champion of new music, a very effective mediator between young composers and audiences, an administrator fully committed to improving Spanish musical life and an excellent writer.²⁸ Yet it is highly doubtful that Salazar's contemporaries in pre-Francoist Spain regarded him as such a figure: he himself wrote shortly after he arrived in Mexico in 1939 that he had felt hostility towards him before he left Spain.²⁹ Although Salazar never hid his political sympathies for the left in a time in which music criticism, like most spheres of Spanish public life, was increasingly politicised,³⁰ it would not be accurate to assume that such hostility towards him was solely motivated by political reasons. Salazar's approach to music criticism and to new music had detractors among left-wingers as well, and it was indeed another supporter of the Republic, Julio Gómez, who called into question the idyllic picture other critics painted on the occasion of Salazar's death. Gómez refused to call Salazar 'the best Spanish critic of all time', arguing that Salazar had excellent writing skills but his judgement of music was not always reliable or impartial, nor was it unanimously embraced even by those who were, in principle, supporters of new music.³¹

Similarly, although I am aware that this chapter may in itself contribute to this impression, contemporary music and its developments in Spain were not the sole focus of music criticism in the period 1914–36, and thus Salazar's

²⁶ Emilio Casares Rodicio, 'Música y músicos de la Generación del 27', p. 20; Emilio Casares Rodicio, 'La música española hasta 1939, o la restauración musical', in Emilio Casares Rodicio, Ismael Fernández de la Cuesta and José López Calo (eds.), *España en la música de Occidente*, 2 vols. (Madrid: Instituto Nacional de Artes Escénicas y de la Música, 1987), vol. 1, p. 301.

²⁷ Rodolfo Halffter, 'Julían Bautista', *Música*, 1 (1938), 9; Palacios, *La renovación musical en Madrid*, p. 14.

²⁸ See Cristóbal Halffter, 'Guía de la música española'; Joaquín Rodrigo, 'Lo que fue para nosotros'; Enrique Franco, 'Crítica creadora'; all *Arriba* (7 October 1958), 29; Ramón Barce, 'Adolfo Salazar. La obra y el hombre', *Índice*, 20 (1958), 23.

²⁹ Consuelo Carredano, 'Danzas de conquista: herencia y celebración de Adolfo Salazar', in Nagore, Sánchez de Andrés and Torres (eds.), *Música y cultura en la Edad de Plata*, p. 175.

³⁰ María Palacios, 'César M. Arconada, el crítico progresista de una vanguardia musical inexistente', in Cascudo and Palacios (eds.), *Los señores de la crítica*, pp. 154–6.

³¹ Julio Gómez, 'Comentarios del presente y del pasado', *Harmonía* (October–December 1958), 5.

writings for *El sol* will necessarily be an incomplete reflection of musical life in Spain at that time. There were other sectors in Spanish music which made use of the written word, be it as a means of communicating with others based elsewhere in Spain, or as a way of lobbying for their own interests. The period 1914–36 saw the foundation of the three longest-lived music magazines in twentieth-century Spain. *Tesoro musical de ilustración del Clero* was first launched in 1917, changed its name to *Tesoro sacro musical* in 1925 and did not cease publication until 1978. Focusing on sacred music, it provides a glimpse of the rich musical culture within the Catholic church, though it was neither the first nor the only one to publish on this topic in Spain, with *Música sacro-hispana* running from 1907 to 1923. Second, in 1929 the composer, music teacher and critic Rogelio del Villar (1875–1937) founded the music magazine *Ritmo*, aimed at a generalist audience interested in Western art music. Apart from four years in which publication ceased as a result of the Spanish Civil War (from 1936 to 1940), *Ritmo* has survived to this day. Thirdly, *Harmonía: Órgano musical* started publication in 1936 and survived until 1958 (again, with a three-year interruption during the Civil War). *Harmonía* was both a magazine and a music publishing venture: it distributed arrangements for wind band to conductors throughout Spain, and with the arrangements came a magazine which discussed both the problems of the profession and broader musical topics; Julio Gómez was a regular contributor both before and after the Civil War.

1939–1981: Federico Sopena

The Spanish Civil War (1936–9) changed the landscape of Spanish music criticism in a significant way, with a number of writers in exile or dead. The most conspicuous absence was probably that of Salazar, who did not completely abandon music criticism but founded, together with fellow exiles Rodolfo Halffter and Jesús Bal y Gay, the periodical *Nueva música* in Mexico City in 1944. Nevertheless, for financial reasons, he chose to focus on writing books on a variety of musical topics and giving talks and lectures. The landscape of newspapers and magazines in Spain had also changed quite substantially: *ABC* survived under the direction of the Luca de Tena family, *El debate*, owned by Editorial Católica, was transformed into *Ya*, but the new big players of the newspaper industry were controlled by the fascist single party of the Franco regime, called Falange Española. Some already well-known names of the musical scene took up posts as music critics for these newspapers, writing reviews of concerts on an almost daily basis in order to transmit to their readership the idea that Spanish music, and the country at large, was on its

way to recovery after Franco's victory. Conrado del Campo (Professor of Composition at the Conservatorio de Madrid) wrote for *El Alcázar*, Joaquín Rodrigo for *Pueblo*,³² guitarist Regino Sainz de la Maza for *ABC*,³³ and composers Ángel María Pompey and José María Franco for *Ya*. The press was tightly controlled by the regime through *consignas* and censorship, and arts criticism was supposed to be, according to Manuel Prados y López's handbook for journalists, 'positive and constructive', because 'in this new Spain in which it is of vital interest to seize all talents available, negative criticism expresses not only bad taste, but is intolerable and dangerous for the mission of the State'.³⁴

Nevertheless, there was a remarkable degree of continuity as well. *Harmonía* and *Ritmo*, two of the music magazines whose publication had been cancelled during the Civil War, were relaunched in 1940. The latter was now more directly controlled by the government, with Nemesio Otaño – former Comisario de Música and director of the Conservatorio de Madrid – as its editor. Nevertheless, it is perhaps the career of Federico Sopena which best exemplifies the mixture of continuity and rupture which characterises musical life in early Francoist Spain. Sopena was a newcomer to music criticism when he was appointed staff music critic at the Falange newspaper *Arriba* in 1939. He was, moreover, a member of the Falange Liberal, and as such he shared the Falange Liberal's aspirations of reconstructing and renovating Spain and not just going back to the values of the past.³⁵ Yet, at the same time, Sopena's career was clearly – and self-confessedly – inspired by Salazar's.³⁶ They shared a commitment to new music and its ramifications in Spain, they both wrote monographs in Spanish music at a time when very few critics or writers were doing so, and they both regarded themselves as music critics rather than historians or musicologists. Yet their writings show a commitment to crafting master narratives for Spanish twentieth-century music even, in the case of Sopena, at a time in which the constant pressure on music critics to attend and positively review multiple concerts a week admittedly took its toll on the depth and acumen that critics could be expected to exhibit in their analysis.³⁷

Sopena had admittedly been looking for a hero figure, a redeemer of Spanish music, since he was appointed staff music critic at *Arriba*,³⁸ and he found it in

³² José Antonio Gutiérrez, 'La labor crítica de Joaquín Rodrigo en el diario *Pueblo* (1940–1946)', in Suárez-Pajares (ed.), *Joaquín Rodrigo*.

³³ Leopoldo Neri de Caso, 'Regino Sainz de la Maza, crítico musical en *ABC* (1939–1952)', in Suárez-Pajares (ed.), *Joaquín Rodrigo*.

³⁴ Manuel Prados y López, *Ética y estética del periodismo español* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1943), p. 72.

³⁵ Moreda Rodríguez, 'Federico Sopena', pp. 293–6. ³⁶ Sopena, *Escrito de noche*, p. 169.

³⁷ Regino Sainz de la Maza, 'Informaciones musicales', *ABC* (12 June 1942), 13.

³⁸ Federico Sopena, *Joaquín Rodrigo* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1946).

Joaquín Rodrigo, whose guitar concerto *Concierto de Aranjuez* was given its first performance in Madrid on 11 December 1940. The concert was quickly recognised as one of the most significant musical events in post-Civil War Spain, and through the 1940s and 1950s music critics repeatedly named it as such.³⁹ The Spanish government was similarly enthusiastic about the work. The *Concierto* was repeatedly selected as one of the examples of Spanish contemporary music to be performed in musical exchanges; it was included in the programme of the third Hispanic-German music festival in August 1942, as well as for the visit of the Orquesta Nacional and the Comisaría de Música to Lisbon in April 1943. Even contemporary scholarship still regards the performance as a milestone in the musical life of early Francoism,⁴⁰ even though at the time in which the concert took place not everybody was equally enthusiastic. Otaño, in a letter to Falla, expressed his horror that the work had been compared to Falla's *Noches en los jardines de España* and explained to Falla that he himself felt obliged to argue against these opinions in a radio broadcast because Rodrigo 'is subtle and well-intentioned, but his talent is limited'.⁴¹ Julio Gómez was also highly critical of the concerto's success and wrote to musicologist José Subirá that: 'The main event [in Madrid musical life] has been the first performance of *Concierto de Aranjuez*, by Joaquín Rodrigo, who has been the object of a pre-concert promotion and a post-concert success which has never been seen in Spain – not even in the best days of the Salazar-Halfpfer duo.'⁴²

Like Salazar's treatment of Halfpfer, Sopena's attempts at placing Rodrigo in the canon of Spanish music started shortly after the performance of the *Concierto* and took different forms beyond just music criticism. For example, in a talk about Spanish music during the above-mentioned visit of the Comisaría to Lisbon, Sopena chose to focus on Falla, Turina and Rodrigo and their significance for contemporary music aesthetics, crucially placing Rodrigo besides the two living Spanish composers with the most significant international reputations. In Sopena's opinion, the music of Falla, Turina and Rodrigo was intrinsically Spanish, but never picturesque or provincial; it had a universal appeal because it was based on feeling and emotion.⁴³ In an

³⁹ Antonio de las Heras, 'La música en el año que termina', *Informaciones* (31 December 1940), 7; Joaquín Rodrigo, 'La música en 1940', *Pueblo* (31 December 1940), 8; Antonio de las Heras, 'Música', *Informaciones* (12 June 1942), 6; Sainz de la Maza, 'Informaciones musicales', 13.

⁴⁰ Tomás Marco, *Spanish Music in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), pp. 130–1; Gemma Pérez Zalduendo, 'Continuidades y rupturas en la música española durante el primer franquismo', in Suárez-Pajares (ed.), *Joaquín Rodrigo*, p. 70.

⁴¹ Nemesio Otaño, Letter to Manuel de Falla (20 August 1938), unpublished, Archive of the Seminary of Loyola.

⁴² Julio Gómez, Letter to José Subirá (25 December 1940), unpublished, Fondo José Subirá, Biblioteca Nacional de España.

⁴³ Anon., 'La Orquesta Nacional, en Lisboa', *Arriba* (3 April 1943), 7.

account of the initial years of music under Francoism published on the occasion of the Día del Caudillo on 1 October 1943, Sopena established a connection between the ‘generation of musicians ... led by Turina’, who had gathered successes for Spanish music in Europe before the war, and the first performance of the *Concierto de Aranjuez* in 1940.⁴⁴ Sopena thus entirely skipped the Grupo de los Ocho and the other young composers active during the Second Republic, with the exception of a passing mention of Ernesto Halffter, suggesting that the principal dynasty of Spanish music went from Falla to Turina to Rodrigo. Sopena’s narrative about Rodrigo was one of necessity and historical inevitability: in several writings through the 1940s and beyond, Sopena claimed that Spanish audiences were feeling dissatisfied with both dehumanised modernism and romanticism after the Spanish Civil War. They hoped for a piece of music that would bring feeling and sincerity back to modern music and this allegedly was what Rodrigo had managed to do with the *Concierto de Aranjuez*.⁴⁵

Sopena’s views of Rodrigo’s *Concierto de Aranjuez* were rooted in his belief that feeling and emotion were the most significant characteristics which modern music should keep at all costs – in clear contrast with Ortega y Gasset’s dehumanisation. As Sopena was the only Spanish music critic during the 1940s to engage systematically with contemporary music, his writings on the subject were influential among his contemporaries and beyond. For example, he repeatedly opposed Falla and Stravinsky as the two main poles of European modernism, because the former was humanistic, reasonably respectful of the past and, above all, truly national, whereas Stravinsky cultivated a dehumanised, non-national and cool modernism.⁴⁶ This opposition certainly proved popular among other music critics of the 1940s.

Perhaps the first time in which Sopena explicitly framed his work as a continuation of Salazar’s was in 1958 in the prologue to his *Historia de la música española contemporánea*, which was presented as a sequel to Salazar’s 1930 *La música española contemporánea*.⁴⁷ Almost twenty years after the end of the Civil War, acknowledging or even praising the exiles was becoming more

⁴⁴ Federico Sopena, ‘La música de estos años’, *Arriba* (1 October 1943), 3.

⁴⁵ Federico Sopena, *Joaquín Rodrigo*, p. 90; Federico Sopena, ‘El nacionalismo en la música de estos años’, *Arbor*, 9/27 (1948), 474–5; Gerardo Diego, Joaquín Rodrigo and Federico Sopena, *Diez años de música en España. Musicología, intérpretes, compositores* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1949), p. 189.

⁴⁶ Eva Moreda Rodríguez, ‘A Catholic, a Patriot, a Good Modernist: Manuel de Falla and the Francoist Musical Press’, *Hispanic Research Journal*, 14/3 (2013), 221–3.

⁴⁷ Federico Sopena, *La historia de la música española contemporánea* (Madrid: Rialp, 1958), p. 13; Salazar, *La música contemporánea en España*.

and more common, as opposed to mentioning them in passing or simply ignoring them, which had been the norm during the 1940s:

More than 25 years have gone by since Adolfo Salazar's relatively short book about contemporary Spanish music was published. All these years require not only more history and a different landscape, but also, in the specific case of Spanish music, a certain change of approach.⁴⁸

By now, however, the Spanish avant-garde composers typically grouped under the label *Generación del 51* (Generation of 51) were starting to become dominant in Spanish musical life. Sopeña did indeed strike close relationships with some of them, such as Cristóbal Halffter, during his tenure as director of the Conservatorio de Madrid. However, he did not champion them in the same way that he had championed Rodrigo in the 1940s; the *Generación del 51* had its own critics, namely Enrique Franco, and critic-composers including Ramón Barce, Luis de Pablo and Tomás Marco. They, and not so much Sopeña, crafted the narratives of history of music and progress and avant-garde as historical inevitability that have informed the reception of the Spanish avant-garde to the present day.⁴⁹

As was the case during the Salazar years, however, music criticism writings of the Franco era reflect a broader range of interests rather than just new music. A particularly interesting development is the emergence of publications focusing on popular music and recordings, starting with the jazz-focused *Ritmo y melodía* in 1944 and moving on to *Aria jazz*, *Discóbolo*, *Fonorama* and others, which reflect the changing listening and consumption habits of Spanish audiences – and indeed, even in established magazines such as *Ritmo*, reviews of recordings quickly replace reviews of live events from the 1970s onwards, with the Spanish government establishing a prize for reviewers of recordings (Premio Nacional de la Crítica Discográfica) in 1980 (with no equivalent prize for reviewers of live music events).

The generation of critics succeeding Sopeña, starting their careers between the 1950s and the 1970s (Enrique Franco, Carlos Gómez Amat, Ángel Fernando Mayo) still managed to keep some of Sopeña's dual status as music critic and music historian/musicologist, but this has not been the case in more recent decades. Part of the reason for this has to be sought in the increasing

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ See for example, Tomás Marco, *La música de la España contemporánea* (Madrid: Publicaciones Españolas, 1970); and Marco, *Música española de vanguardia* (Madrid: Guadarrama, 1970). Contemporary scholarship indebted to such narratives includes to a great extent Germán Gan Quesada, 'A la altura de las circunstancias ... Continuidad y pautas de renovación en la música española', in Alberto González Lapuente (ed.), *Historia de la música en España e Hispanoamérica: La música en España en el siglo xx* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2012), p. 169.

professionalisation of musicology in Spain, with the first university department in musicology opening in 1984 at the University of Oviedo; nevertheless, some musicologists still combine scholarly research and teaching with regular engagement in music criticism in national or regional newspapers, some examples being Pablo L. Rodríguez, Xoán Manuel Carreira, Diana Díaz and Luís Costa. Not surprisingly, it is in the field of popular music that critics and journalists still seem able to exert some influence on the shaping of historiographical narratives, with many of them publishing books and other extended works on areas and topics still unexplored by the popular music studies field; names include Eduardo Guillot, Roberto Moso, Luis Clemente and January Ruiz. Access to a broader range of musical genres and technological developments (e.g. the pioneering Spanish-language music criticism portal *mundoclasico.com*) has also transformed music criticism into a varied, somewhat fragmented landscape; it would be difficult to imagine a personality like Salazar's and Sopena's occupying such a central, influential role today.

It is perhaps this diversity that most clearly illustrates that Salazar and Sopena truly occupied an exceptional place in Spanish twentieth-century music criticism. They did not necessarily fully capture the zeitgeist of the time they lived in – although they were often believed to have done so – and yet their commitment to writing as an interpretative and transformative tool granted them remarkable influence on other critics and musicologists to the present day. Even though such influence will no doubt be the object of further critical analysis in the future, Salazar's and Sopena's attempts at extending the boundaries of music criticism as a mode of writing, blurring them with those of music historiography and even those of literary writing, will ensure that their writings remain relevant in the future.

Critical Battlegrounds in the French Third Republic

DELPHINE MORDEY

But, like a kaleidoscope which is every now and then given a turn, society arranges successively in different orders elements which one would have supposed immutable, and composes a new pattern.

Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time* (1996)¹

The Third Republic was paradoxically both a ‘golden age’ – of the press, of cinema and of music – and a time of tragedy, humiliation and almost perpetual pessimism. Bookended by Bizet’s *Carmen* (1875) and Messiaen’s *Quatuor pour la fin du temps* (1940–1), the musical world experienced a dizzying array of schools and movements, as musicians negotiated the transition from nineteenth-century romanticism to twentieth-century modernism, via the looming spectre of Wagnerism. These musical transformations took place against an extraordinarily turbulent political background: born out of, interrupted and ended by war with Germany, the Republic was also regularly rocked by internal crises, not least the Dreyfus Affair, which split the already deeply divided country further into two.²

Within an ever-expanding press, itself made possible by unprecedented rates of technological development, music criticism followed the contours of this highly charged landscape, becoming an arena for intertwined social and cultural battles. These battles are most famously exemplified by the era’s succession of *succès de scandale*, including the Parisian premieres of Wagner’s *Lohengrin* (1887), Debussy’s *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1902) and Stravinsky’s *Rite of Spring* (1913), each of which drew scores of reviews across the specialist and general press, exposing conflicting ideals as critics attempted to influence, and were influenced by, fractured public opinion.

¹ Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time*, Vol. 2: *Within a Budding Grove*, trans. C. K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin (London: Vintage, 1996), p. 103.

² In 1894 Captain Alfred Dreyfus was accused of passing French military secrets to the Germans. The case brought to the fore deep divisions between the largely Catholic, Monarchist anti-Dreyfusards and the anticlerical, pro-republican Dreyfusards, and infiltrated every facet of French cultural and political life; see Ruth Harris, *Dreyfus: Politics, Emotion, and the Scandal of the Century* (New York: Henry Holt, 2010).

The overwhelming quantity and heterogeneity of music criticism in this period has resulted in a vast repertory of opposing, overlapping and intersecting narratives. From this apparent morass, certain patterns emerge, mapping out a complex critical battleground: the same disputes were fought and refought, albeit in new permutations, reflecting the continual clashes between generations, between conservatives and progressives, and between the rival compositional schools, or *petites chapelles*, that flourished in the belligerence of the Third Republic. Indeed, such was the impact of this climate of conflict that the language of the criticism was itself suffused with military metaphors; these have subsequently influenced the perception and historiography of the period.

While many of these battles appeared to be intramural, others were more clearly contested on external fronts: no issue dominated the Republic more than its fraught relationship with Germany, and the fear of cultural as well as political invasion. Such anxieties inspired a critical obsession with forging a true French musical identity; this, in turn, prompted wrangling over what exactly constituted that identity and the most appropriate genres through which to express it. As ever, the battle lines were far from static, frequently realigning to mirror the tangled ideologies of the time: political and aesthetic binaries failed to coincide, critics resisting the categorisations that historians have so often attempted to create for them.

These, then, are the central concerns that underpin this overview of music criticism and its debates between 1870 and 1940. Of course, the intricacy, length and immense bibliography of the period preclude the possibility of comprehensiveness; any single study can offer only one set of patterns within the kaleidoscope of possible interpretations. Within these limitations, however, the following chapter begins by surveying the rise of the press, the corresponding changes to the corpus of critics who contributed to it, and the battles they fought over the nature and practice of their burgeoning discipline. In the second half, the focus moves from questions about criticism itself to the struggles over French musical identity, inferiority and cultural conquest that repeatedly preoccupied critics between the belle époque and the Second World War.

The Golden Age of the French Press

The Third Republic witnessed a remarkable transformation and expansion of the press industry. Many scholars have pointed to the Law on the Freedom of the Press of 1881 as a crucial catalyst in this development, but the wheels had been set

in motion well before:³ technological innovations had led to faster and cheaper printing, and growing railway networks had facilitated distribution. Moreover, literacy rates had been steadily growing over the course of the century, feeding the demand for inexpensive newspapers – *la petite presse*.⁴ The statistics are striking: in the period up to the First World War, circulation of Parisian daily newspapers went up by 250 per cent; by 1900, there were 142 dailies published in the capital (up from fourteen in 1853), and one newspaper alone – *Le Petit journal* – had a print run of one million by 1890.⁵ Every possible combination of political, social and cultural orientations was catered for within this huge number of dailies, with obvious ramifications for the character of the criticism each newspaper published.

But this was not just the golden age of the daily press. Periodicals also enjoyed a surge in popularity, with publications appearing (and often disappearing) at an extraordinary rate: in 1882 there were at least 3,800 periodicals in France; a decade later, the number had risen to 6,000.⁶ The broad spectrum of *Revue*s covered both those aimed at the intellectual elite, such as the long-lived *Revue des deux mondes* (1829–), and more ephemeral publications targeting new audiences and their leisure pursuits. By the turn of the century, most institutions, associations, activities and artistic movements had their own periodical, from *L'Orphéon* (1855–1939), a gazette for the popular choral movement, to the in-house journal at *Le Chat noir* (1882–9).

The rapid growth of the press was brought to a halt by the First World War. Publications lost millions of readers to the front, and personnel and paper shortages meant that those papers that persevered did so on a much smaller scale and at inflated prices. Fighting this trend, a handful of new titles sprang up in response to current circumstances, including, most notably, *La Musique pendant la guerre* (1915–17); many more disappeared for good. Almost all specialist music periodicals ceased during this period, and musical coverage in the general press was greatly reduced. Following this enforced hiatus, the French press industry would struggle to regain its pre-war vigour: the number

³ This law meant, inter alia, that anyone could now set up a newspaper, and that censorship was relaxed; see Raymond Manevy, *La Presse de la Troisième République* (Paris: J. Forêt, 1955), p. 9.

⁴ On the rise of the press in the Third Republic, see in addition Claude Bellanger, Jacques Godechot, Pierre Guiral and Fernand Terrou (eds.), *Histoire générale de la presse française, tome 3: de 1871 à 1940* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1972); and Christophe Charle, *Le Siècle de la presse, 1830–1939* (Paris: Le Seuil, 2004).

⁵ See Christian Goubault, *La Critique musicale dans la presse française de 1870 à 1914* (Geneva: Slatkine, 1984), p. 25; and Déirdre Donnellon, 'Debussy, Satie and the Parisian Critical Press (1890–1925)', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Liverpool (2000), 1. These two sources provide invaluable accounts of French music criticism in the first fifty years of the Third Republic. For discussion of the interwar period, see Barbara L. Kelly and Christopher Moore (eds.), *Music Criticism in France, 1918–1939: Authority, Advocacy, Legacy* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2018), published after completion of this chapter.

⁶ Manevy, *La Presse de la Troisième République*, p. 9.

of Parisian dailies dropped sharply from 80 in 1914 to 31 by 1939, as print runs stagnated,⁷ and many of the younger critics who had contributed to the changing face of the press, failed to return from the trenches. But by then the developments in the French press industry had already left their mark on music criticism.

Music Criticism in the Press

One of the most obvious ways in which the extraordinary efflorescence of the press before the war affected music criticism was the increase in the number of critics that it brought about, both to fill the pages of the expanding specialist musical press and to contribute columns to a broad swathe of generalist publications. Music criticism, in one form or another, particularly of opera, could be found virtually everywhere, from the heavyweight cultural *revues* to the plethora of sporting and fashion magazines. It also had a place in nearly every newspaper: most dailies would have at least one critic to churn out a variety of copy, generally adhering to formulas established earlier in the nineteenth century. The serious music reviews usually took the form of six-column *feuilletons*, which filled the bottom half of the page, and were customarily published, weekly or fortnightly, on Mondays; hence the critics, or *feuilletonistes*, were also commonly known as *lundistes*. The relative length of the *feuilleton*, a format borrowed from literary critics and made famous during the Second Empire by Berlioz in *Le Journal des débats*, allowed for the most detailed, reflective and influential writing on musical works available in the general press.

While the *lundistes* persisted in many papers during the Third Republic, they were increasingly supplemented, and in some cases supplanted, by the *soiristes* (or *lendemainistes*): critics appointed to write next-day reports, or *comptes rendus*, of new works.⁸ The resulting articles, usually no more than a column in length, commonly focused on backstage gossip, as well as accounts of who was present in the audience, what they wore, and how warmly they applauded. Any mention of the work itself tended to be superficial at best, limited to discussion of the staging and costume design, with a few comments on the quality of the singing and dancing. In 1867, *Le Figaro* had become one of the first newspapers to switch from the weekly, fixed-day

⁷ See Charle, *Le Siècle de la presse*, p. 250.

⁸ See Roman Piana, 'La Diversification du discours critique après le Second Empire: la rubrique de "soirée"', in Mariane Bury and Hélène Laplace-Claverie (eds.), *Le Miel et le fiel: La critique théâtrale en France au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2008), p. 44.

feuilleton in favour of the next-day review, a decision that Arthur Pougin blamed for the death of the true critic.⁹

Controversial or otherwise, these various forms of criticism were supplied by a growing body of critics, whose status evolved over the course of the Third Republic. One of the by-products of press expansion was the increasing professionalisation of journalism, marked by the foundation of numerous professional bodies, including the Association de la critique dramatique et musicale (1877), and the Syndicat de la presse artistique (1899). It thus became increasingly possible to consider journalism a full-time occupation, rather than merely as a springboard for, or accompaniment to, another career. The majority of music critics, at least initially, however, continued to pursue more than one vocation: typically writer, composer, or musicologist. Each additional occupation had a profound effect on the criticism produced.

An Usherette and a Schoolgirl

There was a well-established tradition of *gens de lettres* dabbling in music criticism as part of a broad literary portfolio. Such figures, including Stendhal, Gérard de Nerval and Théophile Gautier, contributed to the genre's development despite little or no musical training. Their reviews, mostly of operatic productions, tended to focus on literary aspects of the work – particularly the qualities of the plot and libretto – with only vague allusions to the musical setting. This approach was alive and well in the Third Republic. Examples abound, but perhaps the most renowned example of the 'literary' music critic from this period was Henri Gautier-Villars (1859–1931), commonly known as Willy.

Playwright, novelist, editor, critic, not to mention Parisian man about town, Willy reigned over his own literary empire, a living embodiment of the effervescent spirit of the belle époque. Early on in his career, he had identified a gap in the market for a different kind of music criticism: 'the music columns of the great dailies were in the hands of boring writers . . . which distanced the reader . . . My idea was to produce a column that was gay, mocking, droll, and fun to read'.¹⁰ The result was the *Lettres de l'ouvreuse* (Letters from the Usherette), a long-running weekly column, written under the pseudonym 'Une ouvreuse du Cirque d'été', and first published in the journal *Art et critique* (1889), before being promoted to the pages of the widely

⁹ See Pougin's response to the 'Enquête sur la critique dramatique française', *La Revue d'art dramatique*, 6 (January–March 1899), 189. All translations are the author's own unless otherwise indicated.

¹⁰ Willy quoted and translated in Judith Thurman, *Secrets of the Flesh: A Life of Colette* (London: Bloomsbury, 2000), p. 51.

circulated daily newspaper *Echo de Paris* in 1892. The column was ostensibly concerned with reviewing orchestral concerts, but devoted as much space, if not more, to the indiscretions of the *Tout-Paris*. Written in a lively, frequently provocative prose, packed with puns, witticisms and innuendos, these columns are representative of the increasingly irreverent tone of music criticism in the daily press; short, casual and caustic, they marked a significant departure from the more serious contemplations of the *feuilletonistes*. The composer (and critic) Pierre de Bréville suggested that, with his *ouvreuse*, Willy had in fact ‘invented a new type of criticism: entertaining criticism, where it’s not necessary to be of the profession to find pleasure in it’.¹¹

Demand for this new brand of criticism was high: Willy contributed to numerous newspapers and journals, including *Comœdia*, *La Nouvelle presse* and *Le Mercure musical*. His extraordinary prolificacy was made possible by a ‘factory’ of ghostwriters; among them was the Conservatoire-trained Emile Vuillermoz, who cut his critical teeth penning the *Ouvreuse* columns between 1904 and 1906.¹² This helps to explain the fact that, for all their apparent triviality, and despite Willy’s own lack of musical training, his reviews were not entirely devoid of technical details.¹³ They also helped to establish him as one of the most influential music critics of the era. Debussy reportedly remarked ‘there is only one music critic and that’s Willy. He may not know what a semiquaver is, but it is to him that I owe the best part of my reputation.’¹⁴

This influence may be partially attributed to Willy’s canny exploitation of the new possibilities presented by mass media at the *fin de siècle*. Courting scandal, both through his romantic affairs, and deliberately inflammatory reviews, he became adept at manipulating and marketing details of his life to feed his art (and pocket) and maintain a prominent place in the public eye. Nowhere was this complex nexus of public and private more evident than in ‘Claudine au Concert’, a series of columns written by Willy’s most famous ghostwriter – and wife – Colette, that appeared in the left-leaning literary daily *Gil Blas* between 12 January and 29 July 1903.

Claudine was the fictional heroine of an eponymous series of novels, the fourth and final instalment of which, *Claudine s’en va*, was published in

¹¹ Pierre de Bréville, ‘Musique’, *Mercure de France* (July 1898), 276.

¹² See Jacques Lonchamp (ed.), *Emile Vuillermoz, critique musicale 1902–1960: au bonheur des soirs* (Paris: P'Harmattan, 2013), p. 18.

¹³ Willy is also known to have sought advice on musical matters from several composers, including Debussy; see Thurman, *Secrets of the Flesh*, p. 51.

¹⁴ Claude Debussy, *Debussy on Music: The Critical Writings of the Great French Composer Claude Debussy*, collected by François Lesure, ed. and trans. Richard Langham Smith (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), p. 64.

March 1903. Authored by Colette, but published in Willy's name, the gently risqué stories related the coming of age of a young girl from the Burgundian countryside. Recognising the financial potential in the stories, Willy squeezed them for all they were worth, generating large amounts of publicity through cartoons, posters and songs, as well as a theatrical dramatisation featuring the actress Polaire. 'Claudine au Concert' added to the elaborate publicity stunt: writing in Claudine's name, Colette deliberately played the part of the ingénue, cultivating a tone that was chatty, carefree and conspiratorial.

In keeping with her character, Colette as Claudine took amateur criticism to a new level, declaring in her opening column that she did not intend to write very much about music at all.¹⁵ Elsewhere, she happily wore her alleged ignorance on her sleeve; in a review of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, she declared: 'The experts will tell you why it's beautiful. I'm just Claudine, and more often than not I submit to beauty . . . overwhelmed, without analysing it.'¹⁶ Disingenuous pronouncements such as this were interspersed with in-jokes and references to characters from the novels, including Claudine's husband Renaud, as well as to Willy, *L'Ouvreuse* and Polaire, lightly tripping across different narrative planes. A similar fusion of the real and the imagined is present in the semi-autobiographical *Claudine* novels themselves, the last of which, partly set in Bayreuth, draws on Colette's own experience as a regular pilgrim to the 'Holy City'.¹⁷ Here Colette partakes in a long literary tradition of what Cormac Newark has described as the *soirée à l'opéra*: the almost obligatory operatic outing featured in French novels of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹⁸ More importantly, this tradition was part of a broader phenomenon in which the distinction between factual reporting and fictional accounts was increasingly blurred. Colette's 'Claudine' columns are indicative of this generic blurring; but they also draw attention to the then prominent practice among music critics of obscuring authorial identity through the use of pseudonyms, ghostwriters and fictional characters, making the task of identifying the true voice behind the competing narratives, the functions and the meanings of the criticism, often very difficult indeed.

¹⁵ [Colette], 'Claudine au Concert', *Gil Blas* (12 January 1903).

¹⁶ [Colette], 'Claudine au Concert', *Gil Blas* (2 February 1903). It was all a pose: Colette was not nearly as ignorant as her alter ego. She was, by all accounts, an accomplished pianist, and her earlier music criticism had demonstrated a degree of technical understanding; see Christian Goubault, 'Colette et Debussy: "Compagnons de chaîne" au *Gil Blas* en 1903', *Revue internationale de la musique française*, 17 (June 1985), 76–8.

¹⁷ Colette, 'Claudine and Annie', in *The Complete Colette*, trans. Antonia White (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001), p. 582.

¹⁸ Cormac Newark, *Opera in the Novel from Balzac to Proust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 5.

Composers as Critics: Debussy at the *Gil Blas*

Claudine/Colette shared the duties of music critic at *Gil Blas* with Claude Debussy, who himself made occasional use of a fictional alter ego – the irascible Monsieur Croche – to voice some of his typically robust opinions.¹⁹ These unlikely critical bedfellows started their respective columns on the same day (12 January 1903), and continued to appear alongside each other every Monday for the next six months, often reviewing the same concerts. Responsible for the longer, and supposedly more serious *feuilleton*, Debussy, as a professional musician, promised a more knowledgeable form of criticism.

In taking on this task, Debussy was just one of an impressive roll call of Third Republic composers who, following in Berlioz's footsteps, carved out a secondary career as a critic; these included Reyer, Saint-Saëns, Fauré, Bruneau, Dukas, Schmitt, Auric and Messiaen. Unlike some of these figures, Debussy's critical career was only intermittent, albeit no less important for that. His first articles appeared in the radical cultural journal *La Revue blanche*, in 1901, where he lasted eight months; after a six-month spell at *Gil Blas*, he published only occasionally until November 1912, when he agreed to take charge of a column reviewing the Concerts Colonne for *La Revue musicale S. I. M.* This final engagement, which lasted until March 1914, once more paired Debussy with a contrasting voice: fellow composer Vincent d'Indy, responsible for reviewing the Concerts Lamoureux.

Debussy was a somewhat reluctant critic, and throughout his career he turned down numerous requests for his critical collaboration.²⁰ He also expressed his scepticism over the quality of a profession that anyone and everyone thought they could try their hand at; as he complained to Louis Laloy, 'Today, if you don't know what to do or, especially, what to say, you improvise some art criticism.'²¹ The composer was himself, however, far from conscientious as a critic: he confessed to not always staying to the end of the concerts under review, and often reused material from older articles. Moreover, despite his superior musical authority, his reviews often came close in tone to those of his critical confrère Colette: amusing, sarcastic and riddled with wordplay, they also refused to engage with technical analysis. 'What you will be finding here', he announced, 'are my own sincere

¹⁹ Monsieur Croche first appeared in Debussy's sixth article for *La Revue blanche* on 1 July 1901; he made only five further appearances, including three in *Gil Blas* on 16 February, and 16 and 23 March 1903; see Déirdre Donnellon, 'Debussy as Musician and Critic', in Simon Trezise (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Debussy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

²⁰ See François Lesure, 'Introduction', in Debussy, *Debussy on Music*, pp. xviii–xx.

²¹ Deborah Priest (ed.), *Louis Laloy (1874–1944) on Debussy, Ravel, and Stravinsky* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), p. 11.

impressions, exactly as I felt them – more than “criticism”²²; he did not want to kill the ‘mystery’ of musical works.²² Perhaps most importantly, Debussy’s reviews shared with Colette’s a broader purpose: self-promotion. Where ‘Claudine au concert’ was a vehicle for marketing novels, Debussy’s *feuilletons* offered the composer a platform from which to disseminate his strongly held views and shape his reputation. His outspoken attacks – against contemporaries such as Bruneau and Saint-Saëns, against creaking state musical institutions and, of course, against Wagner – helped to confirm his reputation as an iconoclast, while his championing of Rameau, and a revised French musical historiography, served to construct the historical narrative into which he wished to situate himself.²³

It was precisely this potential for conflating criticism with personal advancement that led to extensive disparagement of composer-critics. Indeed, as the Third Republic progressed, composers became increasingly adept at utilising criticism as a means of publicity: several members of Les Six, for example, including Auric, Milhaud and Poulenc, regularly wrote for the press, generating exposure for the group. A few voices did come out in support of composers, arguing that their experience made them exceptionally well suited to the job of critic, but such support was usually from composer-critics themselves.²⁴ That said, not all composers were tarred with the same brush: for Michel-Dimitri Calvocoressi, ‘second-rate artists [who are] more assimilators than creators’ could make successful critics.²⁵ Certainly, many of the most influential and respected critics of the day were relatively minor or frustrated composers, including Victorin Joncières, Gaston Carraud and Emile Vuillermoz. There was, however, at the same time, a third category of critic emerging, one that was both musically trained and comparatively disinterested: the musicologist-critic.

Music Criticism and the Rise of Musicology

The discipline of musicology slowly gained recognition in France through a constellation of seminal events in the late nineteenth century. In 1871, the Paris Conservatoire introduced its first music history classes, made compulsory following Fauré’s appointment as Director in 1905; its rival institution,

²² Debussy, *La Revue blanche* (1 April 1901); translated in Debussy, *Debussy on Music*, p. 13.

²³ See Donnellon, ‘Debussy as Musician and Critic’; and Anya Suschitsky, ‘Debussy’s Rameau: French Music and Its Others’, *Musical Quarterly*, 86/3 (2002), 398–448.

²⁴ See, for example, Charles Koechlin, ‘Les compositeurs et la critique musicale’, *La Revue musicale* (1 September 1927), 108–16.

²⁵ Michel-Dimitri Calvocoressi, ‘La Critique musicale’, *Le Courrier musical* (1 November 1910); translated in Donnellon, ‘Debussy, Satie and the Parisian Critical Press’, p. 24.

the Schola Cantorum, had music history at the core of its curriculum from its foundation in 1894. At the Sorbonne, musicology was accepted as a doctoral subject in the 1890s, with the first doctorate awarded to Jules Combarieu in 1894; further doctorates followed for Romain Rolland (1895), Louis Laloy (1904) and Jules Écorcheville (1906), all of whom went on to make their mark in the twin fields of musicology and criticism.

The gradual institutionalisation of musicology led to a new breed of critic, well versed in music history, and capable of analysing and contextualising works, old and new. Many of these critics found an outlet for their lengthy ruminations in the pages of the growing specialist music press, editions of which were usually published weekly or fortnightly, allowing more time to reflect on musical works and catering to a smaller, possibly more discerning audience than the daily papers. *Le Ménestrel*, founded in 1834, remained one of the dominant music journals, and although its long-running rival, the *Revue et Gazette musicale* (1834), ceased publication in 1880, a large number of periodicals surfaced to challenge *Le Ménestrel*'s position, including *L'Art musical* (1860), *La Chronique musicale* (1873), *La Renaissance musicale* (1881), *Le Monde musical* (1889), *Le Journal musical* (1894) and *Le Courrier musical* (1899). In addition to these, and hundreds of short-lived publications, a small number of decidedly more academic journals began to appear, spearheaded by musicologists with a view to disseminating their work: these included *La Tribune de Saint-Gervais* (1895), which, much like its affiliate institution, the Schola Cantorum, promoted early music and historical studies; *La Revue musicale* (1901), founded by Jules Combarieu; Louis Laloy's *Le Mercure musical* (1905), which eventually became *La Revue musicale S. I. M.*; and Henry Prunières's *Revue musicale* (1920).²⁶

Combarieu's journal, initially titled *La Revue d'histoire et de critique musicales*, made clear at the outset its intention to bring together music history and criticism.²⁷ In a letter to the journal's readers, the editors explained:

The history of music is not finished: it progresses before our eyes through the creation of new works. Thus in addition to history, we also provided from the beginning a place for criticism ... In our criticism as in our history, we proceed with texts in hand, we do not claim anything without evidence, and we have no ambition other than to express our opinions.²⁸

²⁶ See Jean-Adrien Thoumin, *Bibliographie rétrospective des périodiques français de littérature musicale, 1870-1954* (Paris: Union Française des Organismes de Documentation, 1957).

²⁷ The journal changed its title to *La Revue musicale: revue d'histoire et de critique* in October 1902, before becoming simply *La Revue musicale* in 1904.

²⁸ 'À nos lecteurs', *La Revue musicale*, 2 (November 1902), translated in Michel Duchesneau, 'French Musicology and the Musical Press (1900-14): The Case of *La Revue musicale*, *Le Mercure musical* and *La Revue musicale SIMP*', trans. Kimberly White, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 140/2 (2015), 247-8.

At first glance, this seems to point towards a more rigorous, analytical approach to criticism, far from Debussy's 'impressions' as he 'felt them'. But, as Michel Duchesneau has noted, the editors' stated aim to 'express our opinions' belies a 'confusion of epistemological approaches', in which academic objectivity was intricately intertwined with personal subjectivity.²⁹ For the Lyon-based musicologist-critic Léon Vallas, such an amalgamation of academic and journalistic methodologies was to be encouraged, a view disputed by Prunières. In the context of a long-running spat over the construction of Debussy's legacy, the critics' bitter disagreement would give rise to a collateral battle over the very nature of musicology.³⁰ With both music criticism and musicology in their relative infancy, the pages of the newly founded journals offered a valuable forum for debating crucial methodological questions, and in doing so, helped to mould the respective disciplines.

Internecine battles aside, one of the most important attributes of the musicologist-critics was their ability to elucidate the growing crop of complex and innovative new musical works to bewildered audiences. It was one thing for untrained, amateur critics to dash off next-day reviews of Auberian *opéra comiques* that they – and their readers – were hearing for the hundredth time; it was quite another to have to explain *Pelléas et Mélisande* or the *Rite of Spring*, and many of the press critics were simply not up to the task. It was not just new works that demanded skilled interpreters; alongside incipient modernism, the Third Republic enjoyed a resurgence of interest in early music.³¹ This interest was nurtured and facilitated by musicologists through their historical research and editions of pre-nineteenth-century repertoire, but it also required their expertise to explain these newly rediscovered works to the public.

The increasingly pedagogical role of music criticism was similarly reflected in the trend for distributing detailed historical and analytical programme notes at concerts, a practice first regularly implemented by the Concerts Colonne from 1885 onwards.³² In their shared didacticism, the *programmistes* and musicologist-critics (often one and the same) were not only responding to

²⁹ Duchesneau, 'French Musicology and the Musical Press', 247.

³⁰ See Barbara L. Kelly, 'Remembering Debussy in Interwar France: Authority, Musicology, and Legacy', *Music & Letters*, 93 (2012), 374–93.

³¹ See Katharine Ellis, *Interpreting the Musical Past: Early Music in Nineteenth-Century France* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

³² See Jann Pasler, 'Building a Public for Orchestral Music: Les Concerts Colonne', in Hans Erich Bödeker, Patrice Veit and Michael Werner (eds.), *Le Concert et son public: mutations de la vie musicale en Europe de 1780 à 1914 (France, Allemagne, Angleterre)* (Paris: Les Éditions de la Maison des Sciences de l'homme, 2002), pp. 214–34.

significant changes in the musical landscape, but also echoing the concern with educating the citizen that was so prevalent in the Third Republic.³³

Criticising Criticism

In tandem with the growth of music criticism at the end of the nineteenth century, critics began to turn the spotlight on themselves, questioning the *raison d'être* of their profession, its aims, responsibilities, methodologies, training and protagonists. The overriding tenor of the resulting articles was negative: despite – perhaps because of – the expansion of the field, the death knell of criticism was constantly tolled, an obligato accompaniment to the soundtrack of the Republic. This pessimistic perception was explored at length in a number of *enquêtes* – or surveys – which focused on the current state of the discipline.³⁴ In response to one of the most famous such *enquêtes*, undertaken by the *Revue d'art dramatique* in 1899, Romain Rolland argued that criticism was 'equally harmful to art and to the public spirit', and should be suppressed.³⁵ Much of this pessimism focused on what was felt to be the shameful incompetence of music critics indiscriminately hired by the daily papers to produce insubstantial and highly subjective reviews. We have already seen the concerns raised over next-day reviews, but the situation was exacerbated by the deepening divide between the general and the specialist press, as musically trained critics gravitated towards the latter, taking with them an ostensibly more objective and technical approach. Although there were exceptions who straddled this divide, the battle lines had been drawn and were frequently invoked, not least by Rolland in his savage fictional portrayal of Théophile Goujart, a critic who 'knew nothing about, nor liked, music; but that did not stop him from talking about it'.³⁶

The old-school critics put up a defence: in 'L'École des amateurs', a ten-part series for *Le Courrier musical*, Jean d'Udine outlined his theories on the importance of subjectivity and intuition over objectivity, describing theoretical and doctoral training as an 'ugly cul-de-sac'.³⁷ The incomprehensibility of more 'technical' criticism was a frequent complaint from the 'amateur' side of the divide; attending a concert of music by Guy Ropartz, Colette's alter ego

³³ See Jann Pasler, *Composing the Citizen: Music as Public Utility in Third Republic France* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009), pp. 189–202.

³⁴ The *enquête* was a ubiquitous journalistic medium in the Third Republic; in soliciting and then juxtaposing opinions from a range of personalities, the *enquêtes* provided a multifaceted snapshot of the current state of debate at any particular moment, giving voice to a variety of competing views.

³⁵ Rolland's response to the 'Enquête sur la critique dramatique française', 161.

³⁶ Romain Rolland, *Jean Christophe à Paris, Vol. 2: La Foire sur la Place* (Paris: Ollendorf, 1908), p. 57.

³⁷ Jean d'Udine, 'L'École des amateurs 11', *Le Courrier musical* (15 October 1905), 565.

Claudine, protested that ‘the programme gives itself a devil of a job trying to explain [why the work is beautiful] . . . There are perhaps people for whom a thing like this aids comprehension; me, it makes me feel like a complete idiot!’³⁸ Faux-naïve or not, Colette’s comment nevertheless points to the need for critics to know their audience: just as the pressure of next-day reviewing was uncondusive to in-depth analysis, so too was the need to cater for the mass readership of the general press, many members of whom might only rarely, if at all, attend the performances. In other words, the shorter, less technical press reviews so common at the time were not necessarily evidence of critical ignorance, so much, perhaps, as responses to practical exigencies.

In addition to questions of competence, critics regularly voiced concern over the issue of independence in their profession. Accusations of corruption and bias were rife, not least, as we have seen, in the reception of composer-critics. Similar rebukes were aimed at critics who formed partnerships with particular composers or compositional schools, using the power of their position to promote their chosen artist or aesthetic.³⁹ Impartiality was further thought to be compromised by the custom of giving out free tickets to critics; if that failed to secure a positive review, theatre directors could turn to paid-for puff pieces, acting as covert publicity. For Calvocoressi, the deliberate obfuscation of the distinction between genuine reviews and publicity, was ‘an unspeakable disgrace’,⁴⁰ but failing to play the game could have serious consequences. When, in 1875, Bizet’s *Carmen* met with an unfavourable reception, blame soon fell on the Opéra-Comique’s Director for neglecting to bribe the most influential critics.⁴¹

The difficulty of distinguishing between genuine criticism and puffery in the Third Republic press continues to pose a problem for historians today. As with the example of Colette’s Claudine, this difficulty is also representative of the wider complications of criticism in the period: a criticism characterised by a multitude of voices, agendas and narratives, sometimes overt, sometimes hidden, as it tried to establish itself within the new and constantly evolving technological, cultural and political contexts of the *fin de siècle*. While this resulted, as we have seen, in a great deal of self-reflection, when critics did turn their gaze from internal debates, it was, more often than not, to focus on – and shape – the broader external aesthetic and political battles that

³⁸ [Colette], ‘Claudine au Concert’, *Gil Blas* (23 February 1903).

³⁹ See Barbara L. Kelly, *Music and Ultra-Modernism in France: A Fragile Consensus, 1913–1939* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013), pp. 67–94.

⁴⁰ Michel-Dimitri Calvocoressi, ‘De la critique musicale’, *Revue française de musique*, 8 (1 February 1913), 325.

⁴¹ See Lesley Wright, *Carmen: Dossier de presse parisienne (1875)* (Weinsberg: Lucie Galland, 2001), p. viii.

dominated the cultural landscape. Chief among these was the relationship with Germany.

Revanche, Regeneration and the Republic

Scarred by the double trauma of military defeat and civil war, and further mutilated by the loss of Alsace-Lorraine, the early Third Republic achieved some sense of unity through a collective desire for *revanche*.⁴² Although the strength of this desire appeared to recede as new generations emerged, periods of political crisis – not least the 1887 Schnæbelé affair,⁴³ the Dreyfus affair and, of course, the First World War – would bring the issue of *revanche* back to the fore. Saint-Saëns's views were typical: interviewed in 1897 for an *enquête* on current attitudes towards Alsace-Lorraine, he argued that anyone who 'considers the war of 70–71 as a "purely historical" event, and who is not prepared to take up arms to reconquer the lost provinces, is unworthy of being called a Frenchman'.⁴⁴ *Revanche* alone was not enough, however, to repair a fragmented French sense of self: the search to identify a 'true' France through which to project a renewed sense of national pride would be one of the recurrent features of the Third Republic.

The shadow of military defeat, the simmering – and twice realised – threat of future conflict with Germany, and the concomitant search for French identity were perpetually reflected in critical debates about music. German culture had appeared as a complex, ambivalent role model for many French intellectuals, including musicians, for much of the nineteenth century: the character of the 'bon Allemand', an artistic, naive and sensitive soul, had provided an idealised counterpart to the shallow, sophisticated Parisian of the Second Empire. But following the Franco-Prussian War, Flaubert's 'peuple de rêveurs',⁴⁵ was replaced in the French imagination with a new breed of German that was cruel and menacing; the image of a barbarous and malevolent nation shattered previously held French illusions of a German utopia peopled by Goethe, Schiller and Beethoven.⁴⁶

⁴² French defeat in the Franco-Prussian war led to the ideology of *revanche*, dedicated to avenging defeat and reclaiming lost territories; see Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Culture of Defeat: On National Trauma, Mourning, and Recovery* (New York: Picador, 2004), pp. 128–35.

⁴³ In April 1887, Guillaume Schnæbelé, a French police inspector, was arrested by the Germans on the Franco-German border; it was widely feared that the ensuing dispute might lead to war.

⁴⁴ Saint-Saëns's response to the 'Enquête sur L'Alsace-Lorraine et l'état actuel des esprits', *Mercur de France* (December 1897), 645.

⁴⁵ Gustave Flaubert, 'Allemands', in his *Dictionnaire des idées reçues* (Paris: L. Conard, 1913).

⁴⁶ See Claude Digeon, *La Crise allemande de la pensée française (1870–1914)* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1959).

This apparent betrayal led to heated arguments in the press over the extent to which French composers could, or should, continue to draw inspiration from their Teutonic neighbours. As will be discussed further below, while for some critics any hint of Germanic style was akin to treason, for others the victors offered a model for French regeneration. Any such defence of German influence, however, required careful rhetorical justification and, in many cases, judicious revision of music history. Beyond questions of influence, the new character assigned to the Germans presented French critics with an opportunity to claim cultural superiority over their rivals: translating military defeat into moral victory, the French awarded themselves the mantle of civilised and humane culture, capable of producing great artworks, in contrast to the spiritual bankruptcy of their German foes. This was the moment to present a new, stronger image of French music, and to vanquish the Germans on the musical battleground, exacting a cultural *revanche*.

But there was a serious sticking point in this plan: critics from different political, institutional, musical and social factions were embroiled in a battle over the nature of French music, endlessly debating the current state of the repertoire and the future directions they thought it should take. Aesthetic disputes ranged from the sources deemed necessary to ensure the revival of an innately French music – especially native *chanson populaire* and early music – to the most appropriate musical genres.⁴⁷

The ontological uncertainty that lay at the heart of debates over French music may have contributed to the deep sense of anxiety and inferiority that underpinned the critical hubris of Gallic superiority. A more significant factor, however, was the perpetual fear of future invasion, both musical and military. As the historian Robert Tombs has explained, the French ‘sense of national cultural exceptionalism’ was often paradoxically accompanied by ‘a pessimism in the face of perceived threats from inferior yet overwhelming foreign influences’.⁴⁸ This fear was manifested in the metaphors of invasion that recur throughout the music criticism of the Third Republic, not least in the context of debates over Wagner,⁴⁹ debates which, moreover, embodied the complex matrix of connections between aesthetic appeal, political legitimacy and the self-consciously riven French identity.

⁴⁷ See Annegret Fauser, ‘Gendering the Nations: The Ideologies of French Discourse on Music (1870–1914)’, in Harry White and Michael Murphy (eds.), *Musical Constructions of Nationalism: Essays on the History and Ideology of European Musical Culture, 1800–1945* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2001).

⁴⁸ Robert Tombs, ‘Culture and the Intellectuals’, in James F. McMillan (ed.), *Modern France: 1880–2002* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 173.

⁴⁹ See Davinia Caddy, *The Ballets Russes and Beyond: Music and Dance in Belle-Époque Paris* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 115–59.

Wagnérisme

If no issue dominated music criticism more than Franco-German relations, no figure dominated this criticism more than Wagner: articles – even entire journals – for, against or simply about Wagner saturated the press, especially in the three decades prior to 1900. Wagner’s dominance was, however, far from uncontroversial. His tempestuous relationship with France – a country he had previously tried and failed to conquer – was already well under way by the time the French and Prussians came to blows, but the 1870 war had a significant impact on this relationship, lending critical debates about the composer an ineluctably nationalist hue. When, in 1873, the conductor Jules Padeloup dared to start programming Wagner again after a two-year hiatus, the fiercely anti-Wagnerian journal *L’Art musical* was quick to remind readers that ‘after the war, Monsieur Padeloup declared in patriotic faith that he renounced the music of Wagner. Like the drunkards who have sworn never to drink again, Monsieur Padeloup has quickly returned to his former loves . . . The Director of the Concerts Populaires is not, as we can see, the musician of *la Revanche*’.⁵⁰

Not only was Wagner German, he had further damned himself in the eyes of the French with his *Eine Kapitulation*; described by the author as an antique comedy in the style of Aristophanes, this cruel farce, written at the height of the Franco-Prussian war and set in besieged Paris, ridiculed the French, portraying them as a frivolous, pleasure-loving people, incapable of taking their situation seriously. First translated into French in 1876,⁵¹ *Eine Kapitulation* was thereafter used by many anti-Wagnerian critics as a stick with which to beat the composer (and his French supporters). It also helped to ensure that the question of Wagner remained firmly tied to the political situation, provoking regular audience protests. *L’Art musical* went so far as to suggest that ‘The music of Wagner is no longer for us a question of art, it is a question of public order. It is no longer for the critic to judge it. It is for the Prefect of Police to prohibit it, in the interest of the peace.’⁵² The impassioned debates over Wagner, which took place both within the specialist music columns and in the more general press, reached a peak with the much-hyped Parisian premiere of *Lohengrin* at the Eden-Théâtre in May 1887, a production brought to a swift conclusion thanks to a heady mix of press hyperbole, street

⁵⁰ Anon., ‘Nouvelles diverses’, *L’Art musical* (25 December 1873), 415.

⁵¹ The first French translation (in abridged form) appeared in Victor Tissot, *Prussiens en Allemagne* (Paris: Dentu, 1876), shortly before a complete translation was published as ‘Richard Wagner et les Parisiens: Une capitulation, comédie à la manière antique’ in a supplement to *L’Eclipse* (5 November 1876).

⁵² *L’Art musical* (2 November 1876), quoted in Élisabeth Bernard, ‘Jules Padeloup et les Concerts Populaires’, *Revue de musicologie*, 57/2 (1971), 176.

riots and the concurrent Schnæbelé affair, which reignited anti-German feeling.⁵³

Wagnerism did not, however, simply sever Wagnerians from anti-Wagnerians; it also generated discord within each of these camps. This knotty situation arose in part from the many misconceptions that surrounded Wagner, caused by, among other factors, the scant availability of translations of his writings (not to mention the contradictions inherent within them) and the patchy performance history of his music in France up until the late 1880s. Although there were regular concert performances of extracts from Wagner's works, his operas were only performed regularly in Paris after 1891, and many of those writing about Wagner thus had only a limited acquaintance with his music.⁵⁴ Indeed, French *wagnérisme* was as much a literary as a musical phenomenon, attracting, in particular, a group of young symbolist writers who sought to promote Wagner's poetic and philosophical ideas through the pages of *La Revue wagnérienne* (1885–88). One corollary of this multidisciplinary and ambiguity was that Wagner could be drawn on by critics to serve varied ideological, aesthetic and political ends. If there was one unifying factor in critical clashes over the composer, it was that they were more concerned with an idea (or ideas) of Wagner, than with details of his music.

Prominent among such ideas was that of Wagner as a progressive, synonymous with the avant-garde; consequently, for conservative critics, Wagner became a byword for undesirable innovation. This can clearly be seen in the critical response to Bizet's *Carmen*. When the work premiered in 1875, it provoked a number of hostile reviews, partly due to the subject matter and racy realism of Céléstine Galli-Marié's central performance, but also because of its departures from the musical conventions of *opéra comique*. Wagner's name made more appearances in these reviews than that of any other composer, barring Bizet himself.⁵⁵ There were several reasons for this, not least that the French composer was a member of the *nouvelle école*, a group widely perceived as being under Wagner's spell, pushing French music further away from its national roots, and essential qualities of clarity and refinement. Many critics thus labelled Bizet's score 'Wagnerian', as a shorthand for it being too difficult and lacking in melody (that is, for being too 'progressive'); pro-Wagnerians, on the other hand, accused the work of not being Wagnerian

⁵³ The press quarrels over *Lohengrin* were reprised in September 1891, when a production was mounted at the Paris Opéra.

⁵⁴ See Gerald D. Turbow, 'Art and Politics: Wagnerism in France', in David C. Large and William Weber (eds.), *Wagnerism in European Culture and Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), pp. 156–7.

⁵⁵ See Wright, *Carmen*, p. viii.

enough. As Lesley Wright reminds us, however, the references to Wagner here must be understood not merely from the perspective of post-war attitudes towards the German composer, but also in the wider context of efforts to reform *opéra comique* in the 1870s. As already mentioned, in the wake of defeat, there were increasing demands to promote a truly French musical culture, and *opéra comique*, the quintessential French genre, was seen as one of the great bastions against foreign (especially German) cultural incursion. By straying from convention in his handling of *opéra comique*, Bizet was thus always likely to cause concern. But to stray in a way that could be seen to suggest Wagnerian influence, might, as Wright has suggested, be viewed almost as ‘a form of national betrayal’.⁵⁶ To invoke Wagner in reviews of *Carmen*, then, was to press into service a dense web of allusions: nationalist fervour, fear of German musical invasion, and concerns for a vulnerable French identity could all be harnessed to give added weight to aesthetic arguments, clothing the age-old battle between conservative and progressive music critics in political discourse.

As the genre upon which many hopes for the post-war promotion of a truly French musical identity were pinned, *opéra comique* was particularly sensitive to accusations of Wagnerian invasion, but also to concerns that it did not project quite the desired version of that identity. In particular, as Annegret Fauser has observed, a number of critics worried that *opéra comique* was inappropriately light and pretty; that is, too feminine.⁵⁷ For a nation recovering from the emasculating effects of military defeat and territorial loss, and keen to demonstrate renewal and vitality, a more virile profile was felt to be required for French music. It was in this context that Gustave Bertrand, writing in *Le Ménestrel* in October 1871, suggested that *opéra comique* should become ‘more masculine and sinewy’.⁵⁸

Such gendering of musical discourse was a common feature of criticism during the Republic, not least in the reception of Claude Debussy, whose delicate, sensitive and seemingly formless compositions attracted charges of effeminacy.⁵⁹ This effeminacy was equated with *fin-de-siècle* decadence, which, in turn, was associated with weakness and ill health; metaphors of sickness are manifold in reviews of Debussy’s music.⁶⁰ Writing for the *Revue des deux*

⁵⁶ Ibid. ⁵⁷ See Fauser, ‘Gendering the Nations’.

⁵⁸ Gustave Bertrand, ‘Opéra-Comique: Hérold, 1000e représentation du *Pré au Clercs*’, *Le Ménestrel* (15 October 1870–71); translated in Fauser, ‘Gendering the Nations’, p. 72.

⁵⁹ See Barbara L. Kelly, ‘Debussy and the Making of a *musicien français*: *Pelléas*, the Press and World War I’, in Barbara L. Kelly (ed.), *French Music, Culture, and National Identity, 1870–1939* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2008), p. 64.

⁶⁰ See Jann Pasler, ‘Paris: Conflicting Notions of Progress’, in Jim Samson (ed.), *The Late Romantic Era: From the Mid-19th Century to World War I* (London: Macmillan, 1991), 396–7.

mondes, the conservative critic Camille Bellaigue suggested that the composer's *opéra comique*, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, was 'sick' music: 'Existing as it does with the minimum of vitality, it tends to impair and destroy our existence. The germs it contains are not those of life and progress, but of decadence and death.'⁶¹ For anti-Debussy critics, such morbid music failed to satisfy the demand for a strong and healthy – that is, masculine – musical language; more than this, it could not hope to combat Wagnerian dominance on the French operatic stage.

Symphonic Schisms

If many French critics sought a stronger, more masculine music to represent the newly revived nation, they also wanted a more serious music. Part of the blame for defeat in the Franco-Prussian War had been placed on the frivolous and morally bankrupt Second Empire, nurtured as it was on a diet of Offenbach and operetta; across the Rhine, the Germans had focused instead on science, study and Beethoven symphonies, ensuring victory. This widespread view of the debacle contributed to demands for an overhaul of French musical culture, shifting the focus to instrumental genres, including the symphony. In thus implicating French music in the account of national defeat and renewal, those critics – and composers – who had long attacked French operatic culture (whether because it was too trivial, too cosmopolitan or too stagnant and closed to new composers) were yet again able to exploit the political circumstances for their own aesthetic ends. The resulting narrative of musical renewal has dominated music histories of France ever since.⁶²

But there was a problem with this reformist agenda: instrumental music, especially the symphony, was closely associated with Germany. It was, however, this association that gave the symphony its credibility in the first place. Just as a number of commentators, including Ernest Renan, had argued that the French could learn from their victors and look to Germany as a model for, among other matters, educational reform,⁶³ so too, it was argued, French composers could usefully learn from their Teutonic counterparts.⁶⁴ But critics required further lines of defence to avoid accusations of cultural treason. One

⁶¹ Camille Bellaigue, 'Pelléas et Mélisande', *Revue des deux mondes* (15 May 1902); translated in Léon Vallas, *Claude Debussy: His Life and Works*, trans. Marie and Grace O'Brien (New York: Dover, 1973), p. 128.

⁶² See Delphine Mordey, 'Auber's Horses: *L'Année terrible* and Apocalyptic Narratives', *19th-Century Music*, 30/3 (Spring 2007), 213–29.

⁶³ See Ernest Renan, *La Réforme intellectuelle et morale* (Paris: Michel Lévy, 1871).

⁶⁴ This attitude even permeated the Société Nationale de Musique, founded by Camille Saint-Saëns and Romain Bussine a month after the end of the Franco-Prussian war; see Michael Strasser, 'The Société Nationale and Its Adversaries: The Musical Politics of *l'invasion germanique* in the 1870s', *19th-Century Music*, 24/3 (Spring 2001), 224–51.

of the most common such defences was to assert the universality of great music: reviewing one of Padeloup's German-centric Concerts Populaires during the Siege of Paris, the music critic for *Le soir* dismissed any concerns with the declaration that 'Masterpieces have no fatherland.'⁶⁵ Critics also seized the chance to claim superior levels of artistic discernment: Benoît Jouvin welcomed the invasion of concert programmes by German composers as an opportunity for the French to demonstrate their ability to appreciate these composers even better than the Germans themselves, engaging with art on a transcendental level, beyond petty material conflicts.⁶⁶ In appropriating the symphony, critics argued, French composers could take this a step further, claiming not only superior understanding of the genre but also the production of superior works.

A further critical strategy was to offer a revised reading of music history, portraying the French as the originators of the most important features of German music. During the First World War, for example, d'Indy claimed that seventeenth-century German composers had been influenced by Latin qualities of clarity and proportion, which in turn underlay all forms of the sonata and symphony.⁶⁷ According to such readings, French composers were simply reclaiming their heritage in turning to the symphony. French appropriation of Beethoven was also common; strikingly, Camille Maclair insisted that the Ninth Symphony was French, as 'each word and each tone correspond adequately to our hopes and to our ideal . . . A German wrote it, but the whole of Germany has lost every right to possess it.'⁶⁸

Despite these justifications, as Brian Hart has observed, many conservative critics refused to accept the idea of the symphony as a legitimate genre for French composers and their audiences.⁶⁹ The debate for and against the symphony instead became a synecdoche for many of the binary oppositions that appeared to divide the political and musical worlds of the Third Republic, not least between the largely right-wing, anti-Dreyfusard Schola Cantorum, led by chief champion of the symphony, Vincent d'Indy, and the Republican, Dreyfusard, vocal-oriented Paris Conservatoire. As this institutional rivalry evolved into a battle between the d'Indystes and the Debussystes (a transmutation that stemmed in part from Debussy's Conservatoire training), the issue

⁶⁵ 'Les chefs-d'oeuvres n'ont point de patrie'; A. B., 'Le Concert Padeloup', *La Liberté* (1 November 1870).

⁶⁶ Benoît Jouvin, 'Chronique musicale', *Le Figaro* (27 June 1871).

⁶⁷ Vincent d'Indy, 'Musique française et musique allemande', *La Renaissance politique, littéraire et artistique* (12 June 1915), 6.

⁶⁸ Camille Maclair, *La Religion de la musique* (Paris: Fischbacher, 1928); translated in Leo Schrade, *Beethoven in France: The Growth of an Idea* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942), p. 242.

⁶⁹ Brian Hart, 'The Symphony and National Identity in Early Twentieth-Century France', in Kelly (ed.), *French Music, Culture, and National Identity*, pp. 134–6.

of Germanic genres continued to play a prominent role in critical disputes. Debussyste critics, such as Vuillermoz and Charles Koechlin, accused d'Indy and his disciples (the Scholistes) of succumbing to and disseminating German influence, while d'Indy's defenders, including Pierre Lalo and Mauclair, bemoaned their opponents' anti-German sentiments.⁷⁰

These ostensible rivalries were, however, to a large extent constructed – or at least exaggerated – and perpetuated by critics on either side of the perceived divides; the battle lines between composers, institutions, politics and aesthetics were not nearly as neatly drawn as contemporary reports (and subsequently much historical musicology) made them out to be.⁷¹ This is not to deny the existence of many schools, societies and factions, separated by genuine differences, but the boundaries between them were neither impermeable, nor fixed. The relationship between d'Indy and Debussy offers a notable case in point. While their supporters frequently pitted one against the other, Debussy's works were in fact regularly performed at the Schola, where they received generally positive reviews from the in-house journal, *La Tribune de Saint-Gervais*.⁷² Debussy, in his own criticism, praised d'Indy's institution for having 'restored to us all the beauty of early music', especially the music of Rameau, the first two acts of whose *Castor et Pollux* were staged at the Schola in 1903.⁷³ Indeed, Rameau was an important point of consensus for the two composers.⁷⁴ Rameau's works, with their 'charming and delicate tenderness' and 'fine sense of elegance', represented, for Debussy, 'a purely French tradition',⁷⁵ one unsullied by the foreign invasions of the nineteenth century and which thus offered an important model for the resuscitation of French music. D'Indy similarly recognised the nationalist potential in Rameau, claiming for him the role of Wagner's precursor; in doing so, d'Indy once again placed France at the origins of a musical tradition, while simultaneously justifying French submission to Wagnerian influence.⁷⁶ Debussy, d'Indy and their respective supporters and critics may have had their differences, but the desire to restore pride in France and its culture following the 1870 defeat was felt across political and aesthetic factions: 'nationalism was', as

⁷⁰ See *ibid.*, p. 136.

⁷¹ See Jann Pasler, 'Deconstructing d'Indy, or, The Problem of a Composer's Reputation', *19th-Century Music*, 30/3 (Spring 2007), 232.

⁷² See Donnellon, 'Debussy, Satie, and the Parisian Critical Press', 73–4

⁷³ Debussy, 'À la Schola Cantorum', *Gil Blas* (2 February 1903); translated in Debussy, *Debussy on Music*, p. 111.

⁷⁴ Both composers contributed to the complete Rameau Edition (1893–1913) under Saint-Saëns' direction.

⁷⁵ Debussy, 'À la Schola Cantorum'; translated in Debussy, *Debussy on Music*, pp. 112, 113.

⁷⁶ See Ellis, *Interpreting the Musical Past*, p. 132.

Pasler has observed, 'a wild card that cut across other basic issues and caused unexpected realignments'.⁷⁷

Plus Ça Change

Although the cast and context would change, many of the same issues that had preoccupied critics at the start of the Republic continued to dominate debates up to, and beyond, the First World War. Old battles were regularly resurrected around familiar enemies, including Wagner, who, following a brief period of relative acceptance, returned to the centre of press polemics with the onset of the War. In September 1914, Saint-Saëns launched a counteroffensive with the first in a series of vitriolic articles attacking Wagner specifically and German culture more broadly. Published in the right-wing, nationalist newspaper *L'Echo de Paris*, under the title 'Germanophilie', these articles were the culmination of thirty years of pent-up frustration at the failure of the Third Republic to achieve *revanche*, and of what Saint-Saëns saw as the continuing neglect of French composers in favour of their German counterparts.⁷⁸ Wagner thus again provided a focal point for the promotion of musical chauvinism, while also, incidentally, serving the cause of the anti-modernists, who claimed that the avant-garde was a German-influenced (by which they meant Wagnerian) threat to French musical culture.⁷⁹ As before, politics and patriotism were commandeered to assist aesthetic aspirations.

Saint-Saëns' Germanophobia was taken up by the Ligue nationale pour la défense de la musique française, founded by the critic Charles Tenroc in March 1916, which campaigned for a ban on the performance of all Austro-German works not yet in the public domain.⁸⁰ Not everyone was in favour of such a ban: Ravel and Fauré refused to join the League, and rebuttals to Saint-Saëns's hard-line nationalism appeared in the more liberal sections of the press. But in the aggressively nationalist climate of the First World War, the chauvinists prevailed; although German works were never officially prohibited, Wagner disappeared from the French stage until 1919.

The question of Franco-German relations fed into another of the cyclical narratives outlined by music criticism across the Third Republic: that of French musical decline and regeneration. In the wake of the Franco-Prussian War,

⁷⁷ Jann Pasler, 'Pelléas and Power: Forces behind the Reception of Debussy's Opera', *19th-Century Music*, 10/3 (Spring 1987), 260.

⁷⁸ The articles were later published together as *Germanophilie* (Paris: Dorbon-ainé, 1916).

⁷⁹ See Marion Schmid, 'À bas Wagner! The French Press Campaign against Wagner during World War 1', in Kelly (ed.), *French Music, Culture, and National Identity*, pp. 87–9.

⁸⁰ See Charles Tenroc, 'Rapport: Ligue nationale pour la défense de la musique française', *La Musique pendant la guerre*, 6 (March 1916).

critics may have hailed the dawn of a musical renaissance and the development of a more serious artistic culture, but the subsequent *belle époque* was to be more famously remembered as a time of absinthe-fuelled café-concerts, cabarets and dancing girls. On the eve of the First World War, as Robert Tombs has noted, the finger was once again pointed at a pre-war culture that had been too ‘cosmopolitan, self-indulgent, and decadent’, rehearsing the argument ‘that the war showed the need for a “purer”, more “serious” art that expressed French and Latin cultural values against the menace of German *kultur*’.⁸¹ In short, the First World War offered an opportunity to reset the cultural dial, purging French music of recent contaminations; that critics felt the need for such a purge is indicative of the extent to which the regenerative rhetoric of 1870 had failed. Cocteau, who had previously defended Wagner and the anti-chauvinist cause, emerged from the First World War with his aphoristic pamphlet *Le Coq et l’arlequin*, in which he demanded a return to French classicism, free from foreign – especially *boche* – influence: ‘the music I want’, he wrote, ‘must be French, of France’.⁸² Even Debussy failed to meet Cocteau’s exclusive demands: now deemed to be too Wagnerian, the formerly ‘progressive’ composer was consigned to history by a new generation of critics and composers, including Les Six, keen to forge a wholly modern French musical identity, in opposition not only to external forces but also to the recent French musical past.⁸³ Cocteau’s ‘Call to Order’, with its emphasis on clarity and simplicity, would help to foster the climate of *l’esprit nouveau* in which neoclassicism briefly flourished. But critics’ renewed hopes for the establishment of a musical culture both truly French and serious were to be frustrated once more. Just as the Franco-Prussian war had been succeeded by the period of optimism, opulence and cosmopolitanism that was the *belle époque*, the First World War was followed by the cathartic release of the *années folles*, with their new technologies, mass entertainment and the exotic sensationalism of Josephine Baker. What critics thought people should listen to – dictated by a range of moral, political and aesthetic agendas – did not necessarily correspond with what audiences wanted: ‘to return to normality, forget suffering, and have fun’.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Tombs, ‘Culture and the Intellectuals’, p. 184.

⁸² Jean Cocteau, ‘The Cock and the Harlequin’, in *A Call to Order*, trans. Rollo Myers (London: Faber and Gwyer, 1926), p. 19.

⁸³ See Kelly, *Music and Ultra-Modernism in France*, p. 79.

⁸⁴ Tombs, ‘Culture and the Intellectuals’, p. 186.

Cultural Conquests

Audiences also appear to have wanted Wagner, whose music was quickly reinstated on the Parisian stage after the end of the First World War. Contemporary Austro-German composers – including Schoenberg – also gradually began to find their way into French concert programmes, though not without controversy: the 1922 Parisian premiere of *Pierrot lunaire* resulted in the so-called ‘affaire des poisons’, a series of articles in which Louis Vuillemin attacked the infiltration of not only Germanic but also Jewish music into France.⁸⁵ Such incidents reinforce the perception of tense Franco-German relations as a dominant theme of music criticism in this period, but there were also moments of political – and musical – rapprochement between the two countries, as exemplified by the ‘Semaine artistique allemande’ during the 1937 Paris Exposition. During such moments, fears over musical invasion did not, however, dissipate; instead they were transferred to other foreign forces, each of which inspired their own unsettling blend of fear and fascination in French critics.

In 1910, the perceived ‘invasion’ of French state-subsidised opera houses (particularly the Opéra-Comique) by Italian *verismo* led to what one critic dubbed ‘la troisième guerre des Bouffons’;⁸⁶ a flurry of *enquêtes* ensued, accompanied by articles debating the merits, or otherwise, of musical protectionism.⁸⁷ The arrival of the Ballets russes in Paris sparked similar concerns over cultural conquest. For Proust, ‘this charming invasion, against whose seductions only the stupidest of critics protested, infected Paris, as we know, with a fever of curiosity less agonizing, more purely aesthetic, but quite as intense perhaps as that aroused by the Dreyfus case’.⁸⁸ He may have played down the legitimacy of some critics’ anxieties, but Proust’s choice of military and epidemiological metaphors suggests the ubiquity of such fears in contemporary thought, reflecting the perceived threat that Russia’s musical exports posed for the fragile French identity.⁸⁹

Another apparent challenge to the cultivation of ‘true’ French music was presented by the invasion of jazz from across the Atlantic; conservative critics, including Tenroc, recycled metaphors of sickness and disease, decrying the contamination of French culture.⁹⁰ But as the popularity of jazz gathered pace

⁸⁵ Vuillemin’s articles appeared in *Le Courrier musical* on 1 January and 15 February 1923.

⁸⁶ Ricciotto Canudo, ‘La Troisième guerre des Bouffons’, *Comœdia* (18 February 1910).

⁸⁷ On the history of the controversy, see Jean-Christophe Branger, ‘Les compositeurs français et l’opéra italien: la crise de 1910’, in Alban Ramaut (ed.), *Le Naturalisme sur la scène lyrique* (Saint-Étienne: Publications de l’Université de Saint-Étienne, 2004).

⁸⁸ Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time, Vol. 5: The Captive*, trans. C.K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin; revised D. J. Enright (London: Vintage, 1996), p. 267.

⁸⁹ See Caddy, *The Ballets Russes and Beyond*, pp. 115–59.

⁹⁰ See Matthew F. Jordan, *Le Jazz: Jazz and French Cultural Identity* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010), pp. 39–72.

in the 1920s, it generated its own branch of criticism. Professional jazz critics, led by Hugues Panassié, set themselves apart from their mainstream counterparts in a growing number of specialist journals, including Panassié's *Jazz Hot*.⁹¹ Within the pages of this press, new and fiercely contested battles were fought over what constituted 'true' jazz ('hot' versus 'straight', black versus white) and whether it could ever be considered an appropriate conduit for French self-expression. In a by now familiar critical technique, defenders of *le jazz français* tackled this concern by claiming that the genre was in fact French, arguing, among other explanations, that its origins lay in French *chansons*, transmitted by early emigrés to Louisiana.⁹²

Music Criticism in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction

The diffusion of jazz was greatly facilitated by the rise of new media technologies, especially the phonograph, radio and cinema, initially viewed by critics with suspicion as representative of foreign mass culture. This unease did not prevent rapid popular acceptance: the first daily public radio programme in France was broadcast on Christmas Eve 1921 from a transmitter on the Eiffel Tower; by 1931, there were twenty-five national and commercial stations broadcasting throughout the country, permeating the daily lives of city dwellers and provincial *payans* alike.⁹³ Music had been an integral part of the radio soundscape from the beginning. As the popularity and accessibility of radio grew, so too, then, did the demand for music to fill the ever-increasing number of broadcast hours; with this came the inevitable critical debates over what music should be performed. With the majority of radio stations under state control, and able to reach large swathes of the country, the medium offered an unprecedented vehicle for promoting French cultural identity and national unity. But the question of what constituted truly French music remained an open one, and conflicts over the value (moral and aesthetic) of popular music, particularly jazz, and its position in French culture, spilled over into critical discussions of radio programming.

For some traditionalist critics, such as Jean Chantavoine, radio represented both a new enemy and a solution. The enemy here, inextricably entwined with popular music, was market forces, to which, it was argued, the French music industry was surrendering, filling the airwaves with what audiences wanted to

⁹¹ *Jazz Hot* (1935–9, 1945–), co-founded with jazz writer, producer and promoter Charles Delaunay, began life as the in-house journal for Panassié's Hot Club de France.

⁹² See Andy Fry, *Paris Blues: African American Music and French Popular Culture, 1920–1960* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), pp. 104–5.

⁹³ Rebecca P. Scales, *Radio and the Politics of Sound in Interwar France, 1921–1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p. 1.

hear, rather than what they should be hearing.⁹⁴ At the same time, state-owned radio offered the opportunity to impose taste from the top down, educating audiences in the music of the classical masters, thus avoiding the mediocre taste-traps of mass democratisation.

The reality lay somewhere in the middle: radio stations did include serious masterworks alongside jazz, music hall and other popular genres, in their generally eclectic programming. But even then, critics argued, it was not enough to simply pump out high art to the masses; they also felt a responsibility to explain the mysteries of this art to new audiences, in a manner akin to the educative programme notes that had been introduced at the Concerts Colonne thirty years before. In 1935, Emile Vuillermoz was one of a number of critics and musicologists who contributed to what he described as a kind of ‘manual’ for radio listeners, a 400-page musical encyclopedia, *L’Initiation à la musique à l’usage des amateurs de radio*.⁹⁵ Critical guidance also appeared in the many journals that sprang up to accompany the proliferation of new media, including *Radio-Magazine* (1923), *Phono-Radio-Musique* (1920) and *Cinémonde* (1928), as well as within the pages of existing publications, which could not afford to miss out on the opportunity to shape listener experience in the increasingly auditory culture of interwar Paris. The new technologies themselves afforded critics further outlets for the dissemination of their criticism: the Breton composer-critic Paul le Flem, for example, enjoyed a successful career on the radio, as well as in print.

While critics were concerned with educating new audiences in matters of musical taste and history, the new technologies also brought with them a need for new kinds of criticism: there were technical matters to consider, notably the quality of sound recordings and broadcasts. Beyond these technical details, critics also had to confront broader worries about the overload of sound to which society was now exposed. Vuillermoz observed that audiences were ‘gorging themselves tirelessly in uninterrupted listening to radio, sound films, and the phonograph’.⁹⁶ Alongside the old battles – over foreign influence, progress and musical identity – these developing challenges provided a new cultural front for criticism in the lead up to the Second World War.

⁹⁴ See Jordan, *Le Jazz*, pp. 86–7.

⁹⁵ Dominique Sordet (ed.), *L’Initiation à la musique à l’usage des amateurs de radio* (Paris: Éditions du Tambourinaire, 1935). Vuillermoz reviewed the book in his article ‘L’Initiation à la musique’, *L’Ouest-Éclair* (4 October 1935).

⁹⁶ Emile Vuillermoz, ‘La peur du silence’, *Le Miroir du monde* (6 April 1935), translated in Scales, *Radio and the Politics of Sound in Interwar France*, p. 1.

Periodical Endings

The Third Republic ended, as it began, with France at war with Germany. On 14 June 1940, German troops entered Paris; the Republic was dissolved three weeks later, and full powers awarded to Maréchal Pétain, head of the French State. It was the third time in seventy years that war had shaken the nation, and the third time that the vast majority of press publications were brought to a halt. The number of specialist music periodicals fell from fifty-seven in 1939 to only nineteen by 1941, and although some of these periodicals – including *La Revue musicale* and *Comœdia* – would reappear once hostilities ended, in other cases, the war proved fatal.⁹⁷ Founded over a hundred years earlier, the grand old dame of French music journalism, *Le Ménestrel*, soldiered on through the first eight months of the war, before drawing its final breath on 24 May 1940. One of the journal's final issues led with an article entitled 'Il y a une musique française', a brief history of French music, written in response to the continued prevalence of German composers in French concert halls; not only did France have an important musical culture of its own, the author argued, but most of the significant developments in music history could be traced to French origins.⁹⁸ Given the political context, it was to be expected that deep-rooted concerns over perceived French musical inferiority, and the conflicted relationship with Germany, would come to the surface; but then, after all, these concerns had never really gone away.

It is tempting to see the demise of the *Ménestrel* as symbolic of the end of an era. Born in 1833, the journal coincided with what Christophe Charle has identified as the complete cycle of growth, apogee and decline of the printed press, as new forms of mass media emerged.⁹⁹ Change may have been inevitable, but the Third Republic left an important legacy: the rise of the press, and consequent professionalisation of music criticism, together with the reciprocal developments in musicology, laid important foundations for the future. What is more, the exponential expansion of criticism bequeathed a multifaceted history of the musical events and preoccupations of the period, one that allows us to chart the ever shifting and repeating battles and alliances of this kaleidoscopic age.

⁹⁷ Yannick Simon, 'Les périodiques musicaux français pendant la seconde guerre mondiale', *Fontes artis musicae*, 49/1–2 (2002), 68.

⁹⁸ Alex Cellier, 'Il y a une musique française', *Le Ménestrel* (22, 29 March and 5 April 1940), 49–50.

⁹⁹ Charle, *Le Siècle de la presse*, p. 12.

British Music Criticism, 1890–1945

PAUL WATT

Music criticism in Britain underwent a major transformation in the late nineteenth century, the effects of which were felt far into the twentieth century. The rise of a new school of music criticism facilitated largely by John F. Runciman (1866–1916) helped professionalise the music critic and improve his – and her – literary status. While the reporting of music news and events remained a mainstay of criticism, music critics, through mentoring or self-education, asserted themselves as intellectuals. As a consequence, their writings were no longer simply about music, but often cast in relation to literary, philosophical and historical questions and issues. European, North American and British music criticism had long featured both reporters and intellectuals, but it was in the late nineteenth century that such portfolio careers coalesced and the division that once separated the journalist from the intellectual – or man of letters – was no longer clear-cut. Moreover, there was a vast increase in the number of women writing in all domains of criticism, and although they were subjected to various degrees of misogyny and condescension, they were nonetheless provided with opportunities for training and career advancement. This chapter maps out the momentum of this period of changing music criticism and looks particularly closely at the careers of Ernest Newman (1868–1959) and Neville Cardus (1888–1975), both products of this era of intellectual transformation.

Setting the Agenda for Reform

Runciman was a key figure in setting the agenda for the reform of music criticism. His articles in the 1890s were a stinging attack on contemporary habits, and they appear to have set in motion further literature on the subject. Although some members of the Musical Association had previously written manifestos in the 1880s, their distribution was limited to a narrow circle of

insiders. Runciman's articles in the literary press exposed the problems of music criticism to the world.¹

An unsigned and negative article on the state of contemporary music criticism in the *Saturday Review* in August 1891, 'Musical Criticism and Musical Critics', is attributed to Runciman.² In it, he claimed there was a 'total absence of serious musical criticism nowadays' with part of the problem lying in the haste with which critics sent their reviews to print without adequate time for considered reflection and analysis.³ He also asserted that a lot of music criticism was badly written, arguing that literary and dramatic criticism was of a much higher standard and supposing critics in these fields were 'perfect masters of their art as compared with musical ones'.⁴ Runciman bemoaned that music critics used technical terms and foreign words without understanding them, or used adjectives that made little or no sense. By way of an example, he explained how a critic, whom he did not name, had claimed that the Polish tenor Jean de Reszke 'speeded through the adagio movement' and that the singer's vocalisation of Lohengrin was 'splendid'. Runciman failed to see how 'speeded' was a word and wondered where in the score in *Lohengrin* the direction for vocalisation – 'to sing exercises without naming the notes and on one vowel' – was called for.⁵ For Runciman, such criticism was the work of the 'uneducated would-be specialist'.⁶

The rush of ill-written concert reviews also worried Charles Villiers Stanford, who took up the topic (and other issues) in an article for the *Fortnightly Review* in June 1894.⁷ Stanford identified what he believed to be 'two baneful oppressions under which musical criticism in England is now groaning'.⁸ The first was this haste to print. The second was the prevalence of anonymous criticism, which allowed the same critic to write variations of a review in many newspapers. In order to overcome rushed press notices, Stanford advocated the French practice of publishing a concert notice days – rather than hours – after the performance. He claimed that taking more time to publish a review would bring England in line with 'all other civilized European countries': the critic would have time to add literary polish to the text and, as a consequence, the public would get a better reading experience.⁹ Stanford also warned that music reviews could not stand by literary merit

¹ See, for example, John Stainer, 'The Principles of Musical Criticism', *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, Seventh Session (1880–81), 35–52; and Charles Kensington Salaman, 'On Musical Criticism', *Proceedings of the Musical Association*, Second Session (1875–6), 1–15.

² Unsigned [attrib. John F. Runciman], 'Musical Criticism and Musical Critics', *Saturday Review* (15 August 1891), 187–8.

³ *Ibid.*, 187. ⁴ *Ibid.* ⁵ *Ibid.* ⁶ *Ibid.*, 188.

⁷ Charles Villiers Stanford, 'Some Aspects of Musical Criticism in England', *Fortnightly Review* (June 1894), 826–31.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 826. ⁹ *Ibid.*, 828.

alone; that editors should employ music critics who knew the repertory. He ended the article by strongly encouraging all music criticism to be signed, just as it was in most major European cities he knew, so that it was clear to all ‘what ballast he carries’.¹⁰

Runciman was inspired to keep writing on the pitfalls and problems of contemporary music criticism and responded to Stanford’s article with two further essays: one in the *Fortnightly Review* in November 1894 (‘Musical Criticism and the Critics’) and a second in the January 1895 *New Review* (‘The Gentle Art of Musical Criticism’).¹¹ These two articles stand as a turning point in the argument for the promulgation of new criticism by severely attacking the credentials of old-school critics and newspapers. In the first of these articles, Runciman was particularly scathing of J. W. Davison (1813–85), whose journalism he regarded as highly suspect:

His [Davison’s] criticism, and indeed most other of that day, is beneath contempt. A few hours spent over old musical newspapers will reveal a depth of ignorance, petty spite, stupid obstinacy, besides a lack of artistic susceptibility, that are almost inconceivable to the modern person. For thirty years this, the ‘old criticism’ hung like a millstone round the neck of English music.¹²

Through a brief critique of many of his contemporaries, or near contemporaries, such as Franz Hueffer (1845–89), J. A. Fuller Maitland (1856–1936), E. F. Jacques (1850–1906) and George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950), Runciman attempted to define a new school of criticism. For Runciman, Hueffer was too literary and narrow-minded. Fuller Maitland and Jacques were considered new-school critics, if half-heartedly, but Runciman did not say why. He ranked George Bernard Shaw as a new-school critic (a point on which he would soon further elaborate) for his well-written work in the *Star*. Runciman later described Shaw’s writing in the *World* as ‘the best example of what may be done by the new method’.¹³ Eventually, Runciman came round to defining the new critic and the qualities that make one:

The ‘new’ critic may be imagined as defining his position thus: Here am I, endowed with certain faculties cultured to a greater or less extent; the question for me to decide is not whether the artist I am criticizing produces a result the same as or different from that produced by certain dead-and-gone worthies, whom you call authorities, ‘standards of taste’, and what-not, and

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 831.

¹¹ John F. Runciman, ‘Musical Criticism and the Critics’, *Fortnightly Review* (August 1894), 170–83; ‘The Gentle Art of Musical Criticism’, *New Review* (January–June 1895), 612–24.

¹² Runciman, ‘Musical Criticism and the Critics’, 171. ¹³ *Ibid.*, 177.

for whom I care not one jot, but whether the result gives or does not give me pleasure! The new critic, therefore, frequently gives no opinion – he implies it merely, by indicating his delight of the opposite with the result produced by his subject or victim. His criticism is purely an expression of personal feeling, and as such has a value the old criticism never had – could not, and cannot possibly have . . . The old method makes no demand upon the critic's best faculties.¹⁴

In his definition of new criticism Runciman placed a high value on readability and the careful, rather than wilful, imparting of impressions or reflections from personal experience. The critics of the old school were known for their 'impersonal manner' and 'sheer dullness'. Moreover, the kind of criticism that was neither old-school nor new school was mere description of performances that Runciman likened to police reports. Runciman did not care for the recording of a critic's impression or biased view of a performance, but, should a critic 'expose himself to the fire of a thousand cross-influences in the big world', his bias and narrow-mindedness could be overcome.¹⁵ For Runciman then, criticism based on wide knowledge, reading and musical experience was the key to quality and the prime marker of this new era.

In the second article, 'The Gentle Art of Musical Criticism', Runciman allowed himself a more detailed exposition on the qualities that made for the quintessential new critic. Shaw's criticism, which Runciman held in the highest regard, was deemed to demonstrate 'cleverness, feeling, wit, and knowledge'.¹⁶ It did not simply impart 'untutored impressions' but was based on a deep knowledge of music, which he believed Shaw possessed par excellence.

To show the extent to which a critic's knowledge and judgement could be tested by so-called authorities or musicians of power and influence, Runciman ridiculed a letter signed by Alexander Mackenzie, George Grove, Otto Goldschmidt (former director of the Bach choir), Walter Parrett (Master of the Queen's Music) and C. Hubert H. Parry that defended a recent performance of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* conducted by Stanford, which had received particularly unfavourable reviews in the press. Runciman himself thought the performance was 'disgraceful' and was irritated that this coterie of eminent musicians, performers themselves, claimed that they knew better.¹⁷ The most damning review, in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, which also appeared to be the most extensive account of the performance, was, according to Runciman, written with 'restraint and courtesy' and did not deserve the aggression brought against it by 'academics' who used their status and

¹⁴ Ibid. ¹⁵ Ibid., 180. ¹⁶ Runciman, 'The Gentle Art of Musical Criticism', 613. ¹⁷ Ibid., 614.

influence to resist reasonable and new-school criticism. Runciman was, of course, using the label ‘academic’ pejoratively.¹⁸

In a further attack on old-school criticism Runciman continued the article with a chapter of sins of the old-school critics:

Unless you turn out the old, old *clichés*; unless you fill your columns with profound references to consecutive fifths, and the birth- and death-dates of composers and popular singers, the Old Critics and the Academics of this land (who should have read their Schumann, their Berlioz, and their Wagner, and so know better) at once assume that you are ignorant, inept, fatuous, and so forth, but chiefly ignorant – ignorant, that is, of the technique of music.¹⁹

The second part of the article dealt with expression and style, and Runciman reprinted many excerpts from reviews, past and present, which continued to ridicule his detractors. He complained about Joseph Bennett’s (1831–1911) ignorance of music theory and also lambasted an unnamed critic from the *Musical Times*, with whom Runciman had played duets but whose journalism he did not like, for the same limitation. A further unnamed critic, writing for the *Times*, while thought by Runciman to be a competent harpsichordist, ‘draws no distinction between a Bach fugue and a Parry fugue’.²⁰ At the end of the article, Runciman turned his attention to a fuller discussion of the use of cliché and exaggeration in critical language employed by old critics, noting long lists of tired adjectives and expressions used in their prose.

Runciman’s article was much discussed and held considerable interest for writers in the leading music journals of the late nineteenth century, namely the *Musical Standard* and the *Musical Times*. In June 1895, an unsigned article in the *Musical Standard* (‘The Gentle Art of Musical Criticism’, a response to Runciman’s article by the same title) took issue with most of Runciman’s views, sarcastically stating that the old school did not have a monopoly on ignorance and that many of the crimes against criticism that Runciman had described could be readily spotted from the pens of critics old and new. The article chastised Runciman for the abusive tone he adopted, especially in the *New Review* article, and it defended both the importance of critics who had a sound knowledge of technical terms and the continuing importance of commenting on technical facility. The *Musical Standard* simply did not accept Runciman’s view that old criticism was necessarily all that bad:

The ideal of the old school was that all personal feeling should be eliminated, and that the critic should sit in his stall and solemnly register technical mistakes, and give praise for technical excellence. That the musical critic

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 616. ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 617. ²⁰ *Ibid.*, 619.

should in any way attempt to bring to the minds of his readers something of what he has felt was, and is, considered by the old school to be undignified and the mark of the dilettante. The old idea of the school-master in criticism is reasonable enough, but unfortunately it leads to absurd mistakes directly it is applied to any new work or to any instrumentalist who has a decided individuality of his own.²¹

The writer for the *Musical Standard* went on to defend the standard of music journalism and suggested it is the sort of criticism that is ‘done fairly well’ by most critics, but admitted that inferior criticism occupied too much space in most newspapers. The writer agreed with Runciman that George Bernard Shaw ‘showed that there was another way of writing about music’ but was not convinced that Shaw was as intellectually and musically worthy as Runciman thought him to be. For the *Musical Standard* writer, Shaw believed himself to be ‘omniscient’, something that led him into ‘rather tight technical corners sometimes’, but concurred that his chief skill was his ability to write and that he had a ‘genius for listening attentively, which is not given to everyone’.²²

The *Musical Standard* writer agreed also with Runciman that the cultivation of a polished writing style was important but hardly necessary. He conceded that ‘when a critic has no particular literary gift, there is no excuse for the stereotyped phrases born of indolence which so much disfigure newspaper criticism’. Some of the clichés the writer singles out for being particularly unimaginative include phrases such as ‘remarkably fine rendering’ and ‘splendidly played’. In defence of some critics’ limited vocabulary, however, the writer made the point that certain newspapers’ conservative house styles constrained the sorts of prose and language that critics can use.²³

By the end of the article, the writer appeared to be in agreement with Runciman on the matter of what a critic should impart:

We come to this, then: musical criticism, in distinction to mere reporting, should convey some idea to the readers of how the music affected the writer, who must have an impressionable nature and cultivated musical taste and the literary power of putting his impressions into words . . . It will be better if he have some technical knowledge of the art, not so that he may scatter a few technical phrases about his ‘copy’, because it will give him greater surety in writing of his musical impressions. But the amount of his knowledge is no measure of his capability of criticizing – the right temperament and the power of writing are the real requisites, however: we do not want the remarks of literary men who know next to nothing of music, whose musical taste has not

²¹ Unsigned, ‘The Gentle Art of Musical Criticism’, *Musical Standard* (8 June 1895), 447.

²² *Ibid.*, 448. ²³ *Ibid.*

been sufficiently cultivated; for music is a profession to many and much harm may be done by ill-judged and stupidly ignorant depreciation.²⁴

The 1890s were characterised by editors taking up the mantle of criticism and advancing the new school or new culture of authorship and authority. Just as newspaper readers and later music critics had joined the call for reform, some journal editors began to redirect editorial policy and give space to the new-school criticism.

The Reform Agenda in Action: Education and Training

In the literature complaining about the standard of music criticism in England, the education and training of critics was almost invariably raised. We have seen already that a high value was placed on wide reading and detailed knowledge of musical works, coupled with a desire for detailed understanding of technical terms and a cultivated literary style. In the second half of the nineteenth century in particular, a plethora of self-help books were published for aspiring journalists, some of which gave advice to would-be music critics. For most music critics, even established and successful ones such as Newman, Herman Klein and Shaw, the route to becoming a music critic was informal and unstructured. As Klein remarked in his autobiography, *Musicians and Mummies* (1925):

My education as a musical critic was, I admit, rather of the practical, rough-and-ready order. Still, I have good reason for thinking it to have been neither better nor worse than that which was common to the period wherein I graduated as a musical journalist. Not until much later was a university training regarded as an essential preliminary for the young man who aspired to follow his branch of the profession. The musical critics of the sixties and seventies are nowadays dismissed with a smile as having been pleasantly naïve and comparatively incompetent.²⁵

Ernest Newman meanwhile served his literary apprenticeship for about a decade from the late 1880s with the great Victorian polymath, rationalist and literary critic, John M. Robertson.²⁶ Through a combination of self-instruction, studies at University College, Liverpool and close mentoring by Robertson, Newman learned to read eight languages with varying proficiency, wrote on a huge range of topics ranging from banking reform to

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 448–9.

²⁵ Herman Klein, *Musicians and Mummies* (London: Cassell and Company, 1925), p. 83.

²⁶ For more on Robertson, see Odin Dekkers, *J. M. Robertson: Rationalist and Literary Critic* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998).

Russian literature, and was provided with publishing opportunities through Robertson's many contacts and work as an editor. He was also a voracious reader with a substantial personal library of more than 10,000 volumes that contained books on philosophy, science, history and music, in addition to English, French, German and Russian literature.²⁷

Shaw also benefited from contacts within the newspaper industry to secure his job as a music critic, as recounted with characteristic humour in his well-known essay, 'How to Become a Musical Critic':

My own plan [to become a musical critic] was a simple one. I joined the staff of a new daily paper as a leader writer. My exploits in this department spread such terror and confusion that my proposal to turn my attention to musical criticism was hailed with inexpressible relief, the subject being one in which lunacy is privileged. I was given a column to myself precisely as I might have been given a padded room in an asylum; and from that time up to the other day – a period of nearly seven years – I wrote every week, in that paper or another, an article under the general heading 'Music', the first condition of which was, as a matter of good journalism, that it should be as attractive to the general reader, musician or non-musician, as any other section of the paper in which it appeared.²⁸

Like Shaw, Neville Cardus was mentored, but by C. P. Scott, editor of the *Manchester Guardian*. In 1916, Cardus was desperate to become a full-time writer. In his *Autobiography*, Cardus tells how he summoned up the courage to write to Scott to ask for a job. Much to his surprise, Scott agreed to meet Cardus in the December of 1916 and offered him a job as a secretary, which involved writing short summaries of books that Scott gave him by the following day. After some weeks, Cardus was relieved of the position (without payment), but by March Scott had offered him a role at the *Manchester Guardian* which saw him reporting on local council news and music hall. It was not until much later that he would replace Samuel Langford as the newspaper's music critic, having already established himself as a noted cricket writer.

Just as Robertson took Newman under his wing, Scott nurtured Cardus's career. In fact, Cardus attributed Scott's reading of his work as a significant point in his career because he refined Cardus's writing style. Cardus described Scott as a 'puritan on matters of language' who barred the use of the words

²⁷ For more on Newman's intellectual formation see Paul Watt, *Ernest Newman: A Critical Biography* (Martelsham: Boydell Press, 2017).

²⁸ George Bernard Shaw, *How to Become a Musical Critic*, ed. Dan H. Lawrence (New York: Da Capo Press, 1978). The article was first published in *Scottish Musical Monthly* in December 1894 and reprinted in *New Music Review*, October 1912.

such as ‘commence’, ‘basically’ and ‘sex’ and occasionally reprimanded Cardus over wayward expression or syntax.²⁹ Cardus held Scott in high regard but also identified his blind spots:

He [Scott] did not presume to be a judge of the writing of a critic, though he once told me he preferred [Ernest] Newman’s writing to [Samuel] Langford’s. Scott found Newman’s prose clearer, and more concrete; he couldn’t fully appreciate the poetic imagery of Langford.³⁰

But Scott was not Cardus’s sole mentor. Cardus wrote of the ‘gifted’ people at the *Manchester Guardian*, who included Haslam Mills, Hedley Lockett and J. V. Ratcliffe, who among others led Cardus to describe this heady environment as ‘like an Academy in the Athenian sense’.³¹ For Cardus:

There was a wonderful comradeship on the *Manchester Guardian*: it was the best university in the world. We used to go into the underground cellars in Manchester – they were for men only. No wine was served, just coffee. If you wanted a meal, you stayed upstairs. In those cellars I was given tutorials, as thorough and as wide-ranging as any that an undergraduate has had at Oxford or Cambridge.³²

By contrast, most other journalists, critics and reporters had to fight their way into what was by the end of the nineteenth century a severely crowded marketplace, and self-help books had long been published to give aspiring writers a professional edge or, at the very least, some help. According to the *Reporter’s Guide* of 1869, at best one in twenty journalists working on the top journals had a university education, with very few having ‘a good classical education’.³³ Essential to the aspiring journalist, according to this book, was a working knowledge of Latin, French and the Greek alphabet, some legal knowledge, and shorthand; they should further capitalise on this knowledge by owning copies of Webster’s *Dictionary*, Haydn’s *Dictionary of Dates*, Bohn’s *Dictionary of Classical Quotations* and Cruden’s *Concordance*, among other reference works. Other manuals for self-instruction, such as Robert D. Blackburn’s handbook, *Composition and Style* (1885), focused on the cultivation of style: ‘The present volume sets forth and illustrates all the rules which should be observed by the young Author. These, if diligently practised, will enable any one of ordinary intelligence to acquire for himself a clear and forcible style.’³⁴

²⁹ Neville Cardus, *Autobiography* (London: Collins, 1947), p. 161 ³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 160.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 98–9, 95.

³² Robin Daniels, *Conversations with Cardus* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1969), p. 163.

³³ Thomas Allen Reed, *The Reporter’s Guide* (London: Pitman, 1869), p. 10.

³⁴ Robert D. Blackburn, *Composition and Style: A Handbook for Literary Students*, 5th ed. (London: C. W. Deacon and Co., 1885).

Blackburn goes on to instruct the reader on sentence and paragraph construction, cautioning against ‘puffing’ and hyperbole, and advocating that the prime rule of criticism was making prose readable.

Some manuals and self-help books encouraged aspiring journalists to steer well clear of vicious attacks on authors and works of art. In his *Practical Journalism* of 1885, for example, John Dawson cautioned his readers: ‘Let me impress upon young journalists the seriousness of criticism – i.e., don’t rush; take care to read fully . . . Praise the good, firmly, yet kindly condemn the bad; and altogether seek rather to encourage than discourage a young writer if signs of improvement can be discerned.’³⁵ He further advised aspiring dramatic critics to cultivate a knowledge of music, ‘as opera bouffe is now so popular on the stage, [it] would undoubtedly be a useful acquisition’.³⁶

Few of these manuals and handbooks were written specifically for music critics. A. Arthur Reade’s *Literary Success* (1885) merely mentioned that critics of drama, art and music were generally specialised, and had nothing more to say on the subject.³⁷ But the issue of specific training for would-be music critics surfaced in the press in the 1890s, following the establishment of a training school for female journalists in Westminster around 1890. An unsigned article in the *Speaker* of 15 March 1890 entitled ‘Lady Journalists’ belittled this initiative, complaining that women ‘not content with penetrating into the pulpit, should also bring the rustle of petticoats within the sacred precincts of Fleet Street’.³⁸ If there had to be female journalists, this writer thought they ought to be confined to ‘writing articles on Shakespeare and the musical glasses, to fill up the columns of the evening papers’.³⁹ He predicted ‘danger’ about this newly established school for producing graduates ‘with only a scanty knowledge of literature, and without the slightest instinct for journalism’.⁴⁰

Runciman provided a more sympathetic account of the female critic in the March 1895 edition of *Monthly Musical Record*. In this article, Runciman commented on the attributes of the music critic, regardless of their sex, though his comment about women making better critics than men, given their propensity for gossip, undermines his attempt to respect women as equals.⁴¹ Still, Runciman was of the opinion that the essential qualifications for criticism – a knowledge of technique, music history, aesthetics and ‘sanity

³⁵ John Dawson, *Practical Journalism: How to Enter Thereon and Succeed: A Manual for Beginners and Amateurs* (London: L. Upcott Gill, 1885), p. 48.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

³⁷ A. Arthur Reade, *Literary Success: A Guide to Practical Journalism* (London: Wyman & Sons, 1885).

³⁸ Unsigned, ‘Lady Journalists’, *Speaker* (15 March 1890), 283. ³⁹ *Ibid.* ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ John F. Runciman, ‘Women as Musical Critics’, *Monthly Musical Record* (1 March 1895), 49–50.

of judgment', as well as the cultivation of a personal style – could be acquired and demonstrated by both women and men.⁴²

Women were further encouraged to take up musical criticism in Frances H. Low's *Press Work for Women: A Textbook for the Young Woman Journalist* (1895).⁴³ Low was not going to let a male-dominated profession stand in her readers' way:

This branch of journalism [musical and dramatic criticism] is, for the most part, even in the sixpenny women's papers, for some extraordinary reason, almost wholly in the hands of men, and offers an interesting though limited field for a cultivated writer's taste, imagination and knowledge ... Seeing what a number of cultivated women musicians there are, this want of enterprise is striking; and I cannot help thinking that students who have a thorough knowledge of the theory of music might do worse than qualify themselves as critics.⁴⁴

It was not until 1911 that an article-length discussion establishing a school for music critics was ventured, and it was written by Ernest Newman in the January *Musical Times*.⁴⁵ The article was inspired by recent articles in *Le Courrier Musical* in which it was reported that a paper entitled 'La critique musicale, ses devoirs, sa méthode' had recently been read by Michel-Dimitri Calvocoressi at the École des hautes études sociales in Paris (where he had been teaching a course on music criticism). Newman thought the idea of a school for music critics was a worthy idea: 'the critic alone has not only to build his house but make his own bricks and find his own straw [but] he has, of course, the writings of great critics to go upon'.⁴⁶ The observation that emerging music critics did not appear to take the job seriously troubled Newman and he doubted they would be inclined to seek out an appropriately qualified mentor. Newman had in mind a mentoring programme spread over a handful of years in which an aspiring critic would be coached, presumably reflecting his own path to criticism under Robertson's mentorship. The critic would benefit from assuming his own principles were right and that 'until the critic can go to school as the composer and the performer can, and profit, like them, by what previous workers in the same field have learned, most criticism will remain the haphazard and dogmatic and contradictory thing it is at present'.⁴⁷

⁴² *Ibid.*, 49.

⁴³ Frances H. Low, *Press Work for Women: A Textbook for the Young Woman Journalist* (London: L. Upcott Gill, 1904).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁴⁵ Ernest Newman, 'A School for Musical Critics', *Musical Times* (1 March 1911), 16–17. ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

Three months later, Calvocoressi himself answered Newman's article in the *Musical Times*, providing some background and context to his lecture.⁴⁸ In it he drew his readers' attention to an article by a Dr Bradford in the *Westminster Review* of November 1894 that suggested the introduction of an examination for music critics, but mentioned that the only structured course with which Braddon was familiar was at the Berlin Seminar für Musik by Dr W. Altmann.⁴⁹ Calvocoressi then went on to explain that music criticism had been taught at the Paris École des hautes études sociales as early as 1908 by Mr Hellouin, and from 1908 Calvocoressi had also presented lectures.

Calvocoressi appears unconvinced that music criticism can be taught, but suggests that

The pupil critic should now be taught how to cull facts, to discern and to weight their import. He should be helped to train his perceptive, emotional and intellectual faculties; to cultivate his receptiveness and his taste, on which his opinions are founded, and to discern the connection between these opinions and certain facts – thus discovering the true key to sound criticism.

Calvocoressi thought that teaching was most effective in groups of two or three students. The method of instruction in his classes in Paris involved the following:

All the principal accounts and criticisms issued after first performances are read and compared, care being taken to render the starting-points – involving many a ramble through the dangerous regions of pure aesthetics – and of the connections between the principles implicitly or explicitly professed and the actual judgments. This is the more practical part of each lesson, devoted to applied aesthetics and the acquirement, not of a particular method, but of method.⁵⁰

Calvocoressi gave further instruction in music history and analysis, especially rhythmic analysis, and the study of a range of criticism evaluating how opinions are formed and 'all the directions for the writing of articles or books, including advice about scope, plan, tone, diction &c., with reference to the requirements of publication or public for which they are intended'.⁵¹

Reform in Theory and Practice

By the 1920s the past, present and future of music criticism had been so much discussed and had garnered so much interest that two landmark books were

⁴⁸ Michel-Dimitri Calvocoressi, 'Can Musical Criticism Be Taught?', *Musical Times* (1 May 1911), 300–2.

⁴⁹ Jacob Bradford, 'Musical Criticism and Critics', *Westminster Review* (November 1984), 530–6.

⁵⁰ Calvocoressi, 'Can Musical Criticism Be Taught?', 302. ⁵¹ *Ibid.*

written on the practical as well as theoretical parameters of the craft: Newman's *A Musical Critic's Holiday* (1925) and Calvocoressi's *The Principles and Methods of Musical Criticism* (1923).⁵²

A Musical Critic's Holiday was a reflective and sometimes pedestrian treatise on criticism, but it stopped short of articulating a theory or method of criticism, which was implied in the opening pages. Consequently, the book confounded many readers, as Newman readily admitted.⁵³ *A Musical Critic's Holiday* considered the need to separate objectivity from subjectivity in criticism and for a critic to be able to stand apart from 'the clichés of his day'.⁵⁴ Newman saw detachment and perspective as characteristics of a process he termed 'backthought' and argued strongly that 'Genuine criticism must always function in the past, not the present'.⁵⁵

On publication, the book was misinterpreted by some of Newman's colleagues, including Edwin Evans, who reviewed it in the *Musical Times*.⁵⁶ Evans claimed that Newman's purpose was to 'envisage a work of art in complete detachment from all considerations arising from its, and from the critics' period, environment, and personal idiosyncrasies'.⁵⁷ But this was not so. Newman had long advocated that musical works should be judged free of a critic's bias and appraised outside its immediate historical environment. For example, Newman argued that a study of the historical circumstances and later reception surrounding Wagner's 'unsavoury reputation' was needed 'as regards general public recognition of his work'.⁵⁸ This is an instance of Newman's 'backthought' in operation, the use of history and historical method, a process Newman had long advocated, most self-consciously in *Gluck and the Opera* (1895).

Calvocoressi's book was an altogether different enterprise. It was based on his work in Paris, but he stressed that the book was not aimed at 'solving all his problems for him'.⁵⁹ In the preface, Calvocoressi outlined his view on the characteristics of a good critic:

⁵² Ernest Newman, *A Musical Critic's Holiday* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1925); and Michel-Dimitri Calvocoressi, *The Principles and Methods of Musical Criticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press; London: Humphrey Milford, 1923).

⁵³ Following its publication, Newman wrote three articles on the purpose of his book, admitting people had been confused by it: 'A Postscript to "A Musical Critic's Holiday"', *Musical Times*, 66/992 (1 October 1925), 881–4; 66/993 (1 November 1925), 977–81; 66/994 (1 December 1925), 1076–9.

⁵⁴ Newman, *A Musical Critic's Holiday*, pp. vii–viii. ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. xi.

⁵⁶ Edwin Evans, 'Objectivity in Contemporary Criticism', *Musical Times*, 66/990 (1925), 692–5. Newman's 'A Postscript to "A Musical Critic's Holiday"' in the *Musical Times* was essentially a long-winded reply to Evans. Evans and Newman were locked in an ideological battle for years, and the battle is briefly discussed in Nigel Scaife, 'British Music Criticism in a New Era: Studies in Critical Thought, 1894–1945', unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Oxford (1994), 158–61.

⁵⁷ Evans, 'Objectivity in Contemporary Criticism', 692.

⁵⁸ Newman, *A Musical Critic's Holiday*, p. 124.

⁵⁹ Calvocoressi, *The Principles and Methods of Musical Criticism*, p. 6.

A perusal of this book will show that, in its author's opinion, the musical critic's studies should include a good deal besides all that properly refers to music as an art: various branches of philosophy, viz. psychology, aesthetics, and logic; acoustics and other branches of musical science, if only in order to test the conclusion or assertions of writers who draw upon these for controversial purposes; and history (not of music only), more on account of the mistakes which ignorance will occasion than for the help history affords in criticism proper. Experience in other arts and other modes of thought will prove the sole remedy against the dangers of specialization, which tends to narrow, and warp the critic's outlook.⁶⁰

The Principles and Methods of Musical Criticism differs significantly from the dozens of articles that complained about the lack of quality criticism and the self-help books that attempted to remedy the situation. This literature was largely empirical, self-referential and focused on practical matters such as drawing attention to old-school criticism as a means of illustrating how new criticism should work, providing working examples of poor writing styles in order to cultivate better ones. Calvocoressi's book was significantly more theoretical, philosophical and, importantly, European in outlook. He referred the student to many authorities, past and present, including Kant, C. A. Sainte-Beuve, Berlioz and local experts on criticism such as Clive Bell, Newman, John M. Robertson, George Saintsbury and Walter Pater. Major sections of the book quoted their writings on the role and function of the critic and criticism. It is clear that above all else, Calvocoressi practised what he preached in terms of the necessity of wide reading.

In some respects, Calvocoressi's publication did not cover especially new ground in his views that aspiring music critics should be widely read, command a wide vocabulary and write in a readable style. He advised critics to exercise discretion between documentary sources and circumstantial evidence, and to discern nuances of meaning in literature in psychology and the psycho-physiological sciences. He also stressed the importance of being familiar with historical writing and the comparative method.

By the 1920s there was a vast literature on historical method that had been appropriated across the spectrum of emerging specialist disciplines in the last century. Calvocoressi was particularly interested in one pocket of this literature: Robertson's rationalist approach to criticism, which had gained considerable currency in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, ostensibly through two books, *Essays Towards a Critical Method* (1889) and *New Essays Towards a Critical Method* (1897), and an article, 'Criticism and

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

Science' (1919).⁶¹ These writings did not prescribe a strictly positivist framework for reading history and philosophy, but rather sought to draw attention to the way reason and logic – also referred to in some literature as induction – should form the basis of all criticism in an effort to be rid of what Robertson termed 'the personal equation', or bias. The result of this process was to achieve a consistent view on art and, through comparison of works of art and others' judgements of them, to arrive at a considered, consistent and rational judgement of one's own.⁶²

The strength of Calvocoressi's book is his careful use of examples. It teaches the student how to 'read' in between the lines, how to be alert for evidence of bias and how to know the historiography of books and the philosophical and aesthetic context in which they were written. It is a much more intellectual account of how one might learn to be a critic, and it subtly, but powerfully, allows students to discover their own blind spots and the ways in which the ideal of objectivity, or 'ethical critics' as Calvocoressi also termed it, may be attained.

The 1930s and 1940s: Newman and Cardus

Newman and Cardus dominated music criticism in Britain in the 1930s and 1940s and became household names. In 1920, when Newman was appointed chief music editor at the *Sunday Times*, he had already developed a reputation as a formidable and controversial voice. By contrast, Cardus was much less fierce but equally well known. He worked on the *Manchester Guardian* from 1927 to 1940 but also travelled to Australia in the 1930s and 1940s to report on cricket at first and then music. Despite Runciman's and others' efforts to reform music criticism, it is important to bear in mind that this call to arms was not about homogenising the style and tenor of criticism. And despite their common backgrounds and interests – a provincial, working-class upbringing, agnosticism and interest in rationalism, and a love of romantic music – their styles of criticism could not be more different, even though Cardus recorded Newman's significant influence on his career.

Newman was twenty-one years older than Cardus and was well entrenched in his own career when Cardus was just starting out. Cardus wrote that as a youth he fell under the 'spell' of Newman's work on the *Birmingham Daily Post* (in the early 1900s), going so far as to admit he 'borrowed' from Newman,

⁶¹ John M. Robertson, *Essays Toward a Critical Method* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1889); *New Essays Toward a Critical Method* (London and New York: Bodley Head/John Lane, 1897); 'Criticism and Science', *North American Review*, 209 (1919), 690–6.

⁶² Calvocoressi, *Principles and Methods*, p. 32.

meaning that he tried to emulate his mentor's writing style: 'I practised my pen with Newman my model in music criticism, with Shaw and Montague and Agate my models in theatre criticism.'⁶³ Cardus also wrote of imitating or 'aping' Newman's style.⁶⁴ When Cardus reflected on the first article he published, which was on Bantock in the 1916–17 volume of *Musical Opinion*, he described it as 'written in the scholarly manner of the rationalist school presided over by J. M. Robertson and Newman. It contained footnotes and was copious in allusions. I could almost have indexed it, beginning with Alembert and ending it with Zukunftsmusik.'⁶⁵ On the one hand, Cardus was writing sarcastically, for this style of criticism was pedantic and a bit overcooked but, on the other hand, he admired it for its breadth and thoroughness. Cardus credits his love of Hugo Wolf's lieder to Newman (whose book on the subject was published in 1907).⁶⁶ Cardus also wrote of his engrossment with Newman's writings on music, especially from his book on the piano-player.⁶⁷ In fact, Cardus attributed Newman with inspiring him to be a music critic: 'At around this time [1905], he [Newman] brought out a book called *Musical Studies*. That book made me wish to become a music critic.'⁶⁸

Despite a shared interest in and influence by Robertson, and Cardus's deep respect for Newman's work, their approaches to music criticism were vastly different. Cardus described these polarities:

I was blessed in my two teachers – Langford the Platonist, Ernest Newman the Aristotelean: Spirit of Affirmation and Spirit of Denial. Langford taught me to feel and translate, while Newman taught me to observe and analyse. Faust and Mephistopheles! – without these two working in harness, so to say, no man can hope really to know art or life. Langford was like the priest administering the sacrament, the body and blood of Beethoven; Newman was the sceptic who while he aesthetically savoured the ritual was alert of palate enough to know always if the wine were good – *qua* wine. Newman never allowed me to take my eye from the object ... Newman remained outside the creative process, and Langford was absorbed into it.⁶⁹

Cardus's criticisms were often imbued with the parlance of religion, especially with a Roman Catholic hue, though he was not a practising Christian of any

⁶³ Cardus, *Autobiography*, pp. 41, 47. ⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 50; Cardus, 'Bantock and Style in Art', *Musical Opinion*, 40 (1916–17), 158–9.

⁶⁶ Cardus, *Autobiography*, p. 55; Ernest Newman, *Hugo Wolf* (London: Methuen, 1907). Newman's other work on Wolf include 'Hugo Wolf', *Contemporary Review* (1 January 1904), 707–20; and *Fifty Songs by Hugo Wolf* (Boston: Oliver Ditson, 1909).

⁶⁷ Cardus, *Autobiography*, p. 50; Ernest Newman, *The Piano-Player and Its Music* (London: Grant Richards, 1920).

⁶⁸ Cardus, *Autobiography*, p. 40; Newman, *Musical Studies* (London and New York: Bodley Head/John Lane, 1905).

⁶⁹ Cardus, *Autobiography*, pp. 213–14.

sort. He once described himself as ‘an atheist who prays’ and also wrote of this distinction about Christ: ‘He [Jesus Christ] offered the world a complete code for civilized living, but the majority of people reject Him. The fact that He went to the Cross as an ordinary man – divesting himself of all power – moves me much more deeply than the description and theology of the Resurrection.’⁷⁰ Under the influence of his employer at Shrewsbury School, Cyril Alington, Cardus wrote that it was he who ‘compelled me to overhaul my disbelief, much to my annoyance; a young man’s scepticism towards all revealed religion could be mightily dogmatic a quarter of a century ago’.⁷¹ It is therefore difficult to pin down Cardus’s religious outlook; suffice it to say that he appeared to believe in some kind of divine spirituality. This manifested itself in various ways in his writing, including the belief that a gramophone recording was a poor substitute for experiencing the musicality of a performer in the flesh. In reference to Kathleen Ferrier he wrote that on the gramophone the listener ‘experienced only 50 per cent of her. The presence of Kathleen on the platform . . . you felt a *spiritual* communication’.⁷² Cardus also spoke of the value of communication in relation to writers: ‘The communication you receive from the hands of a great genius such as Dickens and Shakespeare is much more penetrating than a fleeting television show, which is only an image on the retina – and I don’t think it goes very much farther than that!’⁷³ Despite these difficult nuances of religious thought, Cardus ultimately believed music was on a higher plane than life and other arts.⁷⁴

Cardus’s metaphysical appraisal of music is perhaps best demonstrated in his writings on the Austrian pianist Artur Schnabel (1882–1951), widely revered for his technique and interpretive depth. Cardus’s opinion was no exception, and he was especially captivated by his performances of Beethoven: ‘You wouldn’t be told that Schnabel was a man of distinction. His conversation within ten minutes would have made you think to yourself, “Who is he? What does he do? He’s either a philosopher, a writer, a painter, or a – musician.”’⁷⁵ Cardus described how ‘in an almost clairvoyant way’ he could recall Schnabel playing Beethoven’s Piano Sonata No. 32 Op. 111; the pianist was like a ‘spiritual medium’ and that ‘it is as though Beethoven was speaking through him’.⁷⁶ For Cardus, composers and conductors ‘work through the medium of the senses’;⁷⁷ this was what defined the ‘romantic temperament’.⁷⁸

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 64; Daniels, *Conversations*, p. 266. ⁷¹ Cardus, *Autobiography*, p. 81.

⁷² Daniels, *Conversations*, p. 230. ⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 268

⁷⁴ See Christopher Brookes, *His Own Man: The Life of Neville Cardus* (London: Methuen, 1985), p. 60.

⁷⁵ Daniels, *Conversations*, p. 116. Other pianists Cardus greatly admired were Arthur Rubinstein, Muriel Cohen and Ignaz Friedman.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 140. ⁷⁷ *Ibid.* ⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

In taking the spiritual dimension a step further, Cardus recounted how Schnabel saw himself as a medium:

Before going on to the platform for a public performance I would call to mind what Schnabel used to say to his students when they were nervous about playing in front of the audience: 'You will only be nervous, when you go to the piano, if you are thinking about yourself. Think of Beethoven and then *he* will play'. Schnabel wanted the pianist to be a medium – so far as a human being can be. Whenever I heard Schnabel play I felt he *was* a medium through whom music was speaking. There are very few pianists today whom I would put in that category.⁷⁹

Believing music to be on a higher plane than the other arts and in the ability of a musician to channel music are quintessential romantic values. Indeed Cardus was very aware of this and once described himself as the last of the romantics.⁸⁰ It was even suggested to him by Daniels that he was 'the arch-romantic among English music critics'.⁸¹ And it was a belief that was far away from Newman's atheism.

Newman's criticism rarely drew on metaphysical or religious hyperbole, and he virtually never wrote of his rapture either with a performer or a performance. He was reticent about claiming any degree of emotional response to music. His style as a critic was typically rationalist: he strove to be scientific, removed and impartial. His criticism may have betrayed a disinterest in Mozart and a once over-inflated view of Joseph Holbrooke, but by and large Newman's criticisms were unbiased, in Cardus's view.⁸²

A particularly good example of Newman's scientific approach to criticism is found in a series of three articles in the *Sunday Times* in the early 1920s. In 'A Physiology of Criticism', published in January and February 1929, Newman acknowledged that personal biases got in the way of objective criticism and that any appeal for a scientific method of criticism would be ridiculed.⁸³ Undeterred, Newman proposed a 'system of musical physiology'. In this initial article, he reacted to Paul Bekker's 1911 biography of Beethoven, in which he felt its author had 'read things into Beethoven's music that are not to be found in the music'.⁸⁴ Newman insisted that his own physiological

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 260. ⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 262. ⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

⁸² For Newman's blind spots in Mozart. see Daniels, *Conversations*, p. 41. For an extended account of Newman's spectacular over-estimation of Holbrooke see Paul Watt, "'A Nationalist in Art': Holbrooke's *Contemporary British Composers* (1925)", in Paul Watt and Anne-Marie Forbes (eds.), *Joseph Holbrooke: Composer, Critic, and Musical Patriot* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014), especially pp. 160–2.

⁸³ Ernest Newman, 'A Physiology of Criticism', *Sunday Times* (20 January 1929), 7; (10 February 1929), 7; and (17 February 1929), 7. These three essays are reprinted in Felix Aprahamian (ed.), *Essays from the World of Music* (London: John Calder, 1956), pp. 13–27.

⁸⁴ Newman, 'A Physiology of Criticism 1', 7; Paul Bekker, *Beethoven* (Berlin: Schuster and Loeffler, 1911); English trans. by M. M. Bozman (London: J. M. Dent, 1925). For background on Bekker's career see Christopher Hailey, 'The Paul Bekker Collection in the Yale University Library', *Notes*, 51 (1994), 13–21.

approach could arrive at a more tangible interpretation of a composer's psychology, but many of his readers were not entirely convinced.

Newman turned to his book *The Unconscious Beethoven*, published two years before, in 1927, as an example of how a physiological study of a composer might be realised.⁸⁵ Newman argued that Beethoven had employed three ascending notes (arranged and rearranged in about six different configurations) as the basis for all his compositions, and that Beethoven was

the only composer in whom you will find such a sequence of three notes used with such frequency, always at the same equivalent point in the melody, and always as the obvious expression of a certain state of mind. The three-note sequence, I contend, is a veritable Beethoven fingerprint, because it is not found in any other composer.⁸⁶

Although *The Unconscious Beethoven* was not widely reviewed, some critics disagreed with Newman's fingerprint thesis on the grounds that it was too speculative. On the other hand, one reviewer believed Newman's formal-analytical treatment did not go far enough.⁸⁷ Newman admitted in his first article on physiology that the Beethoven book had met with 'small success', but he remained convinced of its argument. Newman asserted that his type of musical analysis, which was concerned, in part, with discerning compositional processes, could go one step further: to 'see a certain mood' when particular formulas were used, as in the case of Beethoven.⁸⁸

If undertaking a study of Schubert, for example, Newman argued that it would not be difficult to find a set of devices that would be 'always unconsciously employed when Schubert wished to express a certain mood', just as his study of Beethoven had concluded. This establishment of a mood, argued Newman, was the benefit that a physiological study would bring and should be approached in a particularly scholarly way:

I would argue that on the practical aesthetic side [of this physiological method] alone a good deal would be achieved if for a few years writers upon music would abandon their too easy psychological methods – which mean, in the last resort, only saying the first thing that comes into your head – and

⁸⁵ Ernest Newman, *The Unconscious Beethoven: An Essay in Musical Psychology* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1927).

⁸⁶ Newman, 'A Physiology of Criticism 1', 7.

⁸⁷ A particularly trenchant and hostile review of *The Unconscious Beethoven* was written by Carl Engel in 'Views and Reviews', *Musical Quarterly*, 13/4 (October 1927), 646–62. Engel lambasted Newman for throwing 'mud' (646) at Beethoven's reputation and did not find the formal analysis section of the book convincing. On the other hand, writing in 1929, Paul Miles was disappointed that 'Newman's book received too little attention, I think, and its suggestiveness was not fully realized', in 'Beethoven Sketches', *Gramophone* (29 October 1929), 12.

⁸⁸ Newman, 'A Physiology of Criticism 1', 7.

devote themselves to establishing a preliminary physiology of each of the great composer's styles.⁸⁹

Newman's readers were puzzled. He spent the next two instalments (27 January and 3 February) answering readers' letters in a convoluted fashion, going over old ground about the difficulties of impartial criticism and the perils of the so-called 'personal equation'. Newman was at pains to point out that by a physiology of criticism he did not mean 'a study of the composer in the light of his nerves and arteries, or even of his liver'.⁹⁰ Readers were still confused, and the letters continued to pour in. In the last instalment, on 17 February, Newman called a truce:

The sooner I end this series of articles the better, for it is evident from the letters I receive on the subject that no one has the slightest idea what it is I am driving at. I must wait and see if I have better luck in a treatment of the subject on a larger scale elsewhere. The term 'physiology' is plainly a stumbling-block for most people; they read into it a meaning I never intended, and then write me long letters that are most interesting in themselves, but hopelessly irrelevant to the theme.⁹¹

Cardus's emphasis on spirituality and Newman's preoccupation with physical or scientific matters represented the extremes of musical criticism in the first half of the nineteenth century. Newman distrusted any sort of criticism of a spiritual hue, while Cardus was extremely ambivalent about any kind of psychological outpouring. Indeed, the latter wrote in his autobiography: 'It is perhaps necessary here to point out that young men of thirty years ago did not read books and listen to music and attend theatres and art galleries to "integrate their personalities", or to seek out some "higher synthesis."' ⁹²

Despite their different approaches and styles of criticism Newman and Cardus shared a disdain for much of the musical criticism written by their peers. Cardus 'hated the bulk of English musical criticism for its dryness of nature and its parsimonious good-mannered use of the language'.⁹³ He also despised the party-politics of Lambert and the Sitwells: 'It was Lombard Street to a china orange that this new intelligentsia would praise Berlioz at the expense of Wagner'; he also admonished H. C. Colles and Francis Toye for being predictable.⁹⁴ Echoing Runciman and Stanford, Cardus frequently opined that modern criticism lacked wit and depth of knowledge about music through research, and he commented on the ridiculous rush to get concert reviews into print the next day, preferring instead for English

⁸⁹ Ibid. ⁹⁰ Newman, 'A Physiology of Criticism 3', 7.

⁹¹ Newman, 'A Physiology of Criticism 4', 7. ⁹² Cardus, *Autobiography*, p. 257. ⁹³ Ibid., p. 226.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 267.

newspapers to adopt the French and German practice of printing longer notices days after the performance. Cardus complained that criticism had become too much of a business.⁹⁵

Conclusion

The drive for quality music criticism in Britain that began in the second half of the nineteenth century was in order to replace the dogmatic, opinionated and hack reporting deemed old-school criticism, while a more carefully written and nuanced approach to writing raised the quality of reviewing to criticism, even science. This was the new era of criticism for which Runciman, Newman and others had long agitated. It is not surprising, given the prevalence of positivist thought in the nineteenth century, that a system of principles should be developed for criticism of all types, but it was ultimately an unworkable scheme that could never regulate individuality of style. The best that could be hoped for was that music critics could be trained appropriately for their profession. Books by Newman and Calvocoressi represent both theoretical and practical applications of musical criticism, but neither book attempts to shoehorn musical criticism into formulaic approaches. Furthermore, the careers of Newman and Cardus clearly demonstrate the new tenor of criticism: reference to Shakespeare, Dickens, physiology and aesthetics in the extracts above from Newman and Cardus illustrate the broad depth of learning and a wider frame of reference of the new-school critics. Moreover their style was not cast in an ‘impersonal manner’, nor was it ‘sheer dullness’, terms in which Runciman had earlier described criticism of old. A new criticism of much broader horizons, intellectual clout and polished writing style had emerged and come of age.

⁹⁵ Daniels, *Conversations*, pp. 173–5.

Music Criticism in Norway

PER DAHL

Introduction

The history of music criticism in Norway has yet to be written, though quotations from music critiques and reviews have been used in music history texts, and philosophical questions related to music criticism have been debated. Happily, there is a substantial amount of material available for research towards such a history, including newspapers, journals and scrap-books (containing both concert programmes and concert reviews) and radio programmes. In what follows, I will put forward some historical observations that could serve as a background to a history of music criticism in Norway and perhaps encourage further research into this fascinating material.

Background

A Norwegian tradition of music criticism (and of musical practice in general) did not arise in tandem with the rest of the European nations. While musical life in Europe became more and more institutionalised during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Norway remained a dependency of Denmark from 1536 to 1814, and then became part of a union with Sweden from 1814 to 1905. Over the course of these four centuries, then, there was no royal court in Norway, and, more importantly, no nobility. This lack of resources and governmental influence perhaps explains why opera, theatre and a professional symphony orchestra came about much later in Norway than they did in Denmark and Sweden. In Denmark, King Frederik V inaugurated Det kongelige Teater (the Royal Theatre) in 1748 to produce opera and ballet, and he launched one of the first European ballet schools in 1771. Det kongelige kapel (the Royal Danish Orchestra) actually dates back to 1448, when it served King Christian I as the Royal Court's Trumpet Corps, and it became Denmark's symphony orchestra, sharing in opera and ballet performances as well as offering its own concerts. In Sweden, King Gustav III established Kungliga Dramatiska Teatern (the Royal

Dramatic Theatre) in 1788 to produce opera, theatre and ballet. In addition, he had founded Kungliga Musikaliska Akademien (the Royal Swedish Academy of Music) in 1771, which offered several scholarships to young musicians to study abroad and bring back the latest European music to Stockholm.

Norway's history and general lack of infrastructure at the beginning of the nineteenth century recalled a medieval agricultural society, but by the end of the century, it had developed into a nation of consequence to European cultural life, having produced such figures as Ibsen, Bjørnson, Grieg, Bull, Nansen and Munch. This cultural growth was quite remarkable, and the last decades of that century have been labelled the Golden Age in the history of Norway's art. Interestingly, the Norwegian Constitution Law of 1814 was one of the most liberal in Europe, and for Bjørnson, Grieg, Bull and Nansen, it was fundamental to their support for other nations' fights for freedom and sovereignty.

For many hundreds of years, Copenhagen was the political, administrative and cultural centre for Norway, thanks to the latter's dependence upon Denmark. This significantly hampered the dissemination of cultural tendencies from Europe to Norway. Certain senior civil servants brought their personal musical activities with them to their positions in Norway, but this practice mainly stayed private. One positive consequence of this relative insularity was that Norwegian folk music could continue to develop beyond the reach of the dominant European classical music idiom. On the other hand, of course, classical music would not play a part in Norway's nation-building even as late as the end of the nineteenth century. Grieg's celebrated work to promote Norwegian independence did *not* derive from his many attempts to establish a symphony orchestra and music academy in Norway's capital of Christiania (renamed Oslo as of New Year's Day, 1925). Instead, it was his use and adaptation of folk music in his compositions that made him a national hero (according to concert reviews from both Norway and abroad). Victorin Joncières in *La Liberté*, 26 December 1889 reviewed Grieg conducting the *Peer Gynt Suite* and the Piano Concerto in A Minor in Paris on 22 December 1889:

For me it is sufficient to hear some measures, before I feel transported to the land of darkness with fir trees covered with snow, where the sleds, pulled by reindeer, glide across the white-clad plains. It is the rarest and most valuable trait of a musician, that out of his work radiates a special atmosphere including the listener and gives him the illusion of being in an unfamiliar country that suddenly reveals itself through sounds that almost become visible thanks to the magic of art. Mr Grieg is the vivid and vibrant incarnation of Norway.¹

¹ Quoted in Harald Herresthal and Ladislav Reznicek, *Rhapsodie norvégienne: Norsk musikk i Frankrike på Edvard Griegs tid* (Oslo: Norsk musikkforlag, 1994), pp. 149–50. Translation my own.

The violin virtuoso Ole Bull also combined classical repertoire with performances of and improvisations over Norwegian folk tunes in both Europe and America. Back in Norway, he organised concerts in Christiania where performers on the Hardanger fiddle presented the repertoire of folk tunes and dances. Initially, this particular effort met with little success, but when the fiddlers adopted the position of a classical violin player (rather than sitting down with the fiddle on the chest), these concerts and this repertoire became pivotal parts of a national culture based on a Norwegian musical heritage.²

The search for a national identity and style quickened in Norway in the middle of the nineteenth century, as it did in many other regions of Europe. Among Norwegian scholars, two tendencies were particularly in evidence. One arose among those with a background in the cities, and especially Christiania, who aligned themselves with the broader nationalism that was developing in Europe after the revolutions. Musically, they saw vocal music as possessing the oldest pedigree and therefore as the most important part of Norway's cultural heritage. This brand of cultural nationalism also sought the national soul in its natural wilds – by extension, then, the peasants in the most rural districts were determined to have the most 'original' music. Unfortunately, these urban nationalists found that rural country folk did not sing in tune and sometimes lacked any sense of form at all. To make this material presentable to a contemporary European context they had to 'restore' it. One proponent of this strategy was the composer and organist Ludvig Mathias Lindeman (1812–87), the publisher of *Norske Fjeldmelodier* [Norwegian Mountain Tunes] in 1840.³ His collection was based on the performances he had witnessed by singers and instrumentalists (mostly string instruments such as the *Langeleik* and the Hardanger fiddle) who lived in the mountains, but the music was inevitably revised and often arranged for either piano or choir. Prominently lacking in Lindeman's collections is any information about the context in which the source music was actually performed. Nevertheless, bringing folk music to the cities in this manner allowed it to become part of the classical concert life, and thus part of the repertoire available to native composers hoping to add a Norwegian flavour to their works.⁴

² See the four-volume biography of Ole Bull: Harald Herresthal, *Ole Bull: Vidunderbarnet erobrer verden: 1810–1837*, I (Oslo: Unipub, 2006); *Ole Bull: Republikaner blant konger og keisere 1837–1848*, II (Oslo: Unipub, 2007); *Ole Bull: Teaterdirektor, koloniherre og norskdomsmann 1848–1862*, III (Oslo: Unipub, 2009); *Ole Bull: Drømmen om udødelighet 1862–1880*, IV (Oslo: Unipub, 2010).

³ Ludvig Mathias Lindeman, *Ældre og nyere norske Fjeldmelodier: 1* (Christiania: Malling, 1853); *Ældre og nyere norske Fjeldmelodier: 2* (Christiania: Malling, 1853).

⁴ Grieg was rather sceptical of Lindeman's restorations, so he arranged for fiddler Knut Johannesen Dahle to play the folk tunes to violinist (and conductor) Johan Halvorsen to produce notated melodies that were as close as possible to the original performed music before composing his piano cycles titled *Slåttene*, Op. 72, in 1903.

Starting in the 1860s, a second music-cultural strategy arose that was partly a reaction to this urbanised nationalism. This alternative started in the rural districts and focused on the possibilities of reconstructing this old musical material in its original form. For example, it was commonly assumed that the Norwegian ballades were meant to be sung, but parallels were discovered between them and the ballades of the Faroe Islands, which were *danced*. Writer and theatre instructor Hulda Garborg⁵ promptly undertook the work of incorporating dance back into this traditionally vocal repertoire. The goal of reconstruction – rather than restoration – came to divide those who were interested in Norway's original musical heritage, and, in turn, to inform many discussions and statements in newspapers, journals and books about music in Norway starting in the mid-nineteenth century. There was no tradition of reviewing performances of folk music in newspapers or other media, but a discourse with elements of music criticism can be found in many engaging texts arguing on both sides of the heritage debate. What both sides also shared was a general scepticism towards anything related to the nobility or cultural elitism surrounding the rarefied air of European classical music. This emerging signifier of Norwegian identity carried forward into the twentieth century, especially in the social-democratic movement, with its clear links to the socialist movement across Europe and Russia.

Before elaborating on the consequences of this general attitude towards Europe for Norwegian music and music criticism in the twentieth century, there is a need to nuance further the historical narrative. After all, Norway was by no means utterly isolated at any point. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the Hanseatic League connected cities around the North and Baltic Seas through trading, and a shared culture developed in this region. In Norway, Bergen was the Hanseatic trade hub until the 1560s, but the League's cultural contacts continued to impact musical life in Bergen for a long time afterwards. One result was the establishment of the first Norwegian symphony orchestra, the *Musikkselskabet Harmoniens Orkester*, in Bergen in 1765. The group started as twenty (amateur) musicians and ten singers but doubled to the size of Haydn's Esterházy orchestra, managing to perform Beethoven's Second Symphony in 1804, the year it was published (and before it was performed in Berlin!). Over the course of the nineteenth century, the orchestra became unstable and rather fragile, thanks to its complete dependence on private funding. Starting in 1919, the

⁵ Hulda Garborg (1862–1934) was a pioneer in women's rights as well as areas such as theatre and folk dance, cooking and *bunad* (national costume) tradition.

city of Bergen offered financial support to the orchestra (then forty musicians) in combination with the private funds.⁶

Another important influence was the possibility of foreign musicians being appointed as *Stadsmusikant* (*Stadtppfeifer*, city musician). There were formal positions as organist and cantor in the cathedrals in the cities. Due to the very low salary, the same musician often tried for all three positions. The first *Stadsmusikant* contract was signed in Bergen in 1620; by the second half of the eighteenth century, most of the cities in Norway had their own *Stadsmusikant*, usually with six or seven apprentices. The position's privileges were gradually diminished after that time, and this role was abolished by a royal decree on 26 January 1841.

Norway's cultural ascendance as a nation started in Copenhagen in the 1770s with the establishment of *Det Norske Selskab* (the Norwegian Society, a literary group). The process of developing a constitution in 1814 gave the people of Christiania and other Norwegian cities a new confidence and the courage to begin to seek out their unique national roots. In line with the post-Napoleon ideal of every nation having its own cultural identity, Norway's musical life stood in need of both organisation and direction. Drawing upon notions from Romanticism, as well, people in Norway undertook the elevation of folk music (as part of their identity) and the development of a public musical life (as part of the institutionalisation of culture) in the interests of the cultural emancipation of their society.

The discrepancy between Denmark (and Sweden), where the King initiated the opera, the orchestra and various other music institutions, and Norway, where these institutions were the result of more or less stable private support, can be characterised as top-down versus bottom-up arrangements. Taking Habermas's theory of societal evolution and modernisation as a point of departure,⁷ we could also schematise it as the difference between strategic/instrumental rationality and rationalisation, on the one hand (Denmark), and communicative rationality and rationalisation, on the other (Norway). We might also introduce Habermas's distinction between 'work' and 'interaction', where the former includes modes of action based on the rational selection of efficient means – that is, forms of instrumental and strategic action (the king's actions), and the latter refers to forms of 'communicative action' in which actors coordinate their behaviours based on 'consensual norms' (that is, Norway's spreading cultural emancipation). Such consensual norms would

⁶ Today, the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra has 101 musicians.

⁷ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: Polity, 1989).

develop from the dialogue between individuals who met in conversation or exchanged views in the public sphere via printed media, a concept Habermas refers to as *eine Öffentlichkeit*.

Habermas's terminology, dedicated to the change from the eighteenth century's representational culture to the nineteenth century's critical culture seems, to align with cultural development in Norway as well, but there is one important difference. Only in the last decades of the nineteenth century can we find some indication of a public sphere in Norway. This relative delay in cultural development and lack of *eine Öffentlichkeit* restricts Habermas's communicative rationalisation, in this case, to the cultural elite. Because of this, a kind of polarisation between high and low culture in Norway – or at least a preference for a discourse that was shaped around high/elite versus low/public culture – continued to characterise the Norwegian *Öffentlichkeit* into the twentieth century.⁸

Norway's actual fight for freedom and national sovereignty, which was most intense in the period 1880–1905, did not include a stage of popular revolution (as had happened elsewhere in Europe) but instead derived from the aforementioned liberal Constitutional Law of 1814, a gesture originating two generations before those who were the patriots of Norway's cultural elite in the Golden Age. The elite's goal was less to achieve *eine Öffentlichkeit* than to gain acceptance for Norway as a free and independent nation, above and beyond any active public sphere. These elite leaders were supported and admired for their advocacy of concepts such as freedom, equality and individual rights, but there were, in fact, no radical changes to society itself (such as, for example, the bourgeoisie assuming positions long held by the nobility), only progressive development in the economy, school system and living conditions. How Norway's differences from European culture manifested themselves in its music criticism will occupy my conclusion to what follows, but first I will offer some glimpses of the documented history of music criticism in Norway.

Music Criticism

We have now seen that the two preconditions for music criticism, a concert life and a public press, did not develop simultaneously in Norway. Music that is part of military and religious rituals is public at all times, but the emergence

⁸ The consequences of this polarisation for music criticism in Norway would make an interesting research project especially compared to music criticism in Sweden (as documented by Kristina Widestedt, *Ett tongivande förnuft: musikkritik i dagpress under två sekler* (Vol. xvii) (Stockholm: Stockholms universitet, 2001).

of a concert life devoted to the musical experience's aesthetic qualities arose only in the nineteenth century. Sources documenting this emergence include manuscripts, printed music, notes in newspapers about concerts, occasional reviews and articles about musical life in Norway.⁹ From the contracts of the *Stadsmusikant* between 1620 and 1800, for example, we can see that offering public concerts was part of their duties. The earliest texts addressing music in public life were printed in the first Norwegian newspaper, the *Norske Intelligentsedler*, in 1763.¹⁰ These event announcements provided information about performers but seldom said anything about the repertoire or how it was received. Other sources indicate a focus on contemporary music in these concerts until at least the 1840s. For many years, these kinds of music-related texts served as a form of music criticism.

The Norwegian Constitution of 1814 proclaimed freedom of the press and gave rise to several newspapers, bulletins and pamphlets, including, in 1819, the first daily newspaper, called *Morgenbladet*.¹¹ While *Morgenbladet* focused on news and political issues, another newspaper, *Den Constitutionelle*, started in 1836 and became an important platform for commentary on any issue, including cultural life. Among the earliest music critics in Norway with a link to the European tradition was Halfdan Kjerulf (1815–68). His feuilletons in *Den Constitutionelle* from late 1839 to 1847 followed the model of Schumann in their reflective, sometimes humorous and ironic, and always very subjective conclusions, assessments and observations. For example, 15 January 1843:

Ole Bull is an extraordinary individual artist, but therefore we have the right to require extraordinarily high quality, yet taking all essentials in consideration, he delivers so extraordinarily little. It is the special characteristics of this artist that one must admit him everything in one direction and yet almost nothing in another.¹²

This subjectivity also characterises Kjerulf's diaries and letters, and in it we see the Romantic yearning for the exotic become, in Norway, a yearning for national identity rooted in rural culture and the life of the mountains. This was decidedly exotic to the urban citizens of Christiania and elsewhere in Europe, where it influenced music critics in their reviews of music by Grieg and other Norwegian composers.

⁹ One of the earliest articles was Lars Roverud, *Et Blik paa Musikens Tilstand i Norge: med Forslag til dens almindelige Udbredelse i Landet, ved et Instituts Anlæg i Christiania* (Christiania: Self-publishing, 1815).

¹⁰ Børre Qvamme, *Det musikalske Lyceum og konsertlivet i Christiania 1810–1838* (Oslo: Solum, 2002), p. 8.

¹¹ Rune Ottosen, Helge Østbye and Lars Arve Røssland, *Norsk pressehistorie* (Oslo: Samlaget, 2012), p. 32.

¹² Quoted in Nils Grinde, *Halfdan Kjerulf: nordmann og europeer: en komponist og hans tid* (Oslo: Musikkhusets forlag, 2003), p. 273. Translation my own.

Over the next two to three decades (1850–80), there was no regular music criticism published in the newspapers, even as Norway's thriving concert life became more and more evident to all. Here again, the differences between developments in Norway and the arcs of music institutions in Denmark and Sweden during the same period are quite remarkable. In Norway, the lack of governmental support for cultural institutions caused orchestras, opera companies and concert halls to come and go. However, music did become an important part of the new public movements of the second half of the nineteenth century, including the Labour movement (with its international contacts) and its workers' unions, as well as the low-church revivals (*Haugianerne*), which included singing hymns without an organ or other instruments. It was also at this time that a major debate about the Norwegian language started, as to whether it should be based on the Danish (the official written language, or *Riksmål*) or Norwegian dialects (the *Landsmål*, for which Ivar Aasen argued in his books of 1848 and 1850).¹³ Naturally, *Landsmål* supporters were also interested in rural musical traditions, whereas *Riksmål* was associated with urban and elitist European culture. In 1885, both languages became official Norwegian languages. Today, the conflict between *Riksmål* and *Landsmål* (or *Bokmål* and *Nynorsk*, in modern terminology) still arises when questions about identity and cultural belonging come up. The link to musical expression, however, is no longer so prominent.

The first Norwegian music journal was established in January 1880,¹⁴ and at that time, newspapers began to include reviews more regularly. It remained the case that these texts resembled annotations rather than actual criticism, and the perspective of the critics themselves tended to drift from the social event to a performer review to personal opinion. However, in the decade leading up to the First World War, several of the capital's principal newspapers began to feature concert critiques by musically literate critics (mostly composers).¹⁵ These pieces were generally in line with the European tradition of music criticism and strongly influenced by the heritage of Hanslick. Nevertheless, we find a strong bias towards promoting Norway as a nation with its own culture.

During the interwar years, certain changes in society propelled the development of music criticism in Norway. A new genre, jazz, became an important part of public musical life, and an explosion of media – radio, the

¹³ Ivar Aasen and Terje Aarset, *Det norske Folkesprågs Grammatik*, 1 (Volda: Høgskulen i Volda, 1996). It is worth noting that Aasen's books on Norwegian dialects were written in the official Danish language.

¹⁴ The journal was *Nordisk Musiktidende*. Edited by Carl Warmuth, it was published in Oslo between 1880 and 1893.

¹⁵ Ulrik Mørk in *Orebladet* (1900–25) and *Nationen* (1927–40); Reidar Mjøen in *Dagbladet* (1907–25) and *Aftenposten* (1925–53); Hjalmar Borgstrøm in *Aftenposten* (1913–25).

gramophone, magazines and even more newspapers – accompanied it. Music, and texts about music, were everywhere and reflected the newfound ‘buying power’ of the engaged consumer, whether of recordings, radio shows or concerts. Individualism came to characterise music criticism as well, but a tendency remained to align these texts with the reader rather than the listener, in the sense that the narrative refers to information and knowledge about the music and the musical performance rather than the listening process and its associations. Reviews of classical concerts, now common in all of the largest newspapers, became more focused on the musical work itself, its aesthetic potential and the ways in which the actual performance accommodated it, largely from a composer’s perspective.¹⁶ National celebrations such as Olavsjubileet in 1930 (which marked 900 years since the killing of King Olav at Stiklestad and the christening of Norway) and the twenty-fifth anniversary of Norwegian independence spurred some critics to become antagonistic towards new trends in classical music (impressionism, expressionism, neoclassicism) and instead promote the perpetuation of Norway’s national Romantic ideal.¹⁷ In magazines, features about music and musicians were aimed at the consumer and did not necessarily respond to a special concert/occasion.

The first gramophone records produced in Norway arrived in 1905.¹⁸ They appear to have had no impact on the amount of music criticism in the newspapers, however. Their distribution was limited to the larger cities, though the technology reached into the countryside – several music scholars used the equipment to make recordings with traditional folk musicians (vocal and instrumental performers).

Only jazz records received reviews as such in the newspapers and magazines of the 1920s; in fact, classical records were not reviewed in Norwegian newspapers until the 1950s (the LP era). The critic Dag Winding Sørensen opened his column titled ‘Grammofonen’ in the newspaper *Aftenposten* on 19 November 1949 with reviews of classical recordings, and the first LPs arrived in April 1952.¹⁹ This cannot have been because of poor sound quality,

¹⁶ Composer and founder of ISCM Norway, Pauline Hall (1890–1969) was critic for *Dagbladet* (1934–63). Composer David Monrad Johansen (1888–1974) was a critic at *Aftenposten* 1925–45.

¹⁷ Per Reidarsson, critic for *Tidens Tegn* (1913–21), *Arbeiderbladet* (1921–40) and *Fritt Folk* (1940–45), was extremely negative to all new tendencies. Reviewing Harald Sæverud’s (1897–1992) Symphony No. 2 he wrote: ‘However, for me, it was a torment to listen to this three-quarter-long jumble of false tones, everything entirely formless and to that, ugly instrumentation’ *Arbeiderbladet* (24 October 1924); quoted in Lorentz Reitan and Inger Bentzon, *Harald Sæverud: (1897–1992): mannen, musikken og mytene* (Oslo: Forum/Aschehoug, 1997), p. 95. Translation my own.

¹⁸ Vidar Vanberg, *Da de første norske grammofonstjernene sang seg inn i evigheten: norsk grammofonhistorie 100 år* (Oslo: Nasjonalbiblioteket, 2005), pp. 65–102.

¹⁹ Dag Winding Sørensen (1910–93) was a critic for *Aftenposten* (1945–76).

as classical records were being reviewed in other countries. It may indicate a lack of interest among readers, who continued to align classical music with upper-class elitism rather than Norway's strong national identity.²⁰ It seems to have been acceptable to buy some records in such a genre, but the idea of cultivating a taste for a non-Norwegian, highbrow European cultural tradition was met with some suspicion, even in the years of rebuilding that followed the Second World War.²¹

When jazz entered the public sphere in Norway in the 1920s, as mentioned, newspapers printed reviews of both concerts and gramophone records. The same thing happened with pop and rock music at the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s. These genres also prompted new journals that featured a mix of announcements, annotations and reviews. They both challenged the classical concert concept, making their performances an event, and their journals blurred the line between critic/reviews and comments. The first distribution of jazz records came about when Skandinavisk Grammophon produced two releases with the Original Dixieland Jazzband in October 1919.²² Newspapers reported on events where ragtime, cakewalk, Dixieland and dance/restaurant music were played. The definition and scope of 'jazz' remained in flux until the mid-1930s, when Norwegian recordings began to regularly feature more of the improvisation that was so central to the music.²³ Nevertheless, the popularity of jazz spread quickly around the country;²⁴ already in the 1920s, new ensembles and orchestras playing dance and restaurant music were trading their German and European sources for the new music from America, and the local press followed along with jazz-related annotations and occasional reviews. In Christiania/Oslo, as well, several of the main newspapers (*Aftenposten*, *Ørebladet*, *Nationen*, *Verdens Gang*, *Dagbladet*, *Tidens Tegn*) started reviewing jazz concerts in 1921.

Even though the Norwegian newspapers assigned some correspondents (mostly interested amateurs, not professional journalists) to cover local jazz activity, information about the international jazz scene generally came from the Swedish journals *Orkesterjournalen* and *Estrad*. At the end of the 1930s,

²⁰ Arvid O. Vollsnes, et al. (eds.), *Norges musikkhistorie. Inn i mediealderen: 1914–50*, IV (Oslo: Aschehoug, 2000), pp. 38–45.

²¹ Arvid O. Vollsnes, et al. (eds.), *Norges musikkhistorie. 1950–2000: Modernisme og mangfold*, V (Oslo: Aschehoug, 2001), pp. 13–39.

²² See Bjørn Stendahl, *Freebag? Jazz i Norge 1960–1970* (Oslo: Norsk jazzarkiv, 2010); Bjørn Stendahl and Johs Bergh, *Jazz, hot & swing: jazz i Norge 1920–1940* (Oslo: Norsk jazzarkiv, 1987); *Sigarett stomp: jazz i Norge 1940–1950* (Oslo: Norsk jazzarkiv, 1991); *Cool, kløver & dixie: jazz i Norge 1950–1960* (Oslo: Norsk jazzarkiv, 1997).

²³ Kristian Hauger Radiodanseorkesters recording (17 March 1936).

²⁴ In an announcement in a small newspaper in the middle of Norway, we find 'jazz-plater' (jazz records) among the articles listed for sale already in 1920; *Imherredsposten* (3 March 1920).

a discussion developed in Norway around the issue of the cultural conflict between jazz and National Socialism – a conflict with real consequences for many people during the German occupation of Norway (1940–45).²⁵ While a few attempts to publish jazz journals before the war failed straight away, Norwegian jazz blossomed musically in the 1950s, and the Norsk Jazzforbund (Norwegian Jazz Society) was founded in 1953, followed by the journals *Norsk Jazz* (1954–) and *Jazznytt* (1965–). Nevertheless, it was not possible to make a living as a full-time jazz musician in Norway until the mid-1960s, and the first LP recording with Norwegian jazz musicians did not arrive until November 1963.²⁶ The early enthusiasm of the 1920s for jazz had lost momentum, and the music criticism of the 1950s and 1960s was rather conservative regarding new expressions and styles in jazz, in both newspapers and journals. Jazz, after all, was no longer the music of the new generation; the pop and rock movement had usurped that role. Jazz, like classical, instead found itself saddled with an aura of elitism, as a genre that demanded special competence to appreciate, and one where the music critic became an important conduit to such competence.²⁷

Rock and roll is often identified with the emergence of teen culture among the first baby-boomer generation (after the Second World War), when young people had both greater relative affluence and more leisure time and adopted rock and roll as part of a distinct sub-culture.²⁸ The street riot at a concert in Oslo's Sentrum Kino on 20 September 1956 is frequently referred to as ground zero for rock in Norway.²⁹ In the 1960s, writing about rock and pop music mostly consisted of fan journalism catering to a teenage market (for example, the magazine *Pop Revyen*, 1966–70), though accomplished British publications such as *Melody Maker* and *New Musical Express* were widely distributed and read in Norway as well. In the late 1970s, an independent Norwegian rock press emerged (including *Nye Takter*, 1977–89; *Puls*, 1978–; *Beat*, 1985–97; and *Rock Furore*, 1988–96). Influenced by the do-it-yourself aesthetics of the British punk movement, new forms of Norwegian rock writing became a stylistic overlay on a new rock identity for the music,

²⁵ Stendahl and Bergh, *Jazz, hot & swing; Sigarett stomp*, pp. 11–40.

²⁶ Eleven different ensembles made recordings in Norsk Grammfonkompagni's studio 12–14 November 1963, but copyright problems with one of Karin Krogh's texts delayed the launching of the first Jazz-LP to winter 1964. See Stendahl, *Freebag?*, pp. 66–9.

²⁷ Vollsnes, et al. (eds.), *Norges musikkhistorie 1950–2000*, v, pp. 273–5.

²⁸ Cultural analyses often use Bourdieu's *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984) as their theoretical platform for explaining the rock movement.

²⁹ Per Kristian Olsen, Asbjørn Bakke and Sigrid Hvidsten, *Norsk rocks historie: fra Rocke-Pelle til Hank von Helvete* (Oslo: Cappelen Damm, 2009).

its performers and its listeners.³⁰ The influence of the English/American language gave rise to another aesthetic debate in the late 1970s and early 1980s when many musicians and critics decided that the Norwegian language was not suitable for the expressivity in pop and rock songs.³¹ In the 1990s, in turn, more artists started to use Norwegian as their main language for rock expression, and critics in the alternative rock press supported them. An interesting aspect of Norwegian rock criticism is its alignment with other fields, and particularly the literary field. Some writers found an outlet for their prose in rock criticism, and some have become central actors in the public sphere, or have combined musical endeavours with their literary projects. This includes writers such as Jon Nesbø (founder of the rock band Di Derre), Lars Saabye Christensen (member of the band Norsk Utflukt and participating on several records) and the poet Jan Erik Vold co-operating with jazz musicians including Chet Baker, Jan Garbarek, Red Mitchell and Egil Kapstad.

The official Norwegian cultural policy in the second half of the twentieth century moved away from its goal of distributing art as part of public education in the decades following the Second World War to an ideology in the 1960s and 1970s that linked the use of artistic resources to social-democratic ends. National institutions including Riksteateret (the Norwegian Touring Theatre, established 1948) and Riksgalleret (the Travelling Art Gallery, 1953–87) made way for Rikskonsertene (the Norwegian Concert Institute, established 1967), which was dedicated to organising school concerts, youth concerts and evening concerts. The theatres in Oslo (and Christiania), Bergen, Trondheim and Stavanger had traditionally produced operettas (and occasionally operas) as part of their repertoire, but there was no permanent scene around opera. After much discussion, a national opera house was opened in Oslo in 1959. Meanwhile, in the major cities, private music schools/conservatories began to receive more public funding, and in 1973 the Norwegian Academy of Music was established in Oslo. Musicology was made a university discipline in Oslo in 1958 and Trondheim in 1962. This overall institutionalisation of music resulted in a great variety of discourses in the media, including a professionalisation of music criticism. Critics became more educated, as well as more dedicated to particular segments of musical life in a given region. In the classical sphere, composer Klaus Egge (1906–79) was a critic in *Arbeiderbladet* (1945–74) and Arne Nordheim (1931–2010), the

³⁰ Ulf Lindberg, Hans Weisethaunet, Morten Michelsen and Gestur Guðmundsson, *Rock Criticism from the Beginning: Amusers, Bruisers, and Cool-Headed Cruisers* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005).

³¹ Ulf Lindberg, Gestur Guðmundsson, Morten Michelsen and Hans Weisethaunet, 'Critical Negotiations: Rock Criticism in the Nordic Countries', *Popular Music History*, 1/3 (2006), 251–2.

composer most associated with modernism and electronic music, was a critic in *Dagbladet* (1963–70). In pop/jazz, Terje Mosnes (1947–) was a freelance critic in *Dagbladet* from 1966, being made permanent in 1977.

During the 1950s, a new trend developed in the newspapers towards presenting culturally related material that favoured entertainment over ‘serious’ culture and aimed itself at the socioeconomically up-and-coming: the youth.³² In the 1970s and 1980s, then, the situation changed from an embrace of art as a fundamental human value to a culture centred on events about which media attention and short-term success dominated all else. During these decades, public funds expanded the budgets of music institutions and organisations in an unprecedented way. At the same time, Norwegian individualism manifested itself in Norway’s fractious relationship with the EU (the first public vote on membership took place in 1973), as well as the movement to decentralise funding to music and other art forms. (People in Norway like scattered settlement and decentralised funding is in line with national individualism.) The result of all of this was the development of a policy dedicated to music as a tool for solving regional and social problems. This process was closely linked to the demystification of high culture, meaning that artists and intellectuals saw all of it as a devaluation of artistic quality.³³ As a result, two critical discourses evolved: traditional music criticism, which concentrated on musical performances, and popular journalism’s ongoing critique of the musical culture. Media outlets responded to the division by hiring part-time critics to write concert reviews and full-time journalists to produce work for their culture departments.

In the second half of the twentieth century, then, music criticism peaked across all musical genres, in both newspapers and journals/magazines. Classical concerts were reviewed on a regular basis (including the debut concerts of young musicians), and after the CD revolution in the 1980s, many newspapers began to include reviews of classical CDs in addition to concerts. Critics were still generally composers and sometimes musicologists, but in certain newspapers, listeners with a huge collection of records and CDs could also become reviewers of classical records.³⁴ Since the year 2000, on the other hand, the number of classical music reviews has decreased dramatically, and today there is no consistency regarding either concert or CD reviews of classical music in Norway.³⁵ At the same time, the number of professional

³² Ottosen, Østbye and Røssland, *Norsk pressehistorie*.

³³ Håkon Larsen, *Den nye kultursosiologien: kultur som perspektiv og forskningsobjekt* (Oslo: Universitetsforlag, 2013).

³⁴ Kjell Hillveg (1943–) reviewed classical music, but only recordings in *Aftenposten* (1987–2008).

³⁵ Only the left-wing newspaper *Klassekampen* has a Monday music supplement featuring critiques of CDs and concerts across all genres.

orchestras, ensembles, chamber and recital concerts has exploded. This could be seen as a postmodern deconstruction of the post-war governance changing the mid-century Norwegian *Öffentlichkeit* to a pluralistic cultural landscape.

Broadcasting

Broadcasting started with a private company (Kringkastingsselskapet) in 1925, and playing gramophone records as ‘concerts’ represented an important means of the dissemination of music. After introducing the electric pick-up in 1927, the amount of recorded music increased. In 1933, Norwegian National Broadcasting (Norsk Rikskringkasting, or NRK) was established by the government and given a monopoly over public service broadcasting. TV transmission became a regular occurrence in 1960, and NRK’s monopoly over it was not revisited until the 1980s.³⁶ In 1982, NRK launched a second radio channel, P2, dedicated to light music and entertainment; starting in 1993, culture-related discussion and interpretations of cultural expressions became a prominent aspect of P2’s profile. A typical new programme was ‘Ny lyd på gamle verker’ [New Sounds on Old Works], which presented recordings of both classical and jazz music with two hosts, one representing classical music and the other, jazz. The radio was a superb medium for presenting alternative interpretations of the same musical work. Programmes like ‘På sporet’ [On the Track] that focused on new interpretations (on CD) of the classical repertoire became very popular. At the other end of these consumer-perspective programmes, we find ‘Ring in musikken’ [A Call for Music], where people could phone in to the NRK library to request their favourite works. In addition, classical music even got its own twenty-four-hour channel, ‘Alltid klassisk’ [Solely Classics], starting in 1995. Channel P2 continued to present a variety of programmes dedicated to individual music genres, such as folk music (which was given a twenty-four-hour channel in 2004), jazz (which was given its channel in 2007) and world music. NRK’s coverage of classical music, then, followed the path of music criticism in the press, beginning with gramophone concerts and progressing to programmes that brought a critical perspective to the music itself. At first dominated by classical music, this trend came to embrace all genres, before leaving classical music, for the most part, behind.

In the 1960s, and especially from the 1970s onwards, the Norwegian economic situation transformed young people into a viable group of

³⁶ Hand Frederick Dahl, *NRK i fred og krig: kringkastingen i Norge 1920–1945* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1991).

customers with their own preferences in music (pop/rock), clothes, hairstyle and lifestyle. NRK's single channel (until 1982) was not able to satisfy this segment of the public sphere, and in the 1950s and 1960s, for example, Norwegians had to tune into Radio Luxembourg or the Swedish P₃ (for those living close to the border) in order to listen to a wide repertoire of popular music. In 1993, NRK started a channel, P₃, aimed specifically at young people and where developing a discourse in Norwegian for their music genres was important. Norwegian educational institutions were slow to open up to this kind of music and its discourse, as presented in publications such as *Melody Maker*, *Rolling Stone* and *New Musical Express*. Pop and rock music, which seemed to elude conventional music theory and analysis, used electric instruments and cultivated musical expressions based on the possibilities of the recording studio. It therefore represented something new and rather confounding to public Norwegian music criticism until the arrival of the new millennium.

Conclusion

One of the main problems with describing the history of music criticism in Norway is that we are forced to identify elements in its musical life using a terminology that only developed much later. What we now call classical, jazz, pop and rock did not register as such fifty or a hundred years ago. In addition, today's variety of musical genres is the result of strategic choices made by the music industry (gramophone companies, impresarios, agents and media houses), music organisations and institutions, and the educational system, and this also distorts our view of the musical life (and discourse) of the past. Recalling Habermas, we might say that the music industry has always dominated our musical world with its contributing and strategic actions. In the gramophone era, this industry impact strengthened the idea of the recorded musical work as a fact or an object. However, the dissemination of music on the Internet weakens this tendency. Even in this industry context, however, music criticism was an independent communicative action in which the relevant musical actors coordinate their behaviours based on consensual norms. These norms are highly dependent upon what and where the critics articulate them. Yet Norway's political and cultural idiosyncrasy complicated the possibility of an independently cultivated culture of music criticism; often, what critics did ran counter to what people wanted or listened to, deriving as it did from tenets of music theory, history and culture that did not resonate with a consensus norm regarding the public's listening experiences. The lack of dialogue in an active public sphere (*eine Öffentlichkeit*) made music

criticism in Norway into a literary discipline that served to promulgate the internal codes of highbrow musical tradition and to accommodate the interpretative communities belonging to the various musical genres.

The delayed development of music criticism in Norway had some interesting consequences as well. Music criticism as it came about in Europe was imported into Norway as text about the music (that is, the work), not about the listening experience. In the wake of several other developments in Norwegian society (nationalism, the struggle for independence and the anti-elitism of the post-war years), classical music was pigeonholed as highbrow culture with rigid class boundaries and too much insider knowledge. These judgements have been softened in the twenty-first century, as discussed above. When jazz, and later pop/rock, became topics of music criticism, the impact from foreign enterprises (such as the journals, magazines and newspapers of Sweden, England and the United States) became quite evident. However, because they appealed to a broader public and focused on the music as something to experience rather than necessarily know about, these genres were better aligned with the Norwegian society's ethos of equality.

A written text can often be much more rigid in its definition than the artistic expression in question might warrant. This makes music criticism a supplier of relevant premises for people's understanding of musical expressions.³⁷ Categories and norms expressed in these texts are sometimes much more detailed than the musical expressions to which they refer and from which they emerge. This is particularly the case in pop/rock/jazz criticism, with its many references to extra-musical elements. The thing to remember is that the concepts used in music criticism, musical and otherwise, are all rooted in and part of a much larger web of cultural affiliations. To understand that web, we must continue to return to the culture from which it all emerges. I hope the above glimpses of the history of music criticism in Norway have demonstrated the value of such a perspective for any critique of music criticism.

³⁷ See 'The Rise and Fall of Literacy in Classical Music', in Per Dahl, *Music and Knowledge: A Performer's Perspective* (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2017).

Aesthetic Conservatism and Politics in German-Language Music Criticism, 1900–1945

KAREN PAINTER

Time and again studies of German-language music criticism at the *fin de siècle*, but also during the Weimar Republic, the First Austrian Republic and both World Wars, have shown that politics influenced critics or that critics wished to influence politics. And yet the mechanism in place differed vastly in the respective historical contexts, often in unexpected ways. Critical discourse did not necessarily reflect either the political view of the author or the political milieu of the performance and review. This chapter focuses on the clash between rhetoric and politics, not to diminish the significance of ideology in the interpretation of critical discourse, but to understand the more complex ways that music critics both responded to political pressure and pursued their own ideological course.

One such apparent contradiction at the pinnacle of liberalism in the arts and journalism around 1900 is the proliferation of violent metaphors as critics sought to preserve aesthetic ideals in the face of modernism. It would be difficult to determine whether profligate rhetoric at the *fin de siècle* actually influenced the later politicisation of music, especially the abandonment to opportunism and politics during the Third Reich. But such connections can be examined for the two decades after the First World War. The lessons learned and witnessed in the experiments with democracy after 1918 likely affected the behaviour of critics who embraced National Socialism in 1933 (and after the Anschluss of Austria). There has been resistance to scrutinising the politics behind Social Democratic music criticism, above all because scholars, myself included, are sympathetic to those same political aspirations. Yet the fact remains that the advocacy journalism that became so important in Social Democracy, especially in Vienna, was propaganda in all but name. Reports of success in proletarian ventures to promote classical repertoire flew in the face of professional journalistic standards. A final irony this essay explores is that in the Third Reich, political rhetoric all but disappeared from much music criticism (the exceptions being mainly fringe authors), despite the fact that in their reportage and their aesthetic judgements, critics

consistently showed their approval of patriotic and other politically directed music. It was the victory of the apolitical in the service of extreme politics, a move both encouraged and ultimately choreographed by Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels.¹

Apart from the longevity of some careers that stretched across historical eras, there were few commonalities in the genres and practices of music criticism from 1900 to 1945. To oversimplify, critiques were often negative in the period before the First World War but mostly descriptive and positive during the Third Reich. In the bourgeois liberal press, music criticism lost its entertainment value after the First World War as critics felt compelled to show the relevance of their craft. Incisive satirical writing instead persisted mainly in the right-wing press, although humour all but vanished in music criticism after 1933.

Another change across this time span was the importance of music criticism altogether. Around 1900, the stakes were high. Feuilletons on important performances often appeared on the front page of the newspaper. Preserving the traditions of classical music mattered so much that one critic (Hans Liebstöckl) pleaded for a law to protect concert-goers against what he experienced when attending a performance of Schoenberg's Second String Quartet; Schoenberg, in turn, produced an essay titled, 'A Legal Question', taking the critic to task for the terms of his outrage.² The Austrian Social Democrats cared so much about the arts that the Party arts office, established in November 1919 (Sozialdemokratische Kunststelle), maintained a journal, *Kunst und Volk* (subtitled *Mitteilungen des Vereines Sozialdemokratische Kunststelle*) from 1926 to 1931. This intense commitment to music criticism as a vehicle for political change continued in 1933, albeit with changes in language and venue – a veritable swell in opportunism as critics sought to show the potential of their craft to support the new regime – but disappeared soon thereafter. Music critics applied Nazi tenets with zeal and on their own initiative, often adjusting terminology with few changes in rhetoric. Their efforts notwithstanding, music criticism was little valued, either as a contribution or as a threat. Apart from removing staff who were Jewish or deemed politically dangerous, Joseph Goebbels barely monitored music journalism; his ban on arts criticism, effective from 1937, was self-regulating, with no mechanism for enforcement. Apart from the stench of ideological writings on race and nationalism, the bread-and-butter reviews that made up music criticism in the Third Reich were banal and ineffective,

¹ This phenomenon is examined in a broader context in Pamela M. Potter, "What Is "Nazi Music"?", *Musical Quarterly*, 88/3 (2005), 428–55.

² Schoenberg's essay, eventually published in *Der Fackel*, has been translated in *Arnold Schoenberg: The Second String Quartet in F# Minor, Op. 10*, Norton Critical Score, ed. Severine Neff (New York: Norton, 2006), pp. 217–22. Liebstöckl's review appeared in the *Illustriertes Wiener Extrablatt* (9 February 1907).

with the cadre of professionals depleted by cuts due to Aryanisation and political cleansing.

One reason for the clumsy handling of aesthetic (or political) criteria in music criticism, and so too the dilution of the craft altogether, was the change in staffing. The erudition of music critics around 1900 was also together missing in the stringers who kept newspapers in print, especially during the Second World War, when conscription further depleted the ranks. At a time when degree programmes for musicology, composition and performance were established, there was no commensurate training in music criticism. In general, whereas staff positions at large newspapers paid well, contributors to music journals could not earn a living as music critics. Outliers on the Right often cobbled together a living from book royalties – at a prodigious pace that further compromised the quality of their reflections and writing. Compounding this, those who took up political issues, particularly on the Right, tended to have less solid musical training. The end result was that these authors were marginalised by the musical establishment and secured more respect outside rather than within the field of music. Karl Grunsky and Karl Blessinger are two such examples considered further in this essay.

The misalignment of political and aesthetic values is seen most acutely with respect to the goal of active listening. Concern about listening habits intensified in the years around 1900. In particular, critics worried about how new music appeared to hinder an informed and partly synchronic comprehension. Mahler's thick counterpoint and large symphony movements made it difficult to listen synchronically, with an eye to the schematic structure of the whole. This expectation for listening hewed to conservative aesthetics but had no clear political valence at that time; critics across the spectrum of newspapers invested in this stock symphonic criterion. Only later, after the German defeat in the First World War, was active listening taken up on the Right, with musical hacks such as Blessinger and Richard Eichenauer.

Heinrich Schenker, whose right-leaning political views crystallised in the wake of the First World War, developed a profound theoretical apparatus for synchronic listening in the mid-1920s and 1930s. It is, however, unclear whether Schenker influenced the embrace of synchronic listening on the Right. His music criticism, published chiefly from 1892 to 1898, appeared in publications that did not align with his later hard-line nationalism. *Die Zukunft* (The Future), which featured articles by Schenker from the start, in 1892, was a manifesto for frank criticism on literary and political topics. Much of Schenker's critical output appeared in *Neue Revue*, a socially liberal

Viennese literary journal.³ As with *Die Zukunft*, Schenker had close ties to the editor (co-editor) and he contributed articles from its third year of publication through its final year.⁴

Gendered and Anti-Semitic Metaphors

In the decades around 1900, music critics saw their role not only as policing musical developments but also as enlightening readers and assuring the continuation of revered aesthetic principles. Especially within the feuilleton but also in some brief reviews, the goal of entertainment steered authors towards parody and other witticism.

Aesthetic conservatism pushed critics to draw on gendered and anti-Semitic rhetoric to reject modernism, implying a social agenda of discrimination and gender stereotypes despite themselves. Many in this generation felt comfortable using veiled anti-Semitic tropes even when it was rare to reference the Jewish identity of the composer, performer or audience – a practice limited to explicitly anti-Semitic publications, such as the *Deutsche Zeitung* and *Kikeriki*. Before the First World War, it was indecorous, at least in the mainstream press, to make reference to a composer's Jewish identity. Music was a universal language, inclusive of those who participated in the process of cultivation. In his capacity as music critic for the prestigious daily *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*, Rudolf Louis subjected Mahler's music to harsh criticism, even dismissing some works outright, but he also showed reserved praise, for example, reviewing the Seventh Symphony. By contrast, as an author of books – one on German music and another on Bruckner – Louis indulged in explicitly anti-Semitic diatribes against Mahler.

Discussion of Jewish identity, both philo- and anti-Semitic, increased after 1918, though the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and concomitant movement of national determination were more decisive to the exploration of ethnic identity than the War itself. There was resistance to the subject of Jewish identity, especially within the establishment, where music was still hoped to be a universal language. Rudolf Louis's writings faded from view (particularly as he had died prematurely, age forty-four, in 1914). Richard Specht chose to exclude Louis from his article on Mahler's enemies, citing the critic's virulent anti-Semitism. The context was a Mahler issue of *Musikblätter*

³ According to Nicholas Cook, a full third of Schenker's criticism appeared in *Neue Revue*. See Nicholas Cook, *The Schenker Project: Culture, Race, and Music Theory in Fin-de-Siècle Vienna* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 82.

⁴ The only scholarship I have found on the *Neue Revue* dates to a period of unreliability regarding political affiliation. See the entry by Alfred Zohner in *Deutsch-österreichische Literaturgeschichte*, ed. Johann Willibald Nagl, 4 (Vienna: Fromme, 1937), p. 1707.

des Anbruch published to coincide with the 1920 festival in Amsterdam devoted to the composer's symphonies. In Specht's view, Louis's capabilities were clouded by anti-Semitism, to the point that, however deft, he failed to grasp Mahler's music: 'On account of a racial feeling that is alien to art, the Munich Rudolf Louis, just as clever as questionable, found no access to Mahler's music.'⁵ Specht dubbed him the 'Meister Eckhart of music, who rejected alien things as "Jewish"'. The reference was to the scholastic and mystic Meister Eckhart, whom Pope John XXII tried for heresy in 1328, but Specht was likely also alluding to Dietrich Eckart, the anti-Semitic author so influential on Hitler. Eckart's serial article 'The Jew In and Around Us', had appeared a year earlier in the new anti-Semitic magazine which Eckart founded with Alfred Rosenberg.⁶

Whether the diatribe against modernism had an impact – on what was composed, what was programmed or how listeners responded – is difficult to prove. Certainly the negative reception of Mahler's symphonies clearly hindered their performance. This was not, however, true with Strauss's *Salome*. Harsh reviews of the premiere in Dresden on 6 December 1905 did nothing to dissuade future performances, a point of consternation to some critics. When *Salome* was showcased at the annual composers' festival in the summer of 1907, critics from across Germany and Austria encountered Strauss's innovations alongside those of other composers represented at the festival. In this context, some, for example, the Dresden critic F. A. Geissler, attacked his bold harmonic language and thick leitmotivic writing in anti-Semitic terms, in effect grouping Strauss's brash modernism with that of Arnold Schoenberg, represented at the festival through his First String Quartet.⁷

It is striking how quickly the rhetoric of gender and Jewish stereotypes dissipated in mainstream press after the First World War. The dangers seemed quaint. In addition, the polarisation of conservative and modernist camps made political metaphors more apt than those deriding the sensuality of music by Mahler, early Schoenberg or Debussy. Karl Blessinger, who published a series of polemical books immediately after the War, relished in debates that professional critics no longer took seriously. His 1919 tract *Die musikalischen Probleme der Gegenwart und ihre Lösung* (Contemporary Musical Problems and their Solutions) rejected the formal processes that more liberal

⁵ Richard Specht, 'Mahlers Feinde', *Musikblätter des Anbruch*, 3/13–14 (April 1920), 287.

⁶ Dietrich Eckart's 'Das Judentum in und ausser uns', *Auf Gut Deutsch: Wochenschrift für Ordnung und Recht*, 1/2 (10 January 1919), 28–31; 1/3 (17 January), 45–8; 1/4 (24 January), 61–4; 1/5 (31 January), 79–80; 1/6 (7 February), 95–6; 1/7 (14 February), 109–12.

⁷ Friedrich Adolf Geissler, *Leipziger Tagblatt* (1 July 1907); clipping from the Arnold Schönberg Center, Vienna.

critics found invigorating: rich thematic work, taut contrapuntal writing and controlled intensifications [*Steigerungen*]. Rather, he complained:

In striving for immoderate complexity, the New Germans are not satisfied to bring so-called motivic work into the developmental sections, but rather they have it at the beginning and often continue it to the end, without interruption. The result is a confusion of form and an exhaustion of the listener.⁸

A similar point had been made at early performances of Mahler's symphonies around 1900 (even by the composer's supporters, such as Julius Korngold in his review of the Seventh Symphony), but the claims were more sweeping in Blessinger's bald rejection of musical modernism.

It is difficult to gauge Blessinger's impact on contemporaries. *Contemporary Musical Problems and their Solutions* seemed outdated. Blessinger received a doctorate in musicology, but his academic stature had to wait until after the National Socialists came to power. As a scholar who joined the Party in 1932 and published a large-scale attack on Jewish composers, Blessinger was rewarded with a full professorship in 1942. In the aftermath of the First World War, he wished for classical music to empower German listeners. 'Most dilettantes', he grumbled later in the same book, 'never elevate themselves above the perspective of a frog'. He went on to quote Goethe: 'Man does not experience or enjoy, without being productive at the same time. This is the most inward trait of human nature.'⁹ Lacking technical knowledge, Blessinger continued, 'our generation does not really enjoy music; they allow themselves to be transported into a state of rush. This passivity [shows] the prevailing feminine character of today's culture'.¹⁰ Ironically, in the strident attacks on musical modernism, the rights of the listener were invoked repeatedly. Political and aesthetic right were at odds.

Music Criticism as Social Advocacy

Politically infused criticism was not limited to the Right. Emboldened by developments at the turn of the century, Social Democrats took pride in their insistence on the development of rational faculties among the workers' movement. They inherited and continued the discourse of *Bildung* so characteristic of the German and Austrian bourgeoisie in the early nineteenth century and claimed that these ideals could be extended to the working classes. At the same time, Social Democrats all but rejected music criticism as it had

⁸ Karl Blessinger, *Die musikalischen Probleme der Gegenwart und ihre Lösung* (Stuttgart: Kunstverlag Benno Filser, 1919), p. 36.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 82. ¹⁰ *Ibid.*

developed over the course of the nineteenth century. Enthusiasm for social reform led to poor journalism, with respect to accuracy in reportage and in biographical accounts. Ideologically inspired interpretation is itself not surprising, except that scholars sympathetic with David Josef Bach's political goals turn a blind eye to these misrepresentations. As a case study, I turn to the reportage on the Viennese Workers' Concerts.

Appointed music critic at Vienna's *Arbeiter-Zeitung* in October 1904, David Joseph Bach shunned the enterprise and tenets that he had come to associate with the bourgeois press. He lamented that Robert Hirschfeld, a friend and eminent Viennese critic, had attended the workers concerts but remained 'locked in the cage of the bourgeois newspaper business'.¹¹ Bach's aspirations were to uplift and enlighten the working class; accuracy as a journal was beside the point. Scholars sympathetic with his aims did not call out his failings; even Schoenberg, whose right-leaning politics changed only in response to the rise of National Socialism, felt compelled to speak about his friend's virtues, citing 'the ethical and moral power needed to withstand vulgarity and commonplace popularity'.¹²

The most flagrant breach of journalistic ethics – if, admittedly, softer in cultural than political reportage – was D. J. Bach's composer biographies. In an obituary for the Brahms biographer Max Kalbeck, Bach felt compelled to provide a historical justification for the supposed inaccessibility of the composer's music: 'Brahms, as Kalbeck knew, was not an artist for the few but rather a national treasure of the German people' but his music always needed to be explained. In effect, Bach attributed this to the fact that 'Brahms, the proletarian son, moved within a very exclusively patrician circle of great industrialists in Vienna'.¹³ Composer biography had long been used for didactic purposes, but the evolution of journalistic practices had evolved over the long nineteenth century.

The tenacity shown by Bach and his peers, seeking every opportunity to engage workers and justify the project of classical music for the masses, is no surprise considering the distrust their political colleagues harboured towards music criticism. Victor Adler, founder of the Social Democratic Party, was quoted – albeit years after his death – from one of his letters:

Music criticism, itself a questionable enterprise, is an empty word for workers today. The worker can be brought to art not through contemplation but

¹¹ David Josef Bach, 'Fünfundzwanzig Jahre Arbeiter-Sinfonie-Konzert', *Kunst und Volk: Mitteilungen des Vereines Sozialdemokratische Kunststelle*, 4/2 (October 1929), 41–3.

¹² Arnold Schoenberg, 'My Evolution' [1949], in *Style and Idea: Selected Writings*, ed. Leonard Stein, trans. Leo Black (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), p. 80.

¹³ David Josef Bach, 'Max Kalbeck zur Erinnerung', *Der Merker*, 12/10 (15 [May] 1921), 228–31.

through the facts of the art form . . . The monopoly of art must come to an end. It is possible to begin this work with music.¹⁴

As the jewel of the Social Democratic enterprise, the Viennese Workers' Symphony Orchestra Concerts (29 December 1905 to 11 February 1934) amounted to more than an attempt to make classical music accessible to the proletariat at cheaper prices than the public of the Vienna Philharmonic enjoyed. However, from the start, there was an agenda – whether political or social – behind bringing workers into the concert hall. The new journal published by the Social Democratic arts office opened its first issue with the longtime parliament member Anton Hölzl's avowal that 'listening to a beautiful concert, one has a true and genuine joy in life (*Lebensfreude*), whereas from drink one gets merely a poor surrogate'.¹⁵

The idea for a concert series dedicated to Viennese workers, according to D. J. Bach, originated in a centenary commemoration of Friedrich Schiller which he mounted with Victor Adler on 8 May 1905. Curiously, they decided that the musical repertoire should replicate the official state programme from earlier that day. To open, the Prelude to *Die Meistersinger* represented Wagner the revolutionary. Alexander Zemlinsky conducted the Volksoper orchestra.¹⁶ The quality was suboptimal, Bach conceded in his review, but the performance nonetheless 'unleashed a primitive power in the masses of uncorrupted but sensitive audience members'.¹⁷ The official homage to Schiller came from a festive hymn (*Festhymne*) written by Ferdinand von Saar and set to music by Josef Reiter; two workers' choruses performed. Overall, in the judgement of Bach, Zemlinsky achieved something 'truly exceptional . . . The workers' endless applause had affirmed the belief of many party leaders that a deep desire for true art resided in the masses of the people'.¹⁸

The Schiller commemoration concluded with a performance of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. Its success became a call for programming more challenging music for the Viennese workers:

For the first time the Viennese working class was able to hear the enormous work spanning all emotions: and immediately they were pulled from their

¹⁴ David Josef Bach, 'Fünfundzwanzig Jahre', 41.

¹⁵ Anton Hölzl, 'Ich hab' kein Geld!' *Kunst und Volk*, 1/1 (1926), 1.

¹⁶ Before Alexander Zemlinsky's appointment to the Volksoper, Wagner had not been in the repertoire of that opera house. Quite possibly the recentness of his appointment – four months earlier – or the repertoire or even the conditions are what led to some perceived weaknesses in the performance.

¹⁷ David Josef Bach, 'Symphoniekonzerte der Wiener Arbeiterschaft', *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (12 December 1905), 7–8; quoted in Jonathan Kochler, "'Soul is but Harmony": David Josef Bach and the Workers' Symphony Concert Association, 1905–1918', *Austrian History Yearbook*, 39 (2008), 78.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

seats by the power of their comprehension and impressionability. There was no end to the rejoicing . . . One couldn't suppress the wish that next year the workers' potential for enjoyment should be put to test: among all these wishes, in the background, is Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Have courage!¹⁹

As a new music critic for the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, Bach did not accept the traditional tasks of assessing the performance and analysing the music. Two months into the job, reviewing Mahler's Third Symphony within the Workers' Symphony Concerts in December 1904, Bach wrote chiefly about Beethoven's role in the Social Democratic agenda; Mahler won praise insofar as he was like Beethoven. Moreover, the artistic achievement was explained in broad, non-technical terms: 'Beethoven alone among all composers expressed an imminently deep consciousness that spoke with all comprehensibility'.²⁰ The goal of arts appreciation was for Bach chiefly political not aesthetic: 'The role of Social Democracy was to create a lived experience that could uncover the creativity dormant within each worker. The souls of such titans as Beethoven and Wagner exemplified the potential hidden in each individual.'²¹

In general, reportage gave way to brash claims of success in the pages of the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*. On 18 April 1926, the Workers' Symphony Concerts celebrated its 200th performance in full splendour, with Anton Webern conducting Mahler's Eighth Symphony. The *Arbeiter-Zeitung* gauged the success not by the applause, or any other seemingly objective measure, but speculated that 'it is a wholly personal success of Dr Bach to have brought his flock so far that they could follow this most deep and most sublime work of modern symphonic spirit with devotion and profound emotion'.²² Such speculation about listener reaction did not however, surface in the liberal press.

On the day of the performance, the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* announced the event on its front page, in an article subtitled, '200 Worker-Symphony Concerts in a Cultural Jubilee of the Viennese Proletariat'. (The review of that initial performance, a mere paragraph, was buried on page 3 the following day.) The paper claimed that 'the number of Workers' Symphony Concerts has increased' because 'the workers' movement has grown larger and more powerful, and the worker has become more free economically and more

¹⁹ 'Die Schiller-Feier der Wiener Arbeiterschaft', *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (9 May 1905); citation from Koehler, "'Soul is but Harmony'", 76.

²⁰ David Josef Bach, 'Mahlers Dritte', *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (20 December 1904), 1-2; discussed in Koehler, "'Soul is but Harmony'", 73-4.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (23 April 1926); citation from Johann Wilhelm Seidl, *Musik und Austromarxismus: zur Musikrezeption der österreichischen Arbeiterbewegung im späten Kaiserreich und in der Ersten Republik* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1989), p. 159.

developed culturally'.²³ In point of fact, the number of concerts per season remained stable from the first season after the First World War until the article was published in April 1926: eighteen in 1919/20; thirteen in 1920/21; fifteen in 1921/22; twenty-one in 1922/23; seventeen in 1923/24; fifteen in 1924/25; and sixteen in 1925/26. Initially (1905/06 to 1909/10), there were three to five performances per year; for a period of time the numbers rose, with seven to nine per year (1910/11 to 1913/14); then there was a fall to one to five per year during the First World War (1915/16 to 1918/19).²⁴

Inflated reports of attendance or insupportable arguments about impact, whether cosy anecdotes or rank speculation, were the bread and butter of the Socialist arts organ, *Kunst und Volk*, not just the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*. The motivation was not propaganda alone. By drawing reminiscences (necessarily inaccurate) into the genre of music journalism, the editors could validate the workers' movement by giving it historical roots. The politician August Forstner, who was known as *Der Kutscher* (the coachman) in Parliament, was invited to reminisce about the first Workers' Symphony Concert, for which the transport workers had been given a block of fifty seats. Despite the stench of sweat and horses – the men had no time to bathe or change before the concert – he reported that 'During the concert itself, our workers paid close attention to the programme, and one could see them at some points become noticeably agitated, so much did the music affect them.'²⁵ Can one truly observe musical effect, and in such a way as to generalise about fifty individuals? Or was the purpose of Forstner's article to compare the length of the pre-war work day with the shorter eight-hour days of October 1928, which allowed workers time to prepare suitably for a concert?

This early generation of socialist music critics was idealistic, hewing to the idea of music as edification, not merely entertainment. D. J. Bach justified his choice of absolute music for the Viennese Workers' Symphony Concerts because appreciation was *sui generis*. By contrast, he believed, proletarian listeners lacked the level and kind of education to understand the historical context necessary for programme music.²⁶ In reality, the Viennese Workers' Symphony Concerts, under his stewardship, featured numerous

²³ *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (18 April 1926); quoted in Seidl, *Musik und Austromarxismus*, pp. 157–8.

²⁴ These numbers are drawn from the programme listings in Seidl, *Musik und Austromarxismus*, pp. 178–210.

²⁵ August Forstner, 'Die Transportarbeiter im ersten Arbeiter-Sinfoniekonzert', *Kunst und Volk*, 3 (1928/29), 1–4. Koehler identifies Forstner as a 'transport worker', without citing the irony that this was merely his nickname (*Kutscher*) in Parliament, where he served for many years (Koehler, "'Soul is but Harmony'", p. 79).

²⁶ David Josef Bach, 'Die Kunststelle', *Kunst und Volk: Eine Festgabe der Kunststelle zur 1000. Theateraufführung*, ed. David Josef Bach (Vienna: Verlag Leopold Heidrich, 1923), pp. 116–17; quoted from Seidl, *Musik und Austromarxismus*, p. 139.

programmatic works. At the time of his article, the series had premieres or first performances of Paul Graener's *Pan* and Rudolf Bella's symphonic poem *Herbst*, as well as featuring numerous other programmatic works, including Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht* and Alfredo Casella's rhapsody *Italia*. Nor did these interests subside. After Bach's essay, the Viennese Workers' Symphony Concerts went on to premiere *Arkadia* by R. Stimmer; Julius Toldi's orchestral variations *Wanderskizzen*, on a theme from Bartók's *Romanian Folk Dances*, followed over the next few years. Other performances of programme music following Bach's 1923 article included Stravinsky's *Pulcinella Suite*, Honegger's symphonic poem *Le Chant de Nigamon* and Strauss's *Also sprach Zarathustra*.

The initial agenda of the Social Democrats, giving workers access to art music, became more specific, focusing on music and the kind of music appreciation that would bring about change. Bach published his call to action in September 1927, in reference to the 1927–28 season, but formulated his goals with respect to art in general. 'True art is always *revolutionary*', he professed, adding that the subject need not refer to revolution.²⁷ Likewise, new art, Bach continued, is not art that was recently completed, but rather art which 'is "new" in its content'.²⁸ Bach hoped that, at some point, artists would embrace socialism as their goal, but his immediate concern was improving the appreciation of art ('we want to learn to understand and value what is new and alien in art'). The necessary 'education' had to be self-directed and not imposed by the state, although the Social Democratic arts office owed its existence, Bach made clear, to the fact that 'we do not consider art a luxury but rather a necessary achievement of society'.²⁹

In music criticism the politicisation under Social Democracy was more explicit than, on the face of it, under National Socialism. Paul A. Pisk, writing in 1929, took on the subject of 'New Music for New People'. He claimed that 'many important modern composers are Social Democrats' because 'in the working class, and only in the working class, resides the will to a new musical culture'.³⁰ Yet he immediately revealed that this is an aspiration more than a fact:

That is of course not yet seen everywhere. Before the revolution, the proletariat still largely lacks the possibility to take up and rework the cultural goods of past epochs, without which it is impossible to build further and rework. They largely lack the ability to position themselves critically toward them.³¹

²⁷ David Josef Bach, 'Programm für das Jahr 1927–28', *Kunst und Volk*, 2/6 (September 1927), 1–3.

²⁸ *Ibid.* ²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Paul Amadeus Pisk, 'Neue Musik dem neuen Menschen', *Kunst und Volk*, 4/1 (September 1929), 8.

³¹ *Ibid.*

This work, he believed, will still take a few decades.

However well-intentioned their enthusiastic reports, lax journalistic standards in the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, and, later *Kunst und Volk*, committed music criticism to the political sphere. Another area of advocacy through music emerged in the Jewish community press. Heinrich Berl, best known for writing the first philo-Semitic book on music, came from humble intellectual stock and was employed chiefly as a cultural manager, variously directing a lecture series and editing a book series. He wrote music articles for Jewish cultural journals, and yet, despite his specialisation, only once was he invited to contribute to a music journal.³² In a telling rebuke, Arno Nadel, who was the pre-eminent authority on Jewish sacred music, denied that in Western art music there was an identifiable so-called Jewish character. Attuned to his audience (the Zionist readers of Martin Buber's *Der Jude*), Nadel proclaimed great potential of Jews in music in the future but did not concur with how Berl typecast the style and aesthetics of Jewish composers.³³

Politicisation and Accommodations under National Socialism

The power base of music criticism began to erode in the 1920s on several fronts. Arnold Schoenberg's Society for Private Musical Performances, active from February 1919 to December 1921, excluded critics from its weekly performances. One of the satirical issues published by the *Musikblätter des Abbruch* staff, a publication otherwise considered the organ of Viennese modernism, poked fun at the biases and venality of Viennese music critics.³⁴ An underlying question that drove the anxiety and the commitment of writers on the Left and the Right was whether art music – both traditional and contemporary – still influenced society at large, as was presumed to have occurred in the past. Music critics had to argue for the continuation of the art form itself in a world where the niceties of aesthetics could pale in importance.

The Left and the Right both stressed that the inspiration and meaning of the artwork came from the community not the individual. The divergence in the two ideologies, Socialism and National Socialism, came in the status of the composer. Whereas Nazi aesthetic precepts were vague and inconsistent

³² Heinrich Berl, *Das Judentum in der Musik* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1926). See Karen Painter, 'Polyphony and Racial Identity: Schoenberg, Heinrich Berl, and Richard Eichenauer', *Music and Politics*, 5/2 (2011), doi:10.3998/mp.9460447.0005.203.

³³ Arno Nadel, 'Jüdische Musik', *Der Jude*, 7/4 (April 1923), 223–36.

³⁴ *Musikblätter des Abbruch* (1925), 21; cited in Hartmut Krones, 'Humor als Waffe der Wiener Moderne: Die Musikblätter des "Abbruch" (1924 und 1925)', *Musik/Revolution: Festschrift für Georg Knepler zum 90. Geburtstag* (Hamburg: Bockel, 1997), vol. 11, p. 203.

(other than the need for art to be *völkisch* and accessible), David Josef Bach left no doubt that the artist is subordinated to this public: 'The artist stands within the community; he is nothing to speak of apart from it, just as art itself developed only within a community. The artist only expresses what society thinks and feels at the deepest level; he is its mouthpiece.'³⁵ Ideologies on the Left and the Right also shared a dislike of analysis and objective criticism. Bach conceded that the role of the artist's individuality in the creative process poses difficulties for critics and the public. The solution Bach proposed was that 'contemplation' (*Betrachtung*) would help the critic understand connections between different works by the same artist and understand connections between an artist and his generation.³⁶ This very same concept, *Betrachtung*, prevailed under National Socialism as a surrogate when Goebbels's banned arts criticism.

The dismantling of Germany's vast network of newspapers counts as Goebbels's first aggression against the state. Ironically, the indirect manner of censorship – eliminating authors rather than prescribing content, at least regarding music – quelled the enthusiasm of Nazi supporters as well. One of the most virulent right-wing critics, Paul Zschorlich, retired early and left Berlin for the Bavarian countryside, where he turned to composition.³⁷ The circumstances surrounding his departure from the *Deutsche Zeitung* in 1935 or 1936 are unclear, but certainly the Nazi echelons had little interest in rancorous criticism by that point. To his peer Walter Abendroth, it was telling that Zschorlich would withdraw at age fifty-nine.

Ostensibly honouring Zschorlich in an article title that would raise no eyebrows ('An Example of German Criticism: Paul Zschorlich on his Sixtieth Birthday'), Walter Abendroth launched into a justification for music criticism.³⁸ His argument was twofold: on professional grounds and on cultural-political grounds. First, to paraphrase, so long as there is public appreciation of the arts, judgement must be empirically grounded; music critics show the weaknesses of the composition as well as helping listeners to correct their impression and to understand better. His point is unremarkable, except for that fact that Abendroth was a hard-line nationalist and anti-Semite writing in Nazi Germany, and Goebbels would, months later, overturn his comments on the Volk. Indeed, Abendroth's defence of music criticism all but dismissed the

³⁵ David Josef Bach, 'Sozialismus und Kunst', *Kunst und Volk*, 5/5 (July 1931), 92. ³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Paul Schwerts, [Personal-Nachrichten], *Allgemeine Musikzeitung*, 63 (1936), 254; I am grateful to Lee Rothfarb for providing a copy.

³⁸ Walter Abendroth, 'Ein Beispiel deutschen Kritikertums: Paul Zschorlich zum 60. Geburtstag am 8. April 1936', *Zeitschrift für Musik*, 103/5 (May 1936), 589.

‘public, which claps at what it likes and flees from what it does not like’, referring to ‘the taste of the masses’.³⁹

Most striking is Abendroth’s audacity in stating the obvious, namely that a fascist state has no need for music criticism. In his words, ‘after an authoritative state has definitively laid down the relevant cultural-political guidelines and taken over monitoring their compliance, deploying all available means of power’, then the music critic’s ‘cultural-political responsibility would seem entirely superfluous’.⁴⁰ Abendroth protests that any professional would heartily disagree, and yet the explanation of what a music critic *should* undertake is, in fact, excessively vague. Predictably, it turns on the ‘national cultural will’. But even here, the job is not reduced to a clear political aim: the critic’s goals are the ‘clarification, explanation, assertion, and confirmation’ of the ‘main ideas [i.e. the “national cultural will”]’.⁴¹

Karl Grunsky is a fascinating case of a figure who grew into his role as protector of the right-wing nationalism in music criticism. When Grunsky completed a doctorate in philosophy in 1895 (with a focus on aesthetics, and his dissertation on rhyme), he had no job prospects in academia. A minister’s son, Grunsky became editor of *Neues Leben*, a new journal on self-improvement that aimed for ‘all those who strive for a free and natural outlook’.⁴² (Beethoven was the subject of his own contribution). It flopped within months, but as a competent pianist, Grunsky landed a position as music critic at the *Schwäbischer Merkur*, the leading daily in Stuttgart, where he remained for thirteen years. By 1908, Grunsky had gained sufficient stature from recent book publications that he did not need the income from a regular position. Heinrich Schenker, that same year, referred to Grunsky as ‘a very well-known writer on music and reviewer’.⁴³

As with so many Germans, the First World War proved decisive in spawning an outspoken anti-Semitism and hard-line nationalism in Grunsky’s writings. His notoriety came from positioning music in the right-wing pantheon early on, although all in minor publications. *Richard Wagner und die Juden*, from 1920, was the book that would win him the most attention in Nazi Germany. It was published with a projected series that examined major German figures in the context of anti-Semitism (‘Deutschlands führende Männer und das Judentum’). A new anti-Semitic press, Deutscher Volksverlag, started the series, but only four volumes appeared in 1920–22 (Schopenhauer, Wagner, Luther and Hebbel), and then nothing until a final

³⁹ Ibid. ⁴⁰ Ibid. ⁴¹ Ibid. ⁴² *Hygieia* 8 (A. Zimmer, 1895), 323.

⁴³ Heinrich Schenker, Letter to Emil Hertzka [Universal Edition] (19 August 1908), available at www.schenkerdocumentsonline.org.

volume in 1931, on Baron vom Stein, a crucial figure in the unification of Germany.

Grunsky, for his part, pursued numerous ties to political publications. He organised a Bruckner festival for the Stuttgart branch of the anti-Semitic Bayreuther Bund (5–10 October 1921). His activities extended beyond music; he became an official speaker for the Württemberg-Hohenzollern Gau in 1928 or 1929 and apparently joined the Nazi Party in 1930.⁴⁴ That same year, Grunsky became music critic at a Party newspaper that was established in Stuttgart (*NS-Kurier*). And yet what he published did not meet the former standards of the profession. His articles for the national Nazi Party newspaper, *Völkischer Beobachter*, or the Cologne *Westdeutscher Beobachter* were biographical in nature, usually prompted by a composer birthday.

As before, when the National Socialists came to power, Grunsky staked out a position early on, working with a new local press, Erhard Walter's Verlag für nationalsozialistisches Schrifttum. In 1933, Grunsky published a series (*Der Aufschwung*) that celebrated the regime and its focus on music. The sequence of volumes is unclear: either *Der Kampf um deutsche Musik* (released in June 1933) or *Warum Hitler?* appeared first; two volumes followed, also in 1933 (*Bekenntnisse Luthers zur Judenfrage* and *Lessing und Herder als Wegbereiter Richard Wagners*) and then the series ended. *Der Kampf um deutsche Musik* had standing as the first book-length music history under National Socialism, and yet, despite its grandiose structure of a twenty-chapter book, had little meat (the text itself was seventy-three pages). Shortly after the book appeared, an academic from the eastern outskirts of Prussia wrote to local Nazi officials in Stuttgart attacking the book as 'anti-National Socialist' and noting that its author was sixty-two years old. In turn, Grunsky had a well-connected friend write to the Cultural Minister Hans Hinkel to intervene and supply guidelines for the organisation that monitored German cultural life (Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur).⁴⁵ The internecine battles did not end, but it is clear Grunsky's journalistic efforts had no sustained impact. The director of the Richard-Wagner-Forschungsstätte in Bayreuth proposed Grunsky for the Goethe Medal on the occasion of his seventieth birthday. The matter was assigned to a Propaganda Ministry staff-person who advised that Grunsky be honoured but not with the Goethe Medal. His evaluation did not mention any

⁴⁴ According to Fred Prieberg, Grunsky's name is missing from the central records of the Nazi Party; the 1930 date for joining the Party was listed at the Reich Chamber of Music; Fred K. Prieberg, *Handbuch Deutsche Musiker 1933–45*, 2nd ed. (Auprès de Zombry: Fred K. Prieberg, 2009), pp. 2720–2. It is possible that Grunsky lacked the family documentation to apply for membership.

⁴⁵ Karl Hasse, Letter to Hans Hinkel, Staatskommissar, Ministry of Culture, Berlin (17 June 1933); excerpted in Joseph Wulf, *Musik im Dritten Reich: Eine Dokumentation* (Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein, 1983), pp. 65–6.

of Grunsky's political publications by name ('numerous cultural-political tasks') but instead recounted Grunsky's Liszt and Bruckner biographies, his multi-volume music history and his contributions to the *Bayreuther Blätter* (a telling absence in this list is Grunsky's musical aesthetics from 1907). By this point, there was no value gained from identifying Grunsky as a music critic; rather, he was named a 'musicologist and cultural-political writer'.⁴⁶ Goebbels went even further, in his birthday wishes to Grunsky, thanking him for his service 'to German musicology'.⁴⁷ One of the most prolific right-wing music critics went quietly into the night.

* * *

The vigorous response over Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler* Symphony in 1934 showed – or attempted to show – that music criticism mattered. But the inconsistency along political lines was alarming.⁴⁸ Three years later, at the premiere of Orff's *Carmina Burana* in June 1937, there was less engagement with the process of aesthetic judgement. Rather, most critics described the music enthusiastically, drawing on political terms at will. The celebration of Orff as a composer for the new Germany suggested that after a half century of a vigorous critical tradition, the practitioners, Left as well as Right early on and through Weimar, could not resolve where their higher obligation lay – to a set of aesthetic criteria, or to the community of listeners as defined by non-aesthetic, indeed political criteria. If criticism was an exercise in aesthetic judgement, then one might defend modernism (or denounce it) on its own terms; but if the obligation lay to the community and finally to the Volk, then the exercise must have a different goal, that of proclaiming what music was acceptable and what was not. In this respect, Goebbels's declaration that criticism should be silent, and mere description allowed, was a logical endpoint, since for the National Socialists what the community demanded was clear – an awed endorsement of Party aesthetics. Ultimately the critics who wanted to subordinate aesthetic criteria to the community had mostly themselves to blame for the silence that the regime compelled. When the regime ended, however, the alternative tradition could be revived, as could the music it had usually sought to support.

⁴⁶ Personnel Director, Propaganda Ministry, to the Propaganda Minister (3 March 1941), Bundesarchiv Berlin, Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda (R 55/96), sheets 498, 499; quoted in Prieberg, *Handbuch*, p. 2721.

⁴⁷ Goebbels, Letter to Grunsky (3 March 3 1941), Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda (R 55/96), sheet 500. According to Prieberg, Goebbels's honouring of Grunsky was not made public. Prieberg, *Handbuch*, p. 2469.

⁴⁸ For more on this, see Karen Painter, 'Symphonic Ambitions, Operatic Redemption: *Mathis der Maler* and *Palestrina* in the Third Reich', *Musical Quarterly*, 85/1 (2001), 117–66.

Music Criticism in Hungary until the Second World War

LYNN M. HOOKER

There is no Hungarian person, no Hungarian or foreign musician . . . who would not speak about, form an opinion on, or argue over this or that characteristic of Hungarian song or music.

Kornél Ábrányi Sr, *Characteristics of Hungarian Song and Music* (1877)¹

Not much is written in English about the history of Hungarian music criticism. In addition to the language barrier, there is a persistent assumption that Hungarian musicians who succeeded in the international arena had emerged from an ‘underdeveloped’ region due to their own ‘lonely genius’.² The sheer number of Hungarian musicians who have achieved international success – see the composers Liszt, Bartók, Kodály, Lehár and Kálmán; conductors Hans/János Richter, Fritz/Frigyes Reiner, György/Georg Solti and Iván Fischer; and pianists Annie Fischer, Zoltán Kocsis and András Schiff, among many others – defy that assumption. Music criticism illuminates the active scene from which they emerged, and shows how musicians, scholars and critics strove to shape the nation’s sonic image. This chapter acts as an introduction to that criticism through the early twentieth century, sketching the historical context, publication outlets and major personalities, and surveying some of the themes that dominated discourse about music during this period of rapid growth.

Background: Hungarian Culture Emerging from the Shadows

Documents of Hungary’s music culture go back to the medieval period; monastic institutions produced plainchant and polyphony manuscripts, and splendid courts of Hungarian royals imported musicians from France, the

¹ In his *A magyar dal és zene sajátosságai, nyelvi, zöngidomi, harmoniai s műformai szempontból* [The Characteristics of Hungarian Song and Music from the Viewpoint of Language, Tone Profiles, Harmony, and Genre] (Budapest: A Magyar Királyi Egyetemi Nyomda, 1877), pp. 3–4. All translations are by the author unless otherwise noted.

² Judit Frigyesi, *Béla Bartók and Turn-of-the-Century Budapest* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), p. 1.

Low Countries and Italy. Those glorious days faded, though, when Hungary was beset both by the advance of Ottoman forces and by a succession crisis. As Catholic noble families like the Esterházy's sided with the Habsburgs' claim to the Hungarian crown, many of the Protestant nobility, especially in Transylvania, fought to keep the crown in native-born hands. While music and music criticism blossomed in Italy and France in the early 1700s, unrest in Hungary effectively limited investment in both music and writing about music.

Even after the consolidation of Habsburg rule ended armed conflict, development of domestic culture outside aristocratic courts was slow, and foreigners dominated both those courts and the few existing civic cultural institutions. At least until the late eighteenth century, both foreign professionals and most native Hungarian musicians – for example Count Pál Esterházy (1635–1713), who in addition to his military exploits was an accomplished composer – practised a style that was an almost indistinguishable branch of the ‘panromanogermanic mainstream’.³ The acceptance of an international style was in keeping with the Habsburgs' goal of absorbing Hungary into its cultural identity as well as its feudal authority.⁴

The Turkish wars and the conflict with the Habsburgs interrupted the development of print journalism along with the rest of Hungarian culture. Thus, the first Hungarian newspaper, *Mercurius hungaricus*, did not begin publication until 1705 – a hundred years after regularly published newspapers began appearing in Germany – and ceased publication in 1711, shortly after Habsburg rule was fully consolidated.⁵ In addition to strict censorship, the development of print culture beyond the aristocracy was inhibited by widespread illiteracy as well as by the tumult of the times.⁶ In this context the first true periodicals intended for a Hungarian audience, which began in the 1730s, were published in German. They were often near-copies of Viennese

³ See Richard Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically: Historical and Hermeneutical Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 394.

⁴ According to an oft-repeated saying, the Jesuits convinced Leopold I (1640–1705) that Hungary should be rendered ‘miserable, then Catholic, finally German’ (cited in Alice Freifeld, *Nationalism and the Crowd in Liberal Hungary, 1848–1914* (Washington: The Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2000), p. 25).

⁵ Thomas Schroeder, ‘The Origins of the German Press’, in Brendan Dooley and Sabrina A. Baron (eds.), *The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 123; György Kókay, *A magyar sajtó története 1* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1979), p. 46.

⁶ In 1770 fewer than one in four of Hungary's children attended school (I. G. Tóth, ‘Hungarian Culture in the Early Modern Age’, in László Kósa (ed.), *A Cultural History of Hungary*, vol. 1 (Budapest: Corvina, 1999), pp. 206, 222). For comparison, in the north of England in the 1740s, 70 per cent of men and 32 per cent of women were literate enough at least to sign their names to court documents (R. A. Houston, ‘The Development of Literacy: Northern England, 1640–1750’, *Economic History Review*, New Series, 35/2 (May 1982), 204; in Hungary, it was still usual for official documents to be signed with a cross (Tóth, ‘Hungarian Culture’, p. 222).

publications, and what little local news they included focused on society events, church celebrations and natural disasters.⁷

It was only in the 1780s, the period of Joseph II's 'enlightened absolutism', that print culture gradually created a public space for the discussion of Hungarian social and cultural issues. Around the same time, Johann Gottfried Herder famously predicted that the Hungarian language, and by implication the Hungarian people, would disappear into the sea of Germans and Slavs that surrounded them. Herder's prediction became one of the most famous 'examples of foreign hostility, indifference, or callousness' to Hungarian culture, part of the 'recurring nightmare of "national death" (*nemzethalál*)'.⁸ Many Hungarians perceived Habsburg Emperor Joseph II's 1784 mandate that German, rather than Latin, be the official language of his empire to be part of his effort to make Herder's prediction come true. Publications in both Hungarian and German echoed Herder's call to pay respect to 'the language and poetry of every people . . . "with respect to time and place . . . the genius of their nature, their country, their way of life"'.⁹ At the same time, Joseph's relaxation of censorship laws in 1780 allowed for the circulation of publications on topics that had previously been banned, including in the non-official languages of the Empire. As Hungary's self-appointed cultural vanguard (mostly aristocrats) worked to elevate Hungarian culture and to Hungarianise elevated culture, the press began to blossom, quickly distributing ideas about the 'national imagination',¹⁰ beginning with reform of the language and extending through every aspect of society.

The context in which Hungarian elites strove to develop a native culture and free themselves from Imperial influence helps us understand both music and discourse about music in this period. Governmental press restrictions focused the publishing infrastructure, including that for music, in Vienna, and the abundance of Vienna's musical life around the turn of the nineteenth century also exerted a powerful pull. Given Hungary's proximity to the capital, musicians and critics naturally turned to Vienna's publishers and printers. Through the early nineteenth century, Vienna was where most published Hungarian music appeared, from classic-style pieces such as Pál Esterházy's cantatas to dance items in 'Hungarian style' that began to appear in large numbers beginning in 1784. As Catherine Mayes has demonstrated, the fact that these materials were published in Vienna indicates 'not only

⁷ Kókay, *A magyar sajtó története* 1, pp. 54–7.

⁸ Freifeld, *Nationalism and the Crowd in Liberal Hungary*, p. 25.

⁹ Richard Bauman and Charles L. Briggs, *Voices of Modernity: Language Ideologies and the Politics of Inequality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 179, 181, citing Herder.

¹⁰ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised ed. (London and New York: Verso, 1991), p. 30.

[that] the Hungarian music publishing industry was underdeveloped' but also that Hungarian dances were 'suitable for and successful in that city's musical market'.¹¹

The rise of Hungarian dances from rural celebrations of military recruiting to the ballroom and the domestic music market may be attributed in part to occasional performances of Gypsy bands in Vienna and Pressburg at court events, generally sponsored by Hungarian nobles, in the late eighteenth century.¹² The published dances smoothed out most of the irregularities observers reported in Gypsy performances, whether at court or in 'folk' settings, so that the results left 'nothing [to] suggest . . . that [they are] anything other than typical Viennese Hausmusik from the turn of the nineteenth century'.¹³ German-language reports about Gypsies' own performances, however, focused on distinguishing elements. Such reports, like those of travellers to Africa and the Americas (written by 'Western' travellers to what Enlightenment authors were then defining as 'Eastern Europe') 'ventured with their eyes and ears attuned to the sights and sounds of difference'.¹⁴ The anonymous article 'Über die Nationaltänze der Ungarn' in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* in 1800, for example, not only describes specific musical elements such as the preference for the minor mode and the modulations through distantly related keys – with the musicians 'snak[ing] their way wonderfully through nothing but semitones' – but also references more nebulous characteristics like their 'proud', 'heroic' and 'fiery' temperament.¹⁵ That is, the author stresses elements, musical and otherwise, that position the Hungarian or Gypsy (with little distinction made between the two) as an exotic Other.

As the Hungarian-language press began to develop around this same time, it had a more 'civilised' Hungary in mind, focusing on 'high' art and institutional development. The primary language of Pest-Buda (the dominant city in the historical Hungarian crown lands by the turn of the eighteenth century) was

¹¹ Catherine Mayes, 'Reconsidering an Early Exoticism: Viennese Adaptations of Hungarian-Gypsy Music Around 1800', *Eighteenth-Century Music*, 6/2 (September 2009), 168.

¹² See Csaba Szijjártó, *A cigány útra ment: Cigányzenekaraink, valamint népzenei és néptáncárságok külföldjárása a kezdetektől a kiegyezésig (Korabeli sajtódokumentumok alapján)* (Budapest: Masszi Kiadó, 2002), pp. 13–14. These dances were generally labelled simply 'Hungarian (or Gypsy) dance', but they were associated with the men's recruiting dances known as *verbunkos* (a Hungarianisation of the German *Werbung*).

¹³ Mayes, 'Reconsidering an Early Exoticism', 162.

¹⁴ Kevin C. Karnes, 'Inventing Eastern Europe in the Ear of the Enlightenment', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 71 (2018), 78.

¹⁵ Anon. [Heinrich Klein], 'Über die Nationaltänze der Ungarn', *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, 2/35 (28 May 1800), cols. 609–16; quoted citations in Csilla Pethő, 'Spieln Zigeuner Lustig Liedl: A magyar szórakoztató zene es a cigányzenészek külföldi recepciója a 19. században', *Magyar zene*, 40/1 (2002), 74–5; and Mayes, 'Reconsidering an Early Exoticism', 162, 166.

German, as it was for many other towns in the Habsburg Empire.¹⁶ ‘National activists ... despaired that performances in Buda-Pest’s theatres were almost exclusively in German’; it was a great step forward when a Hungarian-language theatre company ventured to present ‘dramas, tragedies, and musicals on the towns’ stages’ beginning in 1790, but that company shut down in 1796 due to financial difficulties.¹⁷ During the so-called Reform Era (1825–48), writers and politicians agitated for the expansion of Hungarian public life and the use of Hungarian. In addition to the challenges of negotiation with Imperial censors, musicians struggled to settle on Hungarian-language terms for certain technical concepts; a Hungarian-language encyclopedia published in 1831–2 proposed certain terms, but those terms were not considered acceptable enough to enter common use.¹⁸ Hungary’s few music critics took part in this process by publishing occasional commentary on various musical issues, from chronicles of day-to-day activities (particularly theatrical and operatic performances, whether in Hungarian or other languages) to essays on the development of Hungarian music and institutions. These reports ‘desire at once to discover and safeguard [that which] propels the scholars and artists who would create, or bring to the surface, elements of a characteristic national culture’.¹⁹

The case of the Pestbudai Hangászegyesület (Pest-Buda Music Society), one of the first music societies in the country, shows how the press took a role in accelerating the process of Hungarianisation while still seeking mastery of international styles and trends. The Society began its operations bilingually, with the dual goals of developing a public that could perform and appreciate the works of the ‘great German composers’ on the one hand, and supporting the cultivation of Hungarian popular elements (folk songs and dances like the *csárdás*) and Hungarian concert composers on the other. At the height of the Reform Era, one writer stated that the Society’s concerts ‘were of such a perfect German physiognomy that it practically hurts the Magyar’s heart’; the organisation decided in 1844 to ‘conduct its business in Hungarian alone’.²⁰

Gábor Mátray (1797–1875), the ‘father of Hungarian musicology’,²¹ stood at the crux of these events. Also in 1837, he wrote and conducted a choral

¹⁶ Buda, Pest, and Óbuda (Ancient Buda) already functioned as one cultural and economic agglomeration by this time, but they were separate entities until their unification into Budapest in 1873. The hyphen in Pest-Buda marks the pre-unification legal independence of those constituent parts.

¹⁷ Robert Nemes, *The Once and Future Budapest* (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2005), p. 31.

¹⁸ Szabolcs Molnár, ‘“Mesterszónak okos formálása”’: Zenei terminológia, vita és karaktergyilkosság, 1831–1832’, *Magyar zene*, 53/3 (2015), 263–76.

¹⁹ Marianne Pándi, *Száz esztendő magyar zenekritikája* [100 years of Hungarian Music Criticism] (Budapest: Zeneműkiadó, 1967), p. 11.

²⁰ Nemes, *The Once and Future Budapest*, pp. 99–100.

²¹ Ferenc Bónis, ‘Mátray, Gábor’, *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, available at www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed 15 June 2015). Mátray earned the title ‘father of Hungarian musicology’ through accomplishments that included both important edited collections of Hungarian folk

work for the opening performance of the Hungarian National Theatre, and he was the notary of the Pest-Buda Music Society from 1837 and the founding director of its Music School from 1840, including during the Society's language-change drama. Most relevant for this article, in 1833 he founded two partnered magazines (published and bound together), *Regélő* [Minstrel] and *Honművész* [Native Artist], the first of several so-called literary fashion magazines that emerged in Reform-Era Hungary. *Regélő* and *Honművész* promised an editorial approach from a Hungarian point of view, with 'pieces [that are] interesting to those closer to our dear homeland'.²² The initial call for subscribers, from which this quotation is taken, further explains that *Regélő* would focus on literary content (both fiction and non-fiction) while *Honművész* would publish pieces '*dealing with art of our homeland*' (italics in original), from visual arts old and new to architecture to trends in fashion to 'reports of plays ... of concerts ... new works of music and other fine arts'. This was the first Hungarian press outlet that regularly published theatre and concert reviews.²³

Literary fashion magazines in general cast their coverage well beyond concert music and high art more generally. Such publications viewed ballroom dance in Hungarian style and Hungarian popular song (the early *magyar nótá*) as an important facet of the new Hungarian culture; they enthused over new csárdáses by Márk Rózsavölgyi, Pest-Buda's leading composer of dance music, even while waltzes by Viennese composers such as Josef Lanner and Johann Strauss Sr continued to be favoured at society balls.²⁴ In Mátray's *Honművész*, however, high art, which usually excluded dance music, was at the centre of the conversation about national culture. The magazine's coverage of Liszt is a good illustration. When *Honművész* reported on Liszt's Parisian exploits in 1833 and 1834, it applauded his virtuosity and cultured sensibility but lamented his 'affectation' and apparent alienation from his homeland.²⁵ In the aftermath of the devastating 1838 flood of Pest, Liszt made known his

songs and historical songs and some of the first scholarly articles in Hungarian about Hungarian music, including those discussed later in this essay (see also bibliography in idem).

²² Kókay, *A magyar sajtó története* 1, p. 447.

²³ Péter Várnai, 'Egy magyar muzsikus a reformkorban: Mátray Gábor élete és működése a szabadságharcig' [A Hungarian Musician in the Reform Era], in Bence Szabolcsi and Dénes Bartha (eds.), *Zenetudományi tanulmányok 11* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1954), p. 554. Mátray began his career as Gábor Róthkrepf but Hungarianised his family name in 1837. See also Péter Várnai, 'Mátray Gábor élete és munkássága a szabadságharctól haláláig' [Gábor Mátray's Life and Work from the War of Independence to His Death], in Bence Szabolcsi and Dénes Bartha (eds.), *Zenetudományi tanulmányok 1v* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1955); and Zoltán Bencé, 'Az újságíró és könyvtáros Mátray Gábor', unpublished MA thesis, University of Szeged (2002).

²⁴ Nemes, *The Once and Future Budapest*, pp. 98–101. See also Nemes, 'The Politics of the Dance Floor: Civil Society and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Hungary', *Slavic Review*, 60/4 (2001), 802–23.

²⁵ See Lynn M. Hooker, *Redefining Hungarian Music from Liszt to Bartók* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 54–5.

reawakened commitment to Hungary, and *Honművész* reported the entire story of his subsequent Hungarian tour including the anticipation generated by the invitation extended in 1838 by Count Leó Festetics, the president of the Pest-Buda Music Society, the pomp surrounding his actual arrival in December 1839 and reviews of the individual concerts.²⁶ But given that most of the ‘serious’ music performed in Hungary necessarily came from abroad, music critics at *Honművész* and other publications covered more than just Hungarian composers; they also discussed the relative roles in Hungarian musical life of different foreign repertoires, which comprised the bulk of the music performed in the country.

The Advent of Specialised Music Journalism in Hungary

The Revolution of 1848 is an inescapable watershed in nineteenth-century Hungarian history. After the fall of the revolutionary government in 1849, Austrian officials cracked down on the Hungarian press, particularly publications in the Hungarian language. According to Nemes, they

closed dozens of newspapers, replaced editors, reintroduced stringent censorship . . . When Imre Vahot, the former editor of [Reform Era literary fashion magazine] *Pesti Divatlap*, wanted to start a new literary magazine, a police official told him that permission would come immediately if he agreed to publish his journal in German; otherwise, it would be impossible.²⁷

Still, Hungarian print culture, including music journalism, continued to expand after the fall of the Revolution. In an era when the idea of the nation held sway in international discourse, even a ‘reliable political conservative’ like Count Emil Desewffy, who was installed as President of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences under the strict post-Revolutionary government, ‘could also speak approvingly of the “Magyarization of higher culture” and the “intellectual battles that aim to sustain our nationality”’.²⁸ By the end of the 1850s in Pest, despite pressure from Vienna, there were almost three times as many periodicals being published in Hungarian as in German.²⁹

Articles on musical topics appeared in variety of outlets: shorter pieces in daily or weekly newspapers, and longer and more scholarly pieces published

²⁶ See Várnai, ‘Egy magyar muzsikus a reformkorban’, p. 254. On Festetics’ invitation, see Franz von Schober, *Briefe über F. Liszts Aufenthalt in Ungarn* (Berlin: Schlesinger, 1843), p. 27; for more on Liszt’s tour and Hungarian coverage of it, see Dezső Legány, ‘Liszt in Hungary, 1820–1846’, in Michael Saffle (ed.), *Liszt and His World: Proceedings of the International Liszt Conference Held at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 20–23 May 1993* (Stuyvesant: Pendragon Press, 1998); and Dana Gooley, *The Virtuoso Liszt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 117–55.

²⁷ Nemes, *The Once and Future Budapest*, p. 155. ²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 159. ²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

either as pamphlets or, very occasionally, in general scholarly journals like *Új magyar múzeum* (New Hungarian Museum, 1850–60) and *Budapesti szemle* (Budapest journal, 1857–1944). These led in the 1850s to ‘an ever-growing clamour for the establishment of a Hungarian music periodical’ by the daily newspapers.³⁰ *Zenészeti lapok* [Music Pages], first published in 1860, was the answer to this call.

Unlike most other Hungarian periodicals of the time, *Zenészeti lapok* was owned by its founding editor Kornél Ábrányi, Sr (1822–1903), a wealthy landowner and Paris- and Vienna-educated pianist, composer and critic. Ábrányi covered the cost of printing *Zenészeti lapok* himself rather than acting as the employee of the printer, an arrangement that ‘brought about a relative intellectual independence for the journal, as well as a chance for a unified direction’.³¹ His colleagues in this endeavour were Hungary’s ‘most outstanding resident musical experts of the time’, including music publisher Gyula Rózsavölgyi (1822–61), musicologists István Bartalus (1821–99) and Gusztáv Szénfy (1819–75), and especially composer Mihály Mosonyi (1815–70).³² The journal developed Hungarian-language musical terminology, promoted concert culture, advocated for the development of Hungarian music education and institutions, published original scholarly articles and summarised current German musicological literature in an accessible style. The journal also evangelised for their vision of the Hungarian composer:

The ideal presented was that of a composer who commanded the highest level of musical technique and who, by using the Hungarian folk song and the *verbunkos* [recruiting dance] as his sources, could create an Hungarian national style of art music of the same calibre as those of the German, French and Italian national schools.³³

Hints of this ideal already appear in some reviews of the 1840 premiere production of *Bátori Mária* by composer Ferenc Erkel, the first major venture in creating a Hungarian historical dramatic opera. *Honművész*’s review, in all

³⁰ Katalin Szerző, ‘The Most Important Hungarian Music Periodical of the 19th Century: *Zenészeti lapok* [Musical Papers] (1860–1876)’, *Periodica Musica*, 4 (Spring 1986), 1.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

³² Szerző, ‘Introduction’, in János Kárpáti (ed.), *Zenészeti lapok (1860–1876)* [Index], Répertoire international de la presse musicale (Baltimore: NISC, 2005), pp. x, xii. Mosonyi reviewed scores and significant Hungarian music books, notably including Liszt’s controversial 1859 book *Des bohémiens et des leur musique en Hongrie* (see Hooker, *Redefining Hungarian Music*, p. 84), but he also wrote articles advocating ‘the propagation of musical art, but especially for the growth and development of Hungarian music’ (quoted by Klára Somogyi Gulyásné in ‘... Szükséges a Pest-Budai Zenedének a dolgok élére állani ...’ Mosonyi Mihály cikksorozata a magyar zenei műveltség felemeléséért’ [‘The Pest-Buda Music School should stand at the forefront of things ...’ Mihály Mosonyi’s article series about the elevation of Hungarian musical cultivation], *Magyar zene*, 54/3 (2016), 319.

³³ Szerző, ‘The Most Important Hungarian Music Periodical’, p. 2.

likelihood penned by editor Gábor Mátray himself, considered the work at some length, comparing it to the 'spirit and style of the newer Romantic operas of Meyerbeer, Halévy, Weber, etc'.³⁴ He also evaluated the music (as well as the costumes and sets) of different scenes, and praised the Hungarian character of a drinking song in the second act in particular. The Hungarian-language daily press, however, did not expend much space on the work. Imre Vahot, as the editor of one of *Honművész*'s competitors, attacked Erkel's work not only based on its own merits but because 'if we should allow [the great figures of Hungarian history] to caterwaul in Hungarian opera, the [national] theatre deserves to succumb immediately' – that is, he dismissed the very premise of historical opera as it was rising across Europe.³⁵

Some of Pest's German-language newspapers, following a tradition of criticism already established in Germany and Austria, published lengthier reviews, but there was no outlet that regularly published detailed reviews and articles about music in the Hungarian language until *Zenészeti lapok*. It was instrumental in transforming readers' and critics' expectations so that by the time of Erkel's later premieres, Hungarian music criticism had grown into 'highly professional, clear-sighted evaluations based on a well-developed aesthetic sense', becoming 'more thorough, more detailed and more broad-minded' over the decades.³⁶

Zenészeti lapok's forward-looking aesthetic agenda was evident in its advocacy of Liszt and Wagner, and in its critiques of the repertoire selections of Hungarian musical institutions and their leaders, particularly the National Theatre and Ferenc Erkel, for giving short shrift to Wagner in favour of French and Italian works.³⁷ Once Wagner's works came to be performed in Buda-Pest more frequently – Hungarian-born Wagner disciple Hans/János Richter (1843–1916) was the conductor at the Hungarian National Theatre from 1871 until 1875, when he moved to the Vienna Hofoper – the journal began to express a concern similar to what Erkel had shown earlier, worrying that Wagner's popularity was a symbol of the predominance of German culture that Hungarians needed to overcome. The question of whether the Hungarian scene should favour French or German opera was still alive and well in the 1890s, when the short-lived journal *Zenevilág* (Music World) (1890–91) promoted French opera and attacked Gustav Mahler, then the director of the Hungarian Royal Opera House, for 'German prejudice'.³⁸

³⁴ István Barna, 'Erkel Ferenc első operái az egykorú sajtó tükrében' [Ferenc Erkel's First Operas in the Mirror of the Press of the Time], in Szabolcsi and Bartha (eds.), *Zenetudományi tanulmányok* 11, p. 176.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

³⁶ István Barna, 'Erkel nagy művei és a kritika' [Erkel's Great Works and Criticism], in Szabolcsi and Bartha (eds.), *Zenetudományi tanulmányok* 14, p. 285.

³⁷ Szerző, 'Introduction' to *Zenészeti lapok*, pp. x–xii. ³⁸ Kárpáti, *Zenészeti közlöny*, p. xviii.

Zenészeti lapok's support for Liszt, which (unlike that for Wagner) remained steadfast throughout its fifteen-year run, had more concrete significance than its position on Wagner. Ábrányi 'recognized what Hungarian musical life and the ageing Liszt could gain by forming a close relationship' and he 'therefore seized every opportunity for the *Zenészeti lapok* to propose invitations to Liszt, whether to discuss plans for the Academy of Music, or to celebrate other noteworthy occasions'.³⁹ In this way the journal became one of the chief advocates for the founding of the Academy of Music, which opened in 1875 with Liszt as its first president. Ábrányi became the general secretary for the new Academy, taking responsibility for much of the day-to-day operation of the institution as well as teaching theory, history, aesthetics and Hungarian music in its early years.

The demands of Ábrányi's position at the Academy of Music soon led him to close *Zenészeti lapok*. This decision had been a long time coming. Already in 1868 the Hungarian National Choral Society accepted *Zenészeti lapok* as its own official journal, relieving Ábrányi of the production costs; Ábrányi remained in the position of editor-in-chief, but with the new mission of promoting Hungary's choral movement. This partnership expanded the readership of the journal, but it turned out to be a poor fit as Ábrányi was 'unwilling to compromise': the Choral Society wanted an 'expansion of the scope of choral coverage at the expense of other columns', including 'a disproportionate number of articles ... concerning the internal organizational problems of the choral societies', whereas Ábrányi wanted to continue the specialised articles on aesthetics and musicology that had been key to his conception of the journal.⁴⁰ He reacquired ownership of *Zenészeti lapok* in 1873, but the colleagues with whom he had initially established the journal had either passed away or moved on. As the operations of the new Academy of Music ramped up, Ábrányi was unable to devote sufficient time to the publication of the journal along with his new duties, though he wrote a handful of books on various Hungarian music topics over the next several years. The last issues of *Zenészeti lapok* were published in early 1876.

Between the closure of *Zenészeti lapok* and the Second World War, no single journal assumed its dominant role. Initially there was a dearth of music journals altogether. Three journals, *Zenészeti közlöny* [Musical Journal] (1882), *Zenevilág* [Music World] (1890–91) and *Zeneirodalmi szemle/Művészeti lapok* [Music-Literature Journal/Arts Pages] (1894–6), came and went quickly, none with a run of more than three years.⁴¹ But from the late 1880s on, music

³⁹ Szerző, 'The Most Important Hungarian Music Periodical', p. 4. ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁴¹ János Kárpáti (ed.), *Zenészeti közlöny (1882), Zenevilág (1890–1891), Zeneirodalmi szemle–Művészeti lapok (1894–1896)* [Index], Répertoire international de la presse musicale (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1996).

journals and music journalism in Hungary blossomed, and by 1909 at least ten different music journals were being published, serving a variety of interest groups in Hungary's music world.⁴² Six of these journals were more specialised in their purpose: most of the pages of *Apollo* (1872–81, 1884–1914, 1924ff) and *Zenélő Magyarország* [Music-Making Hungary] (1894–1913) consisted of piano sheet music; *Katholikus egyházi zeneközlöny* [Catholic Church Music Journal] (1894, 1900–18) and *Protestáns zeneközlöny* [Protestant Music Journal] (1906–11) were dedicated to articles on church music; *Magyar cigányzenészek lapja* [Hungarian Gypsy Musicians' Page] (1908–10, 1927) was a trade publication for Roma in the entertainment music industry; and *Magyar dal- és zeneközlöny* [Hungarian Song and Music Journal] (1895–1910), later retitled *Magyar dal* [Hungarian Song] (1910–31), was the post-Ábrányi journal of the National Choral Society. More comprehensive in their approach were *Zeneközlöny* [Music Journal] (1901–17, 1924–5), *A zene* [Music] (1909–14, 1924–31), *Zenelap* [Music Page] (1886–1912) and *Zenevilág* [Music World] (1899–1910, 1912, 1916): they published a mixture of scholarly articles, feuilletons, reviews of concerts and publications, reports on festivals and other notable events, and opinion pieces on current issues in Hungary's musical life.

These comprehensive journals also varied in format and frequency of publication, in the length of their articles and in general aesthetic outlook. *Zeneközlöny* and the newly constituted *Zenevilág*, for instance, were both edited by associates and advocates of Béla Bartók – Dezső Demény (1871–1937) and Pongrácz Kacsóh (1873–1923), respectively – and regularly featured Bartók, Kodály and other associates, such as violist, composer and musicologist Antal Molnár (1890–1983), in news columns and elsewhere. *Zenevilág* and, especially, *Zeneközlöny* featured more modernist topics and authors in the years leading up to the First World War, while *Zenelap* and *A zene* tended to acknowledge modernist expression less and usually minimised the role of forward-looking musicians, led by Bartók, in their news columns.

Journals were not defined only by their relationships to Bartók's circle, however: these more conservative journals may be distinguished according to their relationship to 'national' repertoire as well. *Zenelap* tended to highlight Hungarian composers, events in the Hungarian provinces and populist

⁴² Journal titles are taken from 'Zenei folyóiratok, 1. *Magyarok*' [Music Periodicals 1. *Hungarian*], in Bence Szabolcsi and Aladár Tóth (eds.), *Zenei lexikon*, vol. 2 (Budapest: Győző Andor, 1931), pp. 724–5. Publication dates are also taken from this source; for this reason, no end dates are available for those journals still being published in 1931. The date 1909 was chosen for the sampling because *A zene*, the last of the most important journals that published in the period leading up to the First World War, began in that year. Dozens of additional journals appear in this listing, but they had very short runs.

Hungarian music-making more generally (including the choral movement and operetta), while *A zene* more frequently emphasised ‘high art’ composition and criticism along with canonical German composers. Moreover, authors sometimes contributed to journals on what would seem to be the ‘wrong’ end of this spectrum. Antal Molnár, one of the ‘founders of modern Hungarian musicology’, who ‘as early as 1912 was able to assign Bartók and Kodály to their proper place in music history’, published an important article on folk song in *A zene* in 1913.⁴³ Meanwhile, Dezső Jányosy (1882–1932), an aesthetically more conservative critic whose activity coincided with the start of Molnár’s career, authored an extended piece on ‘The beautiful according to musical aesthetics in music history’ – with an emphasis on the importance of classicism – in *Zeneközlöny*.⁴⁴

Although no single publication assumed a dominant role through the middle of the twentieth century, a handful of writers began to emerge as major voices in Hungarian music criticism and musicology, particularly Aladár Tóth (1898–1968), Bence Szabolcsi (1899–1973) and the aforementioned Antal Molnár. All three were trained as composers; Tóth and Szabolcsi earned doctorates with dissertations on historical musical topics, while Molnár completed his scholarly apprenticeship in the form of folk music research under the guidance of the slightly older Kodály and Bartók. In the interwar period, Tóth emerged as a leading music critic writing for the ‘progressive press’, from general-interest dailies (*Új Nemzedék*, *Pesti Napló*) and weeklies (*Nyugat*) to specialised music periodicals in Hungary (*Zenei szemle*) and abroad (*Melos*, *Musical Courier*, *Revue musicale*). His ‘mission’ was

to cultivate a high-quality, uniquely Hungarian musical life in his nation’s capital ... Tóth’s prescription for reaching this goal assigned the highest priority to the programming of modern Hungarian works, but he also advocated foreign contemporary works along with what he regarded as ‘classics’ – works of Bach, Beethoven, Handel, Haydn, and Mozart.⁴⁵

⁴³ See Péter P. Várnai, ‘Molnár, Antal’, *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, available at www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed 2 September 2015). Molnár’s article ‘A népdalról’ [About Folk Song] appeared in *A zene*, 5/3 (March 1913), 54–7; it is discussed in Hooker, *Redefining Hungarian Music*, pp. 138–9, 238–9.

⁴⁴ Dezső Jányosy’s ‘A zeneszétikai szép a zenetörténelemben’ [The Music-Aesthetically Beautiful in Music History] appeared in *Zeneközlöny*, 7 (1909), 147–50, 159–61, 167–70, 175–6, 183–8, 191–2, 199–204; it is discussed in Hooker, *Redefining Hungarian Music*, pp. 127–8, 138–43ff.

⁴⁵ David E. Schneider, *Bartók, Hungary, and the Renewal of Tradition: Case Studies in the Intersection of Modernity and Nationality* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006), p. 123. Information about publications to which Tóth contributed is found in *ibid.* and in Ferenc Bónis, ‘Tóth, Aladár’, *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, available at www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed 2 September 2015).

Molnár's career was grounded in his forty-year tenure, beginning in 1918, teaching music history, theory and aesthetics at Budapest's Academy of Music; his books, written for readers both within that institution and beyond, acted as the foundation of twentieth-century Hungarian musicology. Like Tóth, Molnár stressed the importance of contemporary Hungarian composers, particularly Bartók and Kodály, while also contributing to public discourse on music history.⁴⁶ Szabolcsi worked primarily as a critic and editor in this period, like Tóth contributing to a variety of publications; he co-edited the journal *Zenei szemle* from 1926 to 1929, and with Tóth co-edited Hungary's first major music dictionary, the two-volume *Zenei lexikon* (1930–1), to which Molnár also contributed.⁴⁷

These three figures also played central roles in Hungary's musical and musicological life in the early state-socialist period. Szabolcsi joined Molnár in teaching music history at the Academy of Music, founded both the Academy of Music's faculty of musicology and the Budapest Bartók Archive, which became the Institute of Musicology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1969, and served as editor of the chief musicology publications, both journals and other items, that came out of Hungary in the 1950s and 1960s. Tóth worked as director of the Hungarian State Opera from 1946 to 1956, rebuilding that institution after the ravages of the war and putting it on the cultural map of Europe.

Ongoing Questions in Hungarian Music Criticism

Much of the scholarship about Hungarian music criticism has focused on responses to major figures in art music, from Liszt and Erkel in the nineteenth century to Bartók and Kodály in the twentieth. Though these personalities were undeniably central to Hungarian musical life, a 'great man'-centred approach to critical discourses misses some of the ongoing themes in the critical discourses to which those artists responded.

The dominant theme from at least the turn of the nineteenth century through the middle of the twentieth century was the nature of 'Hungarianness' in music, and an important subject within that theme was the 'Gypsy question', or the role of Gypsy musicians within Hungarian music culture.⁴⁸ Already in 1810, an anonymous item in the *Allgemeine musikalische*

⁴⁶ See Várnai, 'Molnár, Antal'.

⁴⁷ Ferenc Bónis, 'Szabolcsi, Bence', *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online available at www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed 8 September 2015).

⁴⁸ 'Roma' or 'Romani' are the terms this group uses to identify itself officially, and words like 'Gypsy', 'Zigeuner' and 'cigány' are often considered both incorrect and pejorative. Still, Gypsies in Hungary generally refer to themselves as 'cigány' (Gypsy) even today. Though I try to use 'Roma' and 'Romani' to

Zeitung [AMZ] identified Hungary's 'Lyranten' as Gypsies, and described them as 'artists of nature' (as opposed to being formally trained musicians). This status allowed them to free themselves from 'the rules' and to 'wildly exult' or 'cry, depending on how [their] feelings are moved'.⁴⁹

Not surprisingly, Hungarian authors came to the topic of Hungarian music with a very different point of view than those writing in German. Where *AMZ* correspondents highlighted the perceived exotic characteristics of Hungarian Gypsy musicians and enthused over their otherness, a piece of music criticism from 1791 in Hungarian (but also published in Vienna), *Short Treatises on Music [Rövid értekezések a muzsikáról]* by literary scholar and Hungarian cultural activist Ferenc Verseggy (1757–1822), reproached Gypsy musicians for 'tasteless "ornamentation"'.⁵⁰ Unlike the Austrian and German commentators of this and the following period, Verseggy and his compatriots had a stake in developing a space for elevated Hungarian music that would follow 'the rules' rather than being dominated by the 'chaos' that some Viennese listeners condescended to enjoy in Gypsy musicians' performances.⁵¹

Gábor Mátray also wrote on the role of Gypsy musicians in the musical life of his homeland in two articles for an 1850s encyclopedia.⁵² These articles show how the role of Gypsy musicians in Hungary's musical life had only become more apparent in the years since Verseggy's piece. Mátray's effort to come to terms with the central role of socially marginal Roma in Hungarian musical life is typical of his time. The first of his two articles is a biography of Hungarian Roma violin virtuoso and bandleader János Bihari (1764–1827); in addition to celebrating Bihari specifically, Mátray's article acknowledges the importance of Roma musicians more generally as tradition-bearers, since, 'Hungarians of . . . elevated social position never devoted themselves to the national Hungarian music and specially avoided composition in this style,

refer to actual people, I also (cautiously) use the word 'Gypsy' here, in part to avoid anachronism and in part because I am also concerned here not with real Roma musicians but with a largely fictional Gypsy image.

⁴⁹ Cited in Mayes, 'Reconsidering an Early Exoticism', p. 161.

⁵⁰ Cited by Bálint Sárosi, *Gypsy Music* (Budapest: Corvina, 1978), p. 106. Verseggy was an advocate for Hungarian culture and a member of the Hungarian Jacobin movement in the period of Joseph II's Germanisation campaign. In addition to his own poetry, songs and essays on Hungarian language, literature and music, he translated a number of important items into Hungarian, both from German (for example Herder's *Ideen* as well as German song texts) and from French (significantly, the Marseillaise); see Ágnes Kenyeres (ed.), 'Verseggy Ferenc', *Magyar életrajzi lexikon*, revised ed. (Budapest: Arcanum Adatbázis Kft, 2001), available at <http://mek.oszk.hu/00300/00355/html> (accessed 22 January 2017).

⁵¹ Mayes, 'Reconsidering an Early Exoticism', pp. 161–2.

⁵² Gábor Mátray, 'Bihari János, magyar népzeneész életrajza' [Biography of János Bihari, Hungarian Folk Musician], in Imre Vahot and Ferenc Kubinyi (eds.), *Magyarország és Erdély képekben*, vol. 2 (Budapest: 1853), pp. 153–161; and 'A magyar zene és a magyar cigányok zenéje', in Imre Vahot and Ferenc Kubinyi (eds.), *Magyarország és Erdély képekben*, vol. 4 (Budapest: 1854), pp. 118–25. Reissued in György Gábrly (ed.), *A muzsikának közönséges története és egyéb írások* (Budapest: Magvető, 1984).

which accounts for Hungarian music having been preserved and popularised only by Bohemians [Gypsies].⁵³

However, in his second article, ‘Hungarian Music and the Music of Hungarian Gypsies’, Mátray worried that foreign musicians might

begin to doubt the true Hungarian character of the national music customarily performed by our Gypsies . . . we cannot doubt that the Gypsies of previous centuries also occupied themselves not with Indian Gypsy [music] but rather with real Hungarian music.⁵⁴

Although Mátray’s article appeared five years before the publication of Liszt’s book, *Des bohémiens et de leur musique en Hongrie* (1859), we may surmise that Mátray aimed these remarks at least partially at Liszt and his international audience. Liszt consulted Mátray while writing the book, and in the published text included a translation of Mátray’s Bihari article (with attribution) and an acknowledgement of his ‘service to this branch of musical literature’.⁵⁵ But Mátray – along with most of the Hungarian music world – still perceived *Des bohémiens* overall as an insult, since it suggested that Hungary’s ‘Gypsy music’ was in fact created by its Gypsy performers. A controversy erupted even before the book was published, from public letters to Liszt and feuilletons in the daily press to scholarly articles and pamphlets about Gypsy musicians and their shortcomings, musical and otherwise.

Eventually most of the Hungarian musical establishment more or less agreed to overlook Liszt’s slight as a mistake while celebrating his legacy. However, the fact that so-called Gypsy music – a recently composed popular genre performed by racial outsiders – was the basis of Hungarian national art music continued to pose a problem, one that popped up regularly all over Hungary’s music press for decades. It was only in the early twentieth century that Bartók, Kodály and other members of their circle, particularly Molnár, challenged prevailing assumptions about what made music Hungarian. Composers also used the style and novelty of peasant music to facilitate experimentation; thus debates about the merits of Bartók and Kodály, for example, also focused on the relationship between ‘hypermodernism’ and national music.⁵⁶

⁵³ Quoted in Franz Liszt, *The Gipsy in Music*, trans. Edwin Evans (London: William Reeves, 1881), p. 262.

⁵⁴ In ‘A magyar zene és a magyar cigányok zenéje’, pp. 120–1.

⁵⁵ In Liszt, *The Gipsy in Music*, p. 262. The Bihari article appears in *ibid.*, pp. 341–8. Although none of Mátray and Liszt’s original correspondence appears to have survived, Liszt’s mentions of Mátray in letters to his collaborator Princess Carolyne Sayn-Wittgenstein, along with his acknowledgement of Mátray in *Des bohémiens* support the conclusion that Mátray helped Liszt collect the source data (Várnai, ‘Mátray Gábor élete és munkássága a szabadságharcotól haláláig’, p. 180.)

⁵⁶ Hooker, *Redefining Hungarian Music*, chapters 2 and 3 develop these themes in much greater detail.

By 1936, Bartók, Kodály, Molnár and others had published this argument so frequently that in his lecture 'Liszt problems' on the occasion of being elected to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Bartók stated that 'it would be a pity to waste another word on proving it'.⁵⁷ Bartók's and Kodály's folk music research and their conclusions on which music is worthy of study and of development into art music continue to be influential in criticism and scholarship on Hungarian music.

The dominance of themes of 'national music' and 'authenticity' have, however, largely overshadowed other interesting issues in early twentieth-century Hungarian music. Some scholars have begun to dig into these questions through primary sources,⁵⁸ but much remains to be explored around not only other art music composers but also popular music genres from the *magyar nóta* to operetta to jazz as well as the impact of new technologies, namely sound recording, radio and film. On topic after topic, we may find an ongoing conversation in the press about all kinds of music, 'high' and 'low', with commentators addressing the issues at hand from all directions for a variety of publics. Published collections of press coverage of Gypsy bands from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries, inside and outside Hungary, have begun to lift the veil on the actual activities, rather than the generalisations and stereotypes, of these musicians who both entertained and represented the country for so long.⁵⁹ Historians interested in Hungarian media have also indicated the importance of popular publications such as *Rádió élet* [Radio Life] and *Rádió újság* [Radio News].

As scholars from around the world have repeatedly demonstrated, music criticism provides us a crucial window into the way musicians, audiences and the critics who mediate between them 'encounter the ways in which ... inhabitants [of this world] constructed their self-knowledge'.⁶⁰ The study of music criticism in Hungary, as elsewhere, still has much to reveal.

⁵⁷ Béla Bartók, 'Liszt Problems', in *Béla Bartók Essays*, ed. Benjamin Suchoff (New York: St Martin's Press, 1976), p. 506. For further discussion, see Hooker, *Redefining Hungarian Music*, pp. 252–7.

⁵⁸ For example Péter Bozó, 'Piszkos partitúrák, szennyes szólamok avagy *Az eleven ördög* és a magyar operett nem teljesen szeplőtlen fogantatása' [Dirty scores, dusty parts, or, *The Living Devil* and the not-so-immaculate conception of Hungarian operetta], *Magyar zene*, 52/3 (August 2014), 318–33; Géza Gábor Simon, *Fejezetek a magyar jazz történetéből 1961-ig* [Chapters from the History of Hungarian Jazz before 1961] (Budapest: Magyar Jazzkutató Társaság, 2001); and Kata Riskó, 'Városi cigányzenekarok hangfelvételei a 20. század elejéről' [Recordings of Urban Gypsy Orchestras from the Beginning of the Twentieth Century], *Magyar zene*, 52/1 (February 2014), 28–42.

⁵⁹ Bálint Sárosi (ed.), *A cigányzenekar múltja az egykori sajtó tükrében, 1: 1776–1903* (Budapest: Nap Kiadó, 2004), and *11: 1904–1944* (Budapest: Nap Kiadó, 2012); and Szíjjártó, *A cigány útra ment*.

⁶⁰ Bohlman, 'Fieldwork in the Ethnomusicological Past', in Gregory F. Barz and Timothy J. Cooley (eds.), *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 152.

The ‘People’ in Czech and Slovak Music Criticism

KELLY ST PIERRE

There is a pattern of circular logic built into discussions of ‘Czech’ and ‘Slovak’ music. On the one hand, scholars are long familiar with processes of nationalist invention; indeed, the task of defining and even determining the sounds of the Czech and Slovak nations – in many ways, the task of Czech and Slovak music criticism – arose with their nationalist movements during the nineteenth century.¹ On another, as Oskár Elsček points out in his introduction to a *History of Slovak Music* (2003), the field of musicology hinges on its own nationalist myths: it favours the study of European art music in which notions of a stable, in some ways timeless, ‘Europe’ are generally left uninterrogated, or at least recognised as a given assumption.² Taken together, these circumstances mean that musicology as a field not only aims to deconstruct the very myths from which it emerged, but that it also happens to lend itself particularly well to the creation of new nationalist myths. To paraphrase Elsček’s more eloquently argued point, for example, ‘if we can study the music of a supposedly timeless and stable “Europe”, then why not that of

Special thanks to Brian Locke for his support and consideration in this project.

¹ Understandings of the ‘Czech lands’ and ‘Slovakia’ are continually in flux. As Tom Dickins aptly summarises, ‘the names of the Czechoslovak polity and its constituent territories have changed so many times since the foundation of the First Republic in 1918 that its precise details are even sometimes lost on historians’. See Tom Dickins, ‘Names of the Czech-Speaking Lands, Their Peoples and Contact Communities: Titles, Names, and Ethnonyms’, *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 89/3 (2011), 416. Here, the ‘Czech lands’ will refer to the combined areas of Bohemia, Moravia, and Czech Silesia. ‘Slovakia’ will similarly refer to regions at times recognised as Slovakia through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which sometimes included parts of Carpatho-Ukraine and Hungary, among other locations. In either case, the use of quotes around ‘Czech’ and ‘Slovak’ at the outset of this study (and occasionally within it for emphasis) is not to undermine the lived experience of those who self-identified or currently self-identify with either category. Instead, the quotes are a means to acknowledge the instability of these identities. Much of this study, including analyses of the nationalist movements in the Czech lands and Slovakia, is indebted to Stefan Auer’s chapters ‘Nationalism in the Czech Republic’ and ‘Nationalism in Slovakia’, in his *Liberal Nationalism in Central Europe* (London: Routledge, 2004).

² Oskár Elsček, ‘Introduction’ to Elsček and Burlas (eds.), *A History of Slovak Music: From the Earliest Times to the Present*, trans. Martin Styan (Bratislava: Institute of Musicology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, 2003), pp. 15–18.

“Slovakia”?³ The chapters that follow his introduction correspondingly begin by examining Slovak music from the time of the Neanderthals, well before notions of a ‘Slovakia’ would ever have existed.

This chapter examines the ways musicology’s embedded nationalist discourses can limit or circularly frame discussions of supposed Czech and Slovak music, whether in music criticism or in scholarship more generally. It begins by exploring nuances of the Czech and Slovak nationalist movements – especially their increased attention to socialist and ethnonationalist thinking into the turn of the twentieth century – to illuminate the political underpinnings of music criticism through the period. Then it examines the roles of music criticism in continually defining and redefining the varying states of Czechoslovakia from its founding in 1918 through the fall of Communism in 1989. Whether classifying the nation according to its imagined ‘people’, ‘ethnicity’, ‘race’, ‘labourers’ or rebellion, music critics and researchers were forced to negotiate ever-changing understandings of their countries, their writings paying special attention to the ways Czech and Slovak sounds seemed to align or not align with shifting political circumstances. Czech and Slovak music research, then, was prescriptive as much as it was descriptive through much of its history and might best be understood as a still-unfolding process of nationalist invention – one that even today is reforming itself within global and capitalist systems.

Inventing Nations and the Long Nineteenth Century

A Czech *národní obrození* [national rebirth] took hold among Prague’s middle classes from around the 1830s. A comparable nationalist movement took place in Slovakia from around the 1840s, especially among Bratislava’s (then Prešporok’s) middle classes. In either case, the typical patterns for nationalist movements held true: though supposedly speaking for the whole nation, individuals within these movements actually articulated the needs and interests primarily of urban elites. Similarly, participants within both movements reconceptualised and reinvented their nations’ pasts towards constructing new, modern states with implicitly autonomous futures.⁴ Such impulses also became increasingly radicalised through the turn of the twentieth century. Nationalism shifted from describing a possible nation to prescribing its duties to – as well as the ethnic characteristics of – its ‘people’.

³ Elschek develops this argument with great sophistication through his introduction, see especially *ibid.*, pp. 28–37.

⁴ Pieter Judson, ‘Introduction’ to Pieter Judson and Marsha L. Rozenblit (eds.), *Constructing Nationalities in East Central Europe* (New York: Berghahn, 2005), pp. 6–9.

Sources of the Czech National Rebirth were many and varied, but the movement was also a response to Josef II's eighteenth-century 'Germanisation' of Bohemia. As part of his centralization of power in Vienna, Josef had banned the Czech language in higher social settings in 1780 in favour of German, which was instituted as the national language in 1784, and decreased the power of the Bohemian Assembly. Together, these circumstances inspired many to begin self-identifying as specifically 'Czech', rather than Austrian or Bohemian (or both), as would have been typical previously.⁵ As governor of Bohemia Leopold Thun summarised in 1843, 'the power of a state rests upon the development of the spiritual forces of its peoples; for the spiritual development of the Bohemian people a Slav national feeling and the revival of the Czech language is a necessary, indispensable means'.⁶ For nationalists the nation's future power of the state hinged on a revival of the Czech language; a reawakening to their supposedly Slav (and specifically not German) roots.

The region of Slovakia existed under Hungary from the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, and so Slovak nationalism was formulated in response to Magyarisation policies – especially the ways these policies revealed themselves in class systems – rather than Germanisation. As Martin Šimečka aptly summarises, 'Hungarian nobility occupied the castles and chateaux; the towns belonged to the Germans, Hungarians, and the Jews; and the villages and nature were left for the Slovaks'.⁷ Not just oppressed, Slovak nationalists saw themselves as marginalised both geographically and in terms of privilege. Religious affiliation fragmented the movement even further. When Ľudovít Štúr codified the Slovak language at mid-century, he favoured a dialect of the language spoken by the region's Catholics rather than its Protestants, who preferred Czech.⁸

Despite their differences, the Czech and Slovak nationalist movements shared Herder's influence; their investment in the reinvigoration of language was met with the codification of folk song repertoires. Josef Jungmann's publication of his five-volume Czech–German dictionary in 1834, for example, was followed by Karel Jaromír Erben's two volumes on *Písně národní v Čechách* [National Songs in Bohemia] (1842 and 1845) and his *Prostonárodní*

⁵ Pieter Judson, *Exclusive Revolutionaries: Liberal Politics, Social Experience, and National Identity in the Austrian Empire, 1848–1914* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996); Rita Kreuger, *Czech, German, and Noble: Status and National Identity in Habsburg Bohemia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); and Derek Sayer, *The Coasts of Bohemia: A Czech History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998) are all especially valuable sources for exploring the constructions and instability of 'Czech' and 'German' as political categories during the period.

⁶ Translation in Kreuger, *Czech, German, and Noble*, p. 4.

⁷ Martin Šimečka, 'Slovakia's Lonely Independence', *Transitions* (1997), 15; quoted in Auer, *Liberal Nationalism in Central Europe*, pp. 136–7.

⁸ Auer, *Liberal Nationalism in Central Europe*, p. 137.

české písně a říkadla [Czech Folk Songs and Nursery Rhymes] (1862–4). František Sušil similarly published his *Moravské národní písně* [Moravian National Songs] in 1835. In Slovakia, Štúr's codification of the language took place alongside the publication of several extensive folk song collections by Pavol Jozef Šafárik and Ján Kollár through the 1820s and 1830s.⁹

But even outside of folk song collection, the emergence of both the Czech and Slovak nationalist movements happened to take place alongside the emergence of musicology as a field. This circumstance, along with the nationalist assumptions that underpinned German musicological work during the era, deeply impacted Czech music studies in particular: Prague's Charles University (then, the Univerzita Karlo-Ferdinandova) became the first in Central Europe to establish musicological studies 1869 (neighbouring Vienna and Berlin followed in 1870 and 1875), and – in keeping with the Czech nationalist discourses of the day – the university divided into two separate German and Czech schools in 1892, the Deutsche Karl-Ferdinands-Universität and the Česká universita Karlo-Ferdinandova.¹⁰ The German university named Guido Adler head of the musicology department in 1885 – the same year of his landmark 'Umfang, Methode und Ziel der Musikwissenschaft' ['Scope, Method, and Aim of Musicology'] – and the Czech university named Otakar Hostinský head of its own musicology department. Within this setting, Hostinský and his colleagues carefully positioned Czech musicology as something distinctly 'other' from 'German' musicology. In 1906, for example, Leoš Janáček famously called for the development of folk song research based on Hostinský's model, rather than that of German musicologist Josef Pommer's *Grundzüge für die Sammlung* [Guidelines for Collection] (1905), Hostinský publishing his *Česká světská píseň lidová* [Czech Secular Folk Song] the following year.¹¹

⁹ Šafárik's and Kollár's volumes on *Písně světské lidu slovenského v Uhrách* [Secular Songs of the Slovak People in Hungary] were published in Pest in 1823 and 1827. Kollár also followed with his two-volume *Národné zpievanky čili Písně světské Slováků v Uhrách jak pospolitého lidu tak i vyšších stavů* [The National Songs or Secular Tunes of Slovaks in Hungary, Both of the Common People and Higher Classes], which was published in Buda in 1834 and 1835.

¹⁰ Albrecht Schneider, 'Comparative and Systematic Musicology in Relation to Ethnomusicology: A Historical and Methodological Survey', *Ethnomusicology*, 50/2 (2006), 241.

¹¹ Hostinský's *Česká světská píseň lidová* was an updated version of his *36 nářevů světských písní českého lidu z XVI. století* [Thirty-Six Melodies of Czech Secular Folk Song from the Sixteenth Century] (1892), which became an enduring touchstone for Czech folk music research. For more on Hostinský, especially his German-language theoretical writings, see Felix Wörner's chapter 'Otkar Hostinský, the Musically Beautiful, and the *Gesamtkunstwerk*', in Nicole Grimes, Siobhán Donovan and Wolfgang Marx (eds.), *Rethinking Hanslick: Music, Formalism, and Expression* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2013). For more on Janáček's early work alongside Hostinský, see especially Jarmila Procházková, 'Janáčková koncepce činnosti Pracovního výboru pro českou národní píseň na Moravě a ve Slezsku' ['Janáček's Concept for the Activities of the Organizational Committee for Czech Folk Song'], in Jana Pospíšilová and Jana Nosková (eds.), *Od lidové písně k evropské etnologii: 100 let Etnologického ústavu Akademie věd České*

In the realm of ‘art’ music, too, the impulse to situate Czech music as ‘other’ yielded long-standing assumptions in the field, especially concerning the works of Bedřich Smetana.¹² In 1873, music critic František Pivoda famously argued that Smetana’s Wagnerian leanings meant his music had been ‘taken over’ by a ‘foreign entity’.¹³ In what Hostinský later dubbed the ‘musical battles’ of the 1870s, Hostinský and his colleagues argued that Smetana did not just mimic Wagner’s aesthetics in his works, but out-synthesised them.¹⁴ In the same way that Czech musicology responded to German methods by affirming its ‘otherness’, then, Hostinský and his colleagues situated Smetana’s music as not reflecting but exceeding German nationalist aesthetics; Smetana’s music was distinctly ‘other’ or ‘Czech’ precisely because of, not despite Smetana’s Wagnerism.

Outside of musicological methods, Smetana advocacy also adversely impacted Antonín Dvořák’s reception in Prague, even at the level of political affiliations. Smetana aligned himself with the so-called ‘mladočeši’ [‘young Czechs’], who advocated against the direct quotation of folk song in the opera and favoured instead an internalised sense of its aesthetics. The ‘staročeši’ [‘old Czechs’], however, advocated for the direct quotation of folk song and chose Dvořák as their representative, likely to rival Smetana. Rather than through divided audiences in Prague, Dvořák’s ultimate international success was indebted to his friendships with Eduard Hanslick and, by extension, Johannes Brahms. These individuals not only created new opportunities for the publication and performance of Dvořák’s works, but also their German-language advocacy helped Dvořák’s music avoid becoming tokenised as ‘Czech’, so that it appeared more universal and accessible to wider audiences.¹⁵

republiky [From Folk Song to European Ethnology: 100 Years of the Ethnological Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic] (Brno: Etnologický ústav AV ČR, 2006), pp. 42–9, as well as Jiří Vyslouzil’s ‘Brněnský Pracovní výbor, Ústav a Kabinet pro lidovou píseň’ [‘Brno’s Organizational Committee, Department and Institute for Folk Song’] in the same collection (pp. 133–6). Hereafter, this collection of essays will be referred to as *From Folksong to European Ethnology*.

¹² For more on constructions of ‘Czechness’, see Michael Beckerman’s landmark article, ‘In Search of Czechness in Music’, *19th-Century Music*, 10/1 (Summer 1986), 61–73, as well as the conclusion of Kelly St Pierre’s *Bedřich Smetana: Myth, Music, and Propaganda* (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2017), pp. 109–112.

¹³ Pivoda, *Pokrok* (22 February 1870), trans. in Brian Locke, *Opera and Ideology in Prague: Polemics and Practice at the National Theatre, 1900–1938* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2006), p. 23.

¹⁴ See, for example, Hostinský’s *Z hudebních bojů let sedmdesátých a osmdesátých* [From the Musical Fights of the 70s and 80s] (Prague: Editio Supraphon, 1986).

¹⁵ Dvořák’s comparative ‘universality’ was reflected in Jeannette Thurber’s famous invitation for Dvořák to direct New York City’s National Conservatory of Music, which he did from 1892 to 1895. For more concerning Dvořák’s status as both universal and ‘other’, see Christopher Campo-Bowen, ‘Bohemian Rhapsodist: Antonín Dvořák’s *Píseň bohatýrská* and the Historiography of Czech Music’, *19th-Century Music*, 40/2 (Fall 2016), 159–81.

In Slovakia, nineteenth-century nationalist aesthetics were theorised by and modelled from the works of Ján Bella. Like many nationalist thinkers, Bella concerned himself with how the nuances of the Slovak language might inform composition – ideas which he presented in his *Mysliienky o vývine národnej hudby a slovenského spevu* [Thoughts on the Development of National Music and Slovak Song] (1873).¹⁶ But outside of his theoretical writings, Bella's career and compositional output were consistent with the ambivalence held by many non-nationalists towards supposed ethnic, religious or geographical boundaries during the era. Bella was born in the town of Liptovský Mikuláš in (now) Slovakia; he completed his degree in theology in Vienna in 1863, during which he also studied music; he returned to Slovakia in 1866, where he was ordained as a Catholic priest; and he was named director of music at Kremnica, Slovakia in 1869. But Bella converted to Protestantism in 1881 upon becoming a teacher and choirmaster in Hermannstadt, Transylvania (now Romania), moved back to Vienna following his retirement in 1921 and settled Bratislava only from 1928. Bella's compositional output mirrored the instability of national identities that his career path followed. He wrote his symphonic poem *Osud a ideál* [Fate and the Ideal] (1874) after meeting both Smetana (a Liszt devotee) and Dvořák, though the title of the work aligned with supposedly more universal conceptualisations of fate and death, especially as articulated in the programme to Franz Liszt's first movement of *Les Préludes* (published 1856). Similarly, Bella planned to write an opera in Czech titled *Jaroslav a Laura* [Jaroslav and Laura] and on a libretto by Václav Pok Poděbradský from 1873, but never completed the work. Instead, he worked on an opera on Wagner's libretto *Wieland der Schmied* [Wayland the Smith] through the 1880s, the work left unperformed until 1926 in a Slovak translation by Oskar Schlemm. Altogether, Bella's compositional output moved unproblematically between differing and sometimes conflicting nationalist aesthetics.

The impulses of both the Czech and Slovak nationalist movements shifted around the turn of the twentieth century, however, from imaging possible nations to prescribing their social responsibilities and ethnic makeups. In Prague, future Czechoslovak president Tomáš Masaryk spearheaded investigations of the social responsibility of the state with the 1895 publication of his *Česká otázka: snahy a tužby národního obrození* [The Czech Question: The Endeavours and Yearnings of the National Revival]. Masaryk's philosophies prioritised what he called 'humanism'; rather than fact-driven historiography, for example, Masaryk favoured histories that 'subordinated [the past] to the

¹⁶ Smetana advocate Ludevít Procházka is credited with urging Bella to publish on Slovak nationalist aesthetics, which he did from the pages of Pivoda's journal *Hudební listy* [Music News] as early as 1872.

present' so that they might offer insight into Czechs' humanity.¹⁷ Such philosophies of Masaryk initiated a 'dispute over the meaning of Czech history' that impacted both political practices and music criticism at the turn of the twentieth century. Masaryk's philosophies meant that the better the scholar, the better the understanding of the humanity of the Czech people; academics' active participation within the 'dispute over the meaning of Czech history' consequently became part of an imagined civic duty as much as a consideration of historiographical questions. Similarly, Masaryk's philosophies meant that, though nationalism traditionally concerned boundaries between people, now it concerned an imagined people's universal well-being; as Masaryk summarised, the answer to the 'Czech Question' was actually the 'Social Question'.¹⁸ That is, scholars who understood Czechs' humanity might best serve the nation in political office, rather than in academia, so that their participation in the 'dispute' also became a means of political platforming.

Hostinský's now-infamous student Zdeněk Nejedlý was one of the academics perhaps most deeply invested in the discourses of the 'dispute over the meaning of Czech history', especially its embedded political posturing. Nejedlý began work at Charles University in musicology in 1905, gained professorship in 1908, and chaired its musicology department from 1909, but he was also an ambitious politician, launching lengthy 'affairs' from these and other such positions to serve his own self-promotion.¹⁹ Nejedlý slandered a number of composers, supposedly as a means of preserving Smetana's legacy, for example, but in ways that ultimately allowed him to gain political office. He smeared Dvořák following the premiere of his *Rusalka* in 1901 by positioning the composer as representing everything for which Pivoda had previously stood; he attacked Karel Knittl in 1906 for having anonymously criticised Smetana's fourth opera *Dvě vdovy* [The Two Widows] over thirty years earlier, in 1873; he disparaged National Theater conductor Karel Kovařovic for performing altered versions of Smetana's scores; he advocated against Vítězslav Novák and Josef Suk, both of whom had been students of Dvořák; and he clashed with Leoš Janáček, especially because Janáček had sided with Pivoda early in his career.²⁰ Two anti-Nejedlý

¹⁷ Tomáš G. Masaryk, *Česká otázka: snahy a tužby národního obrození* [The Czech Question: The Endeavors and Yearnings of the National Revival], trans. Peter Kussi, in Ahmet Ersoy, Maciej Górný and Vangelis Kechriotis (eds.), *Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeastern Europe (1770–1945): Texts and Commentaries*, vol. III/1 of *Modernism and the Creation of Nation-States* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2010), p. 206.

¹⁸ See Masaryk's discussion in *ibid.*, pp. 207–9. See also Sayer, *Coasts of Bohemia*, p. 156.

¹⁹ Brian Locke's *Opera and Ideology in Prague*, and Jiří Křest'an's *Zdeněk Nejedlý: Politik a vědec v osamění* [Zdeněk Nejedlý: Politician and Scholar in Solitude] (Prague: Paseka, 2012) are rich resources for exploring the ways Nejedlý's battles served his personal and political ambitions.

²⁰ Locke, *Opera and Ideology in Prague*, pp. 21 and 33. Janáček's ethnic alignments and pan-Slavic interests also meant that he was not particularly receptive to assistance from German-aligned critics and publishers.

protests took place in period music journals in 1912 and 1918 in response. Additionally, the Czech 'Maffie' ['mafia'], which acted as a quasi-judicial system under the provisional government of the First Republic, deemed Nejedlý's arguments against Suk invalid in 1919.²¹ Still, Nejedlý was awarded the position of Minister of Education from 1945 to 1946 and 1948 to 1952.

But if the political platforming of the 'dispute' fundamentally concerned notions of socialism, Czech nationalism at the turn of the twentieth century also became increasingly enmeshed in ethnonationalism, especially in the possibility of empirically determining who belonged to the nation and who did not. Such interests manifested even in the passing of the 1905 Moravian Compromise, which required Moravia's 2.5 million inhabitants to register exclusively with either Czech or German political parties, rather than moving freely within an open political landscape.²² A 1910 update to the Compromise's sub-clause called 'Lex Perek' also determined that the nationalities of Moravian children would be determined through investigations of parents' social lives, language use, reading habits and ancestry, rather than through language proficiencies or parents' self-identification as they had been previously. A second update in 1920 regulated that children's ethnonationalities would be determined through the testimonies of community members and distant family members, leading Czechoslovak citizens 'to inform on their neighbours on a massive and unprecedented scale'.²³

Czech and Slovak folk song research around this time mirrored shifts from determining nationality through self-identification to relying on the observations of supposedly objective third parties and bodies of evidence. As early as 1883, folk song researcher František Bartoš published works such as his *Lid a národ* [The People and the Nation], in which he classified humans according to their specific biological landscapes, cultural practices (including folk song repertoires) and social systems. For Bartoš, folk music research was just one of many tools for exploring emerging notions of race and ethnicity.²⁴ Alongside Janáček, Bartoš famously participated in demonstrations of Moravian music at

Even then, Max Brod's German translation of Janáček's *Jenůfa* contributed substantially to Janáček's eventual success, as did Jan Löwenbach. See Leon Botstein's chapter, 'The Cultural Politics of Language and Music: Max Brod and Leoš Janáček', as well as Derek Katz's 'A Turk and a Moravian in Prague: Janáček's *Brouček* and the Perils of Musical Patriotism in Prague', in Michael Beckerman (ed.), *Janáček and His World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003). See also Jaroslav Mráček, 'The Reception of Leoš Janáček as Seen through a Study of the Bibliography: A Preliminary Report', in Michael Beckerman and Glen Bauer (eds.), *Janáček and Czech Music: Proceedings of the International Conference (Saint Louis, 1988)*, *Studies in Czech Music* 1 (Stuyvesant: Pendragon, 1995), pp. 348–9.

²¹ Locke, *Opera and Ideology in Prague*, p. 130; Křest'an, *Zdeněk Nejedlý*, pp. 129–30, 143.

²² The information in the paragraph is indebted to Tara Zahra, 'Reclaiming Children for the Nation: Germanization, National Ascription, and Democracy in the Bohemian Lands, 1900–1945', *Central European History*, 37/4 (2004), 501–43.

²³ Zahra, 'Reclaiming Children for the Nation', 518.

²⁴ For more on relationships between music, ethnography and racial studies, see Ronald Radano and Philip Bohlman (eds.), *Music and the Racial Imagination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); and

the 1895 Czechoslovak Exhibition. The event took place outside of Prague and attracted over 2,000,000 visitors, featuring elaborately detailed reconstructions of area architecture, crafts, food and even whole villages. Despite its title, however, the Czechoslovak Exhibition did not actually include Slovak representation. Instead, potential Slovak collaborators reportedly feared retaliation from the Hungarian government, and so chose not to participate.²⁵ Magyarisation policies meant that collaborations across both Austrian and Hungarian halves of the empire were seen as a threat to Hungarian autonomy, with ethnonationalism reinforcing borders, rather than expanding them as the Czechoslovak Exhibition had seemed to promise.

The assumption that rich folk song traditions evidenced the scientific validity of individual ethnicities also yielded immense folk song collections at the turn of the century. Bartoš and Janáček not only produced their famous *Kytice z národních písní moravských* [A Bouquet of Moravian Folk Songs] in 1890, for example, but also published over 2,000 songs in their *Národní písně moravské v nově nasbírané* [Newly Collected Moravian Folk Songs] in 1901. Janáček additionally participated in an Organisational Committee for Czech Song in Moravia and Silesia, founded in 1905 as part of Universal Edition's *Das Volkslied in Österreich* [Folk Song in Austria] project. Hostinský was named head of this organisation's Czech department, Nejedlý its subdivision for Czech Song in Bohemia and Janáček its subdivision for Czech Song in Moravia and Silesia; together, these areas counted 30,000 folk songs in its collection before the First World War.²⁶ A group called the Friends of Slovak Songs similarly collected 5,000 Slovak melodies through the nineteenth century and published 2,000 of them in the volumes of *Slovenské spevy* [Slovak Songs] (1880–1926).²⁷ Even then, it was the Hungarian Béla Bartók – himself an admirer of the collaborations between Bartoš and Janáček – who became most recognised for his Slovak folk song collections. Articles such as his 1931 *Slovenské ľudvé piesne* [Slovak Folk Songs] allowed him to gain prominence in this area of research, while his positioning of Slovak folk songs within his nationalistically Hungarian works also brought him even further recognition: as he once summarised, ‘my creative work, precisely because it arises from

Klára Móricz, *Jewish Identities: Nationalism, Racism, and Utopianism in Twentieth-Century Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

²⁵ Karel Klusáček, Emanuel Kovář, Lubor Niederle, František Schläffer and František Adolf Šubert (eds.), *Národopisná výstava československá v Praze 1895* [The Czechoslovak Ethnographic Exhibition in Prague 1895] (Prague: Nakladem J. Otty, 1895), p. 24.

²⁶ The organisation's subdivision for German folk song also counted 10,000 in its collection. Věra Thořová, ‘Vznik Státního ústavu pro lidovou píseň a první léta jeho existence’ [The Genesis of the State Institute for Folk Song and the First Years of Its Existence], in *From Folksong to European Ethnology*, p. 53.

²⁷ Oskár Elsček, ‘11. Traditional Music’, in Richard Rybář, et al., ‘Slovakia’, *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, available at www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed 22 April 2017).

three sources, Hungarian, Romanian, and Slovakian, might be regarded as the embodiment of the very concept of integrity, which is so much emphasized in Hungary today'.²⁸ For Bartók, and in keeping with his hegemonic position within Magyarisation policies, Slovak folk song was crucial for reflecting the complexity of a multi-ethnic Hungarian state.

Outside of ethnographic studies of Czech and Slovak folk music, ethnonationalist impulses were similarly reflected in the publication of studies such as Richard Eichenauer's *Musik und Rasse* [Music and Race] (1932) as well as Bartók's 'Race Purity in Music' (1942). Ethnonationalism also, of course, had devastating consequences at the beginning of the twentieth century, with several Central European states forcing the emigration of supposed 'surplus' populations both before and after the First World War.²⁹ But even outside of these geographic cleansings, ethnonationalism strongly informed political discourses between Czechs and Slovaks upon the founding of the First Czechoslovak Republic in 1918. The possibility of forming a 'Czecho-Slovak' federation had been popular previous to the war, but a united Czechoslovakia was not. Instead the 'Czechoslovakism' that reframed maps in Central Europe following the First World War primarily reflected the political manoeuvrings of Tomáš Masaryk.³⁰ For the international community from whom Masaryk sought approval, a Czecho-Slovak state appeared dangerously reminiscent of a divided Austro-Hungary, and therefore likely to inherit its instability. A fully integrated and united Czechoslovakia as Masaryk proposed, however, was thought to carry fewer tensions, and so became interwar policy.³¹

Czechoslovakia and Music Criticism

In reality, Czechoslovakia's First Republic yielded exactly the ethnonationalist conflicts a federalised 'Czecho-Slovakia' sought to avoid: the nation divided into several segments at the outset of the Second World War, including the Nazi-occupied Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, the Nazi-satellite of

²⁸ For a close examination of the instances in which Bartók and Janáček might have interacted with one another, see James Porter, 'Bartók and Janáček: Ideological Convergence and Critical Value', *Musical Quarterly*, 84/3 (2000), 426–51. The translation of this quote appears on p. 435.

²⁹ Tara Zahra explains that 'surplus' populations previous to the First World War typically referred to individuals' class, gender, or occupation; after the First World War, 'surplus' populations were determined by national, religious and racial identities. See Zahra, *The Great Departure: Mass Migration from Eastern Europe and the Making of the Free World* (New York: Norton, 2016), p. 17.

³⁰ Andrea Orzoff's *Battle for the Castle: The Myth of Czechoslovakia in Europe, 1914–1948* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) is a rich resource for examining Masaryk's 'Czechoslovakism' as well as the ways he and his advocates self-consciously perpetuated the myth of 'Czechoslovakia' upon the founding of its First Republic in 1918.

³¹ Auer, *Liberal Nationalism in Central Europe*, p. 143.

Slovakia and the Hungarian-occupied Carpathian-Ruthenia, which had previously been part of Slovakia. These states (with the exception of Carpathian-Ruthenia, which became part of the USSR in 1945) came together under Communist rule in 1948, splitting again only upon the ‘Velvet Divorce’ of 1993. Such rapidly shifting circumstances meant that the stakes and interests of Czech and Slovak music criticism were in near-constant flux through the twentieth century. That music critics themselves were continually forced to negotiate shifting statehoods also meant that, more than nationalist musical aesthetics, even their livelihoods were sometimes in danger based on their theorisations.

Notions of ‘Czechoslovakism’ were especially threatening to Slovaks, who risked becoming ‘othered’ under yet another centralised state, especially because their agricultural economy could not easily compete with Czech industry after the First World War. And Czechs did gain hegemony upon the founding of Czechoslovakia, their teachers and professionals sent to Slovakia to correct supposed ‘deficiencies’ within the region after 1918.³² Contemporary musical activity and criticism mirrored moves to build Slovak resources to the presumed levels of Prague. In addition to the founding of Bratislava’s Univerzita Komenského (Comenius University) in 1919, for example, a musicology department was established within the school in 1921. A separate Slovak National Theatre was similarly founded in 1920. Within this setting, Bratislava-based music critic Ivan Ballo emerged as a ‘conceptual co-creator’ of Slovak nationalist music, his criticism positioning music as a social and moral concern, much as Hostinský’s criticism had done previously.³³ For Slovak nationalists including Ballo, then, the best path forward upon the founding of Czechoslovakia was for Slovak music to become more in line with traditions in Czech musical aesthetics.

Outside of building resources in Slovakia, imagined paths forward for Czechoslovakia slipped easily between notions of democracy – on which Czechoslovakia was officially founded – and socialism (or, by then, Communism, as the Komunistická strana Československa, or Communist Party of Czechoslovakia had been founded in 1921), much as Masaryk had done previously in his *Czech Question*. Just as before, too, Zdeněk Nejedlý both participated in and fuelled the political posturing embedded in corresponding

³² Ibid., p. 142.

³³ Ladislav Burlas, ‘7. Slovak Music of the 20th Century’, in Elschek and Burlas (eds.), *A History of Slovak Music*, p. 306; and Naďa Hrková, *Trádia, modernosť a slovenská hudobná kultúra 1918–1948* [Tradition, Modernity, and Slovak Musical Culture] (Bratislava: Litera, 1996), pp. 171–86. See also Ján Palkovič, ‘Hudobná kritika v Slovenských pohľadoch v rokoch 1918–1948’ [Music Criticism in *Slovenské pohľady* from the Years 1918–1948], in Zdenko Nováček and Katharina Horváthová (eds.), *Hudobná kritika v Bratislave: 1920–1980* [Music Criticism in Bratislava: 1920–1980] (Bratislava: Martin, 1980), pp. 28–32.

music scholarship during the era. He established the Hudební klub ['music club'] (1911–27) and the journal *Smetana* (1910–26) in order to cultivate even more radical modes of Smetana advocacy, while his scholarship and platforming also led to an important falling out with his 'Music Club' co-developer, one-time student and (eventual) brother-in-law, Vladimír Helfert. Helfert had become head of the newly established musicology department at Brno's Masaryk University from 1919 and, in direct opposition to Nejedlý's previous work, praised his colleague Janáček for his innovative compositional techniques in his 1937 *Česká moderní hudba* [Modern Czech Music]. In response, Nejedlý anonymously launched attacks on Helfert from the pages of *Smetana*, though the onset of the Second World War interrupted the dispute.³⁴ Nejedlý left for Moscow in 1939, at which point he officially joined the Communist party and began work as a professor at Moscow State University. Helfert, who had incorporated anti-Nazi campaigning into his lectures at the university and smuggled Janáček's recordings into safekeeping just before the start of the war, was called in for Gestapo questioning in November 1939, and was arrested soon after. Helfert was held prisoner intermittently at a variety of institutions through the war until arriving at the Nazi camp Terezín in 1944. He died of spotted fever two days after the camp's liberation on 18 May 1945.³⁵

Beyond Nejedlý and Helfert, of course, the lives of several musicologists and critics were deeply affected by the war. Ivan Ballo was arrested for his own anti-fascist work in 1939, released only in 1943. Previous Charles University faculty member Paul Nettel fled Prague with his family, including his then-young son Bruno Nettel, in 1939, ultimately settling in the United States. Paul Nettel's one-time colleague in musicology, Gustav Becking, who worked at Charles University from 1930 to 1945, was killed during Czechoslovakia's own post-war cleansing under the Košice programme. Nejedlý took up his position as Minister of Education upon his return from Moscow, assuming it again from 1948 to 1952, under the Communist regime. Nejedlý's responsibilities in this position included helping formulate the purges at Charles University. Scholar Jiří Křesťan has shown that Nejedlý protected some of his colleagues in this process.³⁶ Nejedlý's one-time student Josef Hutter, who had publically sided with Helfert before the war and was similarly imprisoned

³⁴ Helfert's theorisations were extensively attacked in the pages of *Smetana: Hudební listy* [Smetana: Music News]; Nejedlý fully responded in another publication, *Útok na českou moderní hudbu* [The Attack on Modern Czech Music], published in 1937.

³⁵ For more Helfert's activities, see Rudolf Pečman, *Vladimír Helfert* (Universitas Masarykiana: Brno, 2003), pp. 29, 47–55, 223–4; and Jiří Vysloužil, 'Brněnský Pracovní výbor, Ústav a Kabinet pro lidovou píseň' ['Brno's Organizational Committee, Department and Institute for Folk Song'], in *From Folksong to European Ethnography*, pp. 133–6. All of Janáček's recordings were returned after the war, only ten wax cylinders damaged.

³⁶ Křesťan, *Zdeněk Nejedlý*, pp. 336–7.

during the Second World War, was imprisoned for a second time under the Communist regime, released on amnesty in 1956, and died in 1959.³⁷

Outside of helping to organise the purges, Nejedlý's role as Minister of Education, especially under the Communist regime, allowed him to fundamentally shape Czech music and research up to 1989. He (re)founded the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences in 1952, for example, whose journal *Hudební věda* [Musicology] remains one of the most esteemed publications for Czech music research today.³⁸ Nejedlý was also responsible for interpreting socialist realism as prescribed by Andrei Zhdanov (though critics, composers and researchers had already aligned themselves with similar standards even from the 1948 Prague Manifesto); his resulting 'Czech realism' ['český realismus'] was unique in that it allowed for the celebration of Czech (and not specifically Soviet) heroes.³⁹ The restoration of the Bethlehem Chapel, from which Jan Hus preached during the fifteenth century, reflected the nationalism embedded in 'Czech realism', as did Nejedlý's positioning of Smetana – especially in the idealised version that Nejedlý most frequently presented in his writings – as the centre of a specifically Czech musical canon, at the expense of Dvořák and Janáček, among others.⁴⁰

Though Nejedlý may have formulated 'Czech realism', Miroslav Barvík – who scholar Thomas Svatos describes as 'the most powerful musician during the Stalinist years' – was responsible for its enforcement.⁴¹ Barvík's power came from his position as head of the Union of Czechoslovak Composers (UCC), the censorship board whose participation (or at least annual fee) was mandatory for all composers, critics and researchers. As part of his work, Barvík led ideological meetings, or 'brainwashing' events as later described by emigré Miloš Jůzl, the first in 1950 titled *The Composers Go with the People*.⁴² Barvík was also editor of *Hudební rozhledy* [Musical Perspectives], under which all previous music journals were reorganised and which became the primary tool for instilling Czech and Socialist realism in the field of music. Even then,

³⁷ Locke, *Opera and Ideology in Prague*, pp. 188–9, 235–7, especially chapter 9 n. 119, and chapter 11 n. 6.

³⁸ For more on the history of the Academy of Sciences, see Stanley B. Winters, 'Josef Hlávka, Zdeněk Nejedlý, and the Czech Academy of Sciences and Arts, 1891–1952', *Minerva*, 32/1 (1994), 53–78.

³⁹ Translated from *Smetanova pětiletka, 1949–1953: Program and pokyny* [Smetana's Five-Year Plan, 1949–1953: Programme and Instructions] (Prague: Společnost Bedřicha Smetany, 1949), p. 9.

⁴⁰ See Locke, *Opera and Ideology in Prague*, p. 29.

⁴¹ Thomas D. Svatos, 'Sovietizing Czechoslovak Music: The "Hatchet Man" Miroslav Barvík and His Speech *The Composers Go with the People*', *Music & Politics*, 4/1 (2010), 1. Slovakia was granted its own Institute of Musicology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences from 1951, which founded its own *Hudobnovedné štúdié* [Musicological Studies] in 1956. A specific Union of Slovak Composers also met for the first time in 1959, and its (later-founded) journal, *Musikologica Slovaca* [Musicology of Slovakia], remains an important resource for Slovak music research today.

⁴² Miloš Jůzl, 'Music and the Totalitarian Regime', *International Review of the Aesthetics of Sociology of Music*, 27/1 (1996), 35.

Slovakia was granted its own Institute of Musicology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences from 1951, which founded its journal on *Hudobnovedné štúdié* [Musicological Studies] in 1956. A specific Union of Slovak Composers met for the first time in 1959, its subsequent journal, *Musicologica Slovaca* [Slovak Musicology] similarly remaining an important resource for Slovak music research today.⁴³

Though Alexander Dubček's liberalisation policies of the 1960s loosened restrictions in Prague, the corresponding invasion of Soviet tanks in 1968 and ensuing 'Normalisation' policies of the 1970s and 1980s reinvigorated radical exertions of power.⁴⁴ In (unofficial) music criticism, these circumstances led to a break with past traditions, especially the long-standing custom of the privileging of supposed 'art' over popular music in defining the nation. Dissident poet and later Czechoslovak president Václav Havel led this move, positioning rock music as not only the voice of an oppressed nation, but also an important catalyst for the nation's revolution.⁴⁵ Havel had already helped formulate Charter 77 (the 1977 call for the Communist administration to respect basic human rights), but he also claimed in his writings as early as 1978 that the imprisonment of the band members of Plastic People of the Universe inspired him to lead the wave of revolutions that ultimately toppled the Communist regime in 1989.⁴⁶ Relatedly, Havel famously invited Lou Reed, an important influence on Plastic People, to perform in Prague in 1990; he sponsored a free concert by the Rolling Stones that same year; and he hosted a special 'SOS proti Rassismus' ('SOS against Racism') rock concert in Prague just before the 1990 June elections, in no small part because popular music was considered apolitical – or at least because Havel attempted to position it as such.⁴⁷ Still, Havel appointed Ivan Jirous, artistic director of Plastic People of the Universe, to his administration upon his election and named Frank Zappa, from whose songs Plastic People took their name, an adviser on trade, culture and tourism.

Havel's actions, along with the ways 'Czechoslovakism' manifested in music from 1918, illustrate a movement from negotiating Czechs' hegemonic role in formulating a new Czechoslovak nation in 'art' music to redefining

⁴³ For more on the ways Soviet radicalism was less aggressive in Bratislava than it was in Prague, see Auer, *Liberal Nationalism in Central Europe*, p. 152; and Jůzl, 'Music and the Totalitarian Regime', 47.

⁴⁴ Trevor Hagen offers a close discussion of music under Normalisation in his 'Converging on Generation: Musicking in Normalized Czechoslovakia', *East Central Europe*, 38 (2011), 307–35.

⁴⁵ See Havel's 'The Power of the Powerless' (1978), excerpted and translated in Tony Mitchell, 'Mixing Pop and Politics: Rock Music in Czechoslovakia Before and After the Velvet Revolution', *Popular Music*, 11/2 (1992), 189.

⁴⁶ For more on how the Charter effected the lives of musicologists and critics then working at Charles University, see Jůzl, 'Music and the Totalitarian Regime', 47–8.

⁴⁷ Mitchell, 'Mixing Pop and Politics', 192–3.

Czechoslovakia as a product of human rights-driven rebellion from at least 1989, if not earlier. The use of rock music as a platform for political comment persists in Prague even today. The city's famous 'John Lennon Wall' – a graffiti wall created after Lennon's murder in 1980 – was painted over on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Velvet Revolution in 2014 with the aim of creating space for new political expression in today's democracy.⁴⁸ While music criticism may have theoretically defined the nation in the past, today such moves invite us to consider the roles popular music criticism might continue to play within continually unfolding nationalist discourses.

Conclusion: Criticism in the Twenty-First Century

Any present-day author writing on nearly any topic in Czech and Slovak history is faced with important ethical questions. A history of the Slovak state, for example, might begin either with the country's independence as a Nazi-satellite, or with the 1944 Slovak Uprising against the Nazis. The latter is more popular in Slovak historiography, though also a more problematic choice, as the country's first Prime Minister, authoritarian leader Vladimír Mečiar (who served from 1993 to 1998), called on Nazi-era nationalist rhetoric in his campaigns; as such, Mečiar and his supporters situated the refounded Slovak Republic as a continuation of, and not necessarily break from Slovakia's Nazi past.⁴⁹ Similarly, Czechoslovakia's expulsion of 2,000,000 Germans and nearly 100,000 Hungarians after the Second World War, along with its treatment of Jewish and Roma populations throughout its short history, raise important questions about to whom 'Czech' and 'Slovak' histories belong.⁵⁰ All of these communities – along with individuals belonging to countless other independent and intersecting identities – fundamentally contributed to the formation of the Czech and Slovak nations. And yet traditional 'Czech' and 'Slovak' histories (including this one) risk examining only these nations' most accessible voices – the ones privileged enough to have been recorded and preserved in the first place, rather than marginalised or oppressed.

⁴⁸ The painting over of the John Lennon Wall was covered in a variety of news sources at the time. See, for example, Adam Chandler, 'The Life and Times of Prague's John Lennon Wall', *The Atlantic* (18 November 2014), available at www.theatlantic.com (accessed 1 May 2015).

⁴⁹ See Stanislav J. Kirschbaum, 'Whither Slovak Historiography after 1993?', *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, 53/1 (2011), 45–63.

⁵⁰ Refer especially to Scott Brunstetter, 'Escaping History: The Expulsion of Sudeten Germans as a *Leitmotif* in German–Czech Relations', and Edward Chászár, 'Ethnic Cleansing in Slovakia', in Steven Béla Várdy and T. Hunt Tooley (eds.), *Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe* (New York: Social Science Monographs, 2003).

But even outside of fundamental historiographical challenges, the nationalist discourses embedded in musicology tend towards circular patterns of logic that risk limiting discussions of Czech and Slovak music, as explored at the outset of this chapter. On the one hand, musicology's emergence from nineteenth-century nationalist discourses, especially 'German' ones, means that its methods are prone to perpetuating, rather than interrogating, nationalist narratives. On the other, even when such patterns are thoughtfully recognised, as Elschek did in his introduction to the *History of Slovak Music*, moves to counter them can yield further nationalist myths; as similarly illustrated in Elschek's first chapter for the same study, which begins in pre-history, well and deliberately before notions of 'Slovakia' would ever have existed.

Altogether, such challenges remind us not only that processes of nationalist invention might be unwittingly embedded in music scholarship – so much so that even modern researchers like Elschek are forced to negotiate the circularity of writing traditional, nationally oriented narratives for only decades-old states – but also that examinations of music history might benefit from supplementary questions. To that end, the Czech and Slovak Republics' south-neighbouring (and controversial) philosopher, Slovenian Slavoj Žižek, might ask us to consider music criticism not only as a category of ideology, but also to situate it globally; to explore the possibility that consumers worldwide are the most effective nationalist tastemakers today, rather than citizens themselves.⁵¹ The tourist industries of both Czechia and Slovakia, for example, might well represent today's most active spaces for negotiating relationships between these nations and their musical traditions, even if nightly stagings of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and dinner-theatre performances of the 'skočná' (or 'flying polka') might speak more to the narratives international audiences seek (and are willing to pay for), rather than these countries' modern soundscapes. Though traditional music criticism and research might simultaneously create and deconstruct nineteenth-century formulations of nations and ethnonations, today's might best speak to formulations of the Czech and Slovak states within capitalist and global systems; it might explore constructions of these nations for popular consumption not just as a way examining modern modes of listening, but also because such moves have historical basis, much as philosophies of 'Czechoslovakism' made the nation of Czechoslovakia more palatable for international communities following the First World War.

⁵¹ An example of Žižek's cultural criticism in music is his 'Staging Feminine Hysteria: Schoenberg's *Erwartung*', in Matthew Flisfeder and Louis-Paul Willis (eds.), *Žižek and Media Studies: A Reader* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), though his attention to ideology and neoliberalism pervade his work generally.

· PART V ·
NEW AREAS

Jazz Criticism in America

MARK RACZ

Since the formal academic study of jazz (historical, musicological, analytical or cultural) developed only very late in the twentieth century, critics have inevitably played a crucial role in developing discourses about the music. This has been a great strength as well as an occasional weakness, but it has given criticism a centrality in the literature of jazz that is noteworthy, particularly in comparison with the role of criticism in Western European art music in the same period.

In this chapter, I have restricted my coverage of the subject in several key respects. In the first place, there is very little consideration of pre-1930 criticism, a large and fascinating body of writing, but which with relatively few exceptions has more historical and cultural than musical significance. Secondly, and more controversially, I have included very little about European jazz criticism. The reception history of jazz in Europe is a vast subject, complicated by both the geographical and cultural diversity of Europe and the multifarious ways in which critics responded both to American jazz and to the development of jazz in their own countries. Finally and inevitably, there are many distinguished critics who receive only a brief mention, or none at all. Their omission is due to lack of space rather than any value judgement on my part.

Throughout the early twentieth century there was a significant amount of writing about jazz in America popular music magazines as well as in more mainstream newspapers and journals. However, it was not until the 1930s, with the development of a mass audience for swing bands, that there began to emerge a proliferation of mostly short-lived magazines devoted exclusively to jazz, which nurtured an embryonic but rapidly developing critical tradition. Two journals in particular stand out from this profusion of small 'fanzines' both in their longevity and influence: *Downbeat* and *Metronome*.

In retrospect the most startling if ultimately unsurprising aspect of pre-war jazz criticism is that virtually all of the critics who published in the specialist

jazz press were white, male, from middle- or upper-class family backgrounds, mostly Ivy League-educated and of left-wing political persuasion. There were formally established 'Hot Clubs' in New York, Boston and New Haven, where students from Columbia, Harvard and Yale respectively could listen intently to either the latest or vintage recordings, debate their relative merits and develop their critical faculties. Many of the most typical and long-lasting features of jazz journalism are rooted in this culture of undergraduate enthusiasm.

George T. Simon, Harvard educated and brother of the founder of the publishing house Simon & Schuster, is a characteristic figure. He became a key contributor to *Metronome*, serving as an associate editor from 1934 and as editor-in-chief from 1939 to 1955. He was also an amateur drummer, and even played briefly with Glenn Miller's orchestra in 1937. He wrote brief, enthusiastically descriptive record reviews, including this characteristic one of Jimmie Lunceford's 'Four or Five Times': 'For pure, unadulterated, insinuating swing, it's really stupendous. What a tempo! And what sax figures! There are excellent sax and trombone section passages . . . You must hear this.'¹ He also wrote longer reviews of swing bands, using a rating scale of E to A+. Although his highest rated bands were mostly white, Simon awarded an A to Duke Ellington and an A- to Andy Kirk.²

This urge to rate and quantify musical value is also exemplified by the omnipresent readers' polls, which have remained a distinctive part of jazz journalism to the present day. In keeping with the demographics of its readership, the *Metronome* readers' polls in the 1930s consistently ranked white bands the highest. As Ron Welburn has pointed out, this contrasts markedly with the polls in African American newspapers of the time where, not surprisingly, African American bandleaders were consistently ranked highest. For example, the 1938 *Chicago Defender* readers' poll gave first place to Duke Ellington, followed closely by Jimmie Lunceford, Count Basie and Cab Calloway. These rankings accord perfectly with modern consensus, and provide a powerful tribute to the critical discrimination of their audiences.³

The dominance of white jazz critics in the specialist jazz press is most tellingly illustrated by the fact that in the 1930s *Downbeat* published only one article by an African American writer: Frank Marshall Davis's 'No Secret – White Bands Copy Negroes'.⁴ The factually accurate, if provocative title of Davis's article perhaps suggests why he was not asked to make further

¹ Ron Welburn, 'Jazz Magazines of the 1930s: An Overview of Their Provocative Journalism', *American Music*, 5/3 (Autumn 1987), 259.

² *Ibid.*, 260. ³ *Ibid.*, 261.

⁴ Frank Marshall Davis, 'No Secret – White Bands Copy Negroes', *Downbeat* (June 1938), 5.

contributions. Davis's criticism for the Associated Negro Press looks forward to Amiri Baraka (formerly LeRoi Jones) in not pulling verbal punches: [Fats Waller took] 'the pretty aural confections of Tin Pan Alley and show[ed] them down the white world's throat, dipped in the sardonic salt and vitriol of black living'.⁵ In general, there is a surprising lack of jazz criticism in the African American press of the 1930s, but as Billy Rowe, a journalist active at the time explained: 'in those days, and even now, black critics could not afford the luxury of being critics, because we were so happy when one of our fellows got a job someplace . . . that we never criticised them'.⁶

Among the many white critics who began writing and publishing in the 1930s, John Hammond is both typical in the breadth of what would now be described as his 'portfolio career' and unique in the range of his accomplishments. He wrote jazz reviews and longer critical articles for *Downbeat*, as well as articles on racial politics for the left-of-centre journals *Nation* and *New Masses*. He was a talent scout (his 'discoveries' included Billie Holiday, Count Basie, Charlie Christian, Bob Dylan and Bruce Springsteen), a record producer (he produced both Bessie Smith's last, and Billie Holiday's first recordings, as well as the classic series of Teddy Wilson small band recordings of the late 1930s) and a concert entrepreneur (most notably his 'Spirituals to Swing' concerts at Carnegie Hall in 1938 and 1939). He also served as an informal but highly influential musical and career advisor to both Benny Goodman and Count Basie. In 1935, Goodman, with Hammond's encouragement, hired the African American pianist Teddy Wilson to perform, record and tour with his trio, which was, if not the first, certainly the most high-profile example of a mixed race ensemble in jazz in the 1930s.

British-born Leonard Feather was one of the most influential of all jazz critics, with a career spanning sixty years from his first articles in 1934 for the British music magazine *Melody Maker* until his death in 1994. John Gennari vividly evokes his first trip to New York in 1935, and his first evening out at the Savoy Ballroom in Harlem, escorted by John Hammond, and in doing so concisely summarises the character of much pre-war jazz criticism:

Two young white men without dates, in a room full of good-timing cheer and ecstatic bodily release, position themselves between the musicians and the audience . . . close to but also crucially distinct from the dancing mass body, caught up in an imagined sense of privileged intellectual and emotional communion with the music. Overlaying this subtle geography of inside/outside

⁵ John Gennari, *Blowin' Hot and Cold: Jazz and its Critics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), p. 107.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

was both a self-consciousness about racial and class difference and a correspondingly self-justifying sense of exceptionalism . . .⁷

Feather moved permanently to the United States in 1941, taking American citizenship in 1948. A prolific writer, he also worked as a concert promoter and record producer, sometimes contributing his own compositions and piano playing to sessions. In 1944 he pioneered a critics' poll for *Esquire*, with the intention of providing a more musically informed alternative to readers' polls. In contrast to the domination of white musicians in readers' polls, the *Esquire* poll winners included a sizeable majority of African American musicians. Although the *Esquire* critics' polls lasted for only three years, the concept was adopted by *Downbeat* in 1953 and has become an omnipresent annual feature in the jazz and mainstream press as well as in the blogosphere.

Feather's 'blindfold tests', initially appearing in *Metronome* but moving to *Downbeat* in the 1950s, featured an interviewee musician listening 'blindfold' to and commenting on a series of unidentified recordings. With the exception of the small number of jazz musicians who also wrote formal criticism, this became the most common and revealing format for musicians to publicly express their views on their contemporaries. And if these achievements were not enough, *The Encyclopedia of Jazz* (first published in 1955), conceived of and edited by Feather, was for many years the only available large-scale reference work on jazz.⁸

The Canadian-born Helen Oakley, who wrote for *Downbeat* from 1934 to 1941, was a very rare example of a female jazz critic. She also worked as a concert promoter, and as a record producer was responsible for many classic recordings of the 1930s, including sessions by Red Norvo and Mildred Bailey, Bob Crosby and, most notably, some of Duke Ellington's finest small band recordings.

Duke Ellington and the Critics

The critical reception of Ellington's music in the 1930s and early 1940s provides an ideal case study with which to explore the leading currents and cross-currents within jazz criticism of the period. Many commentators were clearly overwhelmed by the originality, rhythmic vitality and musical intelligence of Ellington's early masterpieces, and often resorted to hyperbole to communicate their enthusiasm. Roger Pryor Dodge, in his 1934 essay

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 23. ⁸ Leonard Feather, *The Encyclopedia of Jazz* (New York: Horizon Press, 1955).

'Harpsichords and Jazz Trumpets' rather improbably compares Ellington's 'Black and Tan Fantasy' to both Bach and Palestrina, the names clearly being invoked as critical benchmarks rather than on specifically musical grounds.⁹ Also in 1934, English composer and critic Constant Lambert wrote about one of Ellington's 1928 recordings: 'I know of nothing in Ravel so dexterous in treatment as the varied solos in the middle of the ebullient "Hot and Bothered", and nothing in Stravinsky more dynamic than the final section. The combination of themes at this moment is one of the most ingenious pieces of writing in modern music.'¹⁰ Lambert's high praise of Ellington was doubtlessly sincere, but was also clearly crafted to serve as ammunition in his iconoclastic attack on contemporary classical music. And in spite of his high praise, Lambert's final paragraph provides a sting in the article's tail which was prescient of future critical censure: 'Ellington's best works are written in what may be called ten-inch record form . . . Into this three and a half minutes he compresses the utmost, but beyond its limits he is inclined to fumble.'¹¹

Just one year later, in 1935, John Hammond published a scathing attack on Ellington's newly recorded thirteen-minute extended composition 'Reminiscing in Tempo', criticising it as 'formless and shapeless' and for the supposed influence of European music (Debussy and Delius in particular) on its style.¹² As Gunther Schuller has argued in some detail, there is nothing either formless or shapeless about the work and the harmonic language has little in common with Ellington's supposed European models.¹³ Hammond was clearly using his a priori view of what constitutes jazz as a critical benchmark and taking Ellington to task for stepping over the line. Hammond also attacked Ellington for not engaging in his music with the pressing issues of racial inequality. His presumption as a white critic in attempting to dictate and narrowly define the aesthetic and political agenda of a leading African American musician perfectly illustrates the way in which white criticism of the time was permeated by the 'self-justifying sense of exceptionalism' identified by Gennari.¹⁴

The Carnegie Hall premiere in 1943 of Ellington's extended programmatic concert work *Black, Brown and Beige* (subtitled *Tone Parallel to the History of the American Negro*) provoked a similar range of critical responses. *New York Herald Tribune* critic Paul Bowles lamented both the frequent tempo changes and the conceptual basis of the work: 'If there is no regular beat, there can be no

⁹ Roger Pryor Dodge, *Hot Jazz and Jazz Dance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 24.

¹⁰ Constant Lambert, *Music Ho!* (New York: C. Scribner's, 1934), p. 214. ¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Frank Alkyer, *60 Years of Jazz* (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard, 1995), p. 25.

¹³ Gunther Schuller, *The Swing Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 74–83.

¹⁴ Gennari, *Blowin' Hot and Cold*, p. 23.

syncopation, and thus no tension, *no jazz* [my italics]. The whole attempt to fuse jazz as a form with art music should be discouraged.¹⁵ In his review in the magazine *Jazz*, John Hammond takes Ellington to task for addressing the very issue that Hammond had found wanting in ‘Reminiscing in Tempo’, that is the African American experience:

The conclusion that one can draw from this concert is that Duke is dissatisfied with dance music as a medium for expression and is trying to achieve something of greater significance. No one can criticize him for this approach if he keeps up the quality of his music for dancing. My feeling is that by becoming more complex he has robbed jazz of most of its basic virtue and lost contact with his audience.¹⁶

The most perceptive contemporary criticism of *Black, Brown and Beige* comes in Mike Levin’s *Downbeat* review. Like Bowles, he criticises the frequent tempo changes, but defends Ellington’s sense of musical form. His overall assessment is that ‘*BBB* [*Black, Brown and Beige*] is not the final step by any means. Duke is working towards music where he can use all the rich scoring and harmonic advantages of the classical tradition, plus the guts, poignance, and emotional drive of great hot jazz, specifically the solo.’¹⁷ Levin was unusual among critics in his willingness to identify shortcomings while still appreciating Ellington’s remarkable achievement and the promise the work held for the future. These criticisms of Ellington’s extended works, including his deployment of sophisticated ‘European’ harmony, increased formal complexity and the abandonment of traditional jazz rhythm are all issues which recur as critical shibboleths over the following decades in response to new developments in jazz.

Bebop and Moldy Figs

The 1930s also saw the first book-length studies of jazz, beginning in France with Robert Goffin’s *Aux frontières du jazz* in 1932¹⁸ and Hugues Panassié’s *Jazz Hot* in 1934¹⁹ and with the first serious American critical study of jazz, Winthrop Sargeant’s *Jazz: Hot and Hybrid* following just a few years later.²⁰ But the book that was to have the most influence on the critical controversies of the 1940s was *Jazzmen*, edited by Frederick Ramsey Jr and Charles Edward

¹⁵ Mark Tucker, *The Duke Ellington Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 166.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 173. ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

¹⁸ Robert Goffin, *Aux frontières du jazz* (Paris: Édition du Sagittaire, 1932).

¹⁹ Hugues Panassié, *Le Jazz hot* (Paris: Éditions R. A. Corrèa, 1934).

²⁰ Winthrop Sargeant, *Jazz: Hot and Hybrid* (London: The Jazz Book Club, 1959; first published New York: E. P. Dutton, 1938).

Smith.²¹ Although it was presented as oral history, Ramsey, Smith and their contributors in effect created a poetic mythology for early jazz. The rediscovery and promotion of New Orleans trumpet veteran Bunk Johnson through concerts and numerous recordings provided a living demonstration of ‘authenticity’. The successful revival in the late 1930s and early 1940s of the careers of New Orleans musicians such as Sidney Bechet, ‘Jelly Roll’ Morton and Kid Ory also owed much to the fervent advocacy of traditionalist jazz critics.

What quickly developed was a bitter war of words between the supporters of modern jazz (both swing and later bebop) and the standard-bearers of jazz revivalism, nicknamed ‘moldy figs’ by their critics. While Rudi Blesh, author of *Shining Trumpets: A History of Jazz* was arguably the most vocal supporter of jazz revivalism,²² Leonard Feather and Barry Ulanov (a *Metronome* editor from 1943 to 1955) were the leading defenders of modernism. Blesh’s passionate invective provides a characteristic example of ‘moldy fig’ criticism: ‘Hot swing, with its riffs, is a highly organized form of instrumental noise devoted to the superinducement of a wholly unnatural excitement . . . The mass auto-hypnosis thereupon vents itself in anarchic, orgiastic and dangerous excitement.’²³

Feather’s response to *Shining Trumpets* was *Inside Bebop*, later republished as *Inside Jazz*, which provided a sympathetic introduction to the music with historical context, musical examples and brief biographies of the leading musicians.²⁴ Ulanov, another passionate supporter of modern jazz (and in particular the music of pianist Lennie Tristano), was in many ways a characteristic member of the first generation of jazz critics, but his studies at Columbia with the distinguished New Critic Lionel Trilling anticipated the way in which jazz critical discourse would develop in the 1950s under the aegis of Martin Williams at *The Jazz Review*.

The Jazz Review and New Criticism

By the early 1950s, jazz criticism had achieved a much higher profile nationally, with critic John S. Wilson appointed to the *New York Times* in 1953 and

²¹ Frederic Ramsey Jr and Charles Edward Smith (eds.), *Jazzmen: The Story of Hot Jazz Told in the Lives of the Men Who Created It* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1957; first published New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1939).

²² Rudi Blesh, *Shining Trumpets: A History of Jazz* (New York: Da Capo, 1986; first published Alfred A. Knopf, 1946).

²³ Blesh, *Shining Trumpets*, p. 290.

²⁴ Leonard Feather, *Inside Jazz* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1976; first published *Inside Bebop*, J. J. Robbins, 1949).

Whitney Balliett to the *New Yorker* in 1954. Alongside the major specialist journals (including *Downbeat* and *Metronome*), the *Atlantic Monthly* and *Saturday Review* both published occasional articles about jazz, as did men's magazines such as *Esquire* and *Playboy*. The introduction of the LP led to the rise of liner notes as a regular vehicle for jazz criticism, and major critics, including Martin Williams, Nat Hentoff, Amiri Baraka, Ira Gitler, Dan Morgenstern and Orrin Keepnews, all contributed notes regularly for both the major and the independent record labels.

A key development was the founding of *The Jazz Review* in 1958, co-edited by Williams and Hentoff, which appeared more or less monthly until 1961. In spite of its short life, it played a key role in establishing a new critical approach to writing about jazz. On the surface its content resembled that of other jazz magazines, with record reviews, feature articles, interviews with musicians and so forth. But what distinguished it was a new high seriousness in its editorial policy, and the first article in volume 1 no. 1 was Gunther Schuller's 'Sonny Rollins and the Challenge of Thematic Improvisation', a detailed analytical study of Sonny Rollins' 'Blue Seven', complete with transcribed excerpts.²⁵ Leading musicians were commissioned to review recordings, including Cecil Taylor on John Coltrane, George Russell on Jimmy Giuffrè, Benny Golson on Sonny Rollins and, surprisingly but effectively, Julian 'Cannonball' Adderley on Dave Brubeck. In addition to the in-house team of critics, there were also articles by guest writers, including leading European critics such as André Hodeir and Max Harrison.

Martin Williams seems to have played the central role in creating an identity for *The Jazz Review*, and it was his introduction of a high modernist critical approach to writing about jazz that was to prove so influential over the coming decades. Williams studied English literature and literary criticism at Columbia University, and as he later recalled: 'I was [particularly] influenced by the New Critics. They were talking about a novel as if it were a novel, a poem as if it were a poem, a play as if it were a play.'²⁶ For Williams and other New Critics, a work of art needed to be analysed for its formal qualities, understood with reference only to other works of art and with no regard for either biographical or social contexts. Alongside this, the critic's role was to establish a (very small) canon of accepted 'masterpieces' based on specific criteria, to analyse other works in relation to the canon and to indicate the ways in which they meet or fall short of the criteria. At the same time, a clear,

²⁵ Gunther Schuller, 'Sonny Rollins and the Challenge of Thematic Improvisation', *The Jazz Review* (November 1958).

²⁶ Gennari, *Blowin' Hot and Cold*, p. 186.

overarching, linear historical narrative is constructed on the premise of the organic and seemingly inevitable development of the art form through the contribution of a small number of key innovators and downplaying the roles of more marginal or peripheral figures.

Williams was also deeply impressed with André Hodeir's *Jazz: Its Evolution and Essence*, first published in English in 1956, whose highly selective approach to and relatively detailed technical analysis of jazz must have suggested a way in which he could adapt his studies of English literature to music.²⁷ Hodeir, a distinguished composer in both classical music and jazz, establishes the highly self-conscious seriousness of his approach in the introduction, which quotes both Paul Valéry and Albert Camus. At a time when the acrimonious disputes between the 'moldy figs' and the modernists were still fresh in the memory, particularly in France, Hodeir argued for a view of jazz which recognises a logical, orderly evolution in which both New Orleans jazz and bebop are equally valued as part of a continuum. Just as importantly, he values the presence of formal compositional processes in improvisation, or 'symmetry and contrast' as he describes it,²⁸ and uses motivic analysis to demonstrate unity. Both of these elements were to become key constituents of Williams' approach.

Williams' New Critical approach to jazz is most clearly embodied in *The Jazz Tradition*, in which each chapter focuses on a single major figure, ranging in the first edition from King Oliver to Ornette Coleman.²⁹ The role of each musician in the development of the music is presented, and key recordings are identified and discussed. Although the main emphasis is on the musician as improviser, Williams also recognises the role of composers such as Duke Ellington and Thelonious Monk who supposedly 'consolidated' the innovations of their improviser predecessors (Louis Armstrong and Charlie Parker, respectively, for Ellington and Monk). A canon of major recordings is delineated and, indeed, was eventually published in 1973 as the *Smithsonian Collection of Classic Jazz*, a set of LPs with an accompanying book. Although Williams' rather dry and formal style has not aged well, his selection of 'masterpieces' was intelligently made, and allowing for the time constraints, few contemporary critics would disagree with his choice of key recordings by (for example) Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Charlie Parker and Thelonious Monk.

²⁷ André Hodeir, *Jazz: its Evolution and Essence*, trans. David Noakes (New York: Black Cat, 1961; first published New York: Grove Press, 1956).

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

²⁹ Martin Williams, *The Jazz Tradition*, new ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993; 1st ed. 1970).

Williams was an acute and sensitive listener and his writings had a widely acknowledged influence on several subsequent generations of jazz critics, including writers as varied in their approaches as Amiri Baraka, Gary Giddins and Stanley Crouch. Above all, his use of an established critical discourse, intelligently applied to jazz, was central in establishing it as an art form worthy of serious attention. His vigorous and sustained advocacy of Ornette Coleman in the late 1950s, a time when Coleman was facing considerable resistance from both musicians and listeners, provided a model of critical open-mindedness to new musical developments.

More important, and in common with both Hodeir and Schuller, was a narrowly defined understanding of the nature of improvisation. In all three writers, there is a seeming frustration with what they regard as the limitations of improvisation. As André Hodeir expressed it: 'many recorded improvisations suffer from a lack of continuity that becomes overwhelmingly apparent upon careful and repeated listening'. In other words, the improvisations lack a sense of balanced phrase structure, sequential repetition, motivic development and other recognised elements of traditional composition in Western classical music. But interestingly, he also correctly recognises Charlie Parker's 'melodic discontinuity that yet avoids incoherence'.³⁰

Gunther Schuller's article 'Sonny Rollins and Thematic Improvisation' in the first issue of *Jazz Review* goes even further, stating that 'The average improvisation is mostly a stringing together of unrelated ideas', and his article attempts to demonstrate that Rollins' solo in 'Blue 7' is exceptional in showing a developed and subtle use of motivic development, comparable to that of a written composition.³¹ In his book *The Swing Era*, he likewise praises Bunny Berigan's two solos on Benny Goodman's 'King Porter Stomp' as 'miniature compositions which many writing-down [*sic*] composers would be envious of having created, even after days of work'.³² On the one hand, this begs the question as to whether these solos had been carefully developed and refined by Berigan over many performances (as we know is the case with Berigan's recording of 'I Can't Get Started', which Schuller also discusses), and on the other, it avoids tackling the more fundamental issue of whether improvisation *should* always, by its nature, resemble written composition.³³

Williams' tacit assumption that improvisation should in some way demonstrate the particular 'coherence' of written composition is most apparent in his self-confessed critical resistance to John Coltrane. Writing about his 1961 Village Vanguard recordings of 'Impressions' and 'Chasin' the Trane' he

³⁰ Hodeir, *Jazz*, p. 104. ³¹ Schuller, 'Sonny Rollins', 6. ³² Schuller, *Swing Era*, p. 468.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 471.

makes this explicit: 'Coltrane's use of reiterated phrases on these pieces seems to me neither sequential nor organizational nor truly developmental', implying that some or all of these qualities are essential elements of coherent improvising while remaining vague about why Coltrane's almost obsessively motivic improvising does not fit his criteria.³⁴

Gunther Schuller's two major books on jazz (*Early Jazz* and *The Swing Era*) are simultaneously a culmination of the 1950s critical tradition and seminal works of jazz musicology and analysis.³⁵ Both books include numerous notated examples (of varying accuracy) and rely on the relatively limited technique of motivic analysis as a means of demonstrating musical unity. *Early Jazz* also retains the concept of an historical sequence of major innovators whose work can best be appreciated through a narrowly defined canon of masterpieces. However, Schuller's omnivorous musical curiosity led him to adopt a more inclusive approach than Williams, and *Early Jazz* includes a detailed consideration of the then little-known trumpeter Jabbo Smith, a lengthy footnote on Paul Whiteman, who for decades had been a target of critical opprobrium, and high praise of several African American territory bands (e.g. Alphonso Trent, Jesse Stone and Floyd Troy), whose names, much less their recordings would have been virtually unknown even to seasoned jazz listeners in the 1960s.

This inclusivity is even more evident in *The Swing Era*, where alongside detailed consideration of the canonical soloists and big bands there is plentiful and often sympathetic consideration of less heralded musicians and ensembles, including Erskine Hawkins, Boots and His Buddies, and Horace Henderson. There is often a sense of revisionism in his judgements about major artists, including his very high praise for the traditionally undervalued bands of Cab Calloway and Chick Webb as well as for well-known white bandleaders such as Glenn Miller, Tommy Dorsey and Harry James, who were rarely discussed seriously by jazz critics. He values the early 1940s recordings of the Count Basie band with their more considered arrangements over Basie's universally more widely admired recordings of the late 1930s, which by contrast emphasise the band's outstanding soloists such as Lester Young and Herschel Evans. He likewise prefers Benny Goodman's early 1940s recordings with sophisticated arrangements by Eddie Sauter and Mel Powell to Goodman's more celebrated earlier recordings. In both these latter cases, it is clear that Schuller's own interest in developing a 'third stream' of

³⁴ Martin Williams, *The Jazz Tradition*, new ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993; 1st ed. 1970), p. 233.

³⁵ Gunther Schuller, *Early Jazz* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968).

contemporary music which would combine jazz with more 'classical' elements predisposed him to champion composers and arrangers who were attempting to break away from the relatively formulaic approach of much Swing Era music. It is also interesting to note that in his chapter on small group jazz he includes a number of full transcriptions of the rhythm section along with the solo improvisations. This foreshadows what would become accepted practice in the 1990s, when soloist-rhythm section interaction became increasingly recognised as fundamental to the critical understanding of jazz performance.

Williams' co-editor of *Jazz Review*, Nat Hentoff, was another of the most significant figures of this generation and contributed extensively to all the major jazz periodicals as well as the mainstream press, including a long tenure at the *Village Voice*. From 1960 to 1961, Hentoff was co-owner and manager of Candid records, and the range and quality of the forty albums Hentoff produced for his label are a lasting testament to his discrimination as a critic. They include many of the most important jazz albums of the time, including *Mingus Presents Mingus*, *The World of Cecil Taylor*, Booker Little's *Up Front* and Max Roach's *We Insist! Freedom Now Suite*.

Another high-profile and much-admired writer whose career began in the 1950s was the longtime *New Yorker* critic Whitney Balliett. Balliett's literary style, rich in sometimes extravagant metaphor and vivid description, stands in contrast to the high seriousness of the New Critical methodology of Williams and the more analytical approach of Schuller. His extended series of profiles, beginning in 1962, utilises extensive quotations from interviews with his subjects interspersed with biographical and/or critical reflections. This became and has remained a much utilised format in jazz criticism:

The pianist and composer Joe Bushkin is the size of a bean pole, but he is highly detailed. He has a handsome, foxy face, a sharp nose, wavy black hair that is turning gray, and Lincoln eyes. His face, worn by the winds of music, is wrinkled . . . He becomes a dervish when he plays . . . He sways back and forth, as if he were rowing in thick weather, sometimes leaning back so far he disappears. His small feet dance intricately and furiously beneath the piano, and he marks successful arpeggios by shooting his right leg into the air.³⁶

Although Balliett wrote perceptive reviews of modern jazz musicians, his sympathies were clearly with an earlier generation of swing-era musicians, and he is at his best writing about Pee Wee Russell, Ben Webster, Henry 'Red' Allen or, an especial favourite, the great drummer 'Big Sid' Catlett.

³⁶ Reprinted in Whitney Balliett, 'Demi-Centennial', *American Musicians 11: Seventy-One Portraits in Jazz* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2005), p. 245.

The 1960s and Free Jazz

Amiri Baraka had, superficially at least, a typically varied career as a music critic in the 1960s, writing concert and record reviews, liner notes, promoting concerts, co-editing a short-lived mimeographed journal devoted to Black Arts (*The Cricket*) and producing recordings for his own equally short-lived record label (provocatively named Jihad). However, in contrast to most other jazz critics, he also had a distinguished career as a poet and playwright. He produced a recording of his play *A Black Mass* with incidental music by Sun Ra, and recited his own poetry on recordings by both the New York Art Quartet and Sunny Murray. His two books of criticism from the 1960s, *Blues People* (1963) and *Black Music* (1967), are among the most influential books of the time.³⁷ They form a neatly contrasted pair; *Blues People* is an extended essay, attempting to place African American music within its social and political context, while *Black Music* is a collection of Baraka's music journalism between 1959 and 1967.

Blues People was truly groundbreaking, in that it was the first book by an African American writer to address at length the issue of the relationship between blues, jazz and the African American experience. Baraka's key refrain was that 'The most expressive Negro music of any given period will be an exact reflection of what the Negro himself is.'³⁸ He acknowledges the quality of much white jazz, but considers it 'at its most profound instance, a learned art'.³⁹ He sees bebop with its 'wilfully harsh, anti-assimilationist sound' as representing a rejection of post-war American middle-class consensus by African American musicians, but regards 1950s hard bop, with its use of blues and gospel materials, as self-conscious, stylised and commercially driven. Finally, Baraka interprets the burgeoning avant-garde of Coleman, Coltrane and Taylor as an attempt to 'restore to jazz its valid separation from, and anarchic disregard of Western popular forms'.⁴⁰

Consisting of a number of disparate reviews, interviews and short articles, *Black Music* provides an extraordinarily broad and vivid panorama of jazz in the 1960s set against a background of the rise of the civil rights movement and black nationalism. Although he writes sympathetically about the earlier generation of modernists (for example Monk, Rollins and Roy Haynes), he is at his most characteristic and passionate writing about the avant-garde. Baraka was a discriminating critic, and almost all of the artists he supported, including Albert Ayler, Pharoah Sanders, Cecil Taylor, Sun Ra and Archie Shepp,

³⁷ LeRoi Jones [Amiri Baraka], *Blues People: Negro Music in White America* (New York: William Morrow, 1963); *Black Music* (New York: William Morrow, 1967).

³⁸ Jones, *Blues People*, p. 137. ³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 153. ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

developed into major figures. Fifty years on, the freshness and vividness of his critical responses remain impressive. Like Whitney Balliett (although with radically different musical taste and prose style) he was a superb stylist, using an extravagantly free-flowing, hyperbolic and improvisatory language which manages to capture much of the energy and unpredictability of the music he admired, particularly when writing about John Coltrane:

TRANE is now a scope of feeling. A more fixed traveller, whose wildest onslaughts are now gorgeous artefacts not even deaf people should miss.⁴¹

The long tag of 'Afro-Blue', with Elvin thrashing and cursing beneath Trane's line is unbelievable. Beautiful has nothing to do with it, but it is. (I got up and danced while writing these notes, screaming at Elvin to cool it) You feel when this is finished, amidst the crashing cymbals, bombarded tom-toms, and above it all Coltrane's soprano singing like any song you can remember, that it really did not have to end at all, that this music could have gone on and on like the wild pulse of all living.⁴²

Significantly, one of Baraka's first published essays was in *The Jazz Review*, and *Blues People* has a number of quotations from leading white critics, including Marshall Stearns and Martin Williams. Like Williams, he founders when he attempts to use technical language to describe the music (for example, they both have trouble attempting to describe John Coltrane's musical language of the early 1960s). However, as the decade progressed, Baraka moved further away from the language and assumptions of New Criticism, and towards a critical agenda shaped by his increasingly radical political views. An interesting measure of this is his changing attitude towards the participation of white musicians in jazz. In the earlier part of the decade, he frequently praises white musicians such as Roswell Rudd, Charlie Haden and Scott LaFaro, often without mentioning their ethnicity. But by 1966, in his essay 'The Burton Greene Affair', he contrasts the 'beautiful writhe of the black spirit-energy sound' of black saxophonists Marion Brown and Pharoah Sanders with the 'white, super-hip (MoDERN) pianist' Burton Greene, described as 'banging aimlessly at the keyboard'.⁴³ Greene was a much-respected musician who collaborated regularly with many leading African American musicians, and Baraka's scorn was clearly a reflection of his own deepening engagement with the black nationalist movement, rather than a strictly critical evaluation.

In the final essay of *Black Music*, 'The Changing Same (R&B and New Black Music)', first published in 1967, Baraka argues that both 'Rhythm and Blues' (in particular the soul music of the mid-sixties) and the New Black Music (Free Jazz) are a direct expression of the African American's position in American

⁴¹ Jones, *Black Music*, p. 173. ⁴² Jones, *Black Music*, p. 66. ⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 137–8.

society, a reiteration of the fundamental premise of *Blues People*, but with a new militancy. He also sees an all-embracing spirituality as a key ingredient in the music (John Coltrane, Albert Ayler, Pharoah Sanders and Sun Ra), as well as political activism or 'social consciousness' (Charles Mingus, Max Roach and Archie Shepp). It is interesting to note that Baraka's bringing together of Free Jazz and the popular African American music of the mid-sixties in one overarching aesthetic anticipates a whole range of musical developments in the late 1960s and 1970s. These include Miles Davis' fusion as well as the work of many musicians who combined Free Jazz with elements of popular black music, often with a spiritual and/or political agenda, including Archie Shepp, the Art Ensemble of Chicago, Byard Lancaster, Phil Ranelin and Joe McPhee.

The second major critical study of jazz by an African American writer was A. B. Spellman's *Four Lives in the Bebop Business*. In chapters on Cecil Taylor, Ornette Coleman, Herbie Nichols and Jackie McLean, Spellman adopted the format of Balliett's *New Yorker* profiles and skilfully interweaves lengthy quotations from interviews with his own commentary. However, in contrast to Balliett, Spellman's emphasis is on the challenges faced by his subjects in their professional lives, and in addition to their reflections on music, he elicits remarkably candid views on race, drugs and the barriers faced by African American musicians in a business dominated by whites.

Much of the critical reaction to 1960s Free Jazz in the mainstream jazz press bore a striking resemblance to the rhetoric of the 'moldy figs' in the 1940s. In the 23 November 1962 issue of *Downbeat*, Kenneth Tynan wrote of a live performance of John Coltrane's quintet: 'Coltrane and Dolphy seem intent on deliberately destroying [swing] . . . They seem bent on pursuing an anarchistic course in their music that can but be termed anti-jazz.'⁴⁴ Ironically, it was Leonard Feather, the champion of modern jazz in the 1940s, who became one of the most outspoken critics of Free Jazz.

In general, jazz criticism of the 1960s tended to view Free Jazz as a sociopolitical phenomenon, with the actual musical content left unanalysed, and it was Ekkehard Jost, a European jazz musician and writer who first attempted to explicate the music in a way which parallels Gunther Schuller's approach in *Early Jazz*. Jost is keen to demonstrate the rigour and intellectual cogency of Free Jazz, and uses numerous transcriptions, diagrams (Don Cherry's *Complete Communion*), minute-by-minute descriptions of recordings (Cecil Taylor's 'Unit Structures') and even 'electro-acoustic registration of the levels' (Albert Ayler's 'Witches and Devils') to underline his

⁴⁴ Carl Woideck (ed.), *The John Coltrane Companion* (New York: Omnibus Press, 1998).

case.⁴⁵ In his analysis of John Coltrane's *Ascension*, he compares the approaches of the different soloists, using Archie Shepp's distinction between 'post-Ornette players' and 'energy-sound players', the former employing motivic and sequential elements as a basis for improvisation, and the latter using timbre and vocalised sound.⁴⁶ He identifies John Tchicai's solo as being unified by a recurring minor third plus major second motif derived from the opening motif of the piece, whereas Pharoah Sanders' solo contains 'hardly any lines that have a recognisable context', serving only a 'kinetic purpose'. He furthermore sees Coltrane's own solo as uniting these two approaches 'that of tone colour and that of melody-and-motive'.⁴⁷ In contrast to Williams' insistence on the primacy of motivic development and sequence, Jost recognises and attempts to describe alternative ways of creating musical coherence.

If Baraka was both theoretician and prophet, Spellman the literary portraitist and Jost the musician analyst, then the journalist and photographer Valerie Wilmer might best be described as the social historian of Free Jazz. *As Serious as Your Life* vividly communicates both the tribulations and triumphs of the burgeoning New York avant-garde jazz community of the 1960s. She also devotes two chapters to the role of women in jazz, addressing their ambivalent stature with a directness unusual at the time.

Ralph Ellison, Albert Murray and Stanley Crouch

The occasional jazz criticism of the African American novelist Ralph Ellison provided the starting point for two of the most prominent jazz critics at the end of the twentieth century: Albert Murray and Stanley Crouch. In his famous review of *Blues People*, Ellison argued against Baraka's view of jazz as an exclusive expression of a separate African American culture, seeing it instead as an expression of a pluralistic, multifaceted American culture.⁴⁸ For Ellison, the African American experience was 'an important segment of the larger American experience – not lying at the bottom of it, but intertwined, diffused in its very texture'.⁴⁹ Ellison also viewed jazz as a form of social interaction both among the musicians and with their audience (especially an audience of dancers): 'The blues, the singer, the band and the dancers formed the vital whole of jazz as an institutional form, and even today neither part is quite complete without the rest.'⁵⁰ This interaction is in stark contrast

⁴⁵ Ekkehard Jost, *Free Jazz* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1994; first published Universal Edition, 1974).

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 90. ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

⁴⁸ Ralph Ellison, *Shadow and Act* (New York: Random House, 1964), pp. 247–58. ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 244.

to the role of the critic as aloof bystander that John Gennari evokes in his account of John Hammond and Leonard Feather at the Savoy Ballroom in 1935.⁵¹

But most importantly for late twentieth-century debates about jazz, Ellison sees the music as essentially life-affirming and the role of the artist as a search for an individual voice within the tradition. He brings all these strands together in one memorable description of 1930s jam sessions:

The delicate balance struck between strong individual personality and group during these early jam sessions was a marvel of social organisation. I had learned too that the end of all this discipline and technical mastery was the desire to express an affirmative way of life through its musical tradition and that this tradition insisted that each artist achieve this creativity within its frame.⁵²

Ellison's essays on the guitarist Charlie Christian (a personal friend) and the singer Jimmy Rushing are marvellous evocations by a great writer of Oklahoma City in the late 1920s, capturing the poetry of time and place, and the interweaving of jazz within the African American community:

In those days, I lived near the Rock Island roundhouse, where, with a steady clanging of bells and a great groaning of wheels along the rails, switch engines made up trains of freight unceasingly. Yet often in the late-spring night I could hear Rushing as I lay four blocks away in bed, carrying to me as clear as a full-bored riff on 'Hot Lips' Paige's [*sic*] horn. Heard thus, across the dark blocks lined with locust trees, through the night throbbing with the natural aural imagery of the blues, with high-balling trains, departing bells, lonesome guitar chords simmering up from a shack in the alley – it was easy to imagine the voice as setting the pattern to which the instruments of the Blue Devils Orchestra and all the random sounds of night arose, affirming, as it were, some ideal native to the time and to the land.⁵³

Albert Murray was a close friend of Ellison's, and it is Ellison's aesthetic which underlies Murray's major work of jazz criticism, *Stomping the Blues*.⁵⁴ Murray shares with Ellison his view of 'blues music' (which for Murray includes jazz) as 'affirmation and celebration':⁵⁵

The blues as such are synonymous with low spirits. Blues music is not. With all its preoccupation with the most disturbing aspects of life, it is something contrived specifically to be performed as entertainment. Not only is its express purpose to make people feel good, which is to say in high spirits, but in the

⁵¹ Gennari, *Blowin' Hot and Cold*, p. 23. ⁵² Ellison, *Shadow and Act*, p. 189. ⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 242–3.

⁵⁴ Albert Murray, *Stomping the Blues* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976).

⁵⁵ Murray, *Stomping the Blues*, p. 166.

process of doing so it is actually expected to generate a disposition that is both elegantly playful and heroic in its nonchalance.⁵⁶

For Murray, jazz is both communal ritual and a force for social cohesion within the African American community, but he also shares with Ellison the perception of jazz as a central component of a broader American culture. He considers Duke Ellington as ‘the most representative American composer’ in comparison with Ives, Copland, Cage and Carter, among others, whom he describes as ‘if not downright European, at least as European as American’.⁵⁷

Murray is exceptional among jazz critics in that his writing had a very tangible influence on the development of both a major artist (Wynton Marsalis) and a significant cultural institution (Jazz at Lincoln Center), whose establishment owed much to the advocacy of Murray’s friend Stanley Crouch. Crouch was undoubtedly the most vocal, provocative and controversial jazz critic of the late twentieth century. In the early part of his career, he worked as a drummer, performing and recording with many of the leading avant-garde musicians of the 1970s. He gradually became disillusioned with the avant-garde and by 1980 he had given up performing and begun to write jazz criticism. Many of Crouch’s basic themes stem directly from Ellison and Murray, including the affirmative nature of jazz and its dependence upon tradition.

For Crouch, ‘the irrefutable jazz fundamentals that have maintained themselves from generation to generation [are]: 4/4 swing, blues, the meditative ballad, and the Spanish tinge’.⁵⁸ His *bêtes noires* are the ‘avant-garde frauds and sellouts to the rock-and-roll God of fusion’,⁵⁹ as well as any attempts to broaden the remit of jazz to include elements outside of his four ‘irrefutable fundamentals’: ‘[Jazz is] now under assault by those who would love to make jazz no more than an “improvised” music free of definition.’⁶⁰ ‘Putting the White Man in Charge’, his notorious attack on trumpeter Dave Douglas, is only a more extreme example of Crouch’s polemical intolerance of jazz falling outside his strict definition.⁶¹ Crouch’s ‘fundamentalism’, with its clear setting of parameters and boundaries for jazz, carries with it distant and paradoxical echoes of the critical controversy over Ellington’s extended works, the rhetoric of the ‘moldy figs’ and the ‘anti-jazz’ of Kenneth Tynan.

But putting aside his polemics and his famously (and sometimes literally) combative approach, Crouch remains a musically astute and intelligent critic. In his lengthy interview with pianist Ethan Iverson, his genuine enthusiasm

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 45. ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

⁵⁸ Stanley Crouch, *Considering Genius* (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2006), p. 210. ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 228.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 211. ⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 232–4.

for and detailed knowledge of a wide range of musical styles is evident and he speaks warmly of the Henry Threadgill Sextett [*sic*], Air, Julius Hemphill and the Art Ensemble of Chicago, all standard-bearers of the avant-garde.⁶² In 'The Presence is Always the Point' he even describes Herbie Hancock's fusion band Mwandishi as 'one of the great ones [ensembles] of that era and perhaps of any'.⁶³ He has written about his admiration not only for Ellison and Murray, but also for Williams, Schuller, Balliett and even Baraka (in his pre-black-nationalist phase), and his writing can at various times suggest the high seriousness of Williams, the extravagant metaphors of Balliett or the hyperbolic prose-poetry of Baraka:

On the front line were the Texas tenors: Arnett Cobb, who stands on his metal crutches and shapes each saxophone note like an individual bellows crafted to build heroic fire; Illinois Jacquet, a barrelhouse bull on wheels roaring into red capes; and Buddy Tate, who can rattle the pulpit of the bandstand with his sensuous renditions of blues-toned scripture.⁶⁴

Whereas both Ellison and Murray grew up in the Swing Era and were ultimately most at home with (if not positively nostalgic for) the music of the 1930s, Crouch saw himself as an advocate for both the present and the future of jazz and determined to help shape its development. In his 1986 essay 'Jazz Criticism and its Effect on the Art Form', Crouch set out his agenda: 'What I am concerned about, and what I see as the task facing the serious writer about jazz, is how the literature on the music might help create a following for the art in this country that would parallel the listening public that European concert music has.'⁶⁵

Crouch's advocacy was crucial in the founding in 1987 of Jazz at Lincoln Center (JALC), initially as a concert series with Wynton Marsalis as Artistic Director and Crouch as Artistic Consultant. In 1991 it became a department within Lincoln Center with a year-round programme of activities, and in 2004 its own purpose-built venues opened at Columbus Circle. The establishment of JALC and what was perceived by some to be its narrow range of programming, including a neglect of avant-garde jazz and allegations of 'Crow Jim' or reverse racism in its sparing employment of white musicians, was the subject of endless commentary and acrimonious debate in both the specialist and the mainstream press. The controversy almost threatened to overshadow what was by any standards a remarkable achievement: the creation of a major

⁶² Stanley Crouch interviewed by Ethan Iverson, originally posted on Do the Math (site now defunct) (February 2007), available at <https://ethaniverson.com/interviews> (accessed January 2018).

⁶³ Crouch, *Considering Genius*, p. 275. ⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 194–5. ⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

publicly funded arts organisation dedicated to jazz and headed by a young African American musician.

Crouch's view of Marsalis was based clearly on Martin Williams's concept of key innovators leading to step changes in the evolution of the music. Whereas Williams saw Louis Armstrong (the improviser) as innovator and Duke Ellington (the composer) as consolidator, Crouch sees both roles fulfilled in Marsalis, with the substitution of Gillespie for Armstrong:

As the youngster developed and his vision clarified, he went on to become both the Dizzy Gillespie and the Duke Ellington of his generation. He created a new plane of technique and rhythmic complexity for his instrument as Gillespie had and went on to compose perhaps the most wide-ranging and impressive body of music since the death of Ellington.⁶⁶

Jazz Criticism and Postmodernism

As jazz critic of the *Village Voice* from 1973 until 2003, Gary Giddins held a position of unusual prominence in the mainstream media. His inspiration and mentor as a critic was Martin Williams, but in response to the increasingly diverse range of jazz which developed in the 1970s and 1980s, Giddins broke ranks with Williams' vision of a monolithic, single stream of jazz tradition in favour of a broader critical perspective. In his essay on pianist Jaki Byard in his 1985 anthology *Rhythm-a-ning*, he admits that 'For more than a decade, jazz has been unencumbered by the sort of lodestar genius who so effectively points new paths that his contemporaries lose sight of the old ones.'⁶⁷ Whereas Stanley Crouch saw Wynton Marsalis as the next great innovator in Williams's lineage, Giddins viewed Marsalis's music as only one aspect of a broader 'neo-classicism', or what would later be described as postmodernism. Giddins admired (if occasionally overstated) the blend of innovation and respect for a wide range of jazz traditions in the work of musicians as diverse as Muhal Richard Abrams, Julius Hemphill, John Carter and Don Pullen.⁶⁸

This tension between visions of jazz defined as a single, narrowly defined discipline or as a broad church of diversity and innovation was central to the debates about the music in the 1980s and 1990s, particularly in the United States. In the introduction to his 1998 book *Visions of Jazz* (with its carefully chosen plural in the title) Giddins wrote disparagingly of 'the guardians of musical morality ... [who] mean to cleanse jazz of impurities transmitted

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 289. ⁶⁷ Gary Giddins, *Rhythm-a-ning* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 3.

⁶⁸ Gary Giddins, *Visions of Jazz* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

through contact with the European classics, American pop, new music, and other mongrel breeds'.⁶⁹

Francis Davis succeeded Giddins at the *Village Voice* and was another champion of stylistic diversity. Although he was less prolific than Giddins, his reviews and profiles represent some of the best jazz writing of the past thirty years. His profiles of Sheila Jordan, Roswell Rudd and Charles Gayle are excellent examples of his particular affinity for musicians he calls 'outcats': artists whose uncompromising individuality has tended to marginalise their work. Howard Mandel also embraced the plurality of contemporary jazz, but whereas Davis leaned towards a pessimistic view of the future of jazz, Mandel celebrated the ability of musicians to constantly renew and reinvigorate their art. Their contrasting world views are neatly encapsulated in their book titles: Davis' *Bebop and Nothingness* and *Jazz and its Discontents* as compared to Mandel's *Future Jazz*.⁷⁰ Mandel showed a particular awareness and appreciation of the New York 'downtown' scene of the 1980s as well as the Brooklyn-based M-Base coalition of Steve Coleman.

Apart from the central issues of tradition versus innovation and the 'legitimacy' of stylistic diversity within jazz, a third important area of critical discussion was the role of composition in contemporary jazz, echoing Gunther Schuller's ideal of the 'third stream' in the 1950s and 60s. In a 1983 essay, Giddins quotes Anthony Davis on the 'shift from the pre-eminence of the performer, the player, to what I believe is the natural ascendance of the composer'.⁷¹ Davis's street-cred as an improviser (with Wadada Leo Smith, David Murray and James Newton among others) combined with his success as a composer of large-scale notated works (including his acclaimed opera *X*) gave him a high visibility in the 1980s, and he was profiled by Giddins, Davis and Mandel. Henry Threadgill, James Newton, Anthony Braxton and George Lewis all developed highly individual approaches to reconciling notation and predetermined structure with improvisation, and all received considerable critical attention.

A particular favourite of the critics in the 1980s was David Murray, whose long, freewheeling tenor improvisations drew on the avant-garde tradition (particularly Albert Ayler) as well as earlier players such as Paul Gonsalves and Ben Webster, in contexts ranging from solo saxophone to octet and big band. Murray was also a member of the World Saxophone Quartet, whose approach

⁶⁹ Giddins, *Visions*, p. 8.

⁷⁰ Francis Davis, *Bebop and Nothingness: Jazz and Pop at the End of the Century* (New York: Schirmer Books 1996); Francis Davis, *Jazz and its Discontents: A Francis Davis Reader* (New York: Da Capo Press 2004); Howard Mandel, *Future Jazz* (New York: Oxford University Press 1999).

⁷¹ Giddins, *Rhythm-a-ning*, p. 59.

seemed, at the time, to typify stylistic diversity and the combination of tradition and innovation, as well as a successful balance of compositional structure and improvisation. It is worth noting that Martin Williams, in a late essay, identified the four members of the quartet (Julius Hemphill, David Murray, Oliver Lake and Hamiet Bluiett) as collectively taking on the mantle of Morton, Ellington, Monk and Mingus as composer-consolidators of the avant-garde tradition stretching back to the 1960s.⁷²

African American critics have, of course, continued to play a central role in developing discourses about jazz. A key work of the 1970s is *Notes and Tones: Musician-to-Musician Interviews* by the drummer Arthur Taylor, a selection of his interviews with a wide range of musicians.⁷³ As both an African American and a much-respected musician, he was able to broach controversial topics related to politics, race and American society, as well as music, and to elicit frank replies from his interviewees. Dizzy Gillespie, interviewed by Taylor in 1970 commented: 'I think the idea now is for blacks to write about the history of our music. It's time for us to do it ourselves and tell it like it is . . . The whites have a whitewash look at our music.'⁷⁴

A comparison of the critical views of saxophonist Sonny Stitt by a white critic (Martin Williams) and an African American critic (Gerald Early) provides a clear illustration of the difference between a strictly formalist approach to criticism and one that situates the music within its social context in the African American community. Williams notes Stitt's dependence on Charlie Parker's style, while also acknowledging his own individuality: 'He simply finds his own voice in Parker's musical language. He may construct a solo almost entirely out of Parker's ideas, but he will play them so as to convince you that he discovered each of them for himself.'⁷⁵ Early acknowledges the Parker influence, but notes that 'Stitt reached an entirely different audience from Bird's. Parker appealed to the white and black hipsters and intellectuals; Stitt, on the other hand, was a great draw for the ordinary, working-class folk whose favourite jazzmen did not have to be cultural rebels or the subject of articles in *Esquire*.'⁷⁶ Early also reminisces about the tenor sax battles Stitt held with Gene Ammons in Philadelphia nightclubs, recalling Ralph Ellison's evocation of Oklahoma City in the 1920s: 'During Stitt's solos, the chorus would be: "Make it talk, Sonny, make it talk," or "Blow that shit, my man, and work it on out.'" The music was extraordinarily loud; on a summer evening

⁷² Williams, *The Jazz Tradition*, pp. 254–9.

⁷³ Arthur Taylor, *Notes and Tones: Musician-to-Musician Interviews*, 2nd revised ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

⁷⁵ Martin Williams, *Jazz in Its Time* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 112.

⁷⁶ Gerald Early, *Tuxedo Junction* (Hopewell: Ecco Perss, 1989), p. 321.

you could stand outside the nightclub, as I did when I was a youngster, and hear everything quite clearly.⁷⁷

Greg Tate is another African American writer whose journalism includes social, racial and political commentary as well as jazz criticism. His style has much of the flair and linguistic energy of Baraka at his best, and like Baraka, he understands the music as the central expression of African American experience. In his obituary of Miles Davis he wrote: 'For some of us coming from the African-centric tip, Miles Davis *is* the black aesthetic. He doesn't just represent it, he defines it . . . What black also meant to Miles was supreme intelligence, elegance, creativity, and funk. Miles worked black culture encyclopedically – from the outhouse to the penthouse and back again.'⁷⁸ Unlike many critics, both white and African American, Tate sees Miles' fusion music of the 1970s not as a sell-out, but as a precursor of a wide range of contemporary musical styles: 'Punk, hip-hop, house, new jack swing, world-beat, ambient music, and dub are all presaged in the records Miles made between 1969 and 1975.'⁷⁹

Jazz and the Internet

With the rapidly evolving medium of the Internet, any summary of current trends must be inevitably provisional and in danger of being almost immediately out of date. At the same time, it is impossible to omit discussion of it, because it is increasingly the case that much of the most engaging and intelligent jazz criticism is now online. I have restricted my comments to websites, blogs and forums which are relatively stable and have had a significant lifespan.

The major print journals all have online presences, with tables of contents of current issues, news items and brief CD reviews or other 'tasters' for their magazines. Bill Shoemaker's *Point of Departure* is a free access online journal including feature articles, interviews, CD reviews and editorial comment, and unusually for the medium, with a format and article lengths comparable to print journals.⁸⁰

There are innumerable jazz bloggers, including critics, musicians and non-professional but often highly knowledgeable fans. Pianist Ethan Iverson's blog *Do the Math* (<https://ethaniverson.com>) is an outstanding example of the potential of the blog as a medium for serious criticism.⁸¹ It includes

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 322. ⁷⁸ Greg Tate, *Flyboy in the Buttermilk* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), p. 86.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 88. ⁸⁰ Available at www.pointofdeparture.org.

⁸¹ Available at <https://ethaniverson.com> [*Do the Math*, now on Iverson's personal site].

information about Iverson's own performance activities and masterclasses, but also features detailed articles and interviews with musicians. His lengthy essays on Bud Powell, Lennie Tristano, James P. Johnson and Ornette Coleman are of a very high standard, informed by his exemplary musicianship. His interviews (such as with Billy Hart, George Cables, Keith Jarrett and Bob Cranshaw), are unconstrained by normal print length, and often elicit a level of both technical detail and personal candour that is rare in print journalism. His interview with Wynton Marsalis and his follow-up posts offer a laudably fair-minded view of Marsalis' music and the critical controversy surrounding it, and in his interview with Stanley Crouch he tackles head-on some of Crouch's more controversial pronouncements, eliciting lively and good-humoured responses from a famously combative critic.

The medium of the blog has enabled non-professionals critics to contribute in ways that were barely possible in the pre-Internet age. Begun in 1968, Jan Evensmo's extensive series of 'solographies' (single artist discographies with critical comments about the improvised solos) were initially published privately, and quickly became difficult to obtain and expensive collector's items, but his publication and continuous updating of them on his *Jazz Archeology* (sic) website has made a vast archive readily available.⁸² Rodger Coleman's *Nuvoid: Sun Ra Sunday* is an ongoing and marathon survey of Sun Ra's vast recorded output, including both officially issued recordings and countless bootlegs.⁸³

There are numerous jazz discussion forums on the web. The *Organissimo* forum includes among its members many well-known musicians, critics, record producers and jazz educators, as well as numerous fans.⁸⁴ As is inevitable with the open nature of the medium, the discussions vary enormously, but at its best there can be a remarkably intelligent, well-informed critical debate which manages to capture a wide range of opinions (and prejudices) about the music past and present.

In some respects blog culture may be seen as a return to the spirit of 1930s jazz criticism, with its proliferation of short-lived magazines, its blurring of professional and amateur perspectives and above all its sense of highly personal and passionate engagement with the music. In a similar way, the discussion forum at its best replicates on a global scale the informal, lively debates characteristic of the 'Hot Clubs' of the same period. But the scale and variety of instantly available material on the Internet far outstrips the amount of

⁸² Available at www.jazzarcheology.com.

⁸³ Available at nuvoid.blogspot.com [ceased uploading new content as of November 2016].

⁸⁴ Available at www.organissimo.org.

critical writing available in any previous period. This has inevitably created a highly disconnected and fragmented corpus of writing, which lacks the sustained editorial framework provided by print journals such as *Downbeat* and *Metronome* in an earlier era. As Ethan Iverson remarked in a posting on the *Organissimo* forum: ‘In the postmodern age, it seems like everything is quite fragmented, and my work both at the piano and on the blog was never intended to be more than one of those fragments.’⁸⁵ At its worst, this fragmentation can produce a level of almost impenetrable critical background noise, but at its best, there is a richness and diversity of perspectives from critics, musicians and fans that can provide a deeply rewarding counterpoint to the listening experience, and which bodes well for the continuation of what has been a long and remarkably sustained tradition of jazz criticism.

⁸⁵ Ethan Iverson, response on ‘Ethan Iverson interviews Bob Cranshaw’ discussion forum post (31 May 2014; topic started 28 May 2014), available at www.organissimo.org (accessed January 2018).

Catalysing Latin American Identities: Alejo Carpentier's Music Criticism as a Cuban Case Study

CAROLINE RAE

Despite the rich diversity of cultures, language and musical traditions in the Latin American world, the vast lands comprising Central and South America have often been considered a monolithic cultural area when viewed from a European perspective, issues of identity and belonging tending to be assumed or over-simplified. While the Franco-American musicologist Gerard Béhague has suggested that concepts of Latin American identity remain fluid, even negotiable,¹ the Cuban-American scholar Roberto González Echevarría has observed that the fascination for European culture throughout Latin America generated anxiety about the perceived cultural and historical gap between the Old Continent and the New, creating a tension that 'provoked a pendular movement of attraction and rejection, of servile imitation of Europe and militant *mundonovismo*' which has become a feature of the Latin American cultural consciousness since the early twentieth century.²

During the nineteenth century, when many of the leading musical institutions of Latin America were founded, European cultural colonialism persisted long after individual states achieved independence. Western European repertoires were favoured almost exclusively, especially Italian opera, with major houses such as the Teatro Solís in Montevideo, Teatro Lírico Fluminense in Rio de Janeiro and Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires choosing Verdi for their respective inaugural productions of the 1850s. Even one of the first so-called national operas of Latin America, *La Parisina* (1878) by the Italian-trained Uruguayan composer Tomás Giribaldi, had a strong European descendance owing much to Donizetti's earlier work of the same title in setting an Italian libretto on an Italian subject based on the poem by English poet Lord Byron. The style of Latin American opera houses also aped the European as the

¹ Gerard Béhague, 'Latin America', *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, available at www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed June 2018).

² Roberto González Echevarría, *Alejo Carpentier: The Pilgrim at Home* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 37.

ultimate expression of grandeur and refinement; while the Teatro Amazonas in Brazil (completed in 1895) was built with marble imported from Italy and furnished with chandeliers of Murano glass from Venice, other opera houses such as the Teatro Municipal de Santiago (Chile) and Teatro Municipal in São Paulo were not only designed by French or Italian architects but also directly modelled on the imperial opulence of the Palais Garnier.

The large number of Cavaillé-Coll organs that were exported to Latin America during the 1880s and 1890s further testifies to the importance of French musical culture on the continent, as does the temporary migration of generations of composers who flocked to France to experience first-hand the European culture it was then fashionable to emulate. Many studied in Paris with the objective of returning to their respective homelands imbued with the perceived mystique of being genuine *afrancesados*, their musical authority in Latin America being defined in terms of their European credentials: the Brazilian Henrique Oswald absorbed the French romantic style so effectively that he became known as the ‘Brazilian Fauré’; pupils of the Argentinean Alberto Williams, who had studied with César Franck, were acclaimed in Buenos Aires as Franck’s ‘musical grandchildren’ (despite their teacher’s interest in Argentinean Gaucho music); and the Haitian composer-pianist Ludovic Lamothe, who trained at the Paris Conservatoire with Louis Diémer, was celebrated as the ‘Black Chopin’.³

Although both France and Italy remained study destinations of choice for composers well into the twentieth century, the relationship of Latin Americans with European cultural influences became more complex during the 1920s owing to an increasing desire to forge a distinctive Latin American identity – one that was not defined in terms of indebtedness to the Old Continent, but which acknowledged the fertile blend of indigenous traditions with those both of the European settlers and Black African slaves that had become an integral part of the New. This became a particularly potent issue in Cuba when political opposition to the ultra-conservative regime of Gerardo Machado by the country’s leading artists and intellectuals, in the form of the leftist Grupo Minorista, resulted in demands for freedom from ‘Yankee’ imperialism and the quest for a new *Cubanidad* that recognised African culture as part of the national profile. As Havana of the time was a major cultural centre and city of international significance within the Latin American world – not least because of its pivotal geographical position – the influence of its vibrant intellectual community extended well beyond the Caribbean to make Cuba a microcosm of new ideas that echoed throughout Latin America.

³ Nicolas Slonimsky, *Music of Latin America* (London: Harrap, 1946), pp. 102, 139, 211.

For this reason, this chapter considers issues of identity through a Cuban lens by investigating the music criticism of Alejo Carpentier (1904–80), one of the most influential writers of twentieth-century Latin America. The son of an émigré Frenchman and Swiss-Russian mother who spent his formative years and adulthood as much in Paris as in Havana,⁴ Carpentier was placed between the cultures of the Old Continent and the New. While his cultural background made him uniquely suited to providing an interface between European and Latin American influences, it was also in danger of alienating him from the country with which he sought to align his creative identity when he began a career in writing; in Cuba, he was considered almost French, but in France he was also a foreigner and an importer of the culturally exotic. Drawing on his experiences in Paris both towards the end of the First World War as well as during the interwar years and later, he sought to counter the entrenched conservatism of contemporary concert life in Havana through raising awareness of the latest developments of the Parisian avant-garde while vigorously questioning the European–Latin American dichotomy. Ironically, it was his advocacy of European modernism that served both as a model for the progressive in Latin America and as a metaphor for the struggle for political and ideological freedom that was part of his quest to engender a new Latin American identity.

Although Carpentier is best known for his novels and essays exploring his seminal concept of *lo real maravilloso*, an idea that did much to ignite the so-called ‘boom’ in Latin American literature,⁵ his music criticism served as much as a workshop of ideas for developing his literary aesthetic as a means of informing and educating his readership. Establishing close friendships during the interwar years with composers in Havana and Paris, including Amadeo Roldán, Alejandro García Caturla, Varèse, Villa-Lobos, Milhaud and Jolivet, Carpentier subsequently drew on his musical knowledge and experience in his literary writings. He had been a gifted pianist in his youth and was descended from a musical family; his paternal grandmother had studied with César Franck, and his father had been a student of Pablo Casals. Many of his most acclaimed novels, including *El reino de este mundo* (1949), *Los pasos perdidos* (1953), *El acoso* (1956), *El siglo de las luces* (1962) and *Concierto barroco* (1974),

⁴ Carpentier’s parents emigrated to Cuba in 1902. It is now known that Carpentier was born in Switzerland, his mother having returned to her parental home near Lausanne for his birth in 1904.

⁵ For more on ‘El Boom’ see John King, ‘The Boom of the Latin American Novel’, in Efraín Kristal (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Latin American Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Roberto González Echevarría and Enrique Pupo-Walker (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Latin American Literature*, vol. 2, *The Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); and Gerald Martin, *Journeys through the Labyrinth: Latin American Fiction in the Twentieth Century* (London: Verso, 1989).

involve music both as a structural device and narrative theme. Borrowing its title from Stravinsky – with the composer’s permission – his penultimate novel *La consagración de la primavera* (1978) cites that most famous of bassoon solos from the opening of *The Rite of Spring* as a preface in musical notation rather than text to assert the primordial as the seed for creative renewal in his exploration of Stravinsky’s ballet as a confrontation between African-originated and European-based influences.⁶ Carpentier’s admiration of the Russian works of Stravinsky, asserted repeatedly throughout his critical writings, provided a powerful model for redefining Latin American identity, the ‘primitive’ power of Stravinsky’s tribes of ancient Russia being equated by Carpentier with the creative energy of the Black Africans of the Caribbean and the Indians of mainland Latin America.⁷ For Carpentier, who had long been in the thrall of Spengler’s *The Decline of the West* (circulated in Spanish translation during the 1920s through Ortega y Gasset’s *Revista de Occidente*), Western European traditions were in terminal decline as a result of Enlightenment rationalism which he felt alienated the life of instinct, desire and imagination;⁸ creative regeneration was to be achieved through contemplation of the ‘primitive’ and primordial which, for him, was a natural feature of the ancient cultures of the Latin American world.

Carpentier’s Music Criticism: Background and Context

Carpentier authored a vast body of music criticism over a period of more than forty years from the 1920s to the 1960s, most of which was intended for a Latin American readership thirsty for knowledge of the latest European developments and whose thinking in terms of the progressive Carpentier sought to influence. During the interwar years he was based in Havana from around 1922 and in Paris from 1928 to 1939, where he was as much a participant in the intellectual and musical milieu as an observer. Writing

⁶ Carpentier probably approached Stravinsky in the late 1950s, around the time he first announced the title of his novel, although it was not completed until after Stravinsky’s death. Set against a background of twentieth-century Cuban history and the confrontation between European and African cultures, the novel concerns the lives of two generations of dancers and their attempts to perform Stravinsky’s *Rite of Spring* in pre- and post-revolutionary Cuba. The novel does not yet exist in English translation but has been translated into French by René L. F. Durand under the title *La Danse sacrée* (Paris: Gallimard, 1980). For more on musical influences in Carpentier’s literary writings see González Echevarría, *Alejo Carpentier: The Pilgrim at Home*; Verity Smith, *Carpentier: Los pasos perdidos* (London: Grant & Cutler/Tamesis, 1983); Sally Harvey, *Carpentier’s Proustian Fiction: The Influence of Marcel Proust on Alejo Carpentier* (London: Tamesis, 1994); Dominic P. Moran, ‘Carpentier’s Stravinsky: Rites and Wrongs’, *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*, 79/1 (2002), 81–104; and Katia Chornik, *Alejo Carpentier and the Musical Text* (Oxford: Legenda, 2015).

⁷ Moran, ‘Carpentier’s Stravinsky: Rites and Wrongs’, p. 83.

⁸ Edwin Williamson, ‘Coming to Terms with Modernity: Magical Realism and the Historical Process in the Novels of Alejo Carpentier’, in *Modern Latin American Fiction* (Faber: London, 1987), p. 82.

for a range of widely disseminated Cuban journals including *Carteles*, *Social*, *La discusión*, *Musicalia*, *Revista de avance*, *Revista de la Habana*, *Revista cubana* and *Atalaya*, as well as the magazines *Chic* and *Diario de la Marina* and the daily newspaper *El país*, his eleven-year Paris residency provided opportunities to contribute to the French journals *L'Intransigent*, *Comœdia*, *Documents* and *Bifur*. (Carpentier later contributed to *Le Nouveau commerce* and *L'Esprit nouveau*.) He also contributed to the Paris-based Spanish-language journal *Gaceta musical* founded in 1928 by the Mexican composer Manuel Ponce, who then resided in the French capital. Focusing on the music of Latin America and Spain, although including notices and reviews covering a range of European cities, *Gaceta musical* was circulated internationally but comprised only nine issues, all published in 1928. (In addition to Carpentier, notable contributors include Milhaud, Dukas, Rodrigo, Salazar, Turina and the French critics Henry Prunières, Roland-Manuel, Henri Collet and Marc Pincherle.) Writing as much on literary, artistic and general cultural matters as specifically about music, Carpentier attempted to found an avant-garde literary journal under the title *Iman*, although it folded after its first edition in 1931.

During the 1940s Carpentier undertook more focused research on the history of Cuban music from the sixteenth century to what was then the present, framing a narrative that embraced the importance of African traditions and Cuban *Son* as much as the work of contemporary composers to assert the validity of an 'indigenous' Cuban culture that no longer needed to be defined in terms of European predecessors. Influenced by the work of the Cuban ethnomusicologist Fernando Ortiz, the result was Carpentier's monograph *La música en Cuba*, published in Mexico in 1946, which remains a significant study of the island's rich musical traditions.⁹ After settling in Caracas in self-imposed exile to escape the authoritarian regime of Fulgencio Batista, Carpentier maintained a regular column in the Venezuelan broadsheet *El nacional* from 1951 to 1961, many of his articles being informed by frequent visits to Paris. Returning to Cuba following Castro's Revolution, Carpentier was appointed director of the state publishing organisation Editorial Nacional before serving the new government as cultural attaché to the Cuban Embassy in Paris from 1966.¹⁰

Comprising several hundred articles (usually of around 2,000 words each), the majority of Carpentier's critical writings on music have been preserved in two major collections: a two-volume anthology entitled *Crónicas* devoted to

⁹ Alejo Carpentier, *La música en Cuba* (Mexico City: Fondo de cultura económica, 1946); in English as *Music in Cuba*, trans. Alan West-Durán (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

¹⁰ Carpentier died in Paris but his remains were returned to Havana, where he received a state funeral as a hero of Castro's Cuba.

his criticism of the interwar years,¹¹ and a three-volume anthology entitled *Ese músico que llevo dentro* comprising a generous selection of his writings from the 1940s onwards but including some earlier articles.¹² Both anthologies are reproduced in Carpentier's *Obras completas*, but with some (unexplained) internal reorganisation of content.¹³ Confusingly, the single-volume French edition of Carpentier's criticism entitled *Chroniques* is not a translation of *Crónicas* but a free anthology of mostly non-musical writings drawn from the pre- and post-war years.¹⁴ Several extended essays on general issues of musical aesthetics, some representing reworkings of earlier articles or public lectures, were published in other collections, including *Ensayos americanos*, *Tientos y diferencias* and *Letra y solfa*, the latter including Carpentier's writings for *El nacional*.¹⁵ His music criticism has yet to be translated into English.

Advocacies in Carpentier's Music Criticism of the Interwar Years

Carpentier's first period of critical writing spans the years from 1922 to 1927 when, despite residing in Havana, he drew extensively on his observations of musical life in the French capital during and just after the First World War.¹⁶ It was at this time that he began a long period as a correspondent for the Cuban journals *Social* and *Carteles*. Widely disseminated throughout Spanish Latin America, *Social* and *Carteles* were founded (in 1916 and 1919, respectively) by the leftist political caricaturist and Minorista activist Conrado Walter Massaguer as platforms for intellectual debate on recent developments in the literary, musical and visual arts as well as politics; the Minorista Manifesto of 1927, which included among its prime objectives the promotion of new art 'in all its diverse manifestations', was published in both

¹¹ Alejo Carpentier, *Crónicas*, 2 vols. (Havana: Editorial Arte y Literatura, 1975–76).

¹² Alejo Carpentier, *Ese músico que llevo dentro*, ed. Zoila Gómez, 3 vols. (Havana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1980).

¹³ Alejo Carpentier, *Obras completas de Alejo Carpentier*, ed. Anheló Hernández, vols. 8–12 (Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno, 1985–7). Internal reorganisation of the Mexican edition results in *Crónicas* vol. 1 becoming largely but not entirely *Crónicas* vol. 2 in *Obras completas* vol. 9, and vice versa. *Ese músico que llevo dentro* receives similar internal reorganisation.

¹⁴ Carpentier, *Chroniques*, ed. with an introduction Carmen Vásquez, trans. René L. F. Durand (Paris: Gallimard, 1983). Excluding most of Carpentier's interwar music criticism, this volume focuses on his discussions of French cinema, the visual arts, literature and politics.

¹⁵ Alejo Carpentier, *Ensayos americanos* (Caracas: Imprenta Nacional, 1949) [43 pp.]; *Tientos y diferencias: ensayos* (Mexico [City]: Mexico Universidad autónoma, 1964); *Letra y solfa* (Caracas: Sintetis Dosmil, 1975), which includes many of Carpentier's articles for *El nacional*.

¹⁶ For more detailed discussion of Carpentier's music criticism of the interwar years, see Caroline Rae, 'From a Foreign Correspondent: The Parisian Chronicles of Alejo Carpentier', in Barbara L. Kelly and Christopher Moore (eds.), *Music Criticism in France, 1918–1939: Authority, Advocacy, Legacy* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2018).

journals.¹⁷ While *Social* provided a monthly forum for the avant-garde in all its guises, it was also something of a society magazine, including regular features on the latest French *haute couture* as well as generous advertising of notable Parisian luxuries from Pleyel pianos to *objets d'art* by Lalique. The 'Prólogo' to the Cuban edition of Carpentier's *Crónicas* by the Cuban scholar José Antonio Portuondo contains an apology for what he describes as the 'bourgeois snobbism' of *Social*.¹⁸ Although the journal actively promoted new ideas in music, art and literature, it was in the context of other articles aimed at the wealthy concert-going *burguesía*. By the 1970s, when *Crónicas* was first published as a collection, the perceived elitism of *Social* had become uncomfortable in Castro's Cuba; Portuondo was at pains to provide a context for the contemporary reader through emphasising that the journal was a recognised forum for the Minorista, the core founders of the Cuban Communist Party. The weekly *Carteles*, on the other hand, was less potentially embarrassing, having served as a mouthpiece for political radicalism through publishing many of the articles that fuelled the Cuban Revolution of 1923 and that of 1927 which sought to overthrow Machado's dictatorship. *Social* survived until 1933, the year Machado was eventually deposed, while *Carteles* continued until 1960, ceasing publication following Castro's Revolution when its role as an organ for dissident opinions was no longer needed.

Despite the contrasted characters of *Social* and *Carteles* there is little difference in the tone of Carpentier's musical articles of the interwar years for the journals, although those for *Carteles* tended to reflect his cosmopolitan view of Parisian musical life in emphasising the activities of foreign participants and their interactions with those from France. This internationalist standpoint was carefully geared towards the interests of his Latin American readership, which itself represented a hybridity of different cultural and national backgrounds. While his articles frequently refer to individual performances, whether in the concert hall, theatre, cafés, nightclubs or music hall, Carpentier's objective was not merely to provide reviews but to take particular performances as a point of departure for exploring broader aesthetic issues relating to the music discussed. In this way, his articles for *Social* and *Carteles* represent personal impressions of the cultural life of Paris in the manner of a foreign correspondent's diary and include discussions of literature, the visual arts, theatre and cinema as much as music.

¹⁷ The Cuban literary website www.cubaliteraria.cu reproduces the original text of the 'Declaración del Grupo Minorista' together with the complete list of signatories.

¹⁸ José Antonio Portuondo, 'Prólogo' to Alejo Carpentier's *Crónicas*, vol. 1, pp. 16–17.

Carpentier's early articles following his return to Havana around 1922 focused on composers whose music he particularly admired, notably Stravinsky, Satie, Debussy, Ravel, Poulenc, Honegger and Falla, his aim being to stimulate debate among his *vanguardia* contemporaries while raising awareness of repertoire then little known in Cuba. Other topics discussed during this early period include the Parisian vogue for Cuban jazz, Josephine Baker's 'Revue nègre', the Ballets Russes and the musical involvements of Picasso, Léon Bakst and Jean Cocteau. While engaging with broader issues relating to musical modernism, Carpentier also investigated the innovations of Richard Strauss as well as Schoenberg, and explored the influence of *Wagnérisme* particularly in relation to Debussy. The latter subject was especially topical for his Cuban readership, Wagner having long been popular in Havana where, according to Carpentier, the city's operatic and concert programming required enlightened rejuvenation through enhancing understanding of the composer's broader influence. Yet he did not neglect the activities of his Cuban compatriots Amadeo Roldán and Alejandro García Caturla, whose music was beginning to receive attention in Havana during the 1920s and whom he had come to know personally through the Grupo Minorista. (Carpentier completed several Afro-Cuban inspired musical collaborations with both composers.¹⁹) Identifying their work as the most important new music to emerge in Cuba due to the incorporation of Afro-Cuban idioms, Carpentier compared aspects of their style to the Brazilian borrowings of Milhaud, declaring that Cuba has composers of its own who are just as good as any of the new European avant-garde.²⁰ While most of Carpentier's early criticism is primarily discursive, his writings for *La discusión* and *El país* included reviews of concerts he attended in Havana.

As many of these articles reveal, Carpentier despaired of the entrenched conservatism of musical life in Havana as exemplified by the Sociedad Pro-Arte Musical and Orquesta Sinfónica, which pandered to the tastes of the city's ruling classes through devoting their programmes to Austro-German classics of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and swathes of Italian opera. As testimony to the influence of Carpentier's criticism, some improvement had occurred with the founding of the rival Orquesta Filarmónica in 1924 which, under the directorship of the Spanish émigré composer-conductor Pedro Sanjuán (whose music is frequently acknowledged in

¹⁹ See Caroline Rae, 'In Havana and Paris: The Musical Activities of Alejo Carpentier', *Music & Letters*, 89/1 (August 2008), 373–95; and 'The Musical Collaborations of Alejo Carpentier: Afro-Cubanism and the Quest for Spiritual Renewal', *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*, 84/7 (November 2007), 905–29.

²⁰ See Alejo Carpentier, 'Amadeo Roldán y la música vernácula', *Carteles* (13 February 1927); and 'La consagración de nuestros ritmos', *Carteles* (22 April 1922), in *Crónicas*, vol. 2, pp. 80–6, 98–103.

Carpentier's criticism), featured the Cuban premieres of Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*, *L'Enfant prodigue*, an orchestration (unspecified) of the *Petite suite*, Ravel's *Pavane pour une infante défunte* and several works by Roldán and García Caturla in its initial seasons.²¹ Nevertheless, these were isolated occurrences. Consequently, in 1926, Carpentier turned to concert promotion and, together with his friend Roldán (who as a violinist was also the concert master of the Filarmónica), founded the first society for the performance of new music in Cuba, the *Conciertos de Música Nueva*. Inspired by the innovations of Carlos Chávez, whose new music concerts Carpentier had heard in Mexico the same year, the Havana *Conciertos de Música Nueva* began the process of realising the advocacies expounded in his early music criticism. Devoted to chamber works, the concerts included Cuban premieres of works by Stravinsky, Satie, Poulenc, Debussy, Ravel, Malipiero and Scriabin, as well as Falla, Prokofiev and Turina, the complete programmes being introduced with lectures by Carpentier.²² The featured works by Stravinsky and Poulenc – *Three Pieces for String Quartet* and *Rapsodie nègre* – are particularly revealing in that they demonstrate the primitivist aesthetic Carpentier was at pains to promote in his criticism as a model for Latin American nationalism; indeed, he reserved his highest praise for the celebration of Africanisms, albeit invented, in Poulenc's *Rapsodie nègre* and described Stravinsky's *Three Pieces* (a work that distils many of the properties of *The Rite of Spring*) as one of his icons of neoprimitivism.²³

Carpentier's early criticism stimulated other innovative musical organisations in Havana, including the progressive musical journals *Musicalia* (founded by Antonio and María Muñoz de Quevedo in 1928)²⁴ and *Atalaya* (founded by Alejandro García Caturla in 1933). Inspired by the short-lived *Revista de avance*, a journal founded by Carpentier in 1927 to promote the radical ideals of the *Minorista* in the context of the avant-garde in the literary and visual arts, *Musicalia* aimed to serve a similar role as a specialist music journal focusing on contemporary music. While the *Revista de avance* survived only until 1930, *Musicalia* published regular editions until 1942 before ceasing publication in 1946. Both were disseminated throughout Latin America,

²¹ See programme listings in Maruja Sánchez Cabrera, *Orquesta Filarmónica de La Habana Memoria 1924-1959* (Havana: Editorial Orbe, 1979). The orchestration of the *Petite suite* was probably that of Henri Büsser.

²² For more on the *Conciertos de Música Nueva* see Caroline Rae, 'In Havana and Paris: The Musical Activities of Alejo Carpentier', 378–82.

²³ See Alejo Carpentier, 'Música nueva: Francis Poulenc', *Diario de la Marina* (Havana, October 1927); and 'Stravinsky, Las Bodas [*Les Noces*] y Papá Montero', *Social*, 12/12 (December 1927), in *Crónicas*, vol. 1, pp. 70–6.

²⁴ María Muñoz de Quevedo later founded the *Sociedad Coral de La Habana* and the Conservatorio Bach de La Habana.

Musicalia managing to extend its reach to Spain as well as Italy and North America. *Musicalia* also sponsored concerts of new music that became formalised in 1929 as the Sociedad Cubana de Música Contemporánea, which became affiliated with the International Society of Contemporary Music the following year. Their concerts included a festival of music by Turina in 1929 (with the participation of the composer) and in 1933 García Caturla (who was a member of the editorial committee of *Musicalia*) invited Nicolas Slonimsky, a noted champion of Latin American music, to conduct two concerts with the Orquesta Filarmónica at Havana's Teatro Nacional.²⁵ The programmes included works by Satie, Falla, Schoenberg and Revueltas as well as the Cuban premieres of Varèse's *Octandre* and *Ionisation*, the latter representing the work's second performance following its New York premiere, and included Henry Cowell among the performers. García Caturla and Roldán had already become the Cuban representatives of Varèse's Pan-American Association of Composers. (In 1932 García Caturla also founded the short-lived Orquesta de Conciertos de Caibarién, a chamber orchestra intended as the Cuban counterpart to Slonimsky's Chamber Orchestra of Boston, and which featured programmes juxtaposing traditional and contemporary repertoire from North and Latin America.)

With the promotion of new music by Carpentier and his colleagues serving as much of a political as an educational role due to the declared aims of the Minorista, which included García Caturla, Roldán and Muñoz de Quevedo among its sympathetic followers and Carpentier as one of its founder members, *Musicalia* published a sort of manifesto for the Sociedad Cubana de Música Contemporánea. Authored by Muñoz de Quevedo, this 'Profesión de Fé' (profession of faith) vigorously rejected the programming of standard classical repertoire exemplified by Havana's Pro-Arte Musical and Orquesta Sinfónica as being mere entertainment for Havana's ruling elite and thus synonymous with the hyperconservatism of Machado's regime. García Caturla also wrote a quasi-political manifesto for the first edition of *Atalaya* that specifically acknowledged the student uprisings of the Cuban coup d'état of 1933; in an unequivocal rejection of Machado's crumbling regime, which he referred to as an 'ignominious reign of tyranny', García Caturla cited the well-known slogan of Cuba's national poet José Martí as a rallying cry for revolution: 'to unite is the word of order'.²⁶

²⁵ See Charles W. White, *Alejandro García Caturla: A Cuban Composer in the Twentieth Century* (Lanham and Oxford: Scarecrow Press, 2003), pp. 161–2.

²⁶ See *ibid.*, p. 159.

The second phase of Carpentier's early, and perhaps most influential, period of music criticism began in 1928 when he was forced to flee Havana for Paris due to his leftist political activities which resulted in a period of imprisonment following his signing of the Minorista Manifesto. He remained in Paris until 1939. Assisted in his escape by the poet Robert Desnos, who was in Havana at the time attending a literary conference, Carpentier became associated with the Surrealists but, like Desnos, was disenchanted with the restricted, and musically resistant, ideas of André Breton and subsequently distanced himself from the group. Building on the contacts developed in Havana and from his visit to Mexico, where he met Carlos Chávez and first heard the music of Varèse, Carpentier quickly expanded his circle of musical friendships. He embarked on several musical collaborations, initially with the composer-conductor-pianist Marius-François Gaillard, who introduced Carpentier both to Varèse (then recently resettled in Paris) and to Milhaud, the dedicatee of their Afro-Cuban 'tragédie-burlesque' for voices and orchestra *Yamba-O* (1928).²⁷ Gaillard had previously met Varèse in New York and conducted the Paris premiere of the revised version of *Intégrales* at the Salle Gaveau on 23 April 1929 in a concert that also included the Paris premiere of Roldán's *Danza negra* (1928) with the Cuban soprano Lydia de Rivera as soloist, no doubt at Carpentier's suggestion. Carpentier subsequently worked with Varèse on the never-to-be-completed opera *The One All-Alone*, and in 1930 Varèse set Carpentier's poem *Canción de la niña enferma de fiebre* for soprano and orchestra. Through Varèse, Carpentier became acquainted with Jolivet, an association acknowledged by the composer's wife in her later monograph.²⁸ He met Honegger and Villa-Lobos through Milhaud. Carpentier later collaborated with Milhaud on his *Incantations*, Op. 201 (1939), writing a French text with Afro-Cuban declamations that allude to Jolivet's *Cinq incantations* for solo flute (1936).

Carpentier's musical friendships inspired many of his articles of the period, several being devoted to Varèse and Villa-Lobos, whose work he described as 'the formidable voice of America, his jungle rhythms, primeval melodies and strident contrasts evoking the infancy of humanity . . . a most refined and very modern music'.²⁹ He praised the nationalist and folkloric aspects of Villa-

²⁷ For more detailed discussion of Carpentier's musical projects see: Caroline Rae, 'In Havana and Paris: The Musical Activities of Alejo Carpentier', 'The Musical Collaborations of Alejo Carpentier: Afro-Cubanism and the Quest for Spiritual Renewal', and 'Forging Identities: Latin Americans in Paris and the Musical Interactions of Miguel Angel Asturias and Alejo Carpentier', in Steven Huebner and Federico Lazzaro (eds.), *Artistic Migration and Identity: Paris 1870-1940* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, in press).

²⁸ Hilda Jolivet, *Varèse* (Paris: Hachette, 1973).

²⁹ 'La voz formidable de América, con sus ritmos de selva, sus melodías primitivas, sus contrastes y choques que evocan la infancia de la humanidad . . . una música refinadísima y muy actual',

Lobos's music, particularly the early ballets *Uirapurú* and *Amazonas* (1917) which he compared favourably to Varèse's *Amériques* (1921, revised 1928), yet conspicuously ignored the neoclassical traits of works such as the early *Bachianas brasileiras* which did not conform to his personal aesthetic. A committed advocate of Stravinskian primitivism, an issue that looms large throughout his criticism of the interwar years, Carpentier dismissed neoclassicism as 'the most inexplicable, most sterile, most fruitless movement in the history of music'.³⁰ It may be for this reason that Carpentier largely ignores the music of Poulenc after resettling in Paris, although he rediscovered his admiration for the composer in his writings of the 1950s. Carpentier also underplayed the French impressionist colourings of Villa-Lobos's early ballets, preferring to emphasise parallels with Varèse and the Russian works of Stravinsky; he reserved praise precisely for those who escaped what he considered the 'dangerous' influence of Debussy.³¹ The stimulus for linking Villa-Lobos with Varèse was undoubtedly the Paris premiere of *Amazonas* at the Salle Gaveau on 30 May 1929 in a concert conducted by Gaillard that also included the Paris premiere of *Amériques*. Mindful of his Latin American readership and the initiatives of Varèse in developing a new pan-Americanism, Carpentier hailed both works as innovative and eloquent scores that brought all of the Americas to Europe.³²

Demonstrating unbridled enthusiasm for Varèse as one of the greatest revolutionaries of the age who also vigorously promoted new music, Carpentier's articles yield tantalising insights into the projected opera *The One All-Along*.³³ Suggesting that the work, when completed, would represent the summation of Varèse's compositional achievement, he describes the structure and orchestration as well as the mystic scenario, which included a voodoo rite – one of Carpentier's innovations that would have particularly fascinated his Cuban readership. (Carpentier discusses Varèse further in later articles for *Le Nouveau commerce* and the Cuban newspaper *El mundo*, both of which were written to commemorate the composer's death.³⁴) Carpentier's admiration for Varèse almost certainly influenced his literary writings; while *La*

Alejo Carpentier, 'Un gran compositor latinoamericano: Heitor Villa-Lobos', *Gaceta musical* (July–August, 1928), reproduced in *Ese músico que llevo dentro*, vol. 1, *Obras completas de Alejo Carpentier*, vol. 10, p. 42.

³⁰ 'El movimiento más inexplicable, más estéril, más inútil, de la historia de la música', 'Conversación con Alejo Carpentier', *Ese músico que llevo dentro*, vol. 3, *Obras completas de Alejo Carpentier*, vol. 12, p. 194.

³¹ Alejo Carpentier, 'Marius-François Gaillard y su labor múltiple', *Social* (February 1929), 89. This article is not reproduced in either *Crónicas* or *Ese músico que llevo dentro*.

³² Alejo Carpentier, 'Una fuerza musical de América – Hector Villa-Lobos', *Social*, 14/8 (August 1929), in *Crónicas*, vol. 1, pp. 135–41.

³³ See Alejo Carpentier, 'Un revolucionario de música: Edgar [sic] Varèse', *Social*, 4/6 (June 1929); and 'Edgar [sic] Varèse escribe para el teatro', *Social*, 16/4 (April 1931), in *Crónicas* vol. 1, pp. 129–34 and 201–5.

³⁴ Alejo Carpentier, 'Edgar [sic] Varèse vivante', *Le Nouveau Commerce*, cahier 10 (Autumn–Winter 1967), 13–28.

consagración de la primavera refers specifically to Varèse by name, the unnamed composer-protagonist of *Los pasos perdidos* who undertakes a journey of creative rediscovery to the depths of the Venezuelan jungle could easily have been modelled on Varèse, who similarly suffered periods of creative stagnation and retreated to live with native Americans.

Although only one of Carpentier's articles of the period is devoted solely to Milhaud, references to the composer's Brazilian and African-originated jazz-inspired works infuse his music criticism of the period. Hailing Milhaud as one of the most original composers of contemporary music, Carpentier compares his Brazilian borrowings with the Afro-Cubanism of Roldán and García Caturla to highlight the new role of Latin American culture as a revitalising force for supposedly ailing European traditions.³⁵ He particularly celebrates Milhaud's use of Latin American rhythms, aligning *Le Bœuf sur le toit* (1920), *La Création du monde* (1923) and the operas *Maximilien* (1930) and *Christophe Colomb* (1930) with a broader pan-Americanism that he further connects with Villa-Lobos and Varèse. An unusual and often overlooked Milhaud connection to which Carpentier also draws attention is his admiration of the music of Schoenberg, whose *Pierrot lunaire* was first performed complete in Paris at the Salle Gaveau on 12 January 1922 with Milhaud conducting. While Carpentier emphasised the importance of Milhaud for Latin America in his writings for *Social* and *Carteles*, his articles for *Comœdia*, *Documents* and *L'Intransigeant* underline the significance of Cuban music in Paris. Taking as their points of departure recent Paris performances of works by Roldán and García Caturla as well as the popularity of Cuban *Son* in the cafés and cabarets of Paris, these French articles advocate the rituals of Afro-Cuban *Ñáñigo* traditions as the ideal interface between the primitive and the modern in the manner of Stravinsky's Russian works. Carpentier seized the opportunity to promote Cuban music and culture to a European readership for which attraction to the exotic 'other' was already an established form of eclecticism.

Honegger might seem an unusual figure for Carpentier's Latin American advocacies, not least given his negative views in respect of neoclassicism, yet the composer receives considerable attention. Defending Honegger against accusations of anti-modernism by figures such as Max Jacob, Carpentier proposes that the composer's interest in locomotives, skating, rugby and to some extent opera, demonstrates an engagement with contemporary phenomena that, far from being retrogressive, constitutes the essence of a modernist aesthetic. Conceding that his music can sometimes be remote,

³⁵ Alejo Carpentier, 'Temas de la lira y el bongó', *Carteles* (April 1929), in *Ese músico que llevo dentro*, vol. 2, *Obras completas de Alejo Carpentier*, vol. 11 (Mexico, 1987), p. 426.

a factor ascribed to Honegger's Swiss heritage, Carpentier equates what he calls the 'indisputable seriousness and sincerity' of works such as the First Symphony with Hindemith and Berg, concluding that Honegger remains a composer of the first rank.³⁶ Curiously, Carpentier appears more equivocal in respect of Ravel, despite the composer's fondness for Spanish idioms which would presumably have appealed to Carpentier's Cuban readership. Carpentier is critical of what he considers Ravel's antiquated approach to musical structure, although he is more positive about his innovations in harmony and orchestration as well as his attraction to jazz. Ravel's music began to be performed regularly in Havana following Paul Wittgenstein's visit in December 1934 to perform the Concerto for Left Hand with the Orquesta Filarmónica under the directorship of Amadeo Roldán, who also conducted the premiere of *Daphnis et Chloé* in June the following year.³⁷

A startling omission in Carpentier's criticism of the interwar years is the avoidance of any reference to Messiaen or the inaugural concert of La Jeune France in June 1936. His lack of interest in Messiaen is almost certainly due to a critical selectivity that sought to promote an internationalist view of Parisian musical life, in which Messiaen's music would be uncomfortably placed, the composer's aesthetic being quite different from the cultural inter-connections Carpentier proposed to his Latin American readership. Messiaen's overt expressions of his Christian faith would also have countered Carpentier's advocacy of the primitive, and perhaps his Communist leanings. Indeed, Carpentier almost entirely ignores composers of the French organ tradition, his comments on the great ecclesiastical establishments of Paris being largely restricted to observations about the architecture. His articles of this period also say little about Jolivet, whose 'magic' works of the 1930s Carpentier would have had the opportunity of hearing and which have much in common with the religious paganism Carpentier otherwise discussed. Carpentier does, however, mention the composer's early songs and leftist political sympathies and briefly evokes the *Cinq dances rituelles* in an article published in the Cuban newspaper *Granma* shortly after the composer's death.

Carpentier's Later Music Criticism

Returning to Cuba in 1939 to escape the outbreak of war in Europe, Carpentier entered a period of assimilation of his Paris experiences, the

³⁶ Alejo Carpentier, 'Honegger y el canto a la velocidad', *Social*, 12/8 (August 1927); and 'Arthur Honegger y el rey Pausole', *Social*, 16/5 (June 1931), both in *Crónicas*, vol. 1, pp. 53–8 and 206–11.

³⁷ See programme listings in Sánchez Cabrera, *Orquesta Filarmónica de La Habana Memoria*.

1940s representing a watershed in terms of his critical and literary output. Appointed director of Cuban broadcasting while teaching a music history course at the University of Havana, Carpentier began work on his monograph *La música en Cuba*, stimulated by several visits to Haiti. More than a chronicle of the island's musical history, Carpentier's study theorises the political role of music throughout the Caribbean while asserting the importance of Cuba's musical heritage as much in terms of its cathedral, court and contemporary composers as in its African traditions, to propose a *Cubanidad* that might inspire a cultural awakening throughout Latin America. His most revealing chapters are those on the 'Blacks in Cuba', 'Afro-Cubanism' and 'Amadeo Roldán – Alejandro García Caturla', which are frequently addressed to young Latin American composers, whom Carpentier advises should look to their own heritage just as generations of Europeans have done with their respective national traditions since the nineteenth century:

The young Latin American composer turns his eyes to his own world. There, still fresh, virginal, are the themes that Milhaud has left for him; the primitive impulses that did not appear in *The Rite of Spring*; a polyrhythm in an unpolished state, which outpaces anything by the 'advanced' composers of Europe. And, furthermore, what the French composer has used as an exotic, disconcerting, unexpected element is full-fledged and authentic for a Brazilian, for a Cuban, for a Mexican, who carries it deep within.³⁸

Carpentier's work on *La música en Cuba* spawned a series of essays on Latin American musical folklore in which he proposed these diverse musical traditions – that in themselves represent a hybridity of influences – as the natural source for Latin American composers to forge their creative identities and thus establish a sense of national belonging. Written from the 1940s to the 1970s, these substantial articles were widely disseminated in Spanish-speaking Latin America.³⁹

³⁸ Alejo Carpentier, 'Amadeo Roldán – Alejandro García Caturla', *Music in Cuba*, trans. Alan West-Durán, p. 281.

³⁹ See Alejo Carpentier, 'Orígenes de la música y la música primitiva' [c. 1944/6], reproduced in Chornik, *Alejo Carpentier and the Musical Text*, pp. 85–123; 'Los problemas del compositor latinoamericano' [1946], reproduced in *Letra y solfa: Vision de America* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Nemont, 1976), pp. 83–102 and *Ese músico que llevo dentro*, vol. 3, pp. 255–71; 'Panorama de la música en Cuba. La música contemporánea', *Revista musical chilena* (Santiago de Chile, December 1947), reproduced in *Ese músico que llevo dentro*, vol. 3, pp. 272–84; 'El folklorismo musical' [1957], reproduced in *Letra y solfa: Vision de America*, pp. 72–82; 'Del folklorisme musical', *Tientos y diferencias: ensayos*, pp. 41–56 and *Ese músico que llevo dentro*, vol. 3, pp. 285–98; 'El ángel de las marcas', *Entrevista de Salvador del Río, Revista Mexicana de Cultura*, 305 (8 December 1974), reproduced in *Ese músico que llevo dentro*, vol. 3, pp. 308–14; 'América Latina en la confluencia de coordenadas históricas y su repercusión en la música', in Isabel Aretz (ed.), *América Latina en su música* (Havana: UNESCO Oficina regional de cultura para América Latina y el Caribe, Centre de documentación, 1975), pp. 7–19, reproduced in *Ese músico que llevo dentro*, vol. 3, pp. 325–42.

With Carpentier's Parisian criticism of the interwar years having provided a literary apprenticeship that helped him formulate his aesthetic positioning, the 1940s and 1950s witnessed his flowering as a major figure in Latin American literature, most notably with the publication of his novels *El reino de este mundo*, *Los pasos perdidos* and *El acoso*. During this period, Carpentier was at pains to assert public distance from the surrealist circles with which he had been associated in Paris, owing to what he considered André Breton's quasi-colonial appropriation of Latin America as a source of the mad, bizarre and 'marvellous' (see the First and Second Surrealist Manifestos). Indeed, it was Breton's particular interest in Haiti (where in 1945 he gave a lecture on 'Surrealism and Haiti') that stimulated Carpentier to assert his anti-colonialist reclamation of Latin American culture following his own visits to the island by codifying his seminal concept of *lo real maravilloso americano* in the prologue to his influential novel *El reino de este mundo* of 1949. His researches for *La música en Cuba* did much to inform his thinking about what constitutes the 'marvellous reality' of Latin America. Portentously, given Carpentier's then recent return to Cuba, the prologue includes the line: 'The Latin American returns to his own world.'⁴⁰

As Carpentier's literary writing began to assume greater prominence, the scope of his music criticism during the 1950s and 1960s (most of which is reproduced in *Ese músico que llevo dentro*) broadened beyond the advocacies of the interwar period. Tending more towards conventional journalism addressed at the general reader of a newspaper arts column rather than the intellectual elite, his articles for Venezuela's *El nacional* (and later for Cuba's *El mundo* and *Granma*) are shorter than those of his earlier period and also less discursive. He no longer focuses exclusively on promoting the avant-garde but comments more widely on the general musical repertoire of the opera house and concert hall discussing representative composers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that he had largely eschewed during the 1920s and 1930s, in addition to his favoured contemporaries. In this sense, his criticism of the period provides a snapshot of musical life in Latin America, drawing attention to the activities of leading international conductors and soloists of the period, many of whom toured major Latin American cities, discussing a range of Latin American festivals of music, as well as commenting on the rise of rock and roll and other forms of popular music including French cabaret songs and jazz. Other articles reveal a deepening of interest in particular areas:

⁴⁰ Cited in Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris (eds.), *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995), p. 83. Carpentier published an expanded version of the prologue as 'De lo real maravilloso americano', *Tientos y diferencias* (Montevideo: Arca, 1967), pp. 96–112.

Wagner and his influence; the problems of musical notation; the relationship of composers and performers; the significance of the introduction of LP recordings and the rise of technology in music.

Among Carpentier's more conventional journalism for his column in *El nacional*, other articles nevertheless reveal concern for recent developments in new music from an international perspective. In addition to pondering the transience of what constitutes the avant-garde and the aesthetic problems facing contemporary composers in Europe as much as in Latin America, he discusses the significance of the First Warsaw Autumn Festival of 1956, the Darmstadt Summer School, new music in Italy, and René Leibowitz (who visited Caracas in 1957), and he devotes two articles to Pierre Boulez, who visited Caracas in 1958 and whom Carpentier describes as the most interesting figure of the young generation in contemporary French music.⁴¹ While he remains largely silent on the subject of Messiaen, Carpentier writes about the music of Maurice Ohana, Alexandre Tansman, Maurice Jaubert, Joaquín Rodrigo, Scriabin, Schoenberg and Varèse, as well as Poulenc's *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* (a work which Carpentier particularly admired). He provides further reflections on Milhaud's works of the period in addition to discussing Stravinsky in no fewer than eight articles, one of which draws parallels with Scriabin, and another of which focuses on the significance of his Venetian works. Latin Americans are far from neglected, with articles on Roldán and García Caturla in addition to commentaries on Carlos Chávez, Silvestre Revueltas and Villa-Lobos, whose music is discussed in seven articles that include a short interview. The death of a number of important figures during the 1950s and 1960s gave rise to various commemorative articles including on Schoenberg, Constant Lambert, Prokofiev, Ives, Honegger, Poulenc, Hindemith and the Cuban composer Ernesto Lecuona. Carpentier also wrote on the subject of Bartók to mark the tenth anniversary of his death, reflecting on his influence and the place of his music in the repertoire.

Commentaries on various aspects of French music remained conspicuous in Carpentier's critical output. In addition to reassessing his views about Poulenc, he ponders the issue of what constitutes 'authentic' French music, explores the influence of Rameau and Machaut on twentieth-century French composers and considers the position of Debussy and Ravel within the international post-war musical milieu. In debating the transience of musical modernism, he argues that Baudelaire and Mallarmé remain as important for French composers of the 1950s, particularly Boulez, as they were for

⁴¹ See Alejo Carpentier, 'Pierre Boulez en Caracas' and 'Un músico habla', *El nacional* (June 1958), reproduced in *Ese músico que llevo dentro*, vol. 1, pp. 359–63.

Debussy at the turn of the twentieth century. He also questions the significance of the Prix de Rome, pointing out that its absence from the biographies of Ravel and Messiaen as well as of Poulenc, Milhaud and Boulez suggests its role as a career-making award had long passed, French composers having long preferred to remain in the hub of activities in Paris rather than endure enforced creative exile in Rome.

Conclusion

While much of Carpentier's music criticism informed his development as a writer of literature, his advocacies reveal how the Parisian avant-garde could be engaged critically to provide a model for the progressive among the Latin American *vanguardia*. His critical writings achieved their intended objective during what Europeans term the interwar years through stimulating not only the founding of new music journals but also the performance of new music, the promotion of which had a clear political dimension as a means of countering the predominant cultural tastes of Cuba's ruling elite of the time. Shedding valuable light on the activities of the Parisian musical milieu, Carpentier's early criticism in particular reveals much about the interconnectedness of musical, literary and artistic circles, as well as his unusual position as both creative participant and critical observer. Yet his writings are also contentious in their selectivity and in their projection of an internationalist vision that was designed to appeal to his Latin American readership. Most importantly, his writings bear witness to the quest for a distinctive Latin American identity that paradoxically was built upon contemplation of innovations in Europe. When, in 1939, Carpentier returned from a Europe already prophesied as a civilisation in decline and about to descend into the catastrophe of the Second World War, he rediscovered his homeland with new eyes, his prolonged absence enabling him to define what it is to be Latin American.

Writing about Popular Music

SIMON FRITH

Introduction

In a twenty-year period, between 1966 and 1986, a new way of writing about music was established in European and North American journalism. 'Rock critic' became a recognisable title, initially in the alternative, bohemian and underground press, then in specialist music outlets and fanzines, and eventually in mainstream newspapers and magazines too.

Rock criticism was culturally significant for a number of reasons. It described a new kind of popular music aesthetic that shaped public understanding of a new kind of popular music, rock. It challenged taken-for-granted arts page distinctions between high and low culture and fed into the creation of a new academic field, popular music studies. It thus changed the terrain of music criticism generally.

Take, for example, the London *Times*. When, in 1963, the paper's chief music critic, William Mann, devoted his round-up of the year's music to the Beatles, he caused something of a furore simply because the paper's arts pages did not usually cover pop music.¹ Within twenty years however the paper was routinely reviewing rock albums and concerts and was as likely to run respectful features on popular as on classical musicians.²

Statistical surveys of music coverage in the wider European and North American media confirm this transformation of the upmarket press's arts pages. In their 2010 survey of 'representations of music in European newspapers between 1960 and 2000', Klaus Bruhn Jensen and Peter Larsen discovered:

This essay has benefitted from my reading of unpublished work by Maud Berthomier, Sarah Hill and Mark Sinker. My thanks to them.

¹ William Mann, 'What Songs the Beatles Sang', *The Times* (27 December 1963).

² See Simon Frith, 'Going Critical: Writing about Recordings', in Nicholas Cook, Eric Clarke, Daniel Leech-Wilkinson and John Rink (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Recorded Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 268.

The 1960s–70s were a period of particular flux, as the emerging youth culture contributed to significant changes in attitudes towards popular culture, including music. Several forms that were considered subaltern at the beginning of the period – varieties of jazz, rock and folk music – became accepted, if not as ‘high’, then as a legitimate presence within the socio-musical field. In subsequent decades, newspapers have participated in the redefinition and negotiation of music as a cultural practice.³

A study of the coverage of popular music since 1955 in the United States, France, Germany and the Netherlands similarly supports the idea that

the emergence of rock criticism in the 1960s had a profound effect on subsequent media discourse about popular music. Although its impact took longer to become apparent in the European countries in our study, the amount of space given to popular music, as well as the shift toward a more critical and evaluative approach, suggests that the style of writing about rock music became more generally adopted by elite newspapers.⁴

The history of rock criticism has been the subject of both academic and non-academic attention⁵ and includes studies of specific publications (such as *Rolling Stone* and *New Musical Express*)⁶ and writers (such as Lester Bangs and Robert Christgau).⁷ In this chapter, while drawing on this documentary work, I will approach rock criticism from the perspective of the sociology of knowledge, as a musical discourse that came into play in particular cultural circumstances and with particular cultural effects. The institutional factors that mattered were not just the changing conditions of popular music production but also the changing conditions of the production of journalism.

In examining the relations between popular music and journalism I will focus on the UK and the United States and examine how rock-writing

³ Klaus Bruhn Jensen and Peter Larsen, ‘The Sounds of Change: Representations of Music in European Newspapers 1960–2000’, in Jostein Gripsrud and Lennart Weibull (eds.), *Media Markets and Public Spheres: European Media at the Crossroads* (Bristol: Intellect Press, 2010), p. 262.

⁴ Vaughn Schmutz, Alex van Venrooij, Susanne Janssen and Marc Verboord, ‘Change and Continuity in Newspaper Coverage of Popular Music Since 1955: Evidence from the United States, France, Germany, and the Netherlands’, *Popular Music and Society*, 33/4 (2010), 513.

⁵ The fullest academic account is Ulf Lindberg, Hans Weisethaunet, Morten Michelsen and Gestur Guðmundsson, *Rock Criticism from the Beginning: Amusers, Bruisers and Cool-Headed Cruisers* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005). For documentation of writers’ self-aggrandisement, see Paul Gorman, *In Their Own Write: Adventures in the Music Press* (London: Sanctuary, 2001).

⁶ Robert Draper, *The Rolling Stone Story* (New York: Doubleday, 1990); Pat Long, *The History of the NME: High Times and Low Lives at the World’s Most Famous Music Magazine* (London: Portico, 2012).

⁷ Jim DeRogatis, *Let it Blurt: The Life and Times of Lester Bangs, America’s Greatest Rock Critic* (New York: Broadway Books, 2000); Tom Carson, Kit Rachlis and Jeff Salamon (eds.), *Don’t Stop ‘Til You Get Enough: Essays in Honor of Robert Christgau* (Austin: Nortex Press, 2002). The best sources of historical information on Anglo-American rock criticism are the websites *rocksbackpages.com* (‘the ultimate archive of music journalism . . . by the finest music writers of the last 50 years’), and *rockcritics.com* (‘rock critics talk to, about, and with each other’). As well as articles and reviews, *rocksbackpages* contains brief biographies of more than 500 writers and the magazines they wrote for.

communities were constructed in each country both discursively and as social networks. I begin with an outline history of rock writing, from its origins in the 1960s to the present day, while considering what made the emergence and subsequent dominance of a new kind of music writing possible. I then consider how rock writers drew attention to – and attempted to resolve – the contradictions facing all contemporary music critics: on the one hand, journalistic writing about music is tied into the business of promoting performers and performances, marketing concert tours and recordings, as well as by the need to make a living; on the other hand, critics see their task as explaining the value of a particular artist or piece of music in aesthetic rather than commercial terms, thus preserving their autonomy as journalists.⁸

The Story of Rock Criticism

People were writing about pop records long before the emergence of rock music.⁹ From the early days of the recording industry, magazines employed writers to inform and service record producers, retailers and consumers. The British trade paper *Talking Machine News* (aimed at record dealers) was publishing record reviews (comparing and rating different recorded versions of the same song) from 1913. *Gramophone*, launched in 1923 and aimed at record buyers, was primarily concerned with classical releases but also included brief comments on popular and dance records from the start. In the United States, the *Music Lovers' Guide*, first published in 1926 as the *Phonograph Monthly Review*, applied stars to the records reviewed in its popular music section, 'In the Popular Vein', an approach taken up by *Gramophone* in its reviews of jazz and swing records from 1936.¹⁰

These early popular music record reviews functioned unashamedly as consumer guides, part of the process by which new songs or dance numbers were marketed; their writers provided basic descriptive information, noting a particular track's catchiness or novelty. Writing about popular music was taken to be quite a different sort of thing from writing about classical music: the latter was lasting art, the former transitory entertainment. For a more self-conscious approach to popular music, or at least to some kinds of popular music, one has to look at magazines for and/or about musicians, such as

⁸ See Gemma Harries and Karin Wahl-Jorgensen, 'The Culture of Arts Journalists: Elites, Saviors or Manic Depressives?', *Journalism*, 8/6 (2007), 619–39.

⁹ There was also popular music coverage before recording. The music hall in the UK and vaudeville in the United States had their own trade papers; established music hall stars and interesting new acts were written about in both national and local papers. Such writing is, though, better placed in the history of theatre than music criticism.

¹⁰ Frith, 'Going Critical: Writing about Recordings', pp. 268–9.

Melody Maker (founded in Britain in 1926), *Downbeat* (founded in the United States in 1934), and *Jazz Hot* (founded in France in 1935), in which the first considered form of popular music writing, jazz criticism, took shape.¹¹

Jazz writers were, from early on, concerned with ideological questions: how could jazz be distinguished from other forms of dance music and entertainment? What was the significance of race in jazz meaning and value? How could jazz develop as an art rather than as commerce? These were questions that would continue to concern rock critics thirty years later, and I will return to them. For most journalists covering popular record releases, however, the issue was how best to respond to changing public tastes and marketing opportunities. The most significant of these changes happened in the 1950s. The reorganisation of music retail around vinyl albums and singles led to a much larger and more committed demand for pop records, and the emergence of an economically significant youth market meant new kinds of recording star.

In Britain, for example, a new trade paper, *Record Retailer*, was launched in 1959 (it changed its name to *Music Week* in 1972); in the United States, *Billboard*, founded in 1894 as a trade paper for the bill posting industry and developing over the following decades to report on all sorts of entertainment business, began to focus on recorded music, changing its name to *Billboard Music Week* in 1961.

At the same time a spate of new publications aimed at young record consumers appeared. In Britain, there were music papers such as *New Musical Express* (launched in 1952), initially a general pop paper but soon competing for teenage readers with *Record Mirror* (1954) and *Disc* (1958). And there were magazines aimed at teenage girls and featuring pictures of and stories about teenage recording stars such as *Marilyn* (1955), *Boyfriend* (1959), *Marty* (1960), *Jackie* (1964), *Fabulous* (1964) and *Rave* (1964). In the United States, there were no equivalents to the UK's pop music papers, but magazines such as *Seventeen* (the first ever magazine for teenage girls, launched in 1944), *16 Magazine* (1957) and *Tiger Beat* (1965) increasingly featured pop stars in their appeal to their market, while *Hit Parader* (1942), which began by publishing the latest hit song lyrics for pop fans generally, also shifted focus to the records that appealed particularly to teen music fans in the 1950s.

¹¹ Michael Denning suggests that the first two writers to write regular reviews of 'vernacular phonograph records' were Abbe Niles in the United States (who started reviewing 'popular music' in a column in *The Bookman* from 1928), and Rodney Gallop (who began reviewing 'vernacular gramophone music' from a variety of European countries in *The Gramophone* in the same year). Both writers came from (amateur) folklorist backgrounds. See Michael Denning, *Noise Uprising* (London: Verso, 2015), pp. 123–6.

These titles created a way of writing about pop music that was new to consumer magazines. They were organised around recording stars, aimed at youth and developed a fan discourse based on intimate knowledge of performers. This was the initial journalistic context for writing about rock 'n' roll and the new pop music of the mid-1960s; these were the magazines in which the Beatles and Rolling Stones, for example, were initially covered.¹²

In Britain new ways of writing about popular music were also developed within the music weeklies, if under the constraint of the papers' editorial conventions and readership. In the United States, the lack of a pop music press meant that writers wanting to write about rock music had to find space in non-music publications. On both sides of the Atlantic, writers felt the need for specialist music outlets. Models for such magazines did exist. In the UK, the *Journal of the Folk-Song Society* was launched in 1899, and the *Journal of the English Folk-Dance Society* in 1914. In the United States, *Sing Out* (which emerged from the post-war *People's Song Newsletter*) has been published as a magazine for leftist folk music performers, songwriters and audiences since 1950, and the subsequent folk revival was marked by the publication of numerous local folk titles, such as Paul Nelson's *Little Sandy Review*, published out of Minnesota University from 1959. The most influential of these was probably *Broadside*, published in New York from 1962 as a magazine for performers, with an emphasis on new songs and songwriters and as a site for debates about folk rock and folk commerce that would be important for rock critics.

By contrast, the English magazines *Blues Unlimited* (a fanzine started by Mike Leadbitter and Simon Napier in 1963) and the glossier *Blues and Soul* (launched in May 1966 and initially called *Home of the Blues*) were aimed at record buyers and collectors, and quickly became important titles for the marketing of blues and soul music in Britain. *Beat Instrumental*, meanwhile, founded in 1963 (under the title, *Beat Monthly*), was aimed more specifically at musicians and would-be musicians in the new British beat scene, with coverage of instruments and technology, while *Mersey Beat*, launched a couple of years earlier, in 1961, was essentially a way of promoting the emerging Liverpool Scene.

If such specialist music magazines provided one model for would-be rock writers, the changes in musical culture to which they were responding were also a matter of interest to already established reporters and cultural

¹² Kate Mossman interviewed some of these magazines' writers for the BBC radio documentary, *The Women Who Wrote Rock*, BBC Radio 4 (broadcast 22 March 2016), available at www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b07428bt (accessed 10 May 2018).

commentators. The unprecedented commercial and cultural impact of the Beatles in both Britain and the United States, and the emergence of Bob Dylan from the folk world and of British blues-based beat groups from the jazz scene, became matters of news interest to a variety of reporters. In the United States, these included the entertainment reporter Jane Scott of the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, who started writing the paper's teen page in 1964, and Lillian Roxon, New York correspondent of the *Sydney Morning Herald* from 1962; in Britain, the *Evening Standard's* Maureen Cleave wrote a column called 'Disc Date' from the early 1960s, coming to national fame through her interviews with the Beatles. All three of these writers helped to develop a new journalistic stance, that youth pop might be more than just transient fun.

A similar argument, more portentously expressed, came from intellectuals too.¹³ In Britain, cultural commentators with a sociological bent found a space for writing about popular music in *New Society*, which launched in 1962 and included among its regular contributors Colin MacInnes, George Melly and Ray Gosling, who were all interested – albeit from different perspectives – in what was happening to youth culture. *New Society's* influence can clearly be seen on the first of the three journalists who can most feasibly lay claim to being Britain's earliest rock writers (without ever developing careers as rock critics): Geoffrey Cannon, Tony Palmer and Nik Cohn.

Cannon, who has claimed to be 'first ever regular rock critic for a UK daily national newspaper', wrote a weekly column for the *Guardian* between 1968 and 1972. He started writing about popular culture as arts and music editor of *New Society* from 1962, moving on to the BBC magazine, *The Listener*, while working on cultural/music documentaries for Granada television.¹⁴ Palmer had a similar trajectory, going from Cambridge University straight into the BBC (working on arts programmes and musical documentaries), while being employed as a regular music critic for the *Observer* from 1967 to 1974. He was part of the classical team but his brief was to cover the new and the avant-garde, and he was quick to cover progressive rock under this label; from 1969 to 1974 he also wrote a column, 'Notes from the Underground', for the *Spectator*. Cohn arrived in London as a would-be writer in the early 1960s and by 1964, aged 18, was employed as an expert commentator on the London youth scene by the *Observer* and *Queen*, a long-established magazine for the

¹³ One of the more interesting early sources of serious writing about popular music was *Axle Quarterly*, published from 1962 to 1963 by Alan Blaikley, Ken Howard and Paul Overy. *Axle* also published pamphlets, which included Gavin Millar's *Pop! Hit or Miss?* Howard and Blaikley went on to have a successful pop music career as a singer/songwriter/management partnership, Overy became a distinguished art critic and historian, and Millar a film critic and TV and film director.

¹⁴ Geoffrey Cannon, 'A Life in Pop Writing', *Rock's Backpages* (April 2012), available at rocksbackpages.com.

upper classes that was now being aimed at the younger hipper London establishment (*Queen* was, among other things, financially and managerially involved with the newly launched pirate radio station, Radio Caroline). As a writer, Cohn was the nearest thing Britain then had to a US-style ‘new journalist’, though he seemed more interested in fiction than non-fiction. His first music book, about P. J. Proby, *I am the Greatest, says Johnny Angelo* (1967), was a novel, though his greatest impact on British music writing was made by his rock ‘n’ roll history, *Pop from the Beginning* (1969), a book which made clear Cohn’s disdain for rock’s attempt to mark itself off from pop while modelling a way of writing about music that was hugely influential on rock writing.¹⁵

While these writers were important for what developed as rock criticism (I read all of them avidly), they lacked the particular self-consciousness and sense of community that were needed to establish a new music writing culture. In developing a distinct way of approaching music, rock critics wrote not in order to further their writing, reporting or broadcasting careers but because they felt the need, in Richard Goldstein’s words, ‘to write about what I saw, heard and felt about something I loved’.¹⁶ The feminist rock critic Jaan Uhelszki elaborates:

[I] was a fan of the first order and soon came to realize that just seeing the bands was no longer enough – my fanaticism required expression. Maybe I needed evidence that I was there . . . I don’t think it was real to me until I wrote about it, and it was always better the second time around.¹⁷

Rock writers wrote not about fans or even primarily for fans but, rather, *as* fans. And there were two ways they could do this: by creating a new role in existing publications (like Richard Goldstein in the *Village Voice*) or by starting a new publication (like Paul Williams with *Crawdaddy*). In practice, many rock writers developed their careers by doing both.

In New York in the mid to late 1960s there were a variety of existing magazines open to such rock coverage. Richard Goldstein started his ‘Pop Eye’ column in the *Village Voice* in 1966; Robert Christgau took over as the *Voice*’s rock columnist from 1969, having previously written about music for *Esquire* (from 1967); Ellen Willis became the first ever pop music critic for the *New Yorker* in 1968, recruited after writing an essay on Bob Dylan for *Commentary*. Other news and general cultural magazines were also at this

¹⁵ Nik Cohn, *I am the Greatest, says Johnny Angelo* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1967); Nik Cohn, *Pop from the Beginning* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969).

¹⁶ Richard Goldstein, *Another Little Piece of My Heart: My Life in Rock and Revolution in the ‘60s* (London: Bloomsbury Circus, 2015), pp. 36–7.

¹⁷ Quoted in Daphne A. Brooks, ‘The Write to Rock: Racial Mythologies, Feminist Theories and the Pleasures of Rock Criticism’, *Women and Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture*, 12 (2008), 60.

time beginning to commission rock coverage, while established columnists (such as Al Aronowitz in the *New York Post*) and critics (such as the jazz writer, Ralph J. Gleason in the *San Francisco Chronicle* and the folk writer, Robert Shelton, in the *New York Times*) were broadening their music reviewing beat.¹⁸ Short-lived pop-oriented lifestyle monthly magazines also came and went, like *Cheetah* (1967–8), for which Willis, Christgau and Goldstein all wrote.

In other US cities, specific rock magazines began to be established. In Boston, *Crawdaddy* emerged from the Swarthmore campus in 1966 and Robert Somma's *Fusion* was launched in 1967 (Jon Landau, Richard Meltzer and Ed Ward were among the writers in this Boston rock scene). Barry Kramer's *Creem*, edited first by Dave Marsh and later by Lester Bangs and Susan Whitall, was published in Birmingham, Michigan from 1968. In San Francisco, Greg Shaw's *Mojo Navigator and Rock'n'Roll News* first appeared in 1966, and Jan Wenner launched *Rolling Stone* in November 1967 (having previously worked on Berkeley's student newspaper, the *Daily Californian*), recruiting among other writers Greil Marcus.¹⁹ Greg Shaw soon moved to Los Angeles, launching *Who Put the Bomp* in 1970 while also being associated with *Phonogram Record*, which started the same year.

All these magazines could be treated as part of the much longer history of specialist music publications emerging to serve new taste groups and record markets, but there were also other influences on how these rock magazines were conceived and published: science fiction's fanzine culture (both Paul Williams and Greg Shaw started out in the sci-fi fan world) and the underground papers that began to spring up in every big or campus American city, beginning in 1964 with the *Berkeley Barb* and the *LA Free Press*. Greil Marcus's early writing, for example, appeared in the underground paper *San Francisco Express Times*, which was launched in January 1968 by Marvin Garson, who had previously edited *Wooden Shoe* (the newsletter of Berkeley's Free Speech Movement). By 1969, the Underground Press Syndicate, which formed in 1967, was claiming 125 member papers in continuous publication (including two British titles, *Oz* and *IT*) and 200 other titles appearing 'erratically'.²⁰

Local rock magazines thus articulated both a sense of fan community and a political and cultural agenda, which had something of the radicalism

¹⁸ For Aronowitz, see Al Aronowitz, *Bob Dylan and the Beatles: Volume One of the Best of the Blacklisted Journalist* (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2004); for Shelton, see Dave Laing 'Taste-Making and Trend-Spotting: The Folk Revival Journalism of Robert Shelton', *Popular Music History*, 1/3 (2004), 307–28; for Gleason, see Dom Armstrong and Jessica Armstrong, 'Dispatches from the Front: The Life and Writings of Ralph J. Gleason', *Rock Music Studies*, 1/1 (2014), 3–35.

¹⁹ Although it was *Rolling Stone* that was to become by far the most successful of these new rock magazines, it is worth noting that the first unashamedly commercial rock title was Gerald Rothberg's *Hullabaloo*, published out of New York from 1966; it changed its name to *Circus* in 1969.

²⁰ See Simon Frith, *The Sociology of Rock* (London: Constable, 1978), pp. 143–4.

previously articulated in folk magazines like *Sing Out* but with two important differences. First, rock writers were also pop fans, were looking elsewhere than folk ideology for the meaning of musical authenticity. Second, these were pop fans who were self-conscious about being writers. As Robert Christgau puts it,

It was, of course, the '60s. The New Journalism was in the air, along with loose talk of freedom, revolution and astrology. None of us was getting paid much, and few had actual jobs or believed we needed them. There was a world of necessity out there, and before long it would step on our necks; in the meantime, however, rock criticism was a literary haven.²¹

The emergence of rock criticism in Britain follows much the same routes as early rock writing in the United States.²² Here too we can point to the influence of the underground press – such newspapers as the *International Times (IT)*, launched in 1966, *Oz* (1967), and *Frendz* (1969)²³ – and to the publication of new rock-oriented music magazines, such as Pete Frame's fanzine-like *ZigZag* (1969), or more commercially produced titles such as *Cream* (1971–3) and *Let It Rock* (1972–5), the brainchild of Charlie Gillett and its first editor, Dave Laing. There was even a new weekly pop music paper, *Sounds*, founded in 1970 by a breakaway group of writers/editors from *Melody Maker* who spotted a gap in the market for a magazine for teenage rock fans who wanted gossip and pictures alongside informed and opinionated concert and record reviews.²⁴ In Britain, too, rock writers came from a pop as well as an alternative writing background. Penny Valentine, for example, started her journalism career in 1959, as a sixteen-year-old cub reporter for the *Uxbridge News*, before joining first *Boyfriend* and then *Disc*. In 1970 she was recruited to the newly launched *Sounds*.

²¹ Robert Christgau, 'A History of Rock Criticism', in Andras Szanto (ed.), *Reporting the Arts 11* (New York: National Arts Journalism Program, 2003), pp. 140–1.

²² For parallel histories of rock writing in other countries, see Ulf Lindberg, Gestur Guðmundsson, Morten Michelsen and Hans Weisethaunet, 'Critical Negotiations: Rock Criticism in the Nordic Countries', *Popular Music History*, 1/3 (2004), 241–62 for Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Sweden; Larry Portis, *French Frenzies: A Social History of Pop Music in France* (College Station: Virtualbookworm.com, 2004) for France; Simone Varriale, 'Bourdieu and the Sociology of Cultural Evaluation: Lessons from the Italian Popular Music Press', *Rassegna italiana di sociologia*, 1 (2014), 121–48 for Italy; Simon Warner, 'In Print and on Screen: The Changing Character of Popular Music Journalism', in Andy Bennett and Steve Waksman (eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Popular Music* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2015) for a global survey also covering Japan and Germany.

²³ *Frendz* was at first called *Friends*. Its core editorial/writing staff came together to put out the UK edition of *Rolling Stone* but fell out with Jann Wenner and so, as 'friends of *Rolling Stone*', started their own paper.

²⁴ Another group of *MM* writers thought there was also a market for lengthier and more serious jazz and rock criticism and, under *MM* auspices, launched a monthly magazine, *Music Maker*. This turned out not to be commercially viable and was closed; one member of the team, Bob Houston, left to start *Cream*; see Dave Laing, "'The World's Best Rock Read": *Let It Rock*, *Popular Music and Society*, 33/4 (2010), 451.

The major difference between the history of rock writing in Britain and the United States is that in the 1960s Britain already had a significant national music press. Its most successful weekly titles, *Melody Maker* and *New Musical Express*, had much bigger readerships than any of the specialist or alternative music magazines: throughout the 1960s their joint circulation was around 300,000 and by 1973 it was more than 400,000.²⁵ Rock writing, however, developed in the two papers rather differently. This is brought out well in Richard Williams's account of his way into rock criticism:

I read a lot, I always did. I read *Rolling Stone* and *Creem*, but I also read *The New Yorker* from the age of 16, *Downbeat* and *Jazz Journal*, but I had also read the underground press since 1966 – *Village Voice*, *East Village Other*, *IT*, *Friends*, and so on – but I actually have to say that at that point I was too busy to think about the quality of my writing. I was too busy writing to think about it very much. I think that's why a lot of British pop writing of the time does not compare very well with American pop writing, because the Americans were very much aware of themselves as literary figures and became even more so. To begin with, we weren't at all. We were writing for weekly papers which were demanding. We would have to write every day, sometimes, 10,000, 20,000 words a week – a lot of words every day: words, words, words. And you did, in a kind of benign way, see yourself as a propagandist, trying to get people to listen to good stuff, so of course you had to write persuasively but the persuasiveness was more a function of enthusiasm than of literary polish.²⁶

Williams had started his career as a reporter on the local paper in his hometown of Nottingham, with responsibility, among other things, for writing for the paper's youth pages, which gave him a chance to build a portfolio of record reviews and music features. He joined *Melody Maker* in 1969.

Most of the *Melody Maker* writers were from a background like mine – local journalism – so they had journalistic imperatives . . .²⁷ So we had that background and we also had the *Melody Maker*'s tradition of dealing with musicians as musicians rather than, as I suppose they'd be called today, style icons. Whereas the *NME* re-made itself, it came from a completely different direction, by getting people in – very talented people from the underground press²⁸ . . . it secured a patch that was more aware than we were of music as fashion, or more interested in exploring it, a bit more aware. We were aware of it, but they were also able to operate without the consciousness of the sort of

²⁵ Frith, *Sociology of Rock*, p. 141.

²⁶ Simon Warner, 'Out of His Pen: The Words of Richard Williams', *rockcritics.com* (22 September 2002).

²⁷ Other such writers were Chris Welch, Mick Watts and Colin Irwin.

²⁸ The key 'underground' writers at *NME* were Charles Shaar Murray, who started his writing career at *Oz*, Nick Kent, who came from *Frendz*, and Mick Farren, who came from *International Times*.

progressive rock dimension. They did not have to be nice about Emerson, Lake and Palmer or Yes.²⁹

In 1972, Charlie Gillett published an article in *Rock File* for would-be rock 'n' roll writers. This reads interestingly now not just as a summary of the then available outlets for rock journalists in both Britain and the United States but also for capturing a moment of transition, a time when rock writing was seesawing on an axis between the consumer weeklies (*MM*, *NME*, *Record Mirror*, *Disc* and *Sounds*) which, in Gillett's words, 'appear to accept a position as a vanity press for the record business', and the more idiosyncratic monthly magazines which published, in Gillett's view, more thoughtful, historically knowledgeable and properly researched articles, reviews and interviews.³⁰ By 1976 the landscape Gillett described in 1972 had changed. Many of the new magazines he listed had vanished (*Let it Rock*, for example, ceased publication in 1975), leaving to flourish new kinds of consumer magazine, like *Rolling Stone* and *Time Out*. At the same time, in Britain, the music weeklies were now the most important setting for 'serious' rock writing and reading (in 1975 the combined circulation of Britain's music weeklies was getting on for 700,000).³¹

The weeklies' writers certainly had a key role to play in the production, marketing and sale of rock records, and benefitted accordingly (with a continuous supply of free records, concert tickets and access to the stars) but the music papers could no longer be thought of simply as the record industry's vanity press. This was most obvious at *NME*, where the writers recruited from alternative and underground publications helped *NME*'s sales figures to overtake and then pull away from *Melody Maker*'s precisely by bringing their disdain for rock commerce with them. What was clear to everyone was that writing about music had become central to the way in which new cultural attitudes were established and commercialised.³²

This became evident in the making of punk rock as a musical movement in the mid-1970s. *Sniffin' Glue* (1976) was just the best known of hundreds of punk fanzines that were published around Britain. The US fanzine equivalent was *Punk*, published in New York from 1975, although the boom in local US

²⁹ Simon Warner, 'Out of His Pen'. From a reader's perspective this meant that while *MM* writers provided detailed descriptions of rock tracks, technologies and techniques, *NME* writers mocked musicians, their music and their sales trappings alike, and valued artists rather for what they stood for.

³⁰ Charlie Gillett, 'So You Wanna Be A Rock 'n' Roll Writer (Keep a Carbon!)', in Charlie Gillett (ed.), *Rock File* (London: New English Library, 1972), p. 64.

³¹ Frith, *Sociology of Rock*, p. 141.

³² Both men's and women's consumer magazines thus now felt the need for their own pop/rock columnists. When *Cosmopolitan* launched its UK edition in 1972, for example, it employed Anne Nightingale in this role; she had previously written for *Petticoat*, while in the later 1970s I (like other UK writers, I assume) was invited to be rock columnist for an about-to-be-launched softcore porn mag.

fanzines came later, with the hardcore punk movement. The longest lasting of these magazines was *Maximumrocknroll*, published in San Francisco from 1982, while two other New York magazines, *Trouser Press*, which started in 1974 as 'America's only British rock magazine', and *New York Rocker*, devoted from its first issue in 1976 to covering the New York indie music scene, were, for a while, punk magazines by default.

At the same time, from a publisher's point of view, it was apparent now that to like music was to like reading about music: popular music fans of all sorts – not just teenage girls or obsessive male record collectors – made up a significant segment of the magazine market. Each new musical genre was thus a potential source of magazine sales for sharp-eared publishing entrepreneurs, while the major magazine publishing companies each now assumed that they needed their own titles to compete for what was a continuously growing and increasingly market-researched readership. The history of popular music and its audience can thus be traced from the 1970s to the early 1990s through the continuous appearance of new magazines and in the career of a publishing entrepreneur like David Hepworth.³³ In Britain, *Black Music* (1973) and *Black Echoes* (1976), *Smash Hits* (1978), *Southern Rag* (1979) which became *Folk Roots* (1985), *Record Collector* (1979),³⁴ *Kerrang* (1981), *The Wire* (1982), *Mixmag* (1983) and *Boy's Own* (1986) were aimed at the very different fan constituencies of, respectively, Northern Soul, reggae and African music, new romantic new pop, folk, roots and world music, pre-punk pop and rock, heavy metal, jazz and the rock avant-garde, disco and acid house.³⁵ By the mid-1980s publishers in both Britain and the United States had decided that *Rolling Stone* and *NME/Melody Maker's* dominance of the mainstream rock-reading public could be challenged by glossier, younger and/or less self-important consumer guides (particularly following the arrival of the CD), such as *Spin* (1985) and the more eclectic *Option* (1985) in the United States; and *Q* (1986), *Select* (1990) and *Vox* (1990) in the UK.³⁶ The commercial success of rap in the 1980s led to the publication from 1988 of the British *Hip Hop Connection*, edited by ex-fanzine editor Chris Hunt, and the American title *The Source*, initially the newsletter/fanzine of a Harvard radio show.

³³ After writing for *NME* and *Sounds* and editing *Smash Hits*, Hepworth founded *Just Seventeen*, *Looks*, *Q*, *More*, *Empire*, *Mojo*, *Heat* and *The Word*.

³⁴ This was the British equivalent of the US music collectables magazine *Goldmine*, founded in 1974.

³⁵ For the history of DJ/club/dance magazines in Britain, see Simon Morrison, "'Surely People Who Go Clubbing Don't Read': Dispatches from the Dancefloor and Clubland in Print", *IASPM@Journal*, 4/2 (2014), available at iaspmjournal.net.

³⁶ *Option* emerged from the demise of my favourite fanzine *OP*, published from 1979 to 1984 out of Olympia, Washington. Each of its issues was devoted to bands, artists or movements beginning with a single letter of the alphabet (there were therefore just twenty-six issues).

The magazines launched in the late 1970s and during the 1980s worked in a different journalistic context than those launched in the 1960s and early 1970s. As Robert Christgau puts it: '[we moved] from a Beatlemania that went without significant critical consideration in the daily press to an embattled megabusiness that attracts locally generated reviews and features from the *Portland Press Herald* to *The Fresno Bee*'.³⁷ He explained further: 'With *Rolling Stone* a beacon, editors and publishers slowly climbed aboard. Rock's commercial juggernaut became impossible to ignore, as did the actual existing interests of working journalists.'³⁸

In short, from the early 1970s it became normal for newspapers in both Britain and the United States to cover rock as part of their day-to-day arts and cultural coverage; the rock critic was now a necessary journalist role.³⁹ And in local and national newspapers, which were necessarily aimed at a general readership, such a critic was expected to write about all sorts of popular music. The ideal rock writer was informed across a range of genres, and was expected to be an enthusiast but with a critical detachment, to both educate readers and to confirm the validity of their tastes. Not surprisingly, then, the next generations of influential rock critics, the people who took up or influenced newspaper music coverage, were recruited through the established rock press (rather than from fanzines): in the United States, from *Rolling Stone* (Mikal Gilmore, David Fricke, Rob Sheffield) and the *Village Voice* (Nelson George, Greg Tate, Ann Powers, Eric Weisbard, Chuck Eddy); in the UK, from *NME*, *Sounds* and *Melody Maker* (Jon Savage, Paul Morley, Vivien Goldman, Lucy O'Brien, Barney Hoskyns, Ian Penman, Simon Reynolds).

The last chapter of the history of rock writing begins in the mid-1990s, although, paradoxically, the 1990s had opened with a new burst of punk-style fanzines, inspired by the Riot Grrrl scene and important as a source of feminist music writing.⁴⁰ From the perspective of the publishing industry, though, neither these feminist fanzines nor new retro titles like *Mojo*, which started publication in Britain in 1993 as a response to the increasing economic clout of ageing rock consumers, were as significant as the first appearance of

³⁷ Christgau, 'A History of Rock Criticism', pp. 141–2. ³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

³⁹ Robert Hillburn became rock and pop critic for the *LA Times* in 1970; John Rockwell, as a classical music critic at the *New York Times*, started reviewing rock for the paper from 1974, though Robert Palmer, a musician who had written for *Rolling Stone*, was the paper's first dedicated rock and pop critic, in the role from 1981 to 1988. He was replaced by Jon Pareles, who had a music degree but also a background writing for *Crawdaddy*, *Rolling Stone* and the *Village Voice*. Pareles started writing for the *New York Times* in 1982, the same year I joined the *Sunday Times* as its first rock critic (Derek Jewell had previously written occasionally about rock acts in his role as jazz and pop reviewer).

⁴⁰ Titles emerging from this movement included the musician-aimed *Rock Grl*, created by Carla de Santis in San Mateo, California, *Punk Planet*, launched in Chicago in the same year, 1994, and *Ablaze!*, first published in Manchester in 1987, which focused on Riot Grrrl acts from 1993.

successful digital magazines. In 1994, for example, senior *Rolling Stone* writer Michael Goldberg launched an online music magazine, *Addicted to Noise*; in 1995 New York fanzine writer Jason Gross launched the online *Perfect Sound Forever*; the same year in Minneapolis, Ryan Schreiber started *Turntable*, an online indie fanzine that in 1996 was renamed *Pitchfork*, moving to Chicago in 1999, which was also when Sarah Zupko launched the online *Pop Matters*.⁴¹ Sean Adams's British music site *Drowned in Sound* was launched in 2000 (its origins were the 1998 emailed fanzine, *The Last Resort*). By the turn of the century, the most interesting rock writing was appearing in online rather than print magazines, and the blogosphere had become a significant outlet for established rock writers, as the space in print outlets was steadily reduced (*Melody Maker* ceased publication in 2000; *NME* became an online-only publication in 2018).⁴²

In the twentieth-first century the context of music writing thus changed in two ways. First, the digital transformation of information storage and distribution put an end to the publishing model that had sustained (and made mutually beneficial) the print and recorded music industries. As record sales and record company incomes fell so did the resources for advertising, star building and tour support; music publications lost advertising income at the same time as their own sales figures declined. And the fragmentation of the music market, which was both a cause and an effect of new digital music services, meant that rock criticism had less significance anyway.⁴³ People no longer had to hear or read about music that didn't immediately interest them; taste groups and fan communities could now be established virtually, through social media and file sharing. The ideological role of the rock critic as a musical authority with exclusive access to both information and a public platform from which to air their views became redundant. Consumer guidance, it seems, could now be performed by an algorithm.⁴⁴

⁴¹ One other publication that could be mentioned in this digital context is *Blender*, which was launched in the United States in 1994 as a CD-ROM magazine. It moved online in 1997 but after being taken over by the UK-based Dennis Publications was also, from 1999, aggressively marketed (in the end not very successfully) in a print format.

⁴² The most engaging such sites are Richard Williams's *thebluemoment.com* and Simon Reynolds's *blissblog*.

⁴³ Howard Hampton suggests that such fragmentation preceded digital music marketing; see his '70's Rock: The Bad Vibes Continue', *New York Times* (14 January 2001), Arts and Leisure Section, 3. The best summary account of the effects of the digital revolution on music and newspaper and magazine publishing is Don McLeese, 'Straddling the Cultural Chasm: The Great Divide Between Music Criticism and Popular Consumption', *Popular Music and Society*, 33/4 (2010), 433-47.

⁴⁴ One of the more significant 'tastemakers' in this digital world is Sean Parker (co-founder of the first music-sharing site, Napster, and ex-president of Facebook), who produces the Hipster International playlist for Spotify. Parker plays the role of rock critic as consumer guide, but his playlist depends as much on calculus as personal obsession.

The Contradictions of Rock Music Criticism

The rock-writing career I know most about is my own, which, while not untypical, has undoubtedly shaped my understanding of how rock criticism works.⁴⁵ Its original impulse was radical and anti-establishment but already, by 1967, rock was, in Richard Goldstein's words, 'a billion-dollar baby'; he felt the need to introduce 'Weird Scenes in the Gold Mine' into his *Voice* column as a way of discussing 'the machinations of the recording industry'.⁴⁶ From almost the very beginning, then, the rock critic was both a self-proclaimed journalistic outsider and an essential cog in a rapidly expanding global music sales machine.⁴⁷ The resulting financial relationship between record companies and music magazines was sometimes direct: *Rolling Stone* was, for a while, supported by Warner Records and *ZigZag* by Chrysalis Records, just as *Gramophone* had been, for a while, supported by EMI. But in the popular music world, as in the classical music world, record companies quickly understood that the most effective promotional support came from writers who were thought by their readers to make independent judgements and from publications that were clearly concerned with their own markets. Music papers and writers were indeed dependent on record companies for financial survival, but indirectly, through advertising income and free access to the music being written about. Rock criticism thus developed as a way of writing about music in which critics asserted their aesthetic autonomy while accepting that their livelihoods depended on their value to both recording and publishing commerce. The resulting tensions were articulated in rock critics' uneasy and inconsistent attitudes towards both low and high culture.

In the 1950s, youth pop, rock 'n' roll, was commonly regarded as lower-class music. To take such music seriously, as writers began to in the 1960s, thus suggested a new social sensibility. Richard Goldstein recalls this shift:

I don't know when rock 'n' roll became rock. I started using the term in 1966, though it seemed arbitrary to make a distinction between the 'trash' of my youth and the 'serious' stuff. I thought it had more to do with class than music. Rock went to college; rock 'n' roll was a high school dropout.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Don McLeese's offers a comparable summary of a career as a music writer in the United States (McLeese, 'Straddling the Cultural Chasm', 435).

⁴⁶ Goldstein, *Another Little Piece of My Heart*, p. 78.

⁴⁷ The relationship was celebrated in 1973 by Ardent Records, which organised the first (and only) Rock Writers Convention, supposedly to establish a kind of rock critics' professional union, but in fact as part of a PR campaign to support Big Star's forthcoming *Radio City* album. See Barney Hoskyns, 'The Great Lig in the Sky: The Legendary, First-and-Last Rock Writer's Convention', *rocksbackpages.com* (June 2006).

⁴⁸ Goldstein, *Another Little Piece of My Heart*, p. 37.

To put this another way, the new approach to pop was not simply an effect of the music itself becoming more ambitious – ‘songs that blasted through the traditional formula of pop’, in Goldstein’s words – but, as importantly, of a new way of thinking about it. Rock writers started out as intellectuals; this is why they treated popular music ‘as something worthy of serious intellectual scrutiny’.⁴⁹ And if it has always been difficult to distinguish ‘pop’ from ‘rock’ according to any clear musical criteria, that is because, when it comes to it, ‘rock’ can only be defined as ‘the music that rock critics write about’. After all, *any* form of popular music can be of intellectual interest.

Sociologically, it is certainly the case that the first generation of American rock writers were almost all college graduates (many of the early rock magazines originated in university publications or friendship groups), while in the UK the major difference between the writers in, say, *Melody Maker* and *Let It Rock* in the early 1970s was that the new, self-conscious rock writers in the latter had mostly been to university and the local newspaper-trained journalists at the former had not. In educational terms, the profile of rock writers ever since has been much like that of any other group of high-cultural journalists; hence the significant number of rock writers in Britain who have come through Oxbridge.⁵⁰ In the early days what set these writers apart from high music critics was that the musicians they wrote about (and most highly valued) did not usually come from the same cultural world, though their readers increasingly did.⁵¹ As Simon Reynolds wrote in 1990, music paper readers were ‘largely students, ex-students and those destined to be students’.⁵² And by then the same could be said of rock musicians, too.

In 1976, Robert Christgau described ‘a Rock-Critic Establishment’, a group of critics who ‘all live in New York, work for influential publications, and are very close socially’.⁵³ His piece was a response to Bruce Springsteen’s apparent rise to fame through critical acclaim rather than mass sales, but his article addressed the more general issue of critical consensus. If rock writing was premised on the individual sensibility, style and voice of a particular writer, if self-expression was the essence of rock criticism (hence the phenomenon of

⁴⁹ See Devon Powers, *Writing the Record: The Village Voice and the Birth of Rock Criticism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013), pp. 9–17.

⁵⁰ For example, Charlie Gillett, Ian Macdonald, Jon Savage, Mary Harron, Mark Ellen, Barney Hoskyns, Simon Reynolds and Alexis Petridis, long-time chief rock critic of the *Guardian*. I graduated from Oxford.

⁵¹ A pattern that continued for some genres. Chris Atton notes that Scotland’s first punk fanzine, *Hanging Around*, was put together by students at the University of Edinburgh (Chris Atton, ‘Popular Music Fanzines: Genres, Aesthetics and the “Democratic Conversation”’, *Popular Music and Society*, 33/4 (2010), 520).

⁵² Quoted in Jason Toynbee, ‘Policing Bohemia, Pinning Up the Grunge: The Music Press and Generic Change in British Pop and Rock’, *Popular Music*, 12/3 (1993), 296–7.

⁵³ Robert Christgau, ‘Yes, There Is a Rock-Critic Establishment (But Is That Bad for Rock?)’, *Village Voice* (26 January 1976), 128.

rock writer-as-star), how was the rock canon (already obvious by then) established?⁵⁴ One aspect of this is institutional. As Christgau suggests, rock writers quickly established networks and hierarchies that could be ostentatiously exclusive (a point often made about 1970s and 1980s *NME* writers, for example).⁵⁵ In a profession that was largely freelance, such contacts were what enabled one to get commissions, assignments and retainers; my own rock-writing career certainly depended on the friendship groups of which I was a member, in both Britain and the United States (as a full-time academic I was not really part of a professional network). Argument and agreement in such groups were essential to the development of shared critical judgements. Such consensus, though, also ensured the continuing importance of fanzines, in which new writers could sound an individual voice against the common critical view. Fanzines thus remained a constant source of new rock writers throughout the 1970s and 1980s, though to sustain a career such writers had quickly to become professional, to join or form a critical establishment themselves.⁵⁶ As Simon Reynolds wrote in 1984, in the first issue of his own fanzine, *Monitor*, ‘fanzines are really a submerged but functional part of the pop media, the system by which talent (musical and journalistic) is defined, noticed, and rises’.⁵⁷

While fanzines, particularly punk and post-punk fanzines, celebrated DIY, their writers were, as Reynolds suggests, still essentially elitist. The suggestion that anyone could be a rock critic was coupled with the assumption that most of the people who did write about music, and especially most of those who were paid to, were clueless hacks, dupes of the music industry. As fanzine writers became professionals themselves (and *Monitor*’s writers were all soon working for *Melody Maker*) the distinction between the critic and the hack had to be maintained in the context of professional practice, the former expressing their independent individual views in the review section, the latter complicit with record companies’ star-making process in the provision of artist features, on-the-road tour reports and interviews.

This distinction between different kinds of music journalism was familiar from early on. In his 1976 account of the Rock-Critic Establishment, Robert

⁵⁴ Lester Bangs and Nick Kent are probably the rock writers who have been most obviously treated as rock stars, but many rock critics have been thought to have big enough names to support book collections of their work.

⁵⁵ Christgau, ‘Yes, There Is a Rock-Critic Establishment’, 128. At some point in the 1970s, I went with members of the New York rock critic establishment to a club gig (we began the evening by having dinner together). On arrival we discovered that the prime reviewers’ table was occupied by lesser rock critics. After some discussion with the club manager, they were moved and we took their seats.

⁵⁶ See Chris Atton, ‘“Living in the Past”? Value Discourses in Progressive Rock Fanzines’, *Popular Music*, 20/1 (January 2001), 29–46.

⁵⁷ Simon Reynolds, ‘Fanzines: The Lost Movement’, *Monitor*, 1 (1984), [n.p.].

Christgau distinguished the 'pop intellectual' from 'an eloquent groupie like *Rolling Stone* puff king Ben Fong-Torres', but in professional practice most pop intellectuals have also had to do their share of star puffery and musician interviews.⁵⁸ Besides, as Christgau also makes clear (his article was, after all, about the selling of Bruce Springsteen), the fan impulse that drives rock writers means the public championing of the sounds and acts with which one is obsessed. Fans become rock critics because they want to develop the persuasive writing skills needed to sell the music they like to their readers; such a fan sensibility is what gives them credibility as critics. At the same time, and for just this reason, it is also important to make clear that this is *their* judgement, that they are not being manipulated by record company press campaigns.⁵⁹ It is thus quite possible for well-respected rock writers to move into record company employment (such as Richard Williams at Island and Paul Nelson at Mercury) and back again, as well as to take on the work of writing record sleeve and concert programme notes, ghosting musician biographies and compiling music collections for record labels (work that is routine for jazz and classical music writers too).⁶⁰

It is also clear, after fifty years of rock criticism, that the continuing attempt to mark off 'real' criticism from commercially driven hackery is also an effect of critics getting older. The suggestion that rock criticism is dead has been around since rock criticism was born: Richard Goldstein, for example, seems to have decided that rock criticism was no longer possible in 1968, and articles asking 'where have all the rock critics gone?' have been a staple of music papers since at least the late 1970s.⁶¹ Such a sense of loss, though, has been as much an effect of generational change as of corporate corruption. As Tom Carson suggested in a 2002 interview:

⁵⁸ Christgau, 'Yes, There Is a Rock-Critic Establishment', 142. A selection of Fong-Torres's *Rolling Stone* pieces can be found in Ben Fong-Torres, *Not Fade Away: A Backstage Pass to 20 Years of Rock & Roll* (London: Backbeat Books, 1999). The best rock star interviews in this period appeared in *Musician* magazine, a US monthly that ran from 1976 to 1999. As its subtitle ('The Art, Business and Technology of Making Music') indicated, it was less interested in musicians' personalities than in their music-making practices. For the general role of musical instrument magazines in establishing a musical (as against critical) community, see Paul Théberge, *Any Sound You Can Imagine: Making Music/Consuming Technology* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1997).

⁵⁹ For a good discussion of the complex relationship between the music press and record company PR personnel, see Eamonn Forde, 'Conflict and Collaboration: The Press Office/Journalist Nexus in the British Music Press of the Late 1990s', *Popular Music History*, 1/3 (2004), 285–306. For an overview of the relationship between music writers and the music industry, see Dave Laing, 'Anglo-American Journalism', in Andy Bennett, Barry Shank and Jason Toynbee (eds.), *The Popular Music Studies Reader* (London: Routledge, 2007).

⁶⁰ The biggest fee I ever earned was from the Pet Shop Boys for the right to reprint a piece I'd written about them in their tour programme.

⁶¹ See Goldstein, *Another Little Piece of My Heart*, p. 134; Frith, 'Going Critical', pp. 267–8.

About 15 years ago the whole ballgame changed. The stuff that had made rock and roll seem consequential enough to devote your life to it just obviously didn't work that way anymore, and even though what replaced it is just as consequential, it involves all these different vocabularies and attitudes and guiding premises. I mean, I thought it was very funny, in a wishful sort of way, when critics started saying 'transgressive' instead of 'subversive'. It's like new, improved Dr Pepper. But it's just ridiculous to treat upsetting the apple cart as a central value in music now, certainly if your basic orientation is toward white-guy guitar bands – which I think it was at the outset for pretty much all the critics in my age group. Kurt Cobain really was the end of the line and also sort of a fluke, and I think it didn't make his life any easier that he was smart enough to know it and just be bedeviled [*sic*] by it. Ever since Madonna, unless you're reviewing hip-hop, you've had to learn to take pop phenomenons [*sic*] seriously in a way critics didn't back then. I dunno, should we really have thought long and hard about Olivia Newton-John? Probably.⁶²

Carson is raising questions here about the source of rock critics' authority. Unlike their classical colleagues, writers about popular music have no formal qualifications in musical analysis and make no claims about their own musical skills (musical literacy, for example, is not a prerequisite). Why, then, should anyone take any notice of what they write?

When writers started taking popular music seriously their critical model was clearly jazz writing, which had established that a music critic was not bound by the technical language or aesthetic sensibility of the classical world. Richard Goldstein thus called his college magazine music column 'The Second Jazz Age',⁶³ and my first articles for my college magazine, interviews with the Animals and Manfred Mann, were pitched to a sceptical arts editor as examining the influence of jazz on British beat music (at that time *Isis*, the University of Oxford's student magazine, had a jazz critic but rarely published anything on pop). Lindberg et al. suggest that 'In many respects the rock criticism emerging at *Melody Maker* from 1964 onward was not so much a break with the traditions of jazz criticism as a prolongation of it.'⁶⁴ And, as Matt Brennan notes, in the mid-1960s *Downbeat* was the bestselling popular music magazine in the United States, and duly took account of the emergence of the new music and its audiences in its news and reviews.⁶⁵ In the end, 'rock' and 'jazz' were established as different kinds of label for different kinds of music, but this was not inevitable. Different editorial and marketing decisions

⁶² Tom Carson, 'Sorry Ma, Forgot to Bring in the Trash: Tom Carson Talks Straight to Scott Woods and Steven Ward', *rockcritics.com* (April 2002).

⁶³ Powers, *Writing the Record*, p. 64. ⁶⁴ Lindberg, et al., *Rock Criticism from the Beginning*, p. 88.

⁶⁵ Matt Brennan, *When Genres Collide: Downbeat, Rolling Stone and the Struggle between Jazz and Rock* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2017).

at *Downbeat* could have established much of the music that became rock as a subcategory of jazz. Certainly, early rock critics like Robert Christgau and Lester Bangs included jazz musicians among the artists in whom they were interested, while the established jazz critic Ralph J. Gleason was a key figure in starting and shaping *Rolling Stone*, which regularly covered jazz in its early days.

There were two related reasons why this music became written about as a new genre, rock, rather than as a new way of making an existing kind of popular music, jazz. First, the music writers most interested in the new music identified themselves as fans; they wrote as and for music consumers rather than music-makers. In *Melody Maker*, for example, there was a clear tension between the older and younger writers as to their significant readers and the differences here determined how the music was written about. Second, rock writers were less concerned than jazz writers with musical skill and technique and more concerned with musicians' ability to articulate the communal values of their fans. In this respect they drew on critical approaches to folk music rather than to jazz.⁶⁶

Rock writers' authority, in short, comes not from their musical qualifications or experiences but from their authenticity as listeners. They are not practitioners in the making of the music they review but in the processes in which it is heard and understood. Music doesn't have to be described using shared musical language (a language which is, in any case, unlikely to be available). One result, as *New York Times* rock critic, Sasha Frere-Jones puts it, is that such criticism is 'unsupervised': anything goes.⁶⁷ Another is that pop and rock critics' authority is inextricably tied up with the idea of authenticity.

In a detailed content analysis of all music features and reviews published in Edinburgh's and Glasgow's broadsheet newspapers and corresponding evening tabloids in a three-month period (1 October–31 December 2004), Frances Boyson found:

The notion of authenticity in popular music pervades discourses within all the papers, and especially within reviews. The multiple uses of the term and the many concepts that underlie it are often contradictory, despite being referred

⁶⁶ See Simon Frith, "'The Magic That Can Set You Free": The Ideology of Folk and the Myth of the Rock Community', *Popular Music*, 1 (January 1981), 159–68. One consequence of this has been the dominance of rock writing by the interests and sensibilities of white boys/men. This was a further difference between jazz and rock writing: the former drew on African American writing about popular music; the latter did not (see Brooks, 'The Write to Rock'). Further, as Brooks shows, this sense of male community has also meant that women rock writers have had to fight to be heard. For a British account of this issue see Caroline Sullivan, 'The Joy of Hacking: Women Rock Critics', Sarah Cooper (ed.) *Girls! Girls! Girls! Essays on Women and Music* (London: Cassell 1995), pp. 138–45.

⁶⁷ Sasha Frere-Jones, 'Subject/Object. Firsthand Knowledge in Criticism', in Andras Szanto (ed.), *Reporting the Arts 11* (New York: National Arts Journalism Program, 2003), pp. 144–5.

to as fixed and objective. Instead, authenticity can be shown to be a subjective label, attributed to artists whom, at that moment, lead the writer to perceive certain qualities pertaining to the means by which the music has been created, produced and consumed.⁶⁸

Weisethaunet and Lindberg have suggested that what's at stake here is as much the authenticity of the writer as of the music and musicians being written about:

Within rock criticism, there is no doubt that the new-intellectuals-become-critics in the 1960s experienced performances as 'authentic' although rock was 'mass culture'. But, as they set out to communicate this experience, it was displaced from the inner-subjective sphere and essentialized as a quality inherent in the music (as well as other constituent elements of rock culture).⁶⁹

Take, as an example of this point, Tom Carson's review of U2 in the *Village Voice* in 1988. Among other things, he writes:

Even punks who manifestly didn't know how to play let you know they knew how to listen, but U2 have never given the impression that they spent their youth turned on by records or obsessed with records, or even noticing records particularly – or humming much.⁷⁰

If knowing how to listen and being obsessed with records is an aspect of performers' claims to be making authentic rock 'n' roll, it is because it is also central to a critic's claims to be able to determine such authenticity. In her study of everyday rock journalism in Philadelphia (based on extensive interviews with fifteen local practitioners), Bethany Klein usefully illustrates the issues involved here.⁷¹ Her interviewees were well aware of the difficulty of establishing their credentials to write about music when they had no formal qualifications for the task. In particular, how can one distinguish a good from a bad rock critic? The consensus view was that 'popular music critics should be proficient writers, should have a breadth of knowledge, and should be able to make studied judgements regardless of personal preferences'.⁷² The problem was that readers could well claim these qualities too (and might be far more knowledgeable about the artists they really liked). The good critic should therefore be a general rather than a 'super fan', but their knowledge should

⁶⁸ Frances Boyson, 'Music Journalism in the Scottish Daily Press', unpublished BMus dissertation, University of Edinburgh (2006), 42.

⁶⁹ Hans Weisethaunet and Ulf Lindberg, 'Authenticity Revisited: The Rock Critic and the Changing Real', *Popular Music and Society*, 33/4 (2010), 481.

⁷⁰ Tom Carson, 'Elvis is Alive', *Village Voice* (15 November 1988), 75.

⁷¹ Bethany Klein, 'Dancing about Architecture: Popular Music Criticism and the Negotiation of Authority', *Popular Communication* 3/1 (2005), 1–20.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 5.

come from their own listening (rather from reading press packs). Klein's interviewees were therefore anxious when writing about music that they hadn't grow up with because, in their view, 'authoritative' knowledge came from the authenticity of their own musical experience. Where writers-as-fans differed from readers-as-fans was that the critic had to translate taste (their likes and dislikes) into value (an assertion of what is good or bad).

What is involved here is what I have called elsewhere, in a discussion of the work of Greil Marcus, 'pragmatic romanticism':

From this perspective rock is a music that articulates an individual sense of being which – mysteriously – resonates with both history and audience; the critic's task is both to sense this mystery and to account for it, to show *how* it happens, in the collaborative and often accidental processes of music making and music listening.⁷³

If musicians' articulation of self necessarily involves collaboration and accident, the effects of commercial as well as aesthetic decision-making, so writers' claims to autonomy, the romantic ideal of being true to their feelings, come up in practice against the realities of writing for a living and being subject both to editorial (and sub-editorial) quirks and reader expectations. The critics interviewed by Klein in Philadelphia were well aware that their need to express *themselves* as music writers constantly came up against the needs of their editors and readers for consumer guidance, and that the writer's basic tool, the space for their words, was not under their control. At the same time, their role as professional journalists also protected them from market pressures in the ongoing negotiations with record company press officers for access to new music.

From this perspective the different power of different critics has more to do with the reach and reputation of their publication than their writing. But a further point here is that, as I have already suggested, critics don't write alone, as it were, but operate in conjunction with all the other critics writing about the same records and performances in all the other outlets (the Philadelphia writers describe the 'rock critic huddle' that forms at local concerts).⁷⁴ As Jason Toynbee puts it, critics work to create 'an interpretative community'.⁷⁵ In Klein's words, 'There is recognition among popular music critics that the majority opinion is the one that will be remembered and will be

⁷³ Simon Frith, 'The Place of the Producer in the Discourse of Rock', Simon Frith and Simon Zagorsky-Thomas (eds.), *The Art of Record Production* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), pp. 220–1.

⁷⁴ Klein, 'Dancing about Architecture', 17.

⁷⁵ Toynbee, 'Policing Bohemia, Pinning Up the Grunge', 299.

archived in the rock 'n' roll history books, unless the critical community later reevaluates the work (which still would require consensus).⁷⁶

For these critics, then, self-expression needs to be distinguished from self-indulgence, and rebellion against the mainstream from the dismissal of music just for being popular. Toynbee suggests that historically the result has been an ongoing dialectic, as each new generation of critics excoriates the existing critical consensus as outdated and establishes a new one.⁷⁷ But this also illustrates the uneasy relationship pop and rock critics have with the issue of popularity itself. For twenty-five years I chaired the judges of the Mercury Music prize, which is one way in which rock critical values have been institutionalised. Commentary on our shortlists and winners never changes: our judgement has either been too populist or not populist enough. As Alexis Petridis wrote in the *Guardian* about the 2015 Prize:

The predominance of artists of relatively obscure stature on this year's shortlist had already attracted criticism from people keen to invoke the famously watertight argument that the best music is invariably the most commercially successful; among them heavyweight musical theorist Dan Wootton, of the *Sun*'s Bizarre column, who decried the list of nominees as 'another snobfest from arrogant music industry luvvies who do not give a damn what the majority of the country listen to'.⁷⁸

This is to return to the Philadelphia critics' anxiety: why should anyone read them? They are either praising records which few people like or knocking those that many people do. The paradox, as Andrew Goodwin once suggested, is that

Like most people you love to hate, music critics are actually very popular. Why? Because you can't get by without them. It isn't just that pop writers might help you select which music you will listen to, and perhaps buy. Even more important, the words that describe music influence the way you hear it. You can't consume music direct like some kind of intravenous drug. Even if you believe you can, there's no way to discuss the experience or make it meaningful that avoids the use of words. Pop writing helps us decode its sounds and visions. Words speak louder than music.⁷⁹

Rhetorically, rock critics' uneasy relationship with the popular means, as Toynbee shows, a constant interplay between the 'didactic' and the 'confrontational', between persuasive and scoffing prose; the critic is either explaining

⁷⁶ Klein, 'Dancing about Architecture', 17.

⁷⁷ Toynbee, 'Policing Bohemia, Pinning Up the Grunge', 292.

⁷⁸ Alexis Petridis, 'Their Darling Clementine: Mercury Prize Judges Opt for Obscure Artist', *Guardian Music Blog*, *guardian.com* (20 November 2015).

⁷⁹ Andrew Goodwin, 'Words Speak Louder than Music', *Calendar Magazine* (June 1987), 8.

to readers why they should like something or why they shouldn't.⁸⁰ And, necessarily in this context, it is the obscure acts that need talking up, the successful ones that need talking down. Toynbee himself provides an excellent analysis of Charles Shaar Murray's writing from this perspective, showing how skilfully Murray mixes high and low cultural terms in his changes of register, but the most pithy deployment of the instructive and the insulting has long been found in Robert Christgau's 'Consumer Guide', capsule reviews of new releases that he has been writing since 1969.⁸¹ The success of such writing, whether measured as a way of making a living or in terms of its effect on popular taste, depends, of course, on finding readers who want to be educated and confronted (and are willing to pay for this). It has been a moot question in the last decade whether such a readership can be sustained.

I don't want to end, though, by sounding like every other music writer and bemoaning the end of a critical golden age. I'm sure that people will go on engaging with popular music and that such engagement will involve writing and reading about music. I am also sure that as one way of doing this, rock criticism, becomes steadily less significant it is likely to be supplanted by other sorts of criticism, involving new ways of doing both music and journalism. One question can still be asked however: in its fifty-year history, what have been rock criticism's effects?

To answer this fully, one would need to look at rock writing's influence on music marketing, on the commercial understanding of pop, in terms of both genre and desire. Over the years, rock writers have, I think, given record companies an idea of what record buyers and concert-goers wanted their music *for*, while providing accounts of artistic creativity that became key to the star-making process. And one could look, too, at the way in which rock critics brought popular music into the cultural mainstream, making popular music a normal topic for discussion in the broadsheet press or for public service broadcasters while also, consequently, making such music interesting to cultural policy makers and arts councils.

But here I will just note the influence of journalistic writing about popular music on academic writing about popular music, on popular music studies. Rock journalists preceded academics in taking popular music seriously. The first scholarly book on pop that I read was Dave Laing's *The Sound of Our Time*, which deployed a number of scholarly approaches to the meaning of music but was, nevertheless, written by a journalist who wouldn't have an academic post

⁸⁰ Toynbee, 'Policing Bohemia, Pinning Up the Grunge', 299. This is true for all critics who see their task as giving shape to a potential taste community.

⁸¹ These can be found at www.robertchristgau.com/cg.php.

for many years to come.⁸² More generally, as Weisethaunet and Lindberg point out,

The history of popular music has, to a considerable extent, been written by music journalists rather than by music scholars. The self-understanding of the popular music studies field therefore, to a large extent, reflects the doxa of popular music criticism, in which some of the most central concepts – with ‘authenticity’ as, perhaps, a paradigmatic example – tend to be harnessed to mythologies cultivated in the journalistic field.⁸³

The terms and conditions of academic popular music studies, in other words, have their unquestioned sources in the archives of the music press. In this field, the academy doesn’t provide an alternative critical or detached way of thinking about popular music but simply adapts both the discourse and authorial stance that is already out there.

⁸² Dave Laing, *The Sound of Our Time* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1969).

⁸³ Weisethaunet and Lindberg, ‘Authenticity Revisited’, 467. See also Toynebee, ‘Policing Bohemia, Pinning Up the Grunge’, 299.

Working in the Cool Capitalism Complex: The Role of Critics in the World Music Field

TIMOTHY D. TAYLOR

Introduction: Criticism and Fields of Cultural Production

This chapter considers world music criticism, broadly understood.* What we now call ‘world music’ is a category created by a cadre of critics, DJs, retailers in the late 1980s, but, of course, the folk and traditional musics that were placed in that category have existed as long as there has been music. The beginning of this chapter examines the rise of music as a ‘genre’ in the Anglo-American music industry¹ and its genrefication constructed and maintained, in part, by critics, who play important roles.

The significant functions played by critics in the construction and maintenance of world music as a ‘genre’ is no different than in any other field of cultural production, and by way of an introduction I want to assert that world music, whatever its status as a ‘genre’ (which is an effect of the Anglo-American music industry’s attempt to categorise this music, as it does with all musics) is, as a genre, no different from any other ‘genre’ and is therefore subject to analysis as a field of cultural production.²

Briefly, even though, according to Bourdieu, it is fields of cultural production that produce genres, world music as a category – and later, genre – was imposed on musicians around the world by the music industry beginning in the 1980s. Only then did it begin to develop as a field of cultural production, though positions, position-takings and forms of capital in this field were already circulating, available to be captured by musicians for use. I won’t go into these positions and position-takings at length,³ except to note for the

* I would like to thank Sherry B. Ortner for helpful comments in the writing of this chapter.

¹ See Timothy D. Taylor, ‘World Music Today’, in Bob W. White (ed.), *Music and Globalization: Critical Encounters* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012).

² Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, ed. Randal Johnson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993) and *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, trans. Susan Emanuel (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).

³ See Timothy D. Taylor, ‘Fields, Genres, Brands’, in *Music in the World: Selected Essays* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017).

time being that what critics and others conceptualise and discuss as ‘authenticity’ is a complex of positions taken and forms and volumes of capital possessed by the musician. One position is the musician’s willingness to adopt popular music sounds from Anglo-America, another’s refusal to do so, preferring to sound ‘traditional’, whatever that may mean in a particular context. The other major position concerns whether or not to sing in English, but I won’t consider that here. ‘Authenticity’ can also take the form of a capital in the world music field based on a musician’s place of origin, upbringing in poverty or other form of oppression, coming from a lineage of famous musicians, studying with a famous teacher, and other such qualities. Musicians, however, can compromise or enhance a form of capital depending on a position they take. A world music artist who, for example, possesses a large amount of capital as a result of being, say, a descendant in a line of West African griots (heredity bardic musician/poets) can decide to adopt western popular music sounds, thus taking that position instead of a ‘traditional’ one. Positions and forms of capital can thus inflect each other in complicated ways.⁴

World music as a field of cultural production is extremely complex. A musician could take as a position membership in the world music field instead of some other field; or (more common in this field) a musician can be placed in it by the music industry despite her desire to be in a different field, a bigger one, a more prestigious one. The great Beninoise singer Angélique Kidjo (1960–), for example, was marketed for a time as an R&B singer by her record label, which seems to have made no difference as far as the broader music industry is concerned – she is still in the world music field.⁵ World music as a field depends in large part on the Anglo-American music industry’s ongoing and extensive efforts to contain world music as a ‘genre’, which has implications and ramifications for it as a field.

In his conception of the sociology of art and literature, Bourdieu argues that one must attend not only to works, ‘but also the symbolic production of the work, i.e. the production of the value of the work or, which amounts of the same thing, of belief in the value of the work’.⁶ Thus, a sociology of art must consider ‘the producers of the meaning and value of the work’, including critics.⁷ Critics in every field of cultural production play an important role in not only shaping that field, Bourdieu says, but also, I would add, defining

⁴ For more on popular music as a field of cultural production, see David Hesmondhalgh, ‘Bourdieu, the Media and Cultural Production’, *Media, Culture and Society*, 28/2 (2006), 211–31.

⁵ See Elena Oumano, ‘Island Targets R&B Market with New Album from Kidjo’, *Billboard* (23 May 1998), 1; Timothy D. Taylor, *Global Pop: World Music, World Markets* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

⁶ Bourdieu, *Field of Cultural Production*, p. 37. ⁷ *Ibid.*

positions, defending them, attacking them, as well as defending or criticising the forms of capital, and amounts of it, possessed by musicians. Loïc Wacquant was quite right to characterise fields in general (not just fields of cultural production) as battlefields in Bourdieu's thinking, sites of constant contestation over positions and forms and volumes of capital. Sometimes critics can play a role in defining positions or forms of capital against what musicians themselves believe, as I will discuss. The music industry, and its efforts, depends no less on the role played by critics.

And critics' roles increasingly depend on the cultural industries' search for the hip and the cool, the edgy, the trendy. The search for the cool, or to manufacture the cool, increasingly suffuses and drives the cultural industries – and thus, the culture.⁸ Critics have an important role to play in this enterprise, which, broadly put, is part of what I will call the Cool Capitalism Complex: finding and making what is thought to be cool.

The Rise of World Music

Before the selection of the term 'world music' to contain all non-Western musics (and many traditional Western musics), there was, occasionally, a song or two that entered the mainstream. These were almost invariably curated or brokered by an American or European musician, or they were Western or Westernised musics that were tonal and thus approachable by mainstream American and European listeners. Most of these songs or musics were ephemeral fads, though some would come in periodic waves, such as 'Latin' musics of various kinds.⁹

Historically, one can also trace the European craze for the tango in Paris and then other European cities;¹⁰ the US interest in ukuleles and Hawai'ian music after the United States annexed the islands in the early twentieth century, an interest that lasted into the 1920s; the fad for calypso, a Trinidadian folk music that became more commercialised by the mid-twentieth century and was popularised beginning with Harry Belafonte with his album *Calypso* (1956); and other fascinations for non-Western (or

⁸ See Timothy D. Taylor, 'Advertising and the Conquest of Culture', *Social Semiotics*, 19/4 (2009), 405–25; 'The Hip, the Cool, and the Edgy, or the Dominant Cultural Logic of Neoliberal Capitalism', *Rivista di analisi e teoria musicale*, 22/1–2 (2016), 105–24; and *Music and Capitalism: A History of the Present* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016); Sherry B. Ortner, *Not Hollywood: Independent Film at the Twilight of the American Dream* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013).

⁹ See Kariann Goldschmitt, *Bossa Mundo: Brazilian Music in the Global Culture Industries* (in preparation); John Storm Roberts, *The Latin Tinge: The Impact of Latin American Music on the United States*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999; first published 1979).

¹⁰ See Marta E. Savigliano, *Tango and the Political Economy of Passion* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995).

marginal Western) genres as precursors to what became known as world music.

Individual musicians and songs have occasionally entered the mainstream. South African popular musics registered with everyday listeners songs such as 'The Lion Sleeps Tonight' (or 'Wimba Way' or 'Wimoweh'), a song originally recorded by Solomon Linda with the Evening Birds in 1939, popularised in the 1950s by many folk and popular artists such as The Weavers, Miriam Makeba and the Kingston Trio. It became a huge hit for the doo-wop group The Tokens in 1961.¹¹ Makeba (1932–2008) helped popularise South African musics beginning in the 1950s with songs such as 'Pata Pata', recorded in 1957 (though not released in the United States until a decade later).

Closer chronologically and stylistically to what would become known as 'world music' is the Cameroonian Manu Dibango's track 'Soul Makossa', released in 1972. It was largely unknown in the United States until played prominently by a New York City DJ, prompting Atlantic Records to license the original recording from its French label and release it as a single. This version reached number 35 on *Billboard* magazine's 'Hot 100' chart in 1973 and was widely covered by groups around the world. 'Soul Makossa' is quite danceable and is viewed by some as an early disco recording.¹² Another key recording was *Le Mystère des voix bulgares*, released in 1975 and re-released in 1986 in the UK. It was an early world music success, popularising Bulgarian women's chorus around the world.¹³

For most listeners, recognition of what was to become best known as 'world music' was prompted by the release in 1986 of Paul Simon's *Graceland*, which employed musicians from South Africa and elsewhere on the African continent. The release of this album and its success (it won the Grammy Award for Record of the Year in 1987) increased interest in world music to the extent that some consumers (never very many, for world music sales are quite small compared to most other popular musics) began to seek out sounds similar to the African musics heard on Simon's album.

Afropop of many kinds, Bulgarian women's choruses, Indian film music and other kinds of musics from around the world did not fit in the usual 'International' sections of record stores, which might have once held German polkas or Irish sing-along music (though sometimes the latter could

¹¹ See Rian Malan, 'Where Does the Lion Sleep Tonight?', *Rolling Stone* (25 May 2004), 54–66, 84–5.

¹² See for example Peter Shapiro, *Turn the Beat Around: The Secret History of Disco* (New York: Faber and Faber, 2005).

¹³ See Timothy Rice, *May It Fill Your Soul: Experiencing Bulgarian Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

be classified as ‘folk’). The influential British DJ Charlie Gillett recalled that moment in the UK:

We had a very simple, small ambition. It was all geared to record shops, that was the only thing we were thinking about. In America, King Sunny Adé (from Nigeria) was being filed under reggae. That was the only place shops could think of to put him. In Britain they didn’t know where to put this music – I think Adé was just lost in the alphabet, next to Abba. In 1985 [*sic*] Paul Simon did *Graceland* and that burst everything wide open, because he created an interest in South African music. People were going into shops saying: ‘I want some of that stuff’ and there wasn’t anywhere for them to look.¹⁴

Following this, world music charts appeared in *Billboard* magazine (the main chronicle of the music industry in the United States) beginning in 1990, and awards were created to recognise world music recordings and artists such as the Grammy Award, starting in 1991.

The rise of world music and its (continuing) genrefication and fieldification was thus the result of a series of processes of the industrialisation and management of the world musics by the international music industry. The rise of specialty labels, specialty magazines and websites, the rise of a system of charts and awards, were all part of this institutionalisation. Criticism had and continues to have an important role to play in all of these processes, as it does with any field of cultural production.

In addition to the rise of world music criticism occurring in existing newspapers and magazines, the rise of world music also brought with it a couple of specialty magazines, *Songlines* in the UK, beginning in 1999, and, around the same time, *Rhythm Music Magazines* (later *RMM*) in the United States (now defunct).¹⁵ *Songlines* began as a semi-serious publication, with articles longer than the average popular press magazine. Its shape and size were also that of a scholarly journal, not a popular magazine. This did not last, however, the editors presumably finding that greater sales could be achieved by changing the magazine’s appearance and content to attract a broader audience; today, it is a slick and glossy affair. *Songlines* began to offer world music awards in 2003; in 2008, BBC Radio 3 cancelled its Awards for World Music. *Songlines* inaugurated a digital version in 2009 (www.songlines.co.uk).

It was interesting to note that those magazines that covered folk music, such as *Folk Roots* in the UK (which had begun as *Southern Rag* in 1979) and

¹⁴ Robin Denslow, ‘We Created World Music’, *The Guardian* (29 June 2004), 10.

¹⁵ It has been difficult to find information on this magazine, to which I once subscribed. I no longer have any of my old copies.

Dirty Linen in the United States, retooled themselves to include world music. *Folk Roots* changed its name to *fRoots* in 1998. *Dirty Linen* began as *Fairport Fanatics* in 1983 (a publication for fans of the band Fairport Convention), changing its name in 1987. The magazine ceased publication in 2010. Both magazines were originally devoted mainly to folk musics (*Folk Roots* mainly in the UK and Ireland, *Dirty Linen* mainly in the United States) but both increasingly covered world music with the rise of that 'genre'. Much the same reorganisation was found in retailers, at least in the United States. The 'Folk' category was evacuated of anything other than American folk music (e.g., Ramblin' Jack Elliott and so forth), and everything else was placed in 'World Music' or 'International'.

World music was initially treated by the music industry and critics as something fresh, new and different, employing language harking back to the beginning of modernity in the sixteenth century, as Europeans romanticised native Americans living freely, without the ills of modern civilisation.¹⁶ Wrote one critic in a guidebook to world music recordings,

Nowadays the music you play needs to be sophisticated but not obtrusive, easy to take but not at all bland, unfamiliar without being patronizing.

World music gives the American listener a sense of freedom from the constraints of standardized Anglo-American pop . . . World music is both entertaining and different. It takes the listener to a place where the world's various cultures meet happily and in the spirit of festival. It is a force for understanding and goodwill in an increasingly dark world.¹⁷

Spencer went on to write that he would exclude from consideration in his book 'anything that sounds too familiar'.¹⁸ Another author wrote in the liner notes to *The Virgin Directory of World Music* recording:

The collection of songs . . . hopefully demonstrates that at a time when rock has become far too responsible to drop its trousers and most jazz couldn't be further from the 'sound of surprise', a whole lot of stuff the marketeers confine to the World Music rack has at least one common denominator: its sheer freshness. If young people have been walking around into record stores and buying armfuls of Salif Keita and Milton Nascimento albums, then it's probably because they want to hear something NEW.¹⁹

¹⁶ See Timothy D. Taylor, *Beyond Exoticism: Western Music and the World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

¹⁷ Peter Spencer, *World Beat: A Listener's Guide to Contemporary World Music on CD* (Pennington: A Cappella Books, 1992), pp. 2-3. Since this author's title refers to 'world beat', let me explain briefly that in the early days of world music, the term 'world beat' was frequently employed to refer to more popular-sounding music, but the generic and all-encompassing term 'world music' is far more common now.

¹⁸ Spencer, *World Beat*, p. 4.

¹⁹ Simon Hopkins, Booklet to *The Virgin Directory of World Music*, Virgin Records, VDWMI (1991).

Authenticities

But ‘NEW’ didn’t mean – and has never meant – so new that the music was completely unfamiliar. With the rise of ‘world music’, there was an immediate rise of expectations and discourses about authenticity, but this didn’t mean, say, ethnographic recordings of traditional musics. Early critical receptions of world music were much the same in that Western critics expected, even demanded, that world music artists – particularly those from the African continent – sound ‘authentic’. There was little consensus about what this meant, and I suspect that most western critics didn’t actually have sounds in their ears that they knew were ‘authentic’ or that someone truly knowledgeable about a particular music would characterise as authentic. Generally, ‘authenticity’ seems to have been a sense that the non-West, Africa in particular, wasn’t modern, and therefore popular musics from the non-West couldn’t sound modern, couldn’t sound as though they had had been influenced by western popular musics. But, of course, non-Western musicians had heard Western music for decades, since the Western music industry had a presence around the globe almost from its inception.

African musicians bristled at these expectations for some time. Angélique Kidjo said:

There is a kind of cultural racism going on where people think that African musicians have to make a certain kind of music. No one asks Paul Simon, ‘Why did you use black African musicians [on *Graceland*]? Why don’t you use Americans? Why don’t you make your music?’ What is the music that Paul Simon is supposed to do?²⁰

Around the same time, Kidjo said,

I won’t do my music different to please some people who want to see something very traditional. The music I write is me. It’s how I feel. If you want to see traditional music and exoticism, take a plane to Africa. They play that music on the streets. I’m not going to play traditional drums and dress like bush people. I’m not going to show my ass for any fucking white man. If they want to see it, they can go outside. I’m not here for that. I don’t ask Americans to play country music.²¹

Also around the same time, Youssou N’Dour, faced with the same kind of expectations and desires of his sound commented on those expectations and desires in a way that was probably more tactful and diplomatic than he felt: ‘I think Americans are more and more interested in Africa but they have a long

²⁰ Ty Burr, ‘From Africa, Three Female Rebels with a Cause’, *New York Times* (10 July 1994), §H, 26.

²¹ Brooke Wentz, ‘No Kid Stuff’, *Beat* (1993), 43.

way to go. The day that people in the West understand how much we understand about the workings of the rest of the planet will be a happy day for us'.²²

Nonetheless, despite attempts by Kidjo, N'Dour and other musicians to educate Western fans and critics, some critics continued to complain about Western influences on world music, especially African popular musics. Some critics wrote of their preference of Kidjo's earliest recordings, saying by the mid-1990s that recordings released in that period sounded too much like Western pop. Kidjo's album *Ayé* from 1994 was written about by one author thus:

In 'Ayé' [1994], the Beninoise funk diva more or less dispensed with the quirkier style of songs that made her earlier CDs, 'Logozo' [1991] and particularly the first, 'Parakou' [1989], interesting. On 'Parakou', the songs range from driving dance numbers to sepia-toned laments and a cappella and there's a huge wealth of dramatic and intriguing percussion. By comparison, 'Ayé' is straight funk-rock, slickly packaged by a [Western] pop producer [Will Mowatt, famous for producing Soul II Soul, and David Z, who worked with The Fine Young Cannibals and Prince], whichever way you look at it – not necessarily with any purist inflection – the songs on it are less engaging.²³

Despite claims against demanding the authentic-as-pure, that is clearly what this author desired but did not receive with *Ayé*.

But, after such criticisms in the 1990s of Kidjo's and many others' recordings, the critical discourse quickly, and remarkably, shifted towards greater acceptance of such recordings under the rubric of 'hybridity', or the authentic-as-hybrid. Kidjo's long career and the fact that she is a woman in a sexist industry provides a good way to examine critical discourse, for it was rather astonishing to witness a critical about-face only a few years after the above disapprobations were published. The critical response to Kidjo's *Oremi* (1998), for example, continues the Western discourse of the construction of its Others as pre-modern and untechnological, but this time writing approvingly of Kidjo's use of modern musical and production technologies, noting how *Oremi* 'balances the electronic and organic', evoking modern and pre-modern, Western and African, masculine and feminine, and other long-familiar binary oppositions.²⁴ A different reviewer wrote, 'though Kidjo employs many elements familiar to techno fans, she makes that genre sound utterly sterile next to her funky, thoroughly organic hybrid'.²⁵ The discourse of hybridity, the rise of the ideology of hybridity-as-authenticity,

²² Sheila Rule, 'An African Superstar Sings Out to the World', *New York Times* (5 September 1992), 11.

²³ Simon Broughton, Richard Trillo and Mark Ellingham (eds.), *World Music: The Rough Guide* (London: Rough Guides, 1994), p. 298.

²⁴ Paul Robicheau, 'Listening to History', *Boston Globe* (25 September 1998), §D, 15.

²⁵ Unsigned, 'Kidjo's "Oremi" Is Heavenly', *Boston Herald* (25 September 1998), S25. See Taylor, *Beyond Exoticism* for more on the issue of hybridity.

was thus simply a new way of talking about the same old thing, keeping the West's Others in the savage slot,²⁶ this time attempting to do so in a more celebratory way, while at the same time retaining the romanticisation of the pre-modern, now juxtaposed with the modern as represented by new digital technologies. But the older discourse of authenticity-as-pure didn't disappear. A reviewer of Kidjo's *Oyaya!* (2004) praised the album for 'strip[ping] away the Europop affections and return[ing] . . . to a rootsier sound'.²⁷ Thus, one regime of authenticity in critical (or other) discourse doesn't necessarily give way to another; they can co-exist, though there are historical moments, some are dominant, some residual and some emergent.²⁸

I would posit two reasons for this critical shift. First, I think it was critics who, upon listening to more 'authentic' recordings such as field recordings by ethnomusicologists (some of which were released in the famous Nonesuch Explorer series from 1967 to 1984, including recordings from the African continent), found such 'authentic' music to be less than satisfying, and so abandoned or attenuated demands for the authentic-as-pure for the authentic-as-hybrid.

Perhaps more significantly, it was also the case for quite some time after the advent of the world music category that critics and fans seemed to single out for special praise recordings that featured collaborations between Western stars and world music artists, as in the case of *Graceland*.²⁹ In addition to that album, Ry Cooder (1947–) made several recordings with non-Western musicians that were hailed by critics for their collaborative nature and were lavished with Grammy awards. Cooder's recordings with Indian instrumentalist V. M. Bhatt (*A Meeting by the River*, 1993) and Malian guitarist Ali Farka Touré (*Talking Timbuktu*, 1994) were both well received by critics; both also won Grammy Awards for Best World Music Album. Cooder scored even greater popular and critical success with *Buena Vista Social Club* (1997), a recording with elderly Cuban musicians. This recording also won a Grammy Award. In cases such as this, the Anglo-American star is normally praised by critics for his discernment, his connoisseurship and, tacitly, his brokering of esoteric or even vaguely dangerous musicians so that they are rendered palatable for Western cosmopolitan tastes.³⁰

²⁶ Michel-Rolph Trouillot, 'Anthropology and the Savage Slot: The Poetics and Politics of Otherness', in Richard G. Fox (ed.), *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present* (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1991).

²⁷ Unsigned, 'Angélique Kidjo "Oyaya!"', *Washington Post* (18 June 2004), T07.

²⁸ Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977).

²⁹ The characterisation of *Graceland* as a collaboration is a complex issue; see Louise Meintjes, 'Paul Simon's *Graceland*, South Africa, and the Mediation of Musical Meaning', *Ethnomusicology*, 34/1 (Winter 1990), 37–73; Taylor, *Beyond Exoticism*.

³⁰ For more on *Buena Vista Social Club*, see Ariana Hernández-Reguán, 'World Music Producers and the Cuban Frontier', in Bob W. White (ed.), *Music and Globalization: Critical Encounters* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012).

Cooder's recording with V. M. Bhatt, for example, was hailed by one critic thus: "A Meeting by The River" is the musical convergence of the Mississippi and the Ganges in a series of long, meditative tunes that weave a splendid spell.³¹ Cooder's next album, with Touré, received much more attention, however, with both artists praised for their collaborations and give-and-take musical attitudes. One critic wrote in *The Independent*:

Ali Farka Touré and Ry Cooder are the joint stars of a new record, *Talking Timbuktu*, which is already creating a considerable buzz in the first week of its release: deservedly, because, discounting jazz, it constitutes an instant member of the minuscule list of truly interesting record collaborations between Africa and American musicians.³²

Another wrote, "Touré's sound is the real African thing, modal and moody, ageless blues. Yet his collaboration with American guitarist Ry Cooder is a natural. Both are thoughtful guitarists, respectful artists and musical purists."³³ Many reviews of the album noted Cooder's longtime collaborative work.

It was the album *Buena Vista Social Club* that received the most attention of all of Cooder's collaborations, however, with many critics, again, noting the collaborative nature of the work (other salient discourses concerned Cooder's connoisseurship and the supposed lost-in-time nature of his elderly collaborators). One critic who interviewed Cooder noted that "Connecting" is the word he uses most often – his attempt to find common ground with far-flung collaborators.³⁴

It is perhaps in part the result of collaborations such as these (and those by Peter Gabriel and David Byrne, among others), and greater familiarity with recordings that could be more justifiably referred to as 'authentic', that critical passion began to move away from the defence of the authentic-as-pure and towards the authentic-as-hybrid.

World Music Criticism Today

After the first attempts to categorise and genrefy world music and the early infatuations with the authentic-as-pure, followed surprisingly quickly by the authentic-as-hybrid, the world music industry began to shift. Perhaps most notable was the slow incorporation of world music and musicians into the

³¹ Brian Wise, 'R. P. M.', [Melbourne] *Sunday Age* (3 October 1993), §Agenda, 7.

³² Philip Sweeney, 'Notes from the Global Village', *The Independent* (31 March 1994), 28.

³³ Danile Feist, 'Ali Farka Touré Weaves an Intricate Tapestry of Serenity', [*Montreal*] *Gazette* (23 April 1994), §E, 7.

³⁴ Eric Sibilin, 'Ry Cooder Goes to Cuba', [*Montreal*] *Gazette* (20 November 1997), §C, 1.

realm – and norms – of Western concerts and concert-going behaviours. In the late 1980s or early 1990s, if one wanted to hear a major singer such as Youssou N'Dour in concert, one would have had to go to a club and hope that N'Dour appeared before midnight (which would have been rare). Now, N'Dour and other world music artists routinely appear in university and other concert series and festivals, making it much easier for mainstream audiences to hear them, and thus more likely that critics will hear them as well.

While the earlier critical and reception discourses concerning authenticity can still be found, along with both the original celebratory and anxious narratives about world music that Steven Feld has explicated,³⁵ today's world music critics can be more knowledgeable than they were in the past, more willing to write in somewhat pedagogical modes to educate their readers, and more likely to review performers and performances as performers and performances rather than as (imagined) representatives of their cultures or races or ethnicities. Also, with the rise of world music stars such as N'Dour, Kidjo, Salif Keita and Oumou Sangere from Mali, and others, critics – at least those in major metropolises where they can hear such major musicians relatively easily and with some frequency – can judge these and other musicians based on their previous experiences of them, as well as their recordings, rather than viewing them as a kind of aberration in the normal course of their work reviewing pop or rock or jazz or other musics.

And it is easier to find interviews with and profiles of major musicians than in the past. Major newspapers review world music artists more frequently than previously, and there are more venues, especially online ones such as *Global Rhythm* (www.globalrhythm.net), *RootsWorld* magazine (www.rootsworld.com/rw), *World Music Central* (worldmusiccentral.org) and still others.

The growing familiarity of world music, both because listeners have simply heard more of it over the years and because an increasing number of musicians strive to make music that will sell on the international market (a quick look at the world music charts on iTunes or *Billboard* or the world music selections offered by airlines on the flights gives an idea of this), has sent some critics seeking, if not the authentic, at least something that doesn't strike them as bland, just as in the late 1980s. Today, there are countless non-Western knock-offs of Western pop, rock, EDM, country and other genres of popular music, sometimes sung in English. There are also, of course, plenty of world music artists making original music.

³⁵ Steven Feld, 'A Sweet Lullaby for World Music', *Public Culture*, 12/1 (2002), 145–71.

This increasing blandification of what is deposited in the world music category (emanating from both the ‘new age’ genre and various east Asian pop musics, long excluded from the world music ‘genre’), and the music industry promotion of world music that will sell, rather than world music that might represent musical originality, perhaps explains, in part, the rise of what David Novak has called ‘World Music 2.0’,³⁶ the re-release of obscure local recordings of popular music by local musicians outside of the West. This is another way of bringing back the authentic-as-pure, but this time, purity is measured not by faithfulness to traditional sounds but by scarcity and obscurity. Connoisseurs seek out little-known recordings of popular musics from around the world in order to re-release them on Western labels. Critics review them in order to demonstrate their knowledge of the esoteric, the hip and cool. World music in this sense is becoming increasingly like many other forms of popular music in a consumer culture, in which a small number of fans and critics can congratulate themselves on their perspicacity, but, once the object of their fandom becomes more widely known or popular, these critics and fans move on, seeking not the Next Big Thing but the next hidden talent, a well-known dynamic in the consumption of popular cultural forms.³⁷ Another development has been the extension of the ideology of the brand into the realm of world music (where it had already been in the popular music field). Branding is a complex process that has been extensively written about in the world of advertising and marketing,³⁸ and, increasingly, in the academic realm as well.³⁹ Those in the business of branding attempt to make a product or a commodity more than just a product or a commodity, but a trusted entity that enjoys complex relationships with consumers, involving memories of past experiences of pleasure, community with others, feelings of satisfaction and self-satisfaction, membership in a special club of consumers, and much more. Workers in the commercial world strive to make brands cool, as cool as the coolest rock star or actor or other celebrity. Some of these meanings and feelings are designed and promulgated by the advertising industry⁴⁰ and critics.

³⁶ David Novak, ‘The Sublime Frequencies of New Old Media’, *Public Culture*, 23/3 (2011), 603–34.

³⁷ For two examples see Guy Dixon, ‘Will Music-Industry Godzillas Reduce Individual Choice?’ [Toronto] *Globe and Mail* (2 August 2004), §R, 3; and Carl Wilson, ‘World Music That Scares Starbucks’, [Toronto] *Globe and Mail* (5 March 2005), §R, 12.

³⁸ See Douglas Holt, *How Brands Become Icons: The Principles of Cultural Branding* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2004); and Alina Wheeler, *Designing Brand Identity: An Essential Guide for the Whole Branding Team*, 3rd ed. (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2009).

³⁹ See Sarah Banet-Weiser, *Authentic™: The Politics of Ambivalence in a Brand Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 2012); Melissa Aronczyk and Devon Powers (eds.), *Blowing Up the Brand: Critical Perspectives on Promotional Culture* (New York: Peter Lang, 2012).

⁴⁰ Adam Arvidsson, *Brands: Meaning and Value in Media Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Marcel Danesi, *Brands* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2006).

I have written elsewhere of world music as a kind of ‘brand warehouse’ (though with some traits of being a brand itself) that houses musico-generic ‘brands’ such as ‘Celtic’ or ‘gypsy’ music.⁴¹ This ideology has not avoided musicians and, even, genres of music. It is routine to hear major stars discussed and characterised as ‘brands’, both in and out of the advertising and marketing industries. While world music stars have not (yet) been constructed thus, at least in the West, some musics have. Celtic music, for example, is frequently represented on album covers and elsewhere with images of standing stones, faux Gaelic fonts, Celtic knot patterns, Celtic crosses, the colour green, classic scenes of Ireland and sometimes more, all as a way of conferring the imprimatur of the Celtic brand on that recording. ‘Celtic’ is a brand/genre category that is never employed by the music industry to label traditional musics and musicians from Ireland, Wales, Brittany, Cornwall or the Isle of Man (the ancient Celtic nations), but, rather, to new-age-inflected music that may have no, or only a loose, connection to these places.⁴² In the category of ‘gypsy’ music, some of the most famous musicians in this category are not Roma people.⁴³

With the branding of certain kinds of music such as Celtic, the (battle)field of positions and forms of capital – and their relationships to each other – can shift. A form of capital camouflaged or construed as a type of ‘authenticity’ could give way to another form of authenticity or another position to be taken. Critics and fans could desire and expect musicians to conform to norms and expectations of the musical brand in which they are categorised, or confined, rather than their (sub)genre. Some listeners, including critics, for example, might feel (I use this word purposely, since it is the intention of those who brand to insinuate ideas about brands into people’s psyches) that ‘Celtic’ music isn’t ‘Celtic’ unless it has the sound of a tin whistle or employs lyrics in an unintelligible language, as is the case with the bestselling Enya, who has done much to shape the Celtic ‘brand’ with her dreamy, new-agey songs sung in the Irish language. Or, fans and critics could be put off by the sound of the tin whistle (or something else) as a sign that the musician or group has succumbed to the pressures of branding, since the sound of the tin

⁴¹ Taylor, ‘Fields, Genres, Brands’.

⁴² There has long been a rather uneasy relationship between new-age music and world music, since both historically have relied on ideologies and discourses that construct these musics as somehow premodern or apart from the vagaries of modern life. And there has been a good deal of slippage between more spiritual world music genres and new-age. It is thus perhaps not a surprise that *Billboard* magazine began its world music and new-age charts at the same time and they were managed by the same person (Taylor, *Global Pop*).

⁴³ See Carol Silverman, *Romani Routes: Cultural Politics and Balkan Music in Diaspora* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

whistle has become practically metonymic for Irish traditional music, and ‘Celtic music’ more generally.

Critics as Workers in the World Music Fields

Since critics always play a role in any field of cultural production, it is no surprise that they were significant in shaping the category of ‘world music’ both as a field and a genre, as well as a brand, at least with respect to certain types of world music. What is more unusual in the world music case is the relatively recent emergence of this ‘genre’ and the role played by critics in naming it.

But critics, whatever unusual function they may perform, are an important part of the cultural industries and fields of cultural production. By and large, they are part of what Bourdieu called the ‘new petite bourgeoisie’,⁴⁴ whose occupations include those in fields such as music criticism (this is not one of Bourdieu’s examples, though I would certainly include it). Critics serve as ‘presenters’; in his terms, popularisers. They do not carry the same cultural prestige as authors, so must create for themselves a role that might nonetheless garner them some prestige and cultural authority.⁴⁵ They can do this, in the realm of world music, by displaying a greater degree of knowledge than other critics (not to mention their audiences), but also by finding the out-of-the-way, either among current musicians or those of the past re-released and re-presented as World Music 2.0. But, as I have argued elsewhere,⁴⁶ with the success of the new petite bourgeoisie in the realm of advertising and the promulgation of the ideology of the hip and the cool, the edgy, the trendy, across the culture at large, in a real sense, those members of the new petite bourgeoisie who find and promote the new and different framed as hip, cool, edgy, play an increasingly important function, perhaps even gaining inroads on the bourgeoisie itself in terms of cultural authority.

Another way that world music critics play an important function that is somewhat different from many other critics is that their role as mediators and/or brokers is more salient and thought to be more necessary. Since world music is a vast collection of musics from around the world, world musicians therefore can come from every walk of life – peasants in remote villages, middle-class urbanites, poor urbanites, kin of world music royalty (such as Anoushka Shankar, daughter of the legendary sitarist Ravi Shankar) and

⁴⁴ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984).

⁴⁵ Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p. 326. ⁴⁶ Taylor, ‘Advertising and the Conquest of Culture’.

others. World music critics mediate and broker between a more heterogeneous collection of individuals and social groups than most music critics, though they mediate and broker them to a quite homogenous Western audience of educated, middle-class people.⁴⁷ These critics' role in what one could call the Cool Capitalism Complex is thus an important one, since they, and others who discover or create and promote the hip, cool, edgy, trendy, are slowly destabilising cultural hierarchies in the West and, perhaps especially, in the United States, as cultural capital as defined by knowledge of the fine arts declines in importance as a way of displaying and maintaining cultural superiority and dominance. Such knowledge is increasingly replaced by knowledge of the hip and the cool, a new form of capital measured by one's familiarity with the latest indie rock album or independent film, and even, sometimes, knowledge of an obscure world music artist. And with this knowledge increasingly comes cultural capital in the neoliberal world.⁴⁸ What this means, as I hinted at above, is that the new petite bourgeoisie, through its location of, presentation of and promulgation of the hip, cool, edgy, may be challenging the bourgeoisie for cultural hegemony. The well-known Military Industrial Complex is frequently decried for making far too many people far too much money in the United States and promoting endless war, but its cultural analogue, the Cool Capitalism Complex, is no less pernicious in its promotion of musicians thought to be cool, or potentially cool, and its discarding or ignorance of many other musicians, musicians who might have something valuable to sing and whose messages could be championed and diffused by critics.

⁴⁷ See Taylor, 'World Music Today'. ⁴⁸ See Taylor, 'Advertising and the Conquest of Culture'.

Cultural Anxieties, Aspirational Cosmopolitanism and Capacity Building: Music Criticism in Singapore

SHZREETAN

A Contentious Review

This chapter by a journalist-turned-ethnomusicologist begins with a personal anecdote, channelling critic Tim Quirk's indictment of academia and journalism's shared and ambivalent reliance on maintaining 'dysfunctional relationships with the truth'.¹ Where subjectivities have recently become the focus of writings about music,² an autoethnographic account of a moment in history in Southeast Asia could usefully open a narrative about musical narratives. And so a version of 'the truth' begins: in 1998, a music graduate freshly returned from the UK (this writer) joined the lifestyle section of a national newspaper and was dispatched to review the debut of a Singaporean violinist. The performer, sixteen years old, had been studying with a celebrated pedagogue in the United States. Self-hailing as Singapore's biggest hope yet for a classical star, she attempted to prove herself with a double concerto bill, comprising Henryk Wieniawski's Second Violin Concerto and Vivaldi's Concerto for Four Violins. The concert, however, had a dual purpose: it was also a fund-raising effort administered by the National Arts Council to purchase a S\$1.5 million (USD 900,000 in 1998) Guarneri violin for the violinist's personal use.³ Any ensuing reviews of the event, thus, would constitute unofficial evaluation of the musician's investment potential.

As it turned out, the critic was impressed, but not ecstatic. The Wieniawski was found to be 'executed with more than practised ease but . . . lacking in heart and soul'. The violinist's interactions with her younger peers in the

¹ Tim Quirk and Jason Toynbee, 'Going through the Motions: Popular Music Performance in Journalism and in Academic Discourse', *Popular Music*, 24/3 (2005), 399–413.

² Eric Clarke, 'Music Space and Subjectivity', in Georgina Born (ed.), *Music, Sound and Space: Transformations of Public and Private Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); 'Lost and Found in Music: Music, Consciousness and Subjectivity', *Musicae Scientiae*, 18 (2014), 354–68.

³ Shzr Ee Tan, '\$1.5m Will Let Her Calm the Ears', *The Straits Times Life!* (13 March 1998).

Vivaldi Concerto saw her coax a ‘focused, rich tone from her instrument, proving that she could command good rapport with fellow players’. A 555-word review was published in *The Straits Times* with the headline ‘Perfect Harmony under the Right Circumstances’.⁴

This lukewarm account proved disagreeable in some quarters, not least to the violinist’s mother, a remisier turned full-time manager of her daughter’s career. Through connections – including access to members of the financial and political worlds in Singapore, and no less than the then-President of Singapore Ong Teng Cheong – the self-titled ‘violin mum’ filed an official complaint against the critic. A fax from the violinist’s supporters was sent, via the Presidential Office, to the newspaper involved, querying the reviewer’s credentials, charging her with destroying a young musician’s career and confidence. The journalist was called up by her superiors and questioned. After some deliberation, the editors decided to stand by the review, refraining from retracting the article. In months to come, the violinist would recover from the setback, raising funds through a public institution to purchase her violin. She returned to her studies and went on to give successful performances, some of which were sponsored by major banks. The journalist stayed on with the newspaper for another six years, working as an arts correspondent before joining academia.

Nearly twenty years on, questions first asked of this storm in a teacup can be revisited. Was the review too harsh? Was the ‘violin mum’ heavy-handed? Did the President himself attend the concert and if so what did he think of it? Should newspaper editors have sent a more seasoned reviewer? What links between the Singaporean state, the private sector and a not-so-free-press did the President’s involvement demonstrate? Each question implicates smaller, literal and narrow axes of judgement, where notions of objectivity are categorically equated with unattainable moral and circumstantial ‘truths’.

Larger issues surrounding the 1998 anecdote underpin the shaping of music criticism in Singapore. The critic operated not alone but within several overlapping communities of performers, agents, record companies, listeners, educators, students and institutional patrons. It was within a broader cultural ecology that music journalism resided: critics functioned through ‘double dependency’ – upon institutions ‘which ... facilitate access to the subject materials (artists, records, concerts)’, and upon ‘readers who produce the sales of the title in which they write’.⁵ At the same time, critics were also cultural

⁴ Shzr Ee Tan, ‘Perfect Harmony under the Right Circumstances’, *The Straits Times Life!* (19 March 1998).

⁵ Pedro Nunes, ‘Good Samaritans and Oblivious Cheerleaders: Ideologies of Portuguese Music Journalists towards Portuguese Music’, *Popular Music*, 29 (2010), 43.

producers. As Atton states, ‘musicians may also be writers and, of course, readers ... this fluidity of roles and their ensuing interdependence suggest a community of cultural agents in close relationship with one another’.⁶ In Singapore, similar groups collectively determined changing standards of taste and value, which became ventriloquised as criteria of objectivity and truth.

These in turn functioned within larger ecosystems operating beyond immediate arts communities. For this writer at least, the ‘Presidential’ baptism by fire conveyed a lesson of circumspection in airing opinions on behalf of a scene densely networked into various state and socio-economic interests. Singapore was a young, postcolonial nation eager to produce its first classical star as evidence of cultural coming of age on the arena of Western art music, chosen for its very international prestige. Embedded into the young nation’s cultural landscape were patrons in the financial world who bought into the shine of corporate social responsibility that supporting a prodigy could bring. Self-described classical connoisseurs ensconced in seats of power in such political and economic worlds were aplenty; many of these individuals also sat on the boards of musical institutions.

What, then, were the credentials of this critic? A respectable degree from a reputable UK music department seemed appropriate for the newspaper’s editors. However, the reviewer was also a fresh graduate who had recently returned from three years of regular exposure to performers playing on London’s stages. Previously, the newspaper had hired freelance reviewers, each variously entrenched in Singapore’s classical communities either as serious amateur performer or teacher. Determining a playing field, then, became a critical point vis-à-vis the young violinist’s birth over claims of pedagogical lineage and international potential. Should she be judged on local standards or measured against the global platform she explicitly targeted? Was there a difference between the two, and what did this say about where Western art music stood within the aspirational cultural milieu of Singapore? Were there other Singaporean violinists of similar talent? Why were they ignored by the newspaper and arts council?

As public debate continued, critics in the parallel Singaporean scenes of Anglo-American rock and Asian pop looked on, bemused by judgements of ‘local’, ‘foreign’ and ‘international’ worth. Some wondered if the President would come to the rescue of a badly reviewed local indie band. Others saw the debacle as a silly skirmish over musical egos, because it broke on the allegedly ‘soft’ arena of the arts: after all, this controversy was some distance away from

⁶ Chris Atton, ‘Writing about Listening: Alternative Discourses in Rock Journalism’, *Popular Music*, 28/1 (2009), 56.

the closely watched terrains of politics, religion and race – three proverbial no-go areas the reviewer herself had been briefed to avoid as a matter of editorial policy. And yet, enough stakes were at play here to have necessitated a state response to a music review.

Returning to the wider aims of this chapter, this writer seeks to understand music criticism in Singapore not as an isolated phenomenon concerned only with text or analysis. Instead, working from the debates around this opening incident, this chapter surveys the subject as a negotiation of subjectivities governed by bigger ecosystems of musical, cultural, socio-economic and political activity. Going beyond dualistic consideration of the opposition between industry and critic,⁷ this writer posits music criticism within ‘connections, symbiosis, feedback loops, and flows of people, product, ideas and money’.⁸ In disentangling these flows, providing historical context to Singapore’s multicultural existence in Southeast Asia is key. Similarly, an interrogation of Singapore’s media and policies is essential.

Scenes and Genres: Asymmetries in Performers and Listeners

Bennett and Peterson define music scenes as ‘clusters of musicians, producers, and fans which collectively share their common musical tastes and . . . distinguish themselves from others’.⁹ The term has been used in ‘journalist discourse, functioning as a cultural resource for fans to forge expressions of “underground” or “alternative” identities’.¹⁰ In Singapore, the term can similarly be used. Here, however, there is less of a single mainstream against which alternatives rise. Rather, political and socio-economic factors overlap in the making of local and translocal identities, creating several cultural doxa. These are in turn impacted by Singapore’s claims to postcolonial as well as desired cosmopolitan membership in regional, transnational and international platforms.

Much has been written about Singapore’s history. Its founding in 1819 by Stamford Raffles, followed by more than a century of British rule, led to the ascendance of the English language and European culture. Rapid local re-population of the island, via migration from South China and South India, paved the way for its multicultural society. Since independence in

⁷ See Roy Shuker, *Understanding Popular Music* (London: Routledge, 2001); and Keith Negus, *Producing Pop: Culture and Conflict in the Popular Music Industry* (London: Arnold, 1992).

⁸ John Holden, *The Ecology of Culture: A Report Commissioned by the Arts and Humanities Research Council’s Cultural Value Project* (Arts and Humanities Research Council UK, 2015), 3.

⁹ Richard A. Peterson and Andy Bennett, ‘Introducing Musical Scenes’, in Bennett and Peterson (eds.), *Music Scenes: Local, Translocal, and Virtual*. (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2004), p. 1.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

1965, Singapore has retained the primary use of English, not only as the language of finance, but also for its neutral value over mother tongues of the island's Chinese, Indian and Malay population.¹¹ English also functioned as a class marker, remaining in extensive usage among early Western-educated Chinese elites, descendants of whom continue to govern the nation. Indeed, scholars view English-language-led multiculturalism in Singapore as a form of social engineering, with the state playing the 'neutral' umpire.¹² Such determining of doxa demonstrates Straubhaar's cultural proximity rule.¹³ In the performing arts, and in the wake of globalisation, it is not surprising that Anglo-American pop/rock has taken on dominance among Singapore's listeners, with Mandopop in second place, if more recently also contested by transnational K-pop. Western art music, nonetheless, formed the postcolonial backbone of formal music education across the island.

Cultural categorisations alone, however, form an incomplete aggregation of Singapore's music scenes. As Brennan writes, the press acts out genre labelling in co-operation with industries.¹⁴ From the perspective of this ex-journalist with *The Straits Times*, music criticism operated on two separate but intersecting paradigms: first, in an identity trope pitting the local against international, and secondly, in terms of genre classification.

Over this writer's six-year (and thereafter freelance) employment with *The Straits Times*, writers were engaged to cover the four main genres of Anglo-American Pop/Rock, Chinese/Asian Pop, Classical Music (both Western European and Chinese Conservatory), and Jazz and World Music. Local and international activity was surveyed. In-house reporters provided previews, interviews and news stories, while mostly freelance writers (excepting this writer) wrote reviews. In-house reporters worked under the arts sub-unit of the newspaper's lifestyle section and often deputised for each other, requiring familiarity with multiple scenes.

While each critic's 'beat' was clearly staked out and demarcated in cultural categories by division of labour, this did not provide for parities of coverage in terms of story angle or column inches. To begin with, state powers still loomed in any publishing of cultural discourse, precluding any discussion of

¹¹ See S. Gopinathan, 'Singapore's Language Policies: Strategies for a Plural Society', *Southeast Asian Affairs* (1979), 280-95.

¹² Beng Huat Chua, 'Multiculturalism in Singapore: An Instrument of Social Control', *Race and Class*, 44/3 (2003), 71-3.

¹³ Joseph Straubhaar, 'Beyond Media Imperialism: Asymmetrical Interdependence and Cultural Proximity', *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 8 (1991), 39-59.

¹⁴ Matt Brennan, 'The Rough Guide to Critics: Musicians Discuss the Role of the Music Press', *Popular Music*, 25/ 2 (2006), 224.

subjects touching on race, politics and religion.¹⁵ In the 1980s, original lyrics of revolutionary works by mainland Chinese composers performed by local choirs were altered in performance and censored in reportage. In recent years, the issue of media censorship itself has been the focus of outcry by members of Singapore's arts community. This has been an interesting development, given the traditional view from within the press that its lifestyle section – not least its music critics – dealt with 'soft news reportage' and courted less controversy than its 'hard news' sections of the home and political desks. Press freedom in Singapore has suffered a lacklustre image on global (if Western-administered) industry metrics, making the rank of 149 out of 179 countries on Reporters Without Borders' Press Freedom Index. The restrictive nature of Singapore's media has been highlighted in scholarly publications and lampooned in social media and local and transnational satirical platforms.¹⁶

Of interest to the music critic here is how politics in music-making was often naively appraised within many music scenes as irrelevant to loftier aesthetic concerns. This was in opposition to the local theatre, literary and visual arts scenes, where articulate activists made their views known not only on matters of censorship but also on social inequality, immigration and LGBTQ+ debates. That is not to say that music scenes in Singapore were not political by nature; indeed, this entire chapter argues otherwise. What is crucial is how the idea of music-making as apolitical in Singapore was reflective of the larger, tacit politics of the state and economy at play. This was to an extent caused by an eclipsing of local context by music critics for an imagined egalitarian playing field and listenership/readership deemed 'international' in its hope of attaining an assumed 'global' standard. For this Singaporean state of, paradoxically, optimistic anxiety over the future determination of global citizenship via negotiation of a bona fide position on international cultural maps, I specifically ascribe the term 'aspirational cosmopolitanism'. By this, I also refer to how projections of the city-state of Singapore as a key node on networks of global cultural production – ultimately made achievable through political capital, in the context of socio-economic privilege – allows one to imagine Singaporean artists, musicians and music-lovers as full and equal members of the global cultural elite who would have as good a claim on determining tastes over Western art music and Anglo-American pop, as any urbanite in London, New York or Paris.

¹⁵ See Cherian George, *Contentious Journalism and the Internet: Towards Democratic Discourse in Malaysia and Singapore* (Washington: University of Washington Press, 2006).

¹⁶ Scholarly publications include *ibid.*; and Tsun Hang Tey, 'Confining the Freedom of the Press in Singapore: A "Pragmatic" Press for "Nation-Building"?' *Human Rights Quarterly*, 3/4 (2008), 876–905.

Anglo-American versus Local Pop/Rock

Returning to the field of music criticism, this meant that pop and rock reviewers in Singapore wrote, for example, about the releases of FKA Twigs and Justin Bieber from aspirational perspectives of would-be colleagues at *Billboard* or *NME*. They targeted their words at a local readership which took Anglo-American pop/rock for granted as a mainstream ‘superculture’ rather than a foreign import.¹⁷ Indeed, the genre remains enmeshed firmly within Singapore’s urban life, filling soundscapes in shopping centres, cafes, on television, social media and Spotify accounts. Here, Anglo-American genres were both translocal and international. In reportage, critics worked with local agents of international record companies for regular supplies of albums to review (and promote) while tapping into networks of local listeners replugged into global conglomerates of distribution and consumption via multinational media companies and the Internet. The scene’s sprawl brings to mind Negus’s ascription of specific tropes to an urban, globalised music journalism, with routine print acknowledgement of artist names by way of lineages, genres and labels.¹⁸ The critic’s complex relationship with record labels has long been documented.¹⁹ Singapore’s exceptionality can be found in its doubly translocal and international nature.

Writing for *The Straits Times*, pop critic Yeow Kai Chai, for example, used language rich with insider references, evidenced in his relation of ‘American overachiever’ Sufjan Stevens going into an ‘existentialist funk’ in *All Delighted People*, ‘an unexpected feminist heart-thumper’.²⁰ In his same review of Polica’s *Give You the Ghost*, Channy Leaneagh’s ‘folkie croon’ is ‘auto-tuned to a glacial sheen . . . in a dub-spacey haven . . . Think The XX but amplified for a midnight cruising for bruising’.²¹ Yeow’s connoisseurial approach belied the description by Guðmundsson, et al. of the ‘enlightened fan’²² turned critic as guardian of musical taste²³ and discoverer of talent.²⁴ Not surprisingly,

¹⁷ Mark Slobin, *Subcultural Sounds: Micromusics of the West* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1993; reissued with new Preface 2000).

¹⁸ Keith Negus, *Popular Music in Theory: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), pp. 99–135.

¹⁹ See Jon Stratton, ‘What Is “Popular Music”?’ *The Sociological Review*, 31/2 (1983), 293–309; Negus, *Producing Pop*; Steve Jones, ‘Popular Music, Criticism, Advertising and the Music Industry’, *Journal of Popular Music Studies*, 5 (1993), 79–91; Jason Toynbee, ‘Policing Bohemia, Pinning up the Grunge: The Music Press and Generic Change in British Pop and Rock’, *Popular Music*, 12/3 (1993), 289–300.

²⁰ Yeow Kai Chai, ‘Indie Comeback Kid Sufjan Stevens Is Back’, *The Straits Times Life!* (3 September 2010).

²¹ Yeow Kai Chai, ‘Sound Bites’, *The Straits Times Life!* (1 November 2012).

²² Gestur Guðmundsson, Ulf Lindberg, Morton Michelsen and Hans Weisethaunet, ‘Brit Crit: Turning Points in British Rock Criticism, 1960–1990’, in Steve Jones (ed.), *Pop Music and the Press* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press 2002), p. 60.

²³ See Jason Toynbee, ‘Policing Bohemia’; and Ulf Lindberg, Hans Weisethaunet, Morten Michelsen and Gestur Guðmundsson, *Rock Criticism from the Beginning: Amusers, Bruisers & Cool-headed Cruisers* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005).

²⁴ Raymond Kendall, ‘Critics Trained for Role as Educators at University of Southern California’, *Music Educators Journal*, 56/7 (1970), 61–3.

Anglo-American indie music acts made the party pieces of pop critics writing in Singapore, co-existing alongside reviews of other broad-appeal Anglo-American acts. This echoes Nunes' observation of Portuguese critics who measure their work against Anglophone writing,²⁵ taking American history as starting point.²⁶

This positioning of Anglo-American pop/rock in Singapore however, functioned only in the realm of recorded music. In contrast, local and live activity has been harder to define. Liew and Tan write of the deliberately 'unglobalised' nature of Singaporean pop/rock musicians in Singapore, reflecting on their societal labelling as indie by default, bypassing the nomenclaturally non-existent category of a local mainstream.²⁷ They also hint at the lack of representation of local bands in the national consciousness beyond rare newspaper interviews and fanzine articles.²⁸ While critics in the mainstream press have reported on Singaporean acts such as The Observatory, Concave Scream, The Boredphucks, Humpback Oak, Electrico, The Sam Willows and Gentle Bones, discourses harked at their marginal statuses as struggling voices in underground venues. Writing on local Portuguese versus foreign musicians, Nunes describes how one camp of journalists directly attributed issues of quality to asymmetries in local versus international standards, devaluing local pop. Another camp, however, understood journalists themselves as playing 'an active part in the evolution (and solving) of any such problem, prioritizing local musicians'.²⁹ Singapore's critics occasionally took the latter position but were often besieged by bigger newsroom interventions that minimised review space for the local performing arts in favour of stories on celebrities. With the exception of punk artist Chris Ho, who penned a column for *The Straits Times* in the 1990s and 2000s, any potentially subversive value of local Indie/pop artists' contributions has been critiqued as detached from politics. In print, controversial references were usually made within the generic struggles of life and love.

Such depoliticised criticism in Singapore was often rooted in the avowedly apolitical starting points of the bands themselves. Occasionally, media have telescoped the modus operandi and aesthetics of local acts with that of international artists, focusing on aspirational journeys of hitting stardom. However, the categories of foreign musicians (both mainstream and Indie)

²⁵ Nunes, 'Good Samaritans and Oblivious Cheerleaders', 43.

²⁶ Simon Frith, *Sound Effects: Youth, Leisure and the Politics of Rock 'n' Roll* (New York: Pantheon, 1981), p. 10.

²⁷ Kai Khiun Liew and Shzr Ee Tan, 'An Unlocalized and Unglobalized Subculture: English Language Independent Music in Singapore', in Anthony Y. H. Fung (ed.), *Asian Popular Culture: The Global (Dis)continuity* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 113.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 125. ²⁹ Nunes, 'Good Samaritans and Oblivious Cheerleaders', 56.

and local (Indie by default) inhabited different sociopolitical worlds. To be sure, in the past decade Singapore's live scene enjoyed some success over the Mosaic Music Festival held at the Esplanade national arts centre. Launched in 2005, the annual event showcased budding local and international talent. However, the festival closed in 2014, following poor attendance. XY (name anonymised), a programmer, explained: 'It's hard to say if there's music scene in Singapore; people just go for the entertainment or to be seen by others. They're not real fans. After the first few years, the novelty wore out.'³⁰

Classical Music and Class

Where a bricks-and-mortar scene with significant funding was concerned, classical music played a bigger role. Here, politico-economics, alongside aesthetic concerns, was key to editorial justification of music criticism and coverage. Research on Western art music in Singapore, particularly in relation to national orchestras and the institutionalisation of classical music education, has yielded insights into state reinforcement of the genre's elite status via policy and funding.³¹ While classical music by no means enjoyed a mainstream existence in the way that Anglo-American pop/rock constituted public and private soundscapes, it remained a 'superculture' too,³² through its prevalent appearance as a musical doxa that fitted well with the agenda of an aspirationally cosmopolitan state. Here, echoing the observations of Pierre Bourdieu on the production of taste,³³ value and class issues influenced state policy in terms of how Western art music came to be equated with cultural attainment and was invested in extensively as a national concern.³⁴

Music critics were expected to respond correspondingly and support the genre. These champions of the genre turned guardians of taste comprised aficionados and semi-professional performers who hailed from the middle-to-upper classes of Singapore. Supplementing this writer's stint at *The Straits Times* (1997–2004) in the 1990s, 2000s and 2010s were freelance critics who held full-time jobs in the medical, legal and banking professions. A number of

³⁰ XY (name anonymised), personal communication with author (5 March 2014).

³¹ See Shzr Ee Tan, 'State Orchestras and Multiculturalism in Singapore', in Tina K. Ramnarine (ed.), *Global Perspectives on Orchestras: Collective Creativity and Social Agency* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018); and Ming Yen Phan, 'Music in Empire: Western Music in Nineteenth-Century Singapore through a Study of Selected Texts', unpublished MA dissertation, National Institute of Education (2004). The state is the biggest funder of the Singapore Symphony Orchestra, which in turn is also the highest-funded arts institution nationally.

³² Slobin, *Subcultural Sounds*.

³³ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (London and New York: Routledge, 1984).

³⁴ Tan, 'State Orchestras and Multiculturalism', pp. 261–81.

them also sat on the directorial boards, sponsorship and programming committees of the national orchestra and/or state conservatory. The scene comprised an ecosystem held together by closely forged political, cultural and economic interests. In *The Straits Times*, performances of the Singapore Symphony Orchestra were critiqued as a matter of public duty.

Unlike with the world of pop/rock, bifurcations of activity between communities of listening and practice were less distinct. Collectors of classical music recordings were also – through links in the corporate world – often sponsors of local and visiting symphony orchestras. Audiences were usually also highly skilled amateur performers. The semi-professional scene thrived: apart from the state-supported Singapore Symphony Orchestra, start-up groups such as the Metropolitan Orchestra and the Orchestra of Music Players have sprung up in recent years. Staffed largely by highly educated amateurs and musicians recently graduated from the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory (launched in 2001) and individuals returning from overseas music colleges, these ensembles consisted of performers who were looking to expand their musical career beyond teaching jobs. The ensembles functioned on a part-time basis, funding themselves through small grants and sponsors, or taking on hired work at pop concerts. A number of performers in this semi-professional scene have also taken to online journalism, actively contributing opinions, articles and tweets on blogs and social media.

It was into this small but densely knit community that the classical critic in Singapore became enmeshed. Reviews impacted on both an individual musician's ego and the community at large. At the highest level, as seen by this article's opening anecdote, the state itself could directly interfere with criticism. Commercial interests were also quietly active behind public discoursing of classical music in Singapore: major concert sponsors who bought advertisements in newspapers asked for these to be published alongside complementary editorial features or reviews. Within such a cultural ecology, critics unwittingly found themselves becoming de facto cheerleaders of the industry, echoing Nunes and Klein.³⁵

To be fair, apart from her Presidential baptism by fire recounted at the beginning of this chapter, this writer's experience in *The Straits Times* rarely involved further editorial intervention from corporate or government entities. Still, all media operated on the basis of support for national institutions, on motivation of capacity building. The relatively small size of the classical

³⁵ Nunes, 'Good Samaritans and Oblivious Cheerleaders'; and Bethany Klein, 'Dancing About Architecture: Popular Music Criticism and the Negotiation of Authority', *Popular Communication*, 3/1 (2005), 1–20.

music community and the density of its ecosystem effectively meant that constantly negative reviews would result in stalled relations with potentially aggrieved key players in the scene curtailing engagement with a critic altogether, or the calling-in of higher, closely connected powers to apply pressure behind the scenes. At the same time, while good contact with frontline workers, such as public relations officers, and genuine personal relationships forged with musicians themselves were crucial, overt praise lessened the reviewer's credibility. The critic played a delicate game of negotiation. She acted less as a free agent than as an individual, deeply contextualised voice held culpable for the collective imagination of the local scene's general health. This writer's six-year stint with *The Straits Times* was unusual in that she was also employed in-house as a lifestyle writer in addition to critic, which latter job usually went to freelancers. The dual role meant that contacts, friends and colleagues who featured 'objectively' in previews later became subjects of critique in reviews. Such a remit allowed for clearly demarcated engagement with different facets of discoursing: preview articles functioned as platforms for investigations into micro and macro contexts including the highly politicised agenda of classical music itself; concert and CD reviews could then be freed to focus on textual, musical or performative matters.

The tight-knit community of classical music stakeholders within which reviewers operated has led some critics to assume important positions on the boards of Singapore's music institutions. Yet other reviewers, as would-be gatekeepers of taste, have been invited to curate local festivals. On occasion, conflicts of interest have arisen, as with the recent case of *The Straits Times* current chief critic Chang Tou Liang – a former board member of the Singapore Symphony Orchestra whose track record of positive reviews paradoxically resulted in the orchestra's counterintuitive decision to invite a different 'embedded journalist' (perceived by the newspaper-reading public as less biased towards the orchestra) to join its 2014 European tour.

To be sure, such interdependence of agents working within a scene can be easily observed in any cosmopolitan city: critics are often invited to write programme notes on behalf of the very musical organisations they review, or to accompany ensembles on tours. For the city-state of Singapore, cultural diplomacy is called into operation. The above-mentioned Chang's endorsement of Singaporean artists for example was rooted in his unabashed decision to 'support local musicians as far as I can'.³⁶ True to an aspirationally cosmopolitan ethos, he was also interested in boosting the international reputation of the city as a focal point for the arts: 'If it's a lousy concert, whether local or

³⁶ Chang Tou Liang, unpublished personal interview with author, Singapore (6 August 2014).

foreign, I'd rather not review.³⁷ Such an agenda was not necessarily born of a uniquely nationalist stance taken by an individual critic. By dint of the geographical viability of a small island's tightly run socio-economic and political life, any discoursing of a subject at the local scale immediately invoked discourses on the national and regional levels.

Chang's reviews spoke to members of the local classical community who, by default, were also members of wider national/transnational organisations and Singapore's ruling class. His calibration of tone belied the approach of an erudite, aspirational cosmopolitan who sought, through a somewhat post-colonial need, to ratify national musical taste with imagined international standards – whether by positively evaluating local musicians on national stages now projected as international platforms, or by critiquing foreign artists according to a personal bar that telescoped the Singaporean and international. Chang's style is adjective-rich and specialist, with opinions restricted to matters of text and performance rather than context, echoing Muller's assertion of writers' regard for the 'conceits of the autonomy of the musical work'.³⁸ His critique of Mariangela Vacatello's rendition of Liszt's *Transcendental Etudes* for example makes reference to an assumed industry standard asked of a work whose value is unquestioned: 'prestidigitation and power may be the pre-requisites but there are also tender moments . . . one still needs feathery lightness and rapier reflexes for a silky-smooth "Feux Follets"'.³⁹ A subscriber to *International Piano Quarterly* and *Gramophone*, Chang also spoke from an aspirational position in 'wanting to improve my own writing skills', attending music criticism workshops in the UK held by journalists he held in regard as 'experts in the international business . . . people like Neil Fisher of *The Times*'.⁴⁰

Chang's envisioning of his connoisseur's craft and his readers as cosmopolitan belies the transnational nature of Singapore's classical music scene. The local symphony orchestra embarks on regular overseas tours and rosters international artists as a matter of course while carving out an 'Asian' niche through limited focus on contemporary Chinese composers. Its audiences are well-travelled and tapped into global industries that see European and American orchestras visit Singapore each year. Many classical enthusiasts are also armchair critics at home who chalk up listener credits with state-of-the-art home entertainment systems designed to mediate the best experiences of Mahler on CD,

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Stephanus J.v.Z. Muller, 'Music Criticism and Adorno', *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* (2005), 104.

³⁹ Chang Tou Liang, 'Liszt Transcendental Studies', *The Straits Times Life!* (16 March 2012).

⁴⁰ Chang Tou Liang, personal interview with author (6 August 2014).

even as they fly around the world, catching the New York Philharmonic on the back of business trips to Manhattan.

Wherefore Asian, Multicultural and World Music(s)?

The aspirationally cosmopolitan standpoints from which classical and pop/rock music journalists operated have relegated the discussion of non-mainstream genres to marginalised fora. This has intersected with a state-mandated multicultural policy enforced through engineering of Singapore's population into constructed Chinese, Malay, Indian and 'Other' cultures. In the newsroom, reportage of music outside Anglo-American pop/rock and Western art music took place under the collective guise of secondary 'beats', with genres taxonomised along class-based hierarchies of listenership and ethnic-based categorisations of 'other' musics. While the press acted out genre labelling in tandem with local industries and state mandates,⁴¹ any notion of a unified music scene was ultimately imperfect: many subcultural scenes abounded beyond the two mainstreams, and today remain in various stages of development.

The word subcultural itself is problematic, given the unique postcolonial politics of Singapore that has seen its Chinese-dominant society – until recently largely Chinese-educated – move towards an age of globalised and postcolonial Anglo-American influence. This situation reverse-mirrors Atton's recalibration of Bourdieu's field theory applied to alternative scenes in rock journalism:

Within popular music production there are numerous avant-gardes that confound the dichotomy of restricted and large-scale sectors . . . They are elite in the sense of small numbers of creators and audiences, and the need for specialist knowledge to 'appreciate' the music. They are popular in that their cultural practices have developed from popular and inclusive forms . . . their economic practices (such as record production) are drawn from the practices of large-scale cultural production.⁴²

In obverse example, Mandopop (and more recently, K-pop) in Singapore confounded dichotomy by being widely enjoyed, drawing upon transnational economies of scale in cultural production, but also distinctly non-mainstream. Such disjunctures in music criticism played out across intersectional ethnic, class and generational divides.

⁴¹ On genre labelling, see Brennan, 'The Rough Guide to Critics', 224.

⁴² Atton, 'Writing about Listening', 56.

In terms of listenership, Mandopop, Cantopop, K-pop and J-pop staked the places after Anglo-American pop/rock. Here, the historical presence of East Asian music distributors has led to the import not only of records in stores but also of touring shows by artists from the transnational '*gangtai*' (Taiwan-Hong Kong) – and more recently, mainland Chinese and K-pop – networks. Operating on the same arena was also a thriving karaoke scene, catering largely to East Asian pop consumers. Beyond this, niche markets existed for jazz, Latin and world music. While audiences for the last three scenes were limited, they saw themselves as part of regional networks alongside local ones. Many jazz and world music listeners were also fans of local Indie bands, Malay *mat-rock* acts, punk groups and experimental musicians.

Alongside the record-dominated genres, a range of state-designated 'multi-cultural' or 'traditional' music scenes also existed. These comprised large Chinese ensembles, including the national institution of the Singapore Chinese Orchestra, plus the smaller folk-derived orchestral acts of the *Orkestra Melayu* and Singapore Indian Orchestra and Choir. Malay Wedding bands, Carnatic and Hindustani ensembles of private academies and temples, Chinese chamber groups, and folk dance troupes and bands of Peranakan and Eurasian communities were also part of the broader Singaporean music scene.

Until recently, the role of the music critic in negotiating these subcultural spheres functioned according to genre hierarchisation by cultural politics within the arts section of the newsroom. As a national institution, the Singapore Chinese Orchestra claimed a greater share of review columns over the next-favoured categories of jazz, Asian pop and world music – the last of which included traditional classical and folk artists. Such carving up of repertage was asymmetrical to actual demographic construction of actual scenes. This was partly because of the split between performers and listeners: Chinese orchestral ensembles in Singapore – particularly in schools – proliferated more than live pop or rock bands, although listeners of pop and rock acts were a larger demographic across the island. However, state or classist agenda could trump potential readership: an editor could privilege print space for a national ensemble over a small community group, or tokenistically highlight projects operating under the nation-building banner of multicultural performance. They could also make space for connoisseur jazz reviews in order to lift the newspaper's cultural 'tone'.

From an editor's perspective, non-aesthetic considerations relating to the 'newsworthiness' of a story were also critical. Quite apart from parity issues of column inches corresponding to the representation of genre diversity, editors favoured articles that were likely to garner more readers, usually on the grounds of news-based topicality or of the fame/notoriety of the subject.

Echoing Frith's indictment of rock critics as mythologists⁴³ and Ray's concept of 'overcomprehension', which embraced the inclination 'to praise everything, because *anything* could be the next Elvis',⁴⁴ hype featured strongly in many Singaporean newspapers' valuing of immediacy in documentation and judgement. The fetishisation of new blood often fed into the agenda for local capacity building, although the backlash against quick, early praise was also vociferous, not least for *The Straits Times*, which suffered from a reputation among arts practitioners for being the state's propaganda machine. Trendiness was relative and always political; this was compounded by the uneven rate of development of different scenes vis-à-vis listeners and their proclivities for certain types of journalistic content. Additionally, different language media of publications vis-à-vis assumed cultural-linguistic backgrounds and knowledge required of critics further unlevelled playing fields.

For example, not all fans of Mandopop and K-pop in Singapore would expect the same aesthetic evaluation from music critics in both the Chinese and English press, which English-speaking reviewers of, for example, Björk, might provide. Instead, content might include short pieces of gossip on costume or backstage antics espoused by the likes of transnational Chinese-language publication *Apple Daily*. This latter approach reflected the larger transmedia machinery of idol-making and fandom in the East Asian pop world that emphasised visual image and celebrity tropes, calling to mind Moskowitz's illustration of the Taiwanese press as articulating distinct values in its judgement of pop:

Even when Western scholars do not dismiss Taiwan's pop quite so readily, their analysis has its own set of cultural biases . . . Robinson et al. correctly attempt to problematize the idea of Western cultural domination as a one-way flow 'From the West to the Rest'. Yet if their stated goal is to undermine concepts of Western hegemony, the underlying logic is that the worth of music lies in the degree to which it enters the Western market.⁴⁵

Another example can be found in this writer's experiences with *The Straits Times*. Locating specialist critics for a Malay folk act or a Carnatic recital performance could be a challenge, not because of a lack of bilingual writers but because they also had to be 'appropriately insider' and to negotiate performances in translation. This writer's negative review of an experimental performance of a Mozart symphony transcribed for the Singapore Indian

⁴³ Frith, *Sound Effects*, p. 10.

⁴⁴ Robert B. Ray, 'Critical Senility vs Overcomprehension: Rock Criticism and the Lesson of the Avant-Garde', in Jones (ed.) *Pop Music and the Press*, p. 76.

⁴⁵ Marc Moskowitz, 'Mandopop under Siege: Culturally Bound Criticisms of Taiwan's Pop Music', *Popular Music*, 28/1 (2009), 72.

Orchestra in 2002 was a case in point: in the eyes of the group, her lack of credentials in appreciating neo-traditional South Indian music and her limited enthusiasm for aesthetic decisions governed by the state multicultural agenda weighed against broader critiques of cultural ghetto-ing and mistranslation.⁴⁶ Here was a case of misaligned expectations between critic, practitioner and different sub-groups of audiences.

And yet, it is often in the subcultural arena that critics exercise their roles as trendsetters, meaning-makers, educators and activist-advocates.⁴⁷ They promote acts ahead of the curve of current taste-making, and advocate for musicians who are slipping through in between the cracks of marketing campaigns. This writer's early interest in ethnomusicology, for example, resulted in frequent expositions on intercultural politics behind folk acts, traditional groups and national institutions on behalf of *The Straits Times* during the early 2000s. Other writers in the same paper became local champions of Southeast Asian punk bands and Indie rock.⁴⁸ In recent years, commentaries on the paradoxes of musical nostalgia have appeared alongside the revival of folk genres amid revisionist discourses on national identity, led by new generations of thinkers and activists. The effect has led to the thrusting of traditional music into a more politically transparent spotlight.

Media in Singapore: *The Straits Times* as Local, National and International

If a framework for locating the critic has so far centred on Singapore's musical ecologies, consideration could next be given to journalism on the island. For the most part, this chapter has considered criticism from the perspective of *The Straits Times*. As the city-state's national newspaper, the daily broadsheet commanded its largest readership (1.43 million).⁴⁹ Twelve other newspapers also operated in the country, but all but one remain owned by the state-connected Singapore Press Holdings (SPH). Close relationships existed between SPH and the government, as attested by George and Chua,⁵⁰ the

⁴⁶ Shzr Ee Tan, 'Experiment Gone Very Wrong', *The Straits Times Life!* (17 June 2002).

⁴⁷ See, respectively, Atton, 'Writing about Listening', 54; Edwin Safford, 'Critics Must Take on Responsibility to Spur Reform of Music', *Music Educators Journal*, 56/7 (1970), 64; Patricia K. Shehan, 'Music Critic', *Music Educators Journal*, 69/2 (1982), 56.

⁴⁸ These include Yeow Kai Chai, Chris Ho/X Ho and Paul Zach.

⁴⁹ Information from 'The Straits Times Customer Care', available at www.straitstimes.com/customer-care/customer-care.html (accessed 1 June 2015).

⁵⁰ George, *Contentious Journalism and the Internet*; Chua, 'Multiculturalism in Singapore'.

latter of whom described editors to ‘have all been groomed as pro-government supporters . . . reporting of local events adhere closely to the official line’.⁵¹

Censorship of Singapore’s media is a well-documented issue. With the unstoppable expansion of internet communications alongside desired economic growth, giving rise to citizen journalism on flourishing social media, the government also adopted a narrow-cast approach towards media control, focusing its efforts on curtailing reportage on race, religion and politics.⁵² As part of the 2002 Media 21 strategy, the government also took steps to ‘internationalize Singapore media enterprises’ and establish the city as a regional communications hub.⁵³ This strategy – if inconsistent with the official stance – impacted on the uneven development of media reportage by scene.

Here, music journalism was not regarded as potentially contentious, although the broader cultural ecosystem within which arts critics operated involved engagement with the wider tentacles of the state, positioned to encourage support of national agenda for capacity building and state branding via cultural diplomacy. Consequently, competition between different outlets was minimal, leaving *The Straits Times* the biggest player against the much smaller English dailies, the *Business Times*, *The New Paper* and *Today*.

An important point can be made in relation to *The Straits Times*’ de facto role as the paper of everyman (or everywoman). It ventriloquised the voice of a projected ‘average’, multicultural English-/Singlish-speaking Singaporean. Thus, its music critics functioned under different state agendas and restrictions, in opposition to writers at the *Business Times*, Chinese-language daily *Lianhe Zaobao* or Malay-language newspaper *Berita Harian*.

Zaobao and *Berita Harian* targeted readers in particular language sectors, with corresponding reportage on music tailored to the aesthetics of Chinese and Malay communities. *Zaobao*’s music coverage emphasised East Asian pop, focusing on previews over reviews. Interestingly, its classical critics here bore the weight of Chinese intellectualism handed down from earlier generations⁵⁴ and could exercise the poetics of language further than critics at *The Straits Times*, especially while simultaneously staking variously marginalised political identities. Old-guard reviewer of classical Chinese and Western music Yew Hongren, for example, championed the paper’s Chinese identity in triumphal

⁵¹ ‘Journalists Frustrated by Press Controls’, viewing cable 09SINGAPORE61, *Wikileaks*, available at wikileaks.org/cable/2009/01/09SINGAPORE61.html (accessed 1 June 2015).

⁵² Gary Rodan, ‘The Internet and Political Control in Singapore’, *Political Science Quarterly*, 113/1 (1998), 81.

⁵³ See ‘Media 21: Transforming Singapore into a Global Media City’, Media Development Authority Singapore, available at mn.gov/mnddc/asd-employment/pdf/03-M21-MDA.pdf (accessed 1 June 2015).

⁵⁴ See Sy Ren Quah, ‘Imagining Malaya, Practising Multiculturalism: The Malayan Consciousness of Singapore Chinese Intellectuals in the 1950s’, trans. Eng Hao Teo, *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 16/1 (2015), 96–112.

and flowery reviews of local musicians and Chinese composers. Younger writers instead affirmed the transnational modernity of Chinese popular culture through invocations of K-pop cultural references in their prose. In comparison, music coverage at *Berita Harian* and *Tamil Murasu*, where it existed, defaulted to news features rather than criticism. Often, general-beat reporters deputised for music reviewers, covering performances from a community angle.

Returning to *The Straits Times*, such carving up of the media scene effectively situated the broadsheet in a multi-functioning role. It served several audiences, working at multicultural, local, national, regional and international levels. The geopolitics and cultural loci of Singapore's successful postcolonial and Chinese population-dominated modernity (vis-à-vis the rest of Southeast Asia) have left its arts critics in a position of having to constantly negotiate scalar shifts between the micro and macro.⁵⁵ Who, really, were *The Straits Times*' readers? In how many nesting circles of identity did critics contextualise themselves and the musicians they reviewed? Was it possible to affect an authoritative linguistic style of insider 'knowingness' without being conscripted by the state's staking of membership in 'world-class' city-hood via chest-thumping music reports?

The Music Critic's Juggling Act

In some ways, the critic in Singapore was no different from his or her counterpart in any other metropolis. In the newsroom, the music journalist – often multitasking as a general reporter reflecting Anderson's description of American press⁵⁶ – pitches her story among a throng of competitive news and feature ideas. Historically, reviewers at *The Straits Times* have been freelancers, recruited from elite English-educated communities of amateur performers. With the maturing of scenes and development of arts criticism alongside the cosmopolitanisation of musical life, in-house writers provided judgement on performers and performances, focusing on issues of originality, long-standing value versus potential and, occasionally, policy and politics.

Today, the critic in Singapore, echoing the default position of newswriters around the world, plies his or her trade as a purveyor of information first and fan of music second. The onus to document subjects in socially and aesthetically meaningful ways is balanced against editorial prioritisation of reader

⁵⁵ Anna Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005), 12–15.

⁵⁶ William Anderson, 'Magazine/Book Editor', *Music Educators Journal*, 69/2 (1982), 53.

habits. Good writers perfect their storytelling via attention-holding introductory hooks. The writer's task bifurcates into reportage versus criticism. In reportage, the journalist becomes cheerleader to musicians; in criticism, the loop is closed – or regenerated – through judgement and feedback.

In practice, criticism and reportage blur into each other at the level of the editorial pitch, with the journalist justifying a story on its socio-aesthetic worth, invoking value judgements. Some writers engage with context and discourse directly in the presentation of previews and reviews; a preview may pose questions that a review answers. This author, among others, has in her past career as a reviewer attempted to engage in meta-criticism, honing not only an individual voice but also weighing in with perspectives on, for example, cultural diplomacy underpinning a world premiere,⁵⁷ power asymmetries in intercultural collaborations,⁵⁸ national agenda behind a state conservatory⁵⁹ or the societal cost of a heavily funded extravaganza.⁶⁰

With many reviewers – particularly classical and jazz freelancers – meta-criticism is often sidestepped. Writers slip into the convention of reviewing 'textually' within the canon and assessing a performance on the assumption of a work's unassailable integrity. This sweeping aside of context reflects a narrowcasting of readership within an exclusive, 'knowing' sector of each paper's readership. It also takes for granted assertions of cosmopolitan musical identity, where aspirational politics invoke would-be international standards of critical appreciation through the use of jargon, insinuated as commensurate with the sophisticated Singaporean musicophile's expanding vocabulary. Such glossing reflects a circumvention of any discussion of postcolonial historicity and class (heavily implicated in the political and elite nature of Singapore's classical scene), so that readers can focus on potentially loftier concerns of 'art for art's sake'.

Scale-Making Projects, Cultural Anxieties and New Frontiers

And yet a popular criticism of *The Straits Times* is its allegedly low standard of writing, understood as a by-product of its function as state mouthpiece. Within the institution, this image is less refuted than seen by jaded reporters as the paper's policy of writing to the lowest common denominator of a 'secondary four student'.⁶¹ This is in accordance with the publication's

⁵⁷ Shzr Ee Tan, 'When Kitsch Meets Craftmanship', *The Straits Times Life!* (28 October 2002).

⁵⁸ Shzr Ee Tan, 'A Myth Sees the Light; Too Flat? Too Beautiful?', *The Straits Times Life!* (15 March 2004).

⁵⁹ Shzr Ee Tan, 'Tuned for Success?', *The Straits Times Life!* (2 August 2003).

⁶⁰ Boon Chan 'Sodagreen Still Cool', *The Straits Times Life!* (1 September 2014).

⁶¹ Equivalent to year 11 in the British school system.

broadier public communicatory role as information-purveyor to the ‘average’ Singaporean. However, writers in the paper’s lifestyle section are given more leeway and expected to target more sophisticated readers.

This exception has led to occasional differences between newsdesk and feature reporting, leading to parallel, contradictory voices. At the 2000 Singapore Arts Festival, theatre director Robert Wilson’s multimedia production *Hot Water* received a positive review from the paper’s theatre and music critics Clarissa Oon and Lionel Choi. However, it drew a response of frustrated confoundedness from the paper’s deputy night editor Alan John: ‘a lone male dancer appeared, doing the strangest things, with props that went from weird to weirder ... I couldn’t wait to get out.’ In the local theatre community, John’s response was bemoaned as symptomatic of the paper’s deliberate anti-intellectualist stance and viewed as a step backwards in the discoursing of avant-garde performance.⁶²

John’s defence was that the arts council’s S\$1.5m budget for the production necessitated a contestation of its value on behalf of the ‘average’ Singaporean taxpayer. Of interest here was that in the specific arena of music, John did not query an equally expensive concert by a visiting symphony orchestra at the same festival. A reason lay in the long-institutionalised standing of Western art music in Singapore, which made its exclusivity and potential opacity to a layman (the main bugbear behind John’s reaction to Wilson) the very reason for its critical untouchability. Indeed, classical and jazz reviewers at *The Straits Times*, although often bewailed by editors for their pomposity and jargon, are given relatively free rein to invoke technical vocabulary, if only because levels of appreciation expected of specific readers were imagined as higher.

And yet, such sophistication reserved for music criticism – particularly of classical music – was itself contested territory. A simplistic explanation could be found in the fact that different editors had different policies on tone and writing.⁶³ Digging deeper, however, one might argue that the crux lay again in the reality of *The Straits Times* functioning on quadruple accounts as a local, national, regional and international newspaper, echoing Singapore’s unique politics as a village-sized but overpopulated postcolonial city that was a state as well as a regional and international hub. Music criticism reflected the cultural anxieties of moving across such projects of scale-making, in turn intersecting across other scales of readership, individual writers’ voices, community and government agenda, and aspirations to taste, class and ‘international’ status. Here, Neveling and Wergin’s analysis of scaling in the context

⁶² Alan John, ‘Baffled by the Big One at the Arts Fest’, *The Straits Times* (21 June 2000).

⁶³ Atton, ‘Writing about Listening’, 66.

of tourism can be applied. He writes of how it is ‘not one large structure impeding on a smaller one but a network of alliances . . . A thorough analysis of the historical emergence and alterations of these alliances is necessary in order to avoid “conflations” that would summarize these diverse and contested arenas of power into one frame’.⁶⁴

Paraphrasing Neveling and Wergin, the constant remaking of these alliances and recalibration of relationships, judgements and the field itself go beyond simple dichotomies of the individual versus collective, local versus global, micro versus macro, or centre versus periphery. The local intersects at many points with the global; phenomena on the micro scale can simultaneously function on the macro, with distance between centre and periphery becoming a purely contextual issue. On the arena of music criticism in Singapore, rescaling is seen in the superficial ‘messiness’ and cultural anxiety pervading articulations stemming from apparently non-contiguous standards of judgement employed, diversity in tone of reportage, lack of parity across coverage of scenes or varying evaluations of historical or sociopolitical significance.

On an individual-meets-macro level, for example, this writer’s experience on the arts desk – necessitating engagement with colleagues covering theatre, literary and visual arts (where wider discourses about cultural orphanage and postcolonial coming of age ensued) – helped hone an awareness of parallel issues on the music beat. The charge that *The Straits Times* was a government mouthpiece was often counterweighed by the argument that ‘we’re all in the same family’: arts groups themselves were often complicit in receiving funding from the state even as they criticised it through their performance work. Critics were sometimes personal friends, and at other times state enemies.

At the intersectional point of capacity building and state agenda for international platforming, these same narratives have been created with simultaneously different intentions. This writer’s articles in *The Straits Times* on Robert Wilson’s intercultural premiere *I La Galigo* at the Esplanade in 2004, for example, were intended to communicate a postcolonial coming of age in the positioning of the island as an international brokerage centre for Southeast Asian art. However, it was later picked up by academic commentators for privileging the culturally anxious stance of national aggrandisement in the global arena.⁶⁵ Such discoursing presents interesting perspectives on the superficially translocal but ultimately Western-centric nexus of English-

⁶⁴ Patrick Neveling and Carsten Wergin, ‘Projects of Scale-Making: New Perspectives for the Anthropology of Tourism’, *Etnográfica*, 13/2 (2009), 326.

⁶⁵ Jennifer Lindsay, ‘Intercultural Expectations: *I La Galigo* in Singapore’, *TDR: The Drama Review*, 51/2 (2007), 68.

language criticism of itself, vis-à-vis the eventual transnational existence of Wilson's Southeast Asian project that went on to tour Europe and the United States. The published criticisms also implicated aspirationally cosmopolitan narratives about Singapore's role in spearheading an Asia-Pacific production here, on the debatable claims of being geographically Southeast Asian while remaining culturally and economically 'Western'.

Any insights derived from the criticism of *I La Galigo* – a project whose idealistic interculturalism was underpinned by global asymmetries – present themselves more starkly in Western art music in Singapore. Returning to a discussion of calibration of standards, it can be argued that classical reviewers in Singapore – in the words of Atton – have been 'dominated by a particular ideology of universal critical values and only briefly challenged by experiments in relativized "cultural studies" journalism'.⁶⁶ On the one hand, the presentation of Western art music as 'universal' in Singapore operates on the back of an unquestioning stance of its classical reviewers; they are unwilling to confront the postcolonial implications of the genre's widespread entrenchment across the island as shorthand for any kind of formal music education. On the other hand, this seeming historico-cultural amnesia might well be reunderstood as an unashamed declaration of successful Asian post-coloniality in the twenty-first century: why fixate over justifying the presence of any 'foreign' musical genre, if listeners and critics on the island were cosmopolitan enough to stake appreciatory claims on it in the name of egalitarianism? Writing to 'insiders' in a style that privileged textual, connoisseurial and genre exclusivity, *The Straits Times*' classical critics Chang Tou Liang, Mervin Beng and Lionel Choi defaulted to this nonplussed stance, staking any regionally specific Singaporean/Asian take on the West as post-cultural non-issues.

Occasionally, however, contextual challenges emerged when the alleged 'universal' values of Western art music's were applied cross-culturally. For example, Chang gave a less-than-glowing review of the Singapore Chinese Orchestra in 2014, describing composer Tang Ni's *The Story of Small Town* as 'the answer to Strauss' *Voices of Spring*'.⁶⁷ This snide remark had piqued readers who picked a bone with his alleged misunderstanding of Chinese instrumental genres, and his imposition of Western-honed criteria in judgement.⁶⁸ Returning to the analysis of criticism along the rhetoric of scale-making, this ensuing controversy could be understood in terms of what Schiller, Çağlar

⁶⁶ Atton, 'Writing about Listening', 55.

⁶⁷ Chang Tou Liang, 'Festive Start to Spring', *The Straits Times Life!* (13 January 2014).

⁶⁸ Irene Yeo, 'Wrong Measure for Chinese Works', *The Straits Times Life!* (18 January 2014).

and Guldbrandsen call ‘city scales’.⁶⁹ Here, aspiring cosmopolitans struggle against national and cultural fault-lines even as rescaling occurs along nationally and culturally disintegrated nodes. Instead, locational factors functioning within the borderless hub of the city become crucial to the creation of artistic value. Arguing in Chang’s defence, it could be said that his judgement of the Chinese Orchestra did not necessarily rest on notions of the performance or work’s ‘Chineseness’, or even that of Chang’s musical education. Rather, it was the invented lineage of the ensemble as ‘symphonic ethnic’ – harking back to musical experiments in China made several decades ago on behalf of modernisation – that was at stake here.

The Internet: A Not-So-Alternative Model After All?

A concluding note on the question of scale in music criticism can be made when considering the final frontier: the Internet. Indeed, the broader cultural ecologies invoked in this chapter exist beyond landscapes of geographical, social, economic and political hierarchies, and are closely integrated into the technologies of virtual media. In the past decade, digital mediascapes in Singapore have provided platforms for the articulation of narratives counter to state discourses upheld by traditional media.⁷⁰ At the same time, mainstream media themselves have capitalised on new platforms and established their own social media arms, unlevelling the playing field. Still, independent satirical sites such as *The Real Singapore*, *Mothership.sg*, *The States Times*, *The Online Citizen* and *Yawning Bread* have proliferated as alternative channels for citizen journalism. These co-opt social media already widely used in Singapore (Facebook, Twitter and Vine) and harness augmented reality technologies.

There are dangers in taking an overly optimistic approach to the digital, however. In classical music criticism, internet mediation is less an issue of providing counternarratives than of reinforcing tributaries of mainstream criticism. *The Straits Times*’ Chang Tou Liang, for example, runs his own blog *Pianomania*, where his print articles reappear alongside other musings. Chang says his site was created ‘in the interests of the wider community – someone should document what’s going on’.⁷¹

Running in complement to Chang’s blog are the Singapore-based *The Flying Inkpot* and the opera blog *The Mad Scene*. Established as a classical music site in

⁶⁹ Nina Glick Schiller, Ayşe Çağlar and Thaddeus C. Guldbrandsen, ‘Beyond the Ethnic Lens: Locality, Globality, and Born-Again Incorporation’, *American Ethnologist*, 33/4 (2006), 612.

⁷⁰ George, *Contentious Journalism and the Internet*.

⁷¹ Chang Tou Liang, personal interview with author (6 August 2014).

1997, *Inkpot* has expanded to include reviews of documentaries, books and theatre. Voices on *Inkpot* are more varied than *The Straits Times* in tone and content. Articles vary in approach and length. Subjects have ranged from technical analyses of a single concert to impressionistic surveys and outright promotion of specific artists. *The Mad Scene* is run as a community forum moderated by four opera singers who write reviews as fans.

Inkpot and *The Mad Scene's* internet-only platforms put them in particular relational dynamics to mainstream media. One would be tempted to see virtual sites as providing uncensored criticism of music in parallel with other citizen journalist sites. However, the closely networked nature of the classical music community in Singapore has meant that any alternative discourses these platforms provide still function within the broader conservatism of the scene itself. At most, grumblings are heard about the technicalities of lacklustre performances; commentaries rarely critique cultural impetuses or political implications of creativity. In contrast, on the pop arena, voices active on alternative media such as Chris Ho, Martyn See and Thatboyhuman raise pressing cultural issues about musical activity. Discussions on these platforms have ranged from the banning of music videos owing to issues of alleged LGBTQ+ agenda,⁷² to the promotion of propaganda in national songs,⁷³ to scandals over the multiple state purchases of Steinway pianos for national music campaigns.⁷⁴

Also interesting in left-field development of music criticism is the rise of ad hoc and crowd-facilitated opinion-making, enabled through social media. The original loci of these scattershot, edited reposts – as quickly assembled as they are disassembled – are often promotional websites for venues, artists and record companies. As opposed to full-length reviews, critical dimensions of these articulations emphasise interactive, off-the-cuff voices and judgements. These micro-evaluations cumulate into broader discussions and memes, and reintegrate into global music-sharing platforms such as YouTube, SoundCloud and Bandcamp. Here, content that can be considered criticism by any marginal definition is woven between general musings on life, work, news and translocal gossip. Commentaries are often anonymous, even as opinions are built on distinctive personality cults. Any invoking of music criticism is deeply entangled with life-writing, café gossip, marketing and self-promotion.

⁷² 'Jolin Tsai's Same-Sex-Marriage Music Video', *Mothership.sg*, available at <https://mothership.sg> (accessed 1 June 2015).

⁷³ 'Singapore's National Songs 2014', available at thatboyhuman.com (accessed 1 June 2015).

⁷⁴ '6 Ways Buying 50 Steinway-Designed Lang Lang Pianos for S\$1.3 Million Will Make Children in S'pore Love Music', *Mothership.sg*, available at <https://mothership.sg> (accessed 1 June 2015).

With regard to new media and music criticism, Singapore can offer perspectives on the aforementioned making of scale alongside Michael Wesch's 'context-collapse' and Henry Jenkins' 'convergence culture'.⁷⁵ A telescoped scaling of criticism also moves discourse-making from a centre-periphery approach to a focus on the act of transition itself – across spaces, places, fields, temporal loci and ideas. For example, violinist Yoong Han Chan of the Singapore Symphony Orchestra, an active social media user, raves about a rare recording by Accademia Bizantina Ottavio Dantone via a YouTube video embedded in his Facebook site, in between posting promotional material for local concerts and subsequent reviews of them by both *The Straits Times* and *The Business Times*. The content sits happily alongside photos and accompanying comments on a rehearsal with visiting violinist Cho-Liang Lin, amid a rally of posts of Technicolor sunsets and his children's gymnastic feats. Transnational, international, local and cosmopolitan references are interwoven, offering glimpses of music content and incidental, offhand critique across arbitrary contexts connected through the unifying theme of Chan's life curated on Facebook.

Outside classical music, social media has become a ripe field for the dilettante critic – intentional and unintentional, buffered by edited posts of globally circulating music videos, advertisements, and accompanying rants and raves. They are translocal and transnational, revolving around event-promotion sites, production houses, music databases or fan pages such as bandwagon.sg, furious.com and musicmatterslive.com. Ad hoc or commissioned writing that can be categorised as criticism – from the review of a radio show in the Philippines⁷⁶ to a round-up of pop songs banned in Singapore⁷⁷ or a Facebook page on Singapore rock history⁷⁸ – function on a blog-based journalistic approach. They offer piecemeal opinions designed to promote products and events within specifically groomed communities.

New models for media production have developed through the interactive novelty of first-wave digitisation to the second-wave consideration of politically inflected demographics of web publication.⁷⁹ Currently, with third-wave reflection on the humanisation of technology, music criticism in Singapore

⁷⁵ Michael Wesch, 'An Anthropological Introduction to YouTube', talk delivered at the Library of Congress (23 June 2008), available on Michael Welsch's YouTube channel at www.youtube.com (accessed 1 June 2015); Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture*.

⁷⁶ Francis Reyes, 'A Caffeine Boost', *Bandwagon.asia*, available at editorial.bandwagon.sg/a-caffeine-boost-of-indie-music-jam-88-3-s-fresh-filter-live-at-satchmi (accessed 1 June 2015).

⁷⁷ Bandwagon, '5 Songs Previously Banned', *Bandwagon.asia*, available at editorial.bandwagon.sg/5-songs-previously-banned-in-singapore (accessed 1 June 2015).

⁷⁸ *So Happy Sg*, available at www.facebook.com/groups/sohappysg.

⁷⁹ Nick Prior, 'Music Consumption as an Assemblage', Creativity and Technology Workshop, University of Cambridge (5 April 2015).

has become a challenging territory to navigate. On the one hand, existing politico-economic ecologies still govern structures that create a false sense of democracy in levelling playing fields for internet journalism. But has a level playing field always been desired? Naysayers such as Andrew Keen speak of the dangerous uneducated amateur in the age of blogs.⁸⁰ And yet the post-digital realities of Singapore's music scenes have seen technology become less of a sudden game-changer in the enablement of wider public platforms for isolated critical voices than a deeply humanised and built-in aspect of everyday communication. These are now taken for granted in the making of personal, communitarian and public sentiment. It is in this cultural ecology encompassed by new media that music criticism in Singapore will continue to operate.

⁸⁰ Andrew Keen, *The Cult of the Amateur: How Blogs, MySpace, YouTube and the Rest of Today's User-Generated Media Are Destroying Our Economy, Our Culture, and Our Values* (New York: Doubleday, 2007).

· PART VI ·
DEVELOPMENTS SINCE
THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Music Criticism in the USSR from Asafyev to Cherednichenko

PETER J. SCHMELZ

The history of Soviet music is inextricably tied to the history of Soviet music criticism. The memorable inflection points of Soviet music history – political, social and musical – were usually spurred on or accompanied, often loudly, by published criticism. The most representative and notorious example is the official reaction to Dmitri Shostakovich's opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*. An article titled 'Muddle Instead of Music' [Sumbur vmesto muzyki] appeared in *Pravda* on 28 January 1936, signalling a stark shift in the fortunes of both work and composer. The criticism coincided with the worst moments of the Great Terror of 1936 and 1937 and encapsulated a new, harder line on artistic products.¹ It set the precedent for future criticism. The Resolution of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of 10 February 1948 was supplemented by vituperative criticism in the press.² In 1962, the high-water mark of the post-Stalin Thaw, Nikita Khrushchev unleashed his anger at an exhibit of avant-garde Soviet visual art, and articles condemning music (often just versions of speeches delivered at official gatherings) soon appeared in publications musical and otherwise.³ And perhaps the biggest inflection point of all arrived in the late 1980s, when suddenly anyone could publish anything. Soon 'official' publication lost its meaning. But an arguably greater change in music criticism in the last two decades of the USSR arrived without a momentous sign, and often at variance with official demands: the growth of popular music criticism. Publications slowly appeared, in both samizdat and in various official periodicals, to grapple with the new music now attracting large, avid audiences.

¹ As historian Karl Schögel wrote, '1937 really began in music as early as the start of 1936'; Karl Schlögel, *Moscow, 1937*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Malden: Polity, 2012), p. 439.

² See Alexander Werth, *Musical Uproar in Moscow* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1977; first published London: Turnstile Press, 1949). Documents surrounding the 1948 Resolution were published in *Sovetskaiia muzyka*, 1 (January and February 1948).

³ See for example, Vano Muradeli, 'Za narodnost' muzyki', *Pravda* (17 December 1962), 3; and Leonid Il'ichev, 'Sily molodezhi—na sluzhbu velikim idealam. Rech' Sekretaria TsK KPSS L. Il'icheva', *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 34/5 (10 January 1963), 1–3. See also Priscilla Johnson McMillan, *Khrushchev and the Arts: The Politics of Soviet Culture, 1962–1964* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1964).

Yet these points when published music criticism and official dictate responded one to the other tell only part of the story. The chief problem of discussing music criticism in the Soviet Union lies in the sheer pervasiveness of criticism in the USSR. Nearly everything was or could become a form of criticism, particularly in the pages of the main music periodical in the USSR, *Sovetskaia muzyka*. Delineating ‘normal’ criticism – reviews of performances or recordings – is anachronistic, if not impossible. Everything carried a political charge, even if some articles had less voltage than others. Like most, if not all, aspects of life in the USSR, music criticism offered a range of reactions to official sentiment: it could echo and amplify; it could softly refine, if not criticise; and it could try to ignore. There was no freedom of the press in the USSR, but options, however slight, were still available. The official press included bland, often false commentary but also allowed for perceptive insights into music-making.

Music criticism in the USSR had an unusual relationship to power and also to musicology and academic writing. Many of the most noted music critics from the Soviet period were not full-time journalists. Instead, they were academics or composers who either wrote music criticism as a complement to their academic or creative activities or, in the case of musicologists, treated their academic writing as a type of criticism, incorporating one into the other. There was a decided lack of daily newspaper criticism in the USSR.⁴ The leading party and government organs *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* carried few reports about music. Rather, specialist journals or newspapers usually published such pieces. In music there were two such journals: first *Sovetskaia muzyka* and, later, *Muzykal'naia zhizn'*. Other publications for a more general audience, among them the youth-oriented *Krugozor*, also prominently included discussions of both classical and popular music. And, as in Europe or America, some of the most important music criticism appeared in book form, as either monographs or collections of essays.

The music criticism that appeared in the USSR is among the most memorable of the twentieth century. Below I discuss representative critics and representative examples as well as central points of contention: among them issues of authority, censorship and authenticity. The criticism that stands out is the negative criticism that carried political import – the cutting rebukes – but I also highlight less flamboyant criticism worthy of comment. Criticism does not tell a different story about the Soviet period, but it complicates and adds texture to the familiar tale.

⁴ See Boris Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia, 1917–1981* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), pp. 222–3.

1920s and 1930s: From Free-for-All to Control

Music criticism in the 1920s reflected Soviet life more broadly: in equal measure tumultuous and uncertain, revolutionary and reactionary. The decade stands out for the sheer number of music-related periodicals that both launched and sank within its boundaries. Many publications lasted for only a volume or two, among them *Muzyka i Oktiabr* [Music and October], published for one year (1926) by the Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians, RAPM. Others were slightly longer-lived, including *Sovremennaia muzyka* [Contemporary Music]. Published from 1924 to 1929, it was edited by Viktor Belyayev (1888–1968) and published by RAPM’s ideological opposite, the Association of Contemporary Music (ASM, in its Russian acronym) and the State Academy of the History of the Arts, in Moscow.⁵ Another central journal in the 1920s was *Muzyka i revoliutsiia* [Music and Revolution], published by the Organisation of Revolutionary Composers (ORK, in its Russian acronym) from 1926 to 1929.⁶

Music criticism from the revolution to 1932 wrestled with new thoughts and new impulses on many levels. The party was already placing a high premium on criticism. The Resolution of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) from 18 June 1925, ‘On the Politics of the Party in Literature’ [O politike partii v oblasti khudozhestvennoi literatury], declared criticism to be ‘one of the main educational weapons in the hands of the party’.⁷ Critics thus engaged with the new audiences, namely workers and other non-elites, who were now being actively encouraged to attend cultural events. Accounts of performances became accounts of their audiences’ reactions rather than evaluations of the musicians on the stage.⁸ Critics also took notice of new attempts to write appropriately ‘Soviet’ music: symphonies of sirens, Shostakovich’s new works, mass songs. Older composers were evaluated in new ways, and critics also engaged with the new types of music wending their way into the USSR, including modernist music from western Europe and new modes of popular music, chief among them jazz. *Sovremennaia muzyka*, in particular, often included accounts of contemporary

⁵ See Amy Nelson, *Music for the Revolution: Musicians and Power in Early Soviet Russia* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), pp. 53–4; Neil Edmunds, *The Soviet Proletarian Music Movement* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2000); and Olga Panteleeva, ‘Formation of Russian Musicology from Sacchetti to Asafyev, 1885–1931’, unpublished PhD dissertation, University of California, Berkeley (2015).

⁶ Nelson, *Music for the Revolution*, pp. 92–3.

⁷ Quoted in Iurii Keldysh, ‘Kritika muzykal’naia’, *Muzykal’naia entsiklopediia*, vol. 3 (Moscow: Sovetskaiia entsiklopediia, 1973–82), p. 59.

⁸ See for example, N. Petrov, ‘Opera i novyi zritel’ [Opera and Its New Audience], *Artist-muzykant*, 2 (1918), 5; quoted in Marina Frolova-Walker and Jonathan Walker (eds.), *Music and Soviet Power, 1917–1932* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2012), pp. 13–14.

Western European composers, dedicating special issues, for example, to Paul Hindemith and Béla Bartók (1924, no. 1 and 1925, no. 7, respectively).⁹

One of the shorter-run publications from the early Soviet years was *Melos*, edited by a journalist named Igor Glebov in Petrograd, which lasted for all of two volumes, from 1917 to 1918. Glebov, it turned out, was a fiction. A powerful critic, he was the nom de plume of Boris Asafyev (1884–1949), a musical jack-of-all trades: composer, musicologist, theorist, critic. While working at the Mariinsky and Mikhailovsky Theaters, he started writing criticism under the pen name Glebov. He contributed to both *Sovremennaia muzyka* and *Muzyka i revoliutsiia* and, in a pair of classic essays in the former, exhorted Soviet composers to engage with a wider audience, ‘to grab and attract the attention not only of a narrow circle, calling forth the cold-blooded interest of specialists, but a greater and greater mass of the population’.¹⁰ He called for music ‘that would be understandable to each and everyone, songs which would be sung both in the streets and in the fields’. One of Asafyev’s most notable contributions was a book-length study of Igor Stravinsky from 1929, called simply *A Book about Stravinsky*.¹¹ It was subsequently translated into several languages – among the only works of music criticism from the USSR for which this is the case. Asafyev also became noted for his more academic work – on the theory of intonations for example, which became a staple not only of academic musicography in the USSR, but also filtered into music criticism.¹²

Ivan Sollertinsky (1902–44), another leading music critic, was active from the late 1920s until his death. A close friend of Shostakovich, the extremely erudite Sollertinsky – who claimed to know more than twenty-one languages – wrote about theatre, ballet, opera and concert music for a variety of periodicals: *Krasnaia gazeta*, *Leningradskaiia pravda*, *Sovetskoe iskusstvo*, *Izvestiia*, *Zhizn’ iskusstva*, *Rabochii i teatr*, *Iskusstvo i zhizn’*, *Teatr* and *Sovetskaia muzyka*.¹³ He addressed both the known – Beethoven, Gluck, Mozart and the nineteenth-

⁹ For a survey of representative examples of music criticism from 1917 to 1932, see Frolova-Walker and Walker (eds.), *Music and Soviet Power, 1917–1932*; and Pauline Fairclough, *Classics for the Masses: Shaping Soviet Musical Identity under Lenin and Stalin* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2016).

¹⁰ Igor Glebov, ‘Krizis lichnogo tvorchestva’, *Sovremennaia muzyka*, 4 (1924), 99–106; excerpted in B. V. Asafyev, *Izbrannye Trudy*, vol. 5 (Moscow: Izdatel’stvo akademii nauk SSSR, 1957), pp. 23. See also Igor Glebov, ‘Kompozitory, pospeshite!’, *Sovremennaia muzyka*, 6 (1924), 145–8; English trans. Frolova-Walker and Walker (eds.), *Music and Soviet Power*, pp. 124–7.

¹¹ B. Asafyev, *Kniga o Stravinskoi* (Leningrad: Muzyka, 1977; first published Leningrad: Triton, 1929); English trans. Boris Asafyev, *A Book about Stravinsky*, trans. Richard F. French (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1982).

¹² Malcolm Hamrick Brown, ‘The Soviet Russian Concepts of “Intonazia” and “Musical Imagery”’, *Musical Quarterly*, 60 (1974), 557–67.

¹³ Liudmila Kovnatskaia, ‘Introduction to D. D. Shostakovich’, *Pis’ma I. I. Sollertinskoiu* (Saint Petersburg: Kompozitor, 2006), p. 5; and M. Druskin, ‘I. I. Sollertinskii – Kritik’, in I. Sollertinskii, *Kriticheskie stat’i*, ed. I. Beletskii (Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe muzykal’noe izdatel’stvo, 1963), p. 6.

century Russian standards – and the less known (for Soviet listeners) – Mahler, Bruckner and Schoenberg.¹⁴ Drawn to the grotesque and the off-kilter, the ‘contradictions of life’, Sollertinsky once quoted the following lines by poet Alexander Blok: ‘The new is always alarming and disturbing. One who grasps that the meaning of human life lies in being disturbed and alarmed will cease being a philistine.’¹⁵ Sollertinsky appraised key works by Shostakovich, among them his opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*,¹⁶ and the premiere of his wartime Symphony No. 7: ‘Never has a single musical work . . . been born in such an unusual atmosphere – intense, harsh, and dreadful’.¹⁷ He also reviewed such canonical Soviet compositions as Ivan Dzerzhinsky’s *Quiet Flows the Don* [*Tikhii Don*], Dmitri Kabalevsky’s *Colas Breugnon* [*Kola Briun’en*] and Asafyev’s *Flames of Paris* [*Plamia Parizha*] and contributed to mid-1930s discussions concerning the place of the symphony in the USSR.¹⁸

In the 1920s prominent figures, Asafyev among them, struggled to establish musicology as a discipline,¹⁹ with tense questions arising: was musicology a mere adjunct to practical music training or was it a discipline in its own right that should influence the course of composition and performance? These foundational questions, together with the changing status of musicologists themselves (only just becoming professionalised) and the Soviet emphasis on *publitsistika* (or writing on publicly accessible topics for a larger audience), had ripple effects on music criticism, helping reinforce the overlap between musicology and criticism that became so characteristic of the Soviet period.

The upheavals of the 1920s in music, and specifically the battles between factions aligned with RAPM and those allied with ASM, were largely silenced by the 1932 resolution ‘liquidating’ the proletarian arts organisations and establishing single creative unions in their place for architects, writers and composers (and musicologists).²⁰ Local unions soon were formed in Moscow and Leningrad, and a central music journal, *Sovetskaia muzyka*, began

¹⁴ Representative examples in: I. I. Sollertinskii, *Muzykal’no istoricheskie etudy*, ed. M. Druskin (Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe muzykal’noe izdatel’stvo, 1956); Sollertinskii, *Kriticheskie stat’i*; and Liudmila Mikheeva (ed.), *Pamiati I. I. Sollertinskogo: Vospominaniia, materialy, issledovaniia*, 2nd expanded ed. (Leningrad and Moscow: Sovetskii kompozitor, 1978). See also Pauline Fairclough, ‘Mahler Reconstructed: Sollertinsky and the Soviet Symphony’, *Musical Quarterly*, 85/2 (2001), 367–90.

¹⁵ Druskin, ‘I. I. Sollertinskii – Kritik’, pp. 9, 4.

¹⁶ Ivan Sollertinskii, ‘“Ledi Makbet Mtsenskogo Uezda”’, *Rahochii i teatr*, 4 (1934); reprinted in Sollertinskii, *Kriticheskie stat’i*, pp. 72–6.

¹⁷ Ivan Sollertinskii, ‘Sed’maia simfoniia Shostakovicha’, *Sovetskaia Sibir’* (16 July 1942); reprinted in Mikheeva (ed.), *Pamiati I. I. Sollertinskogo*, pp. 190–1.

¹⁸ See Sollertinskii, *Kriticheskie stat’i*, pp. 76–9 (Dzerzhinsky) and pp. 79–86 (Kabalevsky); and Mikheeva (ed.), *Pamiati I. I. Sollertinskogo*, pp. 195–201 (Asafyev).

¹⁹ See especially Panteleeva, ‘Formation of Russian Musicology’.

²⁰ ‘On the Restructuring of Literary and Artistic Organizations’, in Frolova-Walker and Walker (eds.), *Music and Soviet Power*, pp. 324–5; and Fairclough, *Classics for the Masses*, pp. 101–7.

publication in 1933.²¹ It held a place of pre-eminence in Soviet musicography through the very end of the USSR (when it was reborn and rebranded as *Muzykal'naia akademiia*). In his mid-1970s encyclopedia account of Soviet music criticism, Yuri Keldysh singled out the 1932 resolution for its salient effect on music criticism, because 'music critics were united with composers in the Union of Composers.'²²

Surely Keldysh did not have in mind the most famous article conjoining critic and composer to emerge from the USSR, the anonymous 1936 denunciation of Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*. This review hit the high points of official Soviet critical histrionics and most readers probably have at least glancing familiarity with its overblown rhetoric. The criticism has forever entered the annals of music history; pick any passage at random and it still shocks: 'All of this is coarse, primitive, and vulgar. The music quacks, grunts, and growls, and suffocates itself, in order to express the amatory scenes as naturalistically as possible. And "love" is smeared all over the opera in the most vulgar manner'.²³ This moment follows the article's central, chilling warning: 'It is a game of clever ingenuity that may end very badly'. The review represented Soviet criticism in a nutshell: it inveighed against dissonance, confusion, 'naturalistic' depictions of sex and violence and formalism (a catch-all epithet condemning all of the above), and it threatened violence to the author himself if his creative deficiencies were not remedied.

But the targets were wider than any single author: Soviet criticism aimed to model future behaviour for all creators. Musical socialist realism relied on an approved canon of texts, musical works that had been praised publicly, but this approval process was founded on an approved body of critical texts, chief among them 'Muddle Instead of Music'.²⁴ Yet the dangers of treating criticism as a form of public humiliation were clear to all creators. Author Maxim Gorky drafted a letter to Stalin shortly after the denunciation of Shostakovich, complaining, 'Critics should give a technical assessment of Shostakovich's music. But what the *Pravda* article did was to authorise hundreds of talentless people, hacks of all kinds, to persecute Shostakovich'.²⁵ Yet this was exactly

²¹ Kiril Tomoff, *Creative Union: The Professional Organization of Soviet Composers, 1939–1953* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), pp. 18–19, 21.

²² Keldysh, 'Kritika muzykal'naia', p. 61.

²³ 'Sumbur vmesto muzyki'; English trans., 'Chaos Instead of Music (1936)', in Robert P. Morgan (ed.), *Strunk's Source Readings in Music History*, revised ed., vol. 7 (New York: Norton, 1998), pp. 1398.

²⁴ Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual*, 3rd ed. (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000), pp. 3–4. See also Marina Frolova-Walker, *Stalin's Music Prize: Soviet Culture and Politics* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2016), pp. 286, 292.

²⁵ M. Gorkii, 'Dva pis'ma Stalinu', *Literaturnaia gazeta* (10 March 1993), 6; quoted in Laurel Fay, *Shostakovich: A Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 91.

what was wanted: an attack on the elites in the name of the (anonymous) masses. It aimed to instil fear from all directions. As historical novelist Vladimir Karpov (1922–2010) wrote about the Stalin period: ‘a good deal of writing was intended to destroy people, most often honest people who were unable to defend themselves against hired loudmouths’.²⁶ The anonymity of the critique was key, and a key characteristic of some of the most famous examples of Soviet music criticism. Its authorship long swathed in myth and speculation, only recently has the true writer of ‘Muddle Instead of Music’ been identified: a low-level journalist named David Zaslavsky (1880–1965). But this truth feels like an afterthought, the damage already long done.²⁷

As would happen countless times over the course of the USSR, discussions about proper musical composition quickly turned into discussions about proper criticism. An article from 4 September 1938 in *Sovetskoe iskusstvo* by musicologist Alexander Shaverdyan (1903–54) objected to recent debates about Soviet opera in the wake of the *Lady Macbeth* controversy for being too one-sided.²⁸ He pointed to the similar format of all the articles and the similar language their critics used, even when discussing ostensibly different works by different composers. But amid the public denunciations and private disappearances, was not uniformity to be expected?

In early 1941, Kabalevsky reported on a spring 1939 conference about music criticism organised by the Union of Composers USSR.²⁹ Kabalevsky had the pleasure of announcing the positive shifts in both Soviet composition and criticism over the intervening year. The earlier critiques had achieved their desired effects, and both criticism and composition were engaged in a ‘process of mutual influence: the successes of composers helped to raise the level of criticism that in turn influenced further creative development’.³⁰ Critics had raised their standards and were not now praising works of ‘low artistic worth’, as they had two or three years previous. No longer ‘passive’, they were now adopting a more active ‘educational’ role. But, as was so common in these official proclamations, Kabalevsky warned that the work was not yet done: the ‘gap between musicology and *publitsistika* still remains’. And he provided recent examples of such insufficient, dilettantish works by Dmitri Rogal’-Levitskiy and Yuri Kremlev. In the end, Kabalevsky raised the

²⁶ Vladimir Karpov, ‘Literature’s Contribution to Perestroika’, in Yevgenii Dugin (ed.), *Perestroika and Development of Culture (Literature, Theatre and Cinema)* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1989), pp. 26–7.

²⁷ See Evgenii Efimov, *Sumbur vokrug ‘sumbura’ i odnogo malen’kogo zhurnalista* (Moscow: Flinta, 2006); and S. Gedroits, Review of Evgenii Efimov, *Sumbur vokrug ‘sumbura’ i odnogo ‘malen’kogo zhurnalista*, *Zvezda*, 5 (2007), available at magazines.russ.ru/zvezda/2007/5/ge20.html (accessed 1 November 2016).

²⁸ A. Shaverdian, ‘Prava i obiazannosti muzykal’nogo kritika’, *Sovetskoe iskusstvo* (4 September 1938).

²⁹ Dm. Kabalevskii, ‘O muzykal’noi kritike’, *Sovetskaia muzyka*, 1 (1941), 4–17. ³⁰ *Ibid.*, 16.

stakes for music criticism: 'Indeed the truly great critic, pointing the way forward for creative work, should stand even higher than the artist.'³¹ He took aim at musicologists and theorists who remained concerned only with questions of the past, for he wanted music writers to be concerned with the 'practical questions of building our great government'. Such demands had immense force during the Second World War, and they did not diminish after its end. Yet, scholars increasingly concentrated on more 'positivistic' enterprises – compiling and collating scores, letters and other historical source documents without editorialising, without criticism.

The 1948 Resolution, Thaw and Stagnation

The next direct intervention in musical life, the infamous Resolution of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of 10 February 1948, devoted portions of its wrath toward musical criticism, decrying the 'altogether intolerable situation in Soviet music criticism'.³² The criticisms of criticism were familiar, a return to the talking points of Shaverdyan and Kabalevsky from a decade previous: 'Instead of combating the harmful views and theories alien to the principles of socialist realism, music critics promote them, hailing the composers who share these false artistic concepts as the advance guard in art.'³³ As a result, the resolution declared:

Musical criticism has ceased to express the opinion of Soviet society, the opinion of the nation, and has become a mouthpiece of individual composers. Some music critics, instead of writing objective criticisms, have begun, because of personal friendship, to fawn upon this or that musical leader, glorifying their works in every conceivable way.³⁴

But such misguided criticism stemmed not only from personal connections; it also arose from imported 'bourgeois ideology', the 'influence of contemporary decadent western European and American music'. The new head of the Soviet Union of Composers, Tikhon Khrennikov, singled out *Sovetskoe iskusstvo* and *Sovetskaia muzyka* for '[lending] their pages to apologists for the formalist movement'.³⁵ In 1949 and 1950, the fallout from the 1948 resolution continued, as musicologists and critics were further rebuked.³⁶

³¹ *Ibid.*, 17.

³² 'Resolution of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of 10 February 1948', in Nicolas Slonimsky, *Music since 1900*, updated by Laura Diane Kuhn, 6th ed. (New York: Schirmer Reference, 2001), pp. 942–3.

³³ *Ibid.* ³⁴ *Ibid.* ³⁵ *Ibid.*, 947.

³⁶ Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia*, pp. 249–58.

Collections of music criticism were published in 1953 and 1955 that responded directly to the 1948 Resolution: they aimed to embody the critiques of that document. Published in the series Soviet Musical Criticism [Sovetskaia muzykal'naia kritika], the articles in each volume serve as an official canon of Soviet music criticism, a collection of its greatest hits. The stated subjects of the collection were Soviet opera (1953) and Soviet symphonism (1955), but the topics ranged widely and including obvious classics, such as 'Muddle Instead of Music' in the opera volume and, in the symphonic volume, Asafyev's 'The Great Tradition of Russian Music', Aleksei Tolstoy's account of Shostakovich's Symphony No. 5, as well as Shostakovich on his own Symphony No. 7.³⁷

Although both volumes were obviously polemical, the opera volume tilted more heavily in that direction, and comprised post-1948 exhortations about the proper course of Soviet opera as well as reviews of 'little-known works that have played a positive role in the history of Soviet opera'.³⁸ Notably, the collection specifically omitted any discussion of operas from the 1940s, when, its editor declared, Soviet work suffered from the 'harmful influences of bourgeois formalism'.³⁹ The heated discussions of opera between 1938 and 1940, filled with 'mistaken judgments', were similarly left out of the book.⁴⁰

The symphonic volume reveals a capacious definition of criticism, ranging from general surveys of new works (Tsukkerman's 'New Instrumental Concertos' and Mikhail Chulaki's 'Soviet Music in 1951') to discussions of specific works or composers (Izrail Nest'ev's 'The Path of Sergei Prokofiev' and Boris Yarustovsky's 'On the Tenth Symphony of Dmitri Shostakovich'). As this brief accounting of its contents suggests, Shostakovich and Prokofiev served as anchors for much Soviet criticism. Yarustovsky's article on Shostakovich's Symphony No. 10 illustrates several general tendencies: it traces the form and main themes of the symphony (including the well-known DSCH motto, or Shostakovich's initials rendered in musical form: D–E♭–C–B♭), and it also suggests an interpretation of the composition's narrative.⁴¹ For example, according to Yarustovsky, the second movement of the symphony 'is an image of evil forces, revealed in close-up. Its connection with the Faust motive [at the beginning of the symphony] is obvious'.⁴²

³⁷ M. Grinberg and N. Poliakova (eds.), *Sovetskaia opera: Sbornik kriticheskikh statei*, Sovetskaia Muzykal'naia Kritika (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe muzykal'noe izdatel'stvo, 1953); M. A. Grinberg (ed.), *Sovetskaia simfonicheskaia muzyka: sbornik statei*, Sovetskaia Muzykal'naia Kritika (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Muzykal'noe Izdatel'stvo, 1955).

³⁸ Grinberg and Poliakova (eds.), *Sovetskaia opera*, p. 7. ³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 7. ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 7–8.

⁴¹ Boris Iarustovskii, 'O desiatoi simfonii D. Shostakovicha', in Grinberg (ed.), *Sovetskaia simfonicheskaia muzyka*, p. 498. See also Frolova-Walker, *Stalin's Music Prize*, pp. 270–6.

⁴² *Ibid.*

The entire work thus involves a conflict between good and evil, culminating ‘only at the very end of the work’ when a ‘cheerful *khorovod*, bright and naïve, enchants the hero’. The sources of the articles in the two collections of criticism are instructive as well: articles from the 1920s come from *Vecherniaia Krasnaia gazeta* and *Zhizn’ iskusstva*; articles from the 1930s come from *Pravda*, *Izvestiia* and *Sovetskoe iskusstvo*; but in the 1940s and 1950s, the primary source was *Sovetskaia muzyka* (and the bulk of the essays in both collections were from this period). Relative diversity had finally ceded to centralised control.

As the excerpts cited above – from Shaverdyan, Kabalevsky, the various official resolutions and even Yarustovsky’s article on Shostakovich – reveal, Soviet criticism relied heavily on formulas, buzzwords and clichés. A contribution by Kabalevsky to the 1955 symphonism volume, titled simply ‘On Mastery’, is rife with such passages. To pick one among many:

Mastery of realism begins with the ability of a composer to delve deeply into life, to study and understand it, with the ability to properly form the idea content of his work, that is, to arrive at a significant and progressive idea, realizing it to its full potential as the basis for a thoughtful composition, finding for it a convincing, vivid expression.⁴³

Kabalevsky says very little as he hits the high points of Soviet musical aesthetics, especially realism, or a properly formed idea content based on delving deeply into life and expressed in music that is progressive, convincing and vivid. The crux of such passages was the ambiguous adjectives and adverbs that allowed criticism to persist: compositions could always be deemed insufficiently deep, proper, significant, full, thoughtful, convincing or vivid. Criticism employing such language persisted up to the final days of the Soviet Union. It lends much Soviet writing a lifeless, homogeneous quality, further bolstered by another aspect of much Soviet criticism: its length. *Sovetskaia muzyka* in particular is filled with seemingly endless, dutiful accountings of official events (conferences, concerts discussions), of new works, of younger composers and of composers from the various national republics, sometimes all in the same article.

The timing of the 1953 and 1955 volumes is worth noting. The first arrived in the year of Stalin’s death, and the second came one year before Khrushchev’s ‘Secret Speech’ at the Twentieth Party Congress that repudiated Stalin’s cult of personality and ushered in the beginnings of the so-called Thaw. Two years

⁴³ Dm. Kabalevskii, ‘O masterstve’, in Grinberg (ed.), *Sovetskaia simfonicheskaia muzyka*, p. 110, originally in *Sovetskaia muzyka*, 3 (1952). ‘Mastery’ also played a key role in his 1941 overview of criticism: Kabalevskii, ‘O muzykal’noi kritike’, 13–14.

later, in 1958, the 1948 Resolution was finally, belatedly, ‘amended and cancelled’.⁴⁴ Through the late 1950s and 1960s, authorities made repeated pronouncements about music criticism, and as they did so the practice solidified.⁴⁵ Yet during this period, and up to the end of the USSR, the goals for Soviet criticism, and especially its tone and tenor, remained essentially unchanged. A 1984 collection of essays on music criticism still declared the role of musical criticism to be ‘to actively propagandise the principles of socialist art and the achievements of Soviet musical culture’.⁴⁶

In 1957 Georgi Khubov, then editor-in-chief of *Sovetskaia muzyka*, spoke of the need to follow ‘not the letter, but the spirit’ of the 1948 Resolution.⁴⁷ Nonetheless, criticism and creativity and criticism and scholarship remained inseparable. Referring to the work of nineteenth-century Russian critic Vissarion Belinsky (1811–48), Khubov declared:

For to separate criticism from scholarship means castrating and debasing criticism, leading it to a banal (or temporary) imposition of taste [*vykusovshchina*]. For it is clear that if a professional music critic does not base his judgments and conclusions on serious scholarly analysis and deep aesthetic synthesis, he will cease to be a critic.⁴⁸

By the same token, musicologists needed a ‘critical spirit, a critical relationship’ to their topic of study, in order to avoid producing a ‘dry enumeration or a pedantic nomenclature of facts’⁴⁹ or, in the worst, most solipsistic cases, Khubov warned, becoming grist only for future scholarly work. Therefore, he concluded, ‘it follows: music criticism and musicology have equivalent understandings of their content’. (Similar debates about the balance between criticism and scholarship later roiled Anglo-American musicology, starting in the 1960s and reaching a peak in the 1980s after the publication of Joseph Kerman’s influential and controversial *Contemplating Music*.)⁵⁰

⁴⁴ ‘Declaration of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Amending and Canceling the Resolution of 10 February 1948 and Restoring the Dignity and Integrity of Soviet Composers Attacked in that Resolution’, in Slonimsky (ed.), *Music since 1900*, pp. 952–3. See also Frolova-Walker, *Stalin’s Music Prize*, pp. 256–7.

⁴⁵ See for example, G. Khubov, ‘Kritika i tvorchestvo’, *Sovetskaia muzyka*, 6 (1957), 29–56; and Iurii Keldysh, ‘Za boevuiu printsipial’nuiu kritiku’, *Sovetskaia muzyka*, 7 (1958).

⁴⁶ L. G. Dan’ko, *Muzychal’naiia kritika (teoriia i metodika): sbornik nauchnykh trudov* (Leningrad: Ministry of Culture RSFSR and Leningrad Conservatory, 1984), p. 4.

⁴⁷ Khubov, ‘Kritika i tvorchestvo’, 31. ⁴⁸ *Ibid.* ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ See Joseph Kerman, ‘A Profile for American Musicology’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 18 (1965), 61–9; reprinted in *Write All These Down: Essays on Music* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 3–11; and *Contemplating Music: Challenges to Musicology* [published in the UK as *Musicology*] (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985). See also Margaret Bent, ‘Fact and Value in Contemporary Scholarship’, *Musical Times*, 127/1716 (1986), 85–9; and Leo Treitler, ‘The Power of Positivist Thinking’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 42 (1989), 375–402.

In order to expand the range of periodicals devoted to music, and to push criticism away from 'dry enumeration' and 'pedantic nomenclature', a more general-interest music publication, *Muzykal'nia zhizn'* [Musical Life], was founded in 1957.⁵¹ As composer Leonid Desyatnikov later remarked, the conventional wisdom separated the two journals as 'the respectable *Sovetskaia muzyka* . . . and the more democratic *Muzykal'naia zhizn'*'.⁵²

Direct, sometimes anonymous attacks on composers still occurred in the post-Stalin period. Andrei Volkonsky's *Musica Stricta* for piano (1956–57) was greeted by the anonymous critique of 'a listener' after its premiere in 1961; the 1963 premiere of his *Suite of Mirrors* for soprano and instrumental ensemble (1960), based on texts of Federico García Lorca, was also anonymously reviewed.⁵³ Edison Denisov was rebuked by 'a journalist' for the 1970s publication of an interview he gave to a West German journal in 1968.⁵⁴ Composers were not the only targets. In the anonymous 1963 review of Volkonsky's *Suite of Mirrors*, details about the listeners at his concerts emerge: the 'clamorous, fashionable girls and boys, enthusiastically demanding encores'.⁵⁵ The tastes of these girls and boys needed to be properly moulded by the critic.

Official critics reacted with particular hostility in the 1960s to new modernist music from the West and its advocates both at home and abroad. The clearest voicing of those views arrived in Grigori Shneerson's *On Music Living and Dead* (1960 and 1964); the stark binary opposition of the title alone signalled the tenor of the volume's assault.⁵⁶ The bourgeois West continued to threaten Soviet creative life. In 1963 Nest'ev took to task several European and American musicologists and critics (Boris Schwarz, Colin Mason, Bogusław Schaeffer, Fred Prieberg, Hans Stuckenschmidt, André Hodeir and Antoine Goléa) for their misrepresentations of Soviet music and their influence, again, on younger Soviet musicians and listeners.⁵⁷ Similarly, in November 1979, Khrennikov criticised the organisers of a new music festival

⁵¹ Keldysh, 'Za boevuiu printsipial'nuiu kritiku'.

⁵² Leonid Desyatnikov, 'Apologiya tolstopuzogo nasmeshnika', in Ol'ga Manul'kina and Pavel Gershenson (eds.), *Novaia Russkaia muzykal'naia kritika, 1993–2003. v trekh tomakh. Vol. 1: Opera* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2015), p. 7.

⁵³ Slushatel' [a listener], 'Na kontserte M. Iudinoi', *Sovetskaia muzyka*, 7 (1961), 89–90; and Unsigned, 'Glavnoe prizvanie sovetskogo iskusstva', *Sovetskaia muzyka*, 2 (1963), 6–9; see also Peter J. Schmelz, *Such Freedom, If Only Musical: Unofficial Soviet Music during the Thaw* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 94–6 and 111–12.

⁵⁴ Zhurnalists' [a journalist], 'Replika: po povodu odnogo interv'iu', *Sovetskaia muzyka*, 10 (1970), 44–6; see also Schmelz, *Such Freedom, If Only Musical*, pp. 278–81.

⁵⁵ Slushatel' [a listener], 'Na kontserte M. Iudinoi', 89–90.

⁵⁶ Grigorii Shneerson, *O muzyke, zhivoi i mertvoi* (Moscow: Sovetskii kompozitor, 1960 and 1964). See also Schmelz, *Such Freedom, If Only Musical*, pp. 41–2.

⁵⁷ Izrail' Nest'ev, 'S pozitsii "kholodnoi voiny"', *Sovetskaia muzyka*, 10 (1963), 125–30.

held earlier that year in Cologne, Germany for focusing on younger ‘unofficial’ Soviet composers (he called out seven by name) instead of the central figures in Soviet musical life: Prokofiev, Myaskovsky, Khachaturyan, Kara Karaev, Rodion Shchedrin, Andrey Eshpay, Boris Tchaikovsky and Giya Kancheli.⁵⁸ (The seven composers, known popularly as the ‘Khrennikov Seven’ comprised Denisov and several of his students as well as Gubaidulina.)

Critical reprimands continued throughout the entire Soviet period and forced listeners, readers and critics into a constant state of defensiveness. But such examples present a one-sided picture of critical engagement with music, particularly during the final decades of the USSR (and after). Almost every musicologist and theorist wrote criticism, including Lev Mazel, Mikhail Tarakanov, Mark Aranovsky and Svetlana Savenko, to name but a few respected authors. A prominent critic from the post-Stalin period worth singling out is Mikhail Druskin (1905–91). His book about Stravinsky from 1979 offered one of the first comprehensive posthumous accounts of the composer’s life and works anywhere and, like Asafyev’s, has been translated into English and several other languages.⁵⁹ Druskin was also central, alongside musicologists Arnold Sokhor (1924–77) and Larisa Danko (1931–), in founding the department of musical criticism at the Leningrad Conservatory, the first of its kind in the USSR.⁶⁰

The ‘dialectical unity’ that Soviet critics posited between criticism and art transformed both (as a dialectical relationship should): composers often wrote about music, their own and that of others.⁶¹ They played crucial roles as critics – supporters, opponents or interested observers – of their colleagues. Among late-Soviet composers, Alfred Schnittke stands out for the range of his critical engagement. His entries into day-to-day music criticism were few but noteworthy. In a review of a 1973 all-Mozart concert by pianist Alexei Lyubimov (1944–), he praised the younger performer, a noted champion of new music in the USSR.⁶² In his ‘romantically expressive and classically balanced’ performance, Schnittke also heard the ‘incredibly refined dynamic timbral shadings of Webern’.⁶³ Schnittke added, polemically, ‘Lyubimov

⁵⁸ See Tikhon Khrennikov, ‘Velikaia missiia sovetskoi muzyki’, *Sovetskaia muzyka*, 1 (1980), 14.

⁵⁹ M. Druskin, *Igor’ Stravinskii: Lichnost’, tvorchestvo, vzgliady*, 2nd ed. (Leningrad: Sovetskii kompozitor, 1979); English trans.: Mikhail Druskin, *Igor Stravinsky: His Life, Works, and Views*, trans. Martin Cooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

⁶⁰ Anastasiia Aleksandrova, ‘U istokov kafedry muzykal’noi kritiki: Arnol’d Naumovich Sokhor’, *Maloizvestnye stranitsy istorii Konservatorii*, vol. 5 (St Petersburg Conservatory, n.d.), pp. 24–7, old .conservatory.ru/files/alm_05_06_aleksandrova.pdf.

⁶¹ The quoted phrase is from Khubov, ‘Kritika i tvorchestvo’, 29.

⁶² Alfred Shnitke, ‘Sub’ektivnye zametki ob ob’ektivnom ispolnenii’, *Sovetskaia muzyka*, 2 (1974), 63–5; English trans. Alfred Schnittke, ‘Subjective Notes on an Objective Performance (On Alexei Liubimov)’, in *A Schnittke Reader*, ed. Alexander Ivashkin, trans. John Goodliffe (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002), pp. 80–1.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

would undoubtedly have played Mozart less well had he not in recent years played and replayed so many works from the Second Viennese School.³ Rather than weakening or distracting performers, Schnittke argued, familiarity with avant-garde music could help refine their performances of the familiar classics.

Schnittke's other writings on music were more technical in nature, and many of them remained unpublished until after his death,⁶⁴ but his memorial appraisals of Shostakovich and Stravinsky are exceptional. In these writings, Schnittke's reflections on another composer reflect his own preoccupations, as in statements like this from his description of Shostakovich's creative personality:

It may be that the unique quality of an artist reveals itself most clearly in the fearless way he opens himself to alien influences, when he makes everything coming from outside his own, as he absorbs it into the immeasurable and unidentifiable substance of his own individual genius, which adorns everything it touches. In the twentieth century only Stravinsky had the same magical power to make his own everything that came into his field of vision.⁶⁵

The leading proponent of polystylism in the USSR viewed the elder Soviet musical statesman – and the looming emigré master – as powerful precedents.

Schnittke's engagement with Shostakovich was typical, for he played an outsize role in Soviet criticism, particularly for younger composers. Shostakovich became a yardstick against which they were measured. In 1959 composer Sergei Aksiuk took to task the thirty-four-year-old Veniamin Basner (1925–96) for his Symphony No. 1 (1958) because he, like many others, was merely 'blindly, like a student, repeating the forms and outlines already overcome by Shostakovich himself'.⁶⁶

Sometimes, sympathetic critics helped younger composers, using the highly evocative, narrative-driven language of Soviet criticism to their benefit. A memorable example comes in a 1966 review of an early twelve-tone composition by Arvo Pärt, his *Perpetuum Mobile* (1963):

Perpetuum makes a great impact on listeners. At first you conceive only some noisy process. But as the work unfolds, a multitude of associations emerge. It seems as if during those four minutes a busy port is stirring to life in the morning, as if you are meeting two satellites in space, as if at night a supersonic

⁶⁴ English translation available in Schnittke, *A Schnittke Reader*; and Russian in Alfred Shnitke, *Stat'i o muzyke* (Moscow: Kompozitor, 2004). Denisov also wrote a number of notable theoretical essays: Edison Denisov, *Sovremennaiia muzyka i problem. Evoliutsii kompozitorskoi tekhniki* (Moscow: Sovetskii kompozitor, 1986).

⁶⁵ Alfred Schnittke, 'On Shostakovich: Circles of Influence (1975)', in *A Schnittke Reader*, p. 59; originally published in Grigorii Shneerson (ed.), *D. Shostakovich: Stat'i i materialy* (Moscow: Sovetskii kompozitor, 1976), p. 223; also in Shnitke, *Stat'i o muzyke*, p. 163.

⁶⁶ Sergei Aksiuk, 'Mysli kompozitora', *Sovetskaia muzyka*, 1 (1959), 27.

airplane flies over the city, as if . . . And when the work ends, after an involuntary feeling of amazement, you are suddenly sorry that the sonic mass has dissipated, vanished.⁶⁷

As with most criticism in the USSR, this was politically motivated: it attempted to make palatable a challenging work in an unfamiliar, potentially ‘formalist’ language. The younger of the review’s two authors, Marina Nestyeva, was a musicologist sympathetic to new musical trends, and she later wrote informed criticism devoted to Ukrainian composer Valentin Silvestrov.⁶⁸

Yet such praise was infrequent. Almost all of the younger Soviet composers from the 1950s to the 1970s received critical, that is to say negative, treatment in *Sovetskaia muzyka*. Just as often, reviews would alternately praise and condemn or damn with faint praise.⁶⁹ Thus for every negative criticism, by an elder statesman, of a new musical work there would be some informed criticism from the supporting side. Such commentary usually appeared in counterpoint, as in the ‘discussions’ that often appeared in *Sovetskaia muzyka*, most prominently of Denisov’s *Sun of the Incas*, Rodion Shchedrin’s experimental *Poetoriya* and Schnittke’s Symphony No. 1.⁷⁰ Another tactic was to grant a voice of official authority the final word. Thus when Savenko published a groundbreaking overview of Schnittke’s career in 1981, her article was accompanied by a paternalistic afterword by *Sovetskaia muzyka*’s then editor, Yuri Korev, in which he countered Savenko’s observations point by point. These approaches provided the illusion of tolerance, of spontaneous, open debate, despite the routine, thorough vetting of everything in advance.⁷¹

Popular Music Criticism

The criticism published in *Sovetskaia muzyka* and *Muzykal’naia zhizn’* formed only part of late-Soviet musicography. The history of popular music criticism, including that of jazz and particularly that of rock, understandably traced

⁶⁷ Marina Nest’eva and Yurii Fortunatov, ‘*Molodezh’ ishchet, somnevaetsia, nakhodit*’, *Sovetskaia muzyka*, 3 (1966), 20.

⁶⁸ Marina Nest’eva, *Valentin Sil’vestrov: Muzyka – eto penie mira o samom sebe . . . Sokrovennyi razgovory i vzgliady so storony: Besedy, stat’i, pis’ma* (Kiev: n.p., 2004).

⁶⁹ Many of these were written by Kabalevsky. See for example: Dmitrii Kabalevskii, ‘*Tvorchestvo molodykh kompozitorov Moskvyy*’, *Sovetskaia muzyka*, 1 (1957), 3–17; ‘*Tvorchestvo molodykh*’, *Sovetskaia muzyka*, 12 (1958), 3–15; and ‘*Kompozitor – prezhde vsego grazhdanin*’, *Sovetskaia muzyka*, 2 (1959), 13–20.

⁷⁰ ‘*Kogda sobiraetsia sekretariat . . .*’, *Sovetskaia muzyka*, 1 (1966), 29–32; ‘*Obsuzhdaem “Poetoriuu” R. Shchedrina*’, *Sovetskaia muzyka*, 11 (1969), 18–32; and ‘*Obsuzhdaem Simfoniiu A. Shnitke*’, *Sovetskaia muzyka*, 10 (1974), 12–26.

⁷¹ Svetlana Savenko, ‘*Portret khudozhnika v zrelosti*’, *Sovetskaia muzyka*, 9 (1981), 35–46 (Korev’s afterword appears on 43–6). See also Peter J. Schmelz, ‘*Selling Schnittke: Late Soviet Censorship in the Cold War Marketplace*’, in Patricia Hall (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Musical Censorship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 423–5.

different contours from art music or folk music. The course of critical responses to avant-garde (as distinct from ‘classical’) music during the Thaw in the USSR (from roughly the mid-1950s to the early 1970s) might be comparable: appearing in official publications first as a negative example, it slowly gained respectability, positive mentions and eventually acceptance. Jazz held to the margins of Soviet music criticism for decades.⁷² Key ‘discussions’ began to emerge in the 1960s, and official publications first appeared in the 1970s. In all of these cases, established art music composers vouched for the quality of the music, often citing jazz as a type of folk music, a common approach to the style from art music composers; Dvořák did the same when he first encountered African American spirituals in the United States in the 1890s.⁷³ Among jazz critics in the USSR, Alexei Batashev takes pride of place for his history of Soviet jazz, the first of its kind, published in 1972, but musicologist Alexander Medvedev was not far behind, and the collection of essays on Soviet jazz he edited with his wife a decade later is another landmark in the official accreditation of the genre in the USSR.⁷⁴ (Medvedev also edited Batashev’s earlier volume.) Medvedev and his wife’s 1987 volume included contributions from a wide range of Soviet critics and composers, among them Prokofiev, Eshchpai, Shchedrin, Schnittke, Evgenii Barban, Georgi Garanyan, Yuri Saul’ski, Batashev and many others. Its contents reveal the unfamiliar status of jazz for general readers in the USSR at the time: it included a glossary of jazz terms, reviews of books on jazz, and a discography of Soviet jazz.

Popular music also began to be addressed officially by the youth-oriented periodical *Krugozor*, first published in 1964. It offered brief discussions of a wide variety of musics, foreign and domestic, including classical, popular and folk. Most significantly, each short issue contained a number of flexible minidiscs containing music and spoken-word excerpts related to the articles within. The offerings were generally tame, but each number usually featured at least one or two examples of popular music, including such leading Soviet artists as Alla Pugachova, international figures such as Edith Piaf, Joan Baez, Tom Jones, Oscar Peterson, Ray Coniff and Dave Brubeck, or, by the late

⁷² See Gleb Tsipursky, ‘Jazz, Power, and Soviet Youth in the Early Cold War, 1948–1953’, *Journal of Musicology*, 33/3 (2016), 332–61; and Tsipursky, *Socialist Fun: Youth Consumption and State-Sponsored Popular Culture in the Soviet Union, 1964–1970* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2016).

⁷³ See for example, ‘Pesni, simfoniia, dzhaz’, *Molodaia gvardiia*, 7 (1964), especially 312, 314–15; and the section ‘Sem’ monologov o dzhaze’, in Aleksandr Medvedev and Ol’ga Medvedeva (eds.), *Sovetskii dzhaz. Problemy. Sobytiia. Mastera. Sbornik statei* (Moscow: Sovetskii kompozitor, 1987). First published as Aleksandr Medvedev, ‘Shest’ monologov o dzhaze’, *Sovetskaia muzyka*, 8 (1984), 50–9.

⁷⁴ Aleksei Batashev, *Sovetskii dzhaz. Istoricheskii ocherk*, ed. A. B. Medvedev (Moscow: Muzyka, 1972); Medvedev and Medvedeva (eds.), *Sovetskii dzhaz*.

1980s, the Scorpions and Madonna, as well as samples of *estrada* (or variety stage music) from around the world.⁷⁵

Neither new music nor jazz critics reverted to samizdat to the degree pop music did. Unofficial magazines – or, better, ’zines – flourished across the USSR from the late 1960s through the end of the Soviet period. A 1994 ‘encyclopedia of rock samizdat’ offers a window into this vibrant phenomenon of popular criticism.⁷⁶ As might be expected, even as their number boomed both just before and just after the fall of the USSR, most of the publications it lists were short-lived. Their names punned, appropriated and mocked: *Muppet show* (original in English), *Rock-salad* [‘Rock salat’; Leningrad], *POPstore* [POPmagazin], *Anarchy* [Anarkhiia] and *Zombie* [Zombi] are typical.⁷⁷ *Roksi* from Leningrad was one of the longest-running (fifteen numbers produced between October 1977 and autumn 1990) and one of the most influential, arriving as it did from a leading rock centre in the USSR during a peak period of activity.⁷⁸ As Polly McMichael has shown, *Roksi* played a central role in the accreditation of Soviet rock music.⁷⁹ Artemy Troitsky became one of the leading Soviet rock critics, a Russian equivalent of noted American writer Greil Marcus. His history of rock in Russia was the first of its kind and immediately made an international splash.⁸⁰ Really a book of criticism and first-hand reporting, it had no peers in Russia.

Conclusion: From Free-for-All to Control (Redux)

Perhaps a more representative example of the new freedoms and new influences affecting late-Soviet and post-Soviet music criticism is the work of musicologist Tatyana Cherednichenko, author of a remarkable series of books and articles tackling the pressing issues of late-twentieth-century music worldwide, not just in Russia or the former USSR.⁸¹ Her writings address the intersections and clashes of high and low as well as the impact of the marketplace on music-making, traditional outgrowths and amplifications

⁷⁵ For an online archive of the journal see www.krugozor-kolobok.ru (accessed 2 November 2016).

⁷⁶ A. Kushnir (ed.), *Zolotoe podpol’e: polnaia illiustrirovannaiia entsiklopediia rok-samizdata, 1967–1994* (Nizhnii Novgorod: Dekom, 1994).

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 72, 62, 136, 190, 102. ⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

⁷⁹ Polly McMichael, “‘After All, You’re a Rock and Roll Star (At Least, That’s What They Say)’”: *Roksi* and the Creation of the Soviet Rock Musician”, *Slavic and East European Review*, 83/4 (2005), 664–84.

⁸⁰ Artemy Troitsky, *Back in the USSR: The True Story of Rock in Russia* (London and New York: Omnibus, 1987).

⁸¹ Tat’iana Cherednichenko, *Krizis obshchestva-krisis iskusstva: Muzykal’nyi ‘avangard’ v sisteme burzhuaznoi ideologii* (Moscow: Muzyka, 1985); *Mezhdû ‘Brezhnevym’ i ‘Pugachovoi’: Tipologiia sovetskoi massovoi kul’tury* (Moscow: Kul’tura, 1994); *Muzyka v istorii kul’tury: Posobie dlia studentov nemuzykal’nykh VUZov i vsekh, kto interesuetia muzykal’nym iskusstvom* (Bishkek: Aibek, 1996).

of standard concerns for Marxist-informed Soviet criticism. Her activities spanned disciplines from history to criticism: one of her listed professions was ‘culturologist’. Well versed in contemporary thinking in the West, she incorporated English and German scholarship into her work. She also hosted an ambitious television show during the 1990s that asked questions about past and present, trying to provide a ‘new analysis of the cultural-historical picture’.⁸² Her stated goal for the programme, ‘an archeological excavation of the present’, betrays her familiarity with and reliance on Western literary theory, especially the work of Michel Foucault.⁸³ Its guests included an impressive array of contemporary Russian thinkers, among them composer Vladimir Martynov and music theorist Yuri Kholopov. Cherednichenko’s final book, *Musical Stock [Muzykal’nyi zapas]*, is among her best – a synthesis of previous writings, it surveys the foibles and achievements of late-Soviet art music. Possessed of a memorable prose style, her writings, witty, acerbic and fiercely intelligent, have the verve and punch that other music criticism from the Soviet Union often lacked, unless directed at a juicy, officially sanctioned target.⁸⁴

After the collapse of the USSR, criticism greatly expanded its reach. The host of newly established independent publications quickly began to include the type of daily arts criticism absent in the Soviet period. *Kommersant* and *Segodnia* in particular featured critics Aleksei Parin and Pyotr Pospelov addressing opera productions. The style shifted from the formalities of the past to a looser, less musicologically encumbered style.⁸⁵ Yet as the Yeltsin era has been eclipsed by Putin’s reign, this moment of freedom has become almost mythical. The Internet has greatly expanded critical responses by fans to musical performances,⁸⁶ and websites devoted to daily arts criticism have blossomed, yet unsavoury commands to self-censor have returned.⁸⁷ Music remains

⁸² Tat’iana Cherednichenko, *Rossia 90-kh v sloganakh, reitingakh, imidzhakh: aktual’nyi leksikon istorii kul’tury* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 1999), p. 12.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁸⁴ Tat’iana Cherednichenko, *Muzykal’nyi zapas: 70-e. Problemy. Portrety. Sluchai* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2002).

⁸⁵ See Ol’ga Manul’kina and Pavel Gershenzon (eds.), *Novaia Russkaia muzykal’naia kritika, 1993–2003*, 3 vols. 1. Opera, 2. Ballet, 3. Concerts (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2015).

⁸⁶ See Emily Erken, ‘Constructing the Russian Moral Project through the Classics: Reflections of Pushkin’s *Eugene Onegin*, 1833–2014’, unpublished PhD dissertation, Ohio State University (2015).

⁸⁷ One of the more notable arts websites is www.colta.ru, founded in 2013. For remarkable conversations between editors and writers about self-censorship under Putin, see the following stories from the online site *Meduza* (medusa.io): Aleksandr Gorbachev, ‘“I’m not going to write about Putin’s daughters”: An Interview with *Esquire*’s New Chief Editor, Ksenia Sokolova’, *Meduza* (9 August 2016); ‘Censorship in Russia Explained’, *Meduza* (5 February 2015); and ‘This Is What Losing Your Newsroom Looks Like in Russia: The Reporters at “RBC” Meet Their New Bosses (Full transcript)’, *Meduza* (11 July 2016).

a crucial battleground, as recent disputations over Tchaikovsky's homosexuality to say nothing of Pussy Riot's notorious protest songs, reveal.⁸⁸ Now that power again encroaches on thought, art has gained new potency, even as the power of critics (if not criticism) has both spread and fractured.

⁸⁸ For a recent summary of these disputes, see Richard Taruskin, *Russian Music at Home and Abroad: New Essays* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016), pp. 4–9; and Simon Morrison, 'Waist-Deep: In the Mire of Russian and Western Debates about Tchaikovsky', *Times Literary Supplement* (1 May 2015), 14–15.

The *Feuilleton* and Beyond: Criticism in the Federal Republic of Germany and Austria after the Second World War

MARK BERRY

Towards a History: First Steps and Thoughts

A common complaint heard from German-speaking English newspaper readers concerns the superiority of arts coverage, especially music coverage, in their German counterparts. German arts supplements still maintain a degree of serious criticism as opposed to mere journalism, even as German critics worry that their platform and, of course, their employment are falling under ‘Anglo-Saxon’ threat. The term *Feuilleton* retains its currency in Germany – in Poland too – although, except in historical usage, it now in French generally denotes a soap opera, a distinction which may or may not be relevant in itself.

Musical criticism of course extends beyond newspapers and always has. Whatever some on either side may wish to claim, there is no absolute dividing line between such criticism and its more academic cousin; moreover, there have long been journals that cater to educated general readers, radio stations too, although again music’s standing, even within erstwhile havens such as the Südwestfunk (South-West Broadcasting) has become seriously endangered. That state of affairs has been witnessed in recent years by the roundly condemned amalgamation of the network’s orchestras of Stuttgart and Baden-Baden/Freiburg. A furious campaign came to nothing, notwithstanding worldwide support and the involvement of musicians as venerable as Michael Gielen and Pierre Boulez. A 2012 *Protestaktion* by composer Johannes Kreidler, destroying a violin and cello onstage at the Donaueschingen Festival – ‘That is no work of art: likewise the merger of two historically evolved orchestras’ – dramatised the fury felt by many musicians, and was widely reported.¹ Yet it was left to Eleonore Büning in the *Feuilleton* of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) to mark the end of the road with resignation that seemed to speak as

¹ Alexander Dick, ‘Komponist zerstört Instrumente – Protest gegen Orchester-Fusion’, *Badische Zeitung* (22 October 2012).

much of criticism's plight as the orchestra's, offering less than warm words for Peter Eötvös in taking on the first concert of the merged orchestra forced into existence by austerity-mongering management.²

It is certainly difficult to imagine Theodor Adorno finding himself so welcome on today's German airwaves as he was during the years following the Second World War. Jürgen Habermas, Adorno's Frankfurt School successor, may retain the status of, and fulfil the role of, public intellectual, but his public sphere is not that of musical criticism. It is, however, only fair to say that Adorno was always unusual: enlightening in so many respects, yet hardly the most typical German 'music critic', even when, during the Weimar period, he had been writing some more conventional music criticism. Whilst it would be tempting, not least for one who has written before on Adorno, to explore his role further, I intend instead to look at less well trodden ground.

What I have to say should only be regarded as some work towards a preliminary understanding of German-speaking music criticism after the Second World War. I say that not out of false modesty but because the subject would really require intensive research from a host of scholars before we could really begin to speak of the construction of a true history, as opposed to historical treatment. To that end, I shall not attempt a survey. All manner of topics have had to be omitted on account of space. Criticism on subjects I considered for inclusion, such as Herbert von Karajan, Hans Werner Henze, the premieres (concert and staged) of Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron*, the rise of 'early music', the Boulez–Chéreau 'Centenary' *Ring* at Bayreuth: those and many more must wait for another day.

Instead, I shall try to offer some degree of context for reading German-language criticism, saying a little about the nature of post-war newspapers more generally in occupied Germany and Austria, and later in the Federal Republic of Germany and the Republic of Austria. (The German Democratic Republic is beyond the scope of this chapter; German-speaking Switzerland must also, alas, wait for another day, notwithstanding the contribution to European cultural criticism of the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* in particular.) Particular examples, often although not exclusively related to rightist reactions, both conservative and radical, to Schoenbergian modernism and, in the final section, similarly to so-called *Regietheater*, will mostly be drawn from the 1940s and 1950s, concluding closer to the present day. That is not because I think there is nothing to say about what happened in between; I have had to make impossible choices.

² Eleonore Büning, 'SWR-Orchester: "Fusionsdirigent"', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (25 March 2015).

Another problem, touched on above, presents itself: what sort of material should be included? If, say, we were considering the first staging of *Moses und Aron*, in Zurich in 1957, should we discard pieces, billed as reviews, because they appeared in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*?³ Hardly. Although it may fall under the heading of ‘academic journal’ – a categorisation latterly complicated by its publication by the music publisher, Schott – the *NZfM* is a continuation of Schumann’s journal, which would certainly find its place in discussion of nineteenth-century criticism. It continues to trumpet, not unreasonably, its status as a journal of ‘contemporary music’. (The English-language version of the website says ‘magazine’, which may or may not be intended as a direct translation.) Why that and not another scholarly journal? There are no definitive answers, any more than there would be in English. It may well be the case that a neo-Aristotelian impulse to categorise is not only not the point, but that its not being the point is in itself an important point; that seems to hold, perhaps surprisingly, despite the absolute distinction made in German universities between ‘practical’ and ‘musicological’ study of music.

Year Zero

Where to begin? Perhaps at the beginning. But what is the beginning? Thomas Nipperdey opened his great history of nineteenth-century Germany with the words, ‘In the beginning was Napoleon’.⁴ For our history, it is difficult not to respond with, ‘In the beginning was Hitler’; or with, following the collapse of the National Socialist regime, ‘in the beginning was the Federal Republic of Germany’ – except that would, like any starting point, mislead. There has been much myth-making, cultural at least as much as political, about ruptures in twentieth-century German history. Hans-Ulrich Wehler suffered a barrage of criticism for his provocative claim that the German *Kaiserreich* of 1871–1918 had formed the antechamber to the Third Reich and that a principal reason for studying it was to understand its role in the origins of Nazism.⁵ Every period, however, has its antechambers. How much we explore them in order to understand our particular object of enquiry will, to a certain extent, prove a matter of taste, yet also of particular circumstances.

In the case of German-speaking countries and German-speaking culture, there can, however, be little doubt: the ‘German catastrophe’, as Friedrich

³ Heinz Joachim, ‘Ein Mysterienspiel für die Bühne: Schönbergs “Moses und Aron” überwaltigte in Zürich’, *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, 118/7–8 (1957), 426–7.

⁴ Thomas Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte, Vol. 1: 1800–1866: Bürgerwelt und starker Staat*, 3 vols. (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1998), p. 11.

⁵ Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Das Deutsche Kaiserreich, 1871–1918* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973).

Meinecke called it in 1946, cast and continues to cast a long shadow.⁶ Or rather ‘shadows’ in the plural, for different groups and, of course, different individuals would interpret them differently. It was, for instance, the American authorities in post-war Berlin who were strongest, most vocal, in their opposition to Wilhelm Furtwängler’s return to the Philharmonic, rooted in and imitating vehement opposition to the conductor in the USA (which would subsequently cost him the post he had accepted at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra). By contrast, and indeed in response, the Soviet-licensed press in 1946 increasingly vociferously demanded Furtwängler’s return; an open letter, signed by a host of those Berlin cultural figures who remained, appeared in the *Berliner Zeitung* and declared, ‘after the barbaric regression of National Socialism, we need a great symbol of artistic perfection as a wake-up call for our German self-awareness. We need, and Germany needs, the artist Wilhelm Furtwängler.’⁷ Occasionally, the problem might even be to escape those shadows, so that the particularities of what comes after are not overwhelmed; but more often, the shadows are as necessary as their presence is unarguable.

The Year Zero, or ‘Stunde Null’ of 1945 has proved an abiding myth in German, Austrian and, to a certain extent, broader European history. The defeat of National Socialism left the Allied Powers in political and military control of most of the continent’s German-speaking lands – those that remained after expulsions such as Czechoslovakia’s Beneš Decrees – and, in many respects, in cultural control too. Germany’s division into two, the Federal Republic in the West and the German Democratic Republic in the East, was formalised in 1949, whereas Austria would have to wait until 1955 for its State Treaty, the price for withdrawal being neutrality and particularism (that is, no second *Anschluss*). Bismarck’s Prussian division of Germany, cleverly concealed under the rubric of ‘unification’, was thus reinforced with respect to Austria and extended with respect to the new opposition of East and West.

How, then, did the idea of a fresh start, a *tabula rasa*, influence musical criticism? And in what senses was it irrelevant? In what ways did that change over time, both during what we might in problematical shorthand call the Cold War, and following the fall of the ‘people’s democracies’, the reunification of Germany (not, of course, a *Großdeutschland* involving Austria) and the

⁶ Friedrich Meinecke, *Die deutsche Katastrophe: Betrachtungen und Erinnerungen* (Wiesbaden: Brackhaus, 1946).

⁷ ‘Berlin ruft Wilhelm Furtwängler’, *Berliner Zeitung*, 2/39 (16 February 1946), 1, 3. I borrow here the exemplary translation in Elizabeth Janik, ‘“The Golden Hunger Years”: Music and Superpower Rivalry in Occupied Berlin’, *German History*, 22 (2004), 90. See also Anne Hartman and Wolfram Eggeling, *Sowjetische Präsenz im kulturellen Leben der SBZ und frühen DDR 1945–1953* (Berlin: Akademie, 1998), p. 153.

re-emergence of a *Mitteleuropa* in which Austria, or perhaps better Vienna, might once again reclaim its 'historic' position at the heart of Europe and, perhaps, the centre of European musical life? There is not space explicitly to engage with all of those questions; let us at least bear them in mind.

Years of Occupation

Several German newspapers and journals were founded between 'Year Zero' and the founding of the Federal Republic, or shortly after: *Die Welt*, the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and the *FAZ*; *Der Spiegel*, *Die Zeit*, *Stern* and *Quick*.⁸ The *FAZ* might be regarded as the West German newspaper *par excellence*. Its first edition was published on 1 November 1949, just a few months after the Federal Republic's creation on 23 May. Many considered it a resurrection of the former *Frankfurter Zeitung*, its *Feuilleton* home to many of the most significant cultural commentators of the Weimar Republic, among them Adorno, Walter Benjamin, the Manns (Heinrich and Thomas) and Stefan Zweig. The newspaper had eventually closed in 1943, following its degeneration into a Nazi propaganda organ, presented to Hitler in 1939 as a birthday gift.⁹ A good number of journalists wrote for both. Nevertheless, the first edition editorial insisted:

From the fact that some of our editorial staff also belonged to the editorial staff of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, it has often been inferred that an attempt is being made here to act as successor to that newspaper. Such an assumption misjudges our intentions. Like everyone, we marvel at the high quality of that paper; that the occupying powers did not permit its reappearance immediately after the ceasefire will remain an indicator of their ignorance of German circumstances. However, respect . . . does not entail the wish to copy.¹⁰

Having one's cake and eating it? If so, that makes it all the more typical of early West German navigations between past – whether Nazi, Weimar or earlier still – and present, with the hope remaining that public life might succumb, like Siegfried, to Guttrune's potion of forgetfulness. That newspaper's general centre-right orientation politically has not really extended to its *Feuilleton*, a common situation, and not just with respect to German

⁸ Sigurd Hess, 'German Intelligence Organizations and the Media', *Journal of Intelligence History*, 9 (2009), 9–10. For a general study of German press history, see Rudolf Stöber, *Deutsche Pressegeschichte: Von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*, 3rd ed. (Konstanz and Munich: UVK, 2014).

⁹ Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich in Power, 1933–39: How the Nazis Won Over the Hearts and Minds of a Nation* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2006), pp. 143–4.

¹⁰ *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (1 November 1949); on the *FAZ* more generally, see Rüdiger Dohrendorf, *Zum publizistischen Profil der Frankfurter Allgemeinen Zeitung: Computerunterstützte Inhaltsanalyse von Kommentaren der FAZ* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1990).

newspapers. Correlation between general editorial content and arts coverage is a complicated affair. One might justly argue that it would be rare and surprising if there were none; yet, by the same token, writers on music and the arts more generally will probably be freer than their 'political' colleagues to pursue independent lines, if only because their subject matter is often likely to be of lesser concern to proprietors and, often, to their most 'important' readers.

Much the same might be said of other newspapers and journals, 'founded', with varying strength of roots in earlier journalistic activity, during the period immediately following the Second World War, with varying degrees (and necessities) of accommodationism with the occupying powers. For instance, the weekly journal *Der Spiegel* – few scholars of post-war operatic culture will forget Pierre Boulez's often misquoted interview in that journal, suggesting that incineration of opera houses might prove the 'most elegant solution' – had its first issue published on 4 January 1947.¹¹ Its precursor, *Diese Woche*, founded the previous year, had fallen into disfavour with the British military authorities, which had therefore granted a licence for *Der Spiegel* instead.¹² The 1949 *Spiegel* statute – the coincidence with the founding of the Federal Republic is no 'mere' coincidence – stressed the highest of journalistic standards, almost as if to negate a perceived murkiness of origins. Such times were difficult, even well-nigh impossible. There is no need to make too much of them, yet it is not unimportant to remember that institutions, let alone individual writers, had histories, which, even if they were concealed, were not necessarily entirely erased.

Having begun, then, at one alleged beginning, we should probably take at least one step further back. Wilmont Haacke had written a compendious history of *Feuilletons* during the Second World War, subsequently republished shorn of its most egregious anti-Semitism.¹³ That perhaps gave weight to the idea, Minerva's owl spreading its wings at dusk, that the golden age was passed; now, it seemed, a more circumscribed future awaited, just as in politics, and perhaps that was no bad thing for those who had read Thomas Mann's recently published *Doktor Faustus* (1947), with its 'imaginative exploration of the role of music in German culture, as a probing, unsparing, and challenging examination of the nexus between German history and its most highly prized cultural commodity'.¹⁴ Meinecke's 'German catastrophe'

¹¹ Felix Schmidt and Jürgen Hohmeyer, Interview with Pierre Boulez, 'Sprengt die Opernhäuser in die Luft!', *Der Spiegel*, 40 (25 September 1967), 166–74.

¹² See Hess, 'German Intelligence Organizations and the Media', 76.

¹³ Wilmont Haacke, *Feuilletonkunde: Das Feuilleton als literarische und journalistische Gattung*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Hiersemann, 1943–4); Haacke, *Handbuch des Feuilletons*, 3 vols. (Emsdetten: Lechte, 1951–3).

¹⁴ Thomas Mann, *Doctor Faustus*, trans. John E. Woods (New York: Vintage, 1999); Hans R. Vaget, 'National and Universal: Thomas Mann and the Paradox of "German" Music', in Celia Applegate and

seemed to demand that a different path be taken, or be seen to be taken. If Haacke's history were also to have a future, the line here in culture, as well as in politics, must be carefully trod.

There were periodicals too, of course, as well as newspapers. The English-language *Encounter* was the most celebrated of CIA-founded and -funded journals, but there were publications in other languages too: via the Congress for Cultural Freedom, for instance, the West Berlin-based *Der Monat* (issued monthly, as its name suggests). Music was not a primary interest of the latter, although it did cover *Doktor Faustus*, both an extract and two articles, in its first issue of 1949 (*that year again*). It extended coverage of the novel later in the year, including publication of Schoenberg's angry letter accusing Mann of intellectual theft. *Der Monat* also occasionally included other overtly musical articles, for instance Felix Weltsch on Beethoven's 'Immortal Beloved', as well as other cultural writing in which music necessarily played some part.¹⁵ Even in apparently 'non-musical' publications, then, the name of the once *entartet* composer had begun to surface again in contemporary and not just historical terms. Initially licensed by the American occupying forces in 1947, the music journal, *Stimmen*, was one such outlet for (old) New Music. Founded by a former Schoenberg student, Josef Rufer, and by veteran music critic, music administrator and soon-to-be Schoenberg biographer, Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt, it published an article by Schoenberg himself, as well as pieces by other prominent figures such as Copland, Messiaen, Antheil and Nicolas Nabokov.¹⁶ If Nazi ghosts were far from dead, the same might be said of those of 'Weimar', including Schoenberg himself. It escaped no one's attention, whether in the 'East' or beyond, that, for better or worse, post-Zhdanov, 'socialist realist' Russia was taking a different route, even though that has too often been exaggerated at the expense of common ground. Stuckenschmidt, for instance, helped organise concerts in both the American and Soviet zones of Berlin, the music of Schoenberg and many other composers heard in both cases.¹⁷

Pamela Potter (eds.), *Music and German National Identity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), pp. 176–7.

¹⁵ Klaus Pringsheim, 'Der Tonsetzer Adrian Leverkühn: Ein Musiker über Thomas Manns Roman', *Der Monat*, 4 (1949), 84–91; Hellmut Jaesrich, 'Dr Faustus in Amerika', *Der Monat*, 4 (1949), 92–4; Arnold Schoenberg and Thomas Mann, 'Der "Eingentliche": Die Dissonanzen zwischen Arnold Schönberg und Thomas Mann', *Der Monat*, 6 (1949), 76–8; Felix Weltsch, 'Beethovens unsterbliche Geliebte: Ein neuer Beitrag zu ihrer Enträtselung', *Der Monat*, 66 (1954), 635–8.

¹⁶ Janik, "'Berlin's Hunger Years'", 94. ¹⁷ Janik, "'Berlin's Hunger Years'", 95.

Schoenberg's *A Survivor from Warsaw* in West Germany

A particular Schoenbergian example I shall consider, in the light of Joy H. Calico's recent study of the reception of *A Survivor from Warsaw* in post-war Europe, is that of the first German performance of Schoenberg's late work, on 20 August 1950.¹⁸ The 'return' of Schoenberg to German-speaking countries was, of course, a particularly fraught issue, historically and culturally. Whilst it is a 'Year Zero' myth to claim that there had been no opportunities for Germans after 1933 to acquaint themselves with Schoenberg's music, such opportunities had not been widespread and there had certainly not been public performances. So far as the 'general public' at least was concerned, the music of the Second Viennese School had long been a closed book. As for Schoenberg himself, was he 'German', 'Austrian', 'Jewish', an 'exile', all of the above? Was he a 'modernist' or a 'Romantic' relic, 'dead', in Boulez's celebrated claim?¹⁹ In the later 1940s and 1950s, such issues were inevitably part, overtly or covertly, of the discourse of musical criticism.

Wolfgang Steinecke, founder of the Darmstadt Summer School, also worked as a music critic during the 1930s and 1940s: for the *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung*, based in Steinecke's home city, Essen; for the Berlin edition of the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*; and for *Der Mittag*, another Rhenish newspaper, based in Düsseldorf. He had also written reports for periodicals such as *Die Musik* and *Deutsche Musikkultur*, published from 1936 to 1944. A wartime piece for the latter had considered 'Prague as German city of music'. There were other potentially contentious subjects – at least from a post-war standpoint – to accompany that, not least his pair of reports on the notorious Düsseldorf 'Entartete Musik' exhibition of 1938 for the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*.²⁰ Steinecke's position was thus one to be envied by many critics; he was one of the lucky few who could programme the music he advocated. Yet he was typical in having to navigate the difficulties presented by the patent fiction of a 'Year Zero'; as with others working in early West Germany, he had been born earlier than 1945.²¹ Although the attention of many 'Darmstadt' composers would later shift from Schoenberg to Webern, Steinecke did a great deal for the former, not least this Darmstadt premiere under Hermann Scherchen, even though he personally seems to

¹⁸ Joy H. Calico, *Arnold Schoenberg's 'A Survivor from Warsaw' in Postwar Europe* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2014).

¹⁹ Pierre Boulez, 'Schoenberg Is Dead', *The Score*, 6 (1952), 18–22.

²⁰ Wolfgang Steinecke, 'Prag als deutsche Musikstadt', *Deutsche Musikkultur*, 4 (1941–2), 123–4; Michael Custodis, "'unter Auswertung meiner Erfahrungen aktiv mitgestaltend": Zum Wirken von Wolfgang Steinecke bis 1950', in Albrecht Riethmüller (ed.), *Deutsche Leitkultur Musik: Zur Musikgeschichte nach dem Holocaust* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2006), p. 146.

²¹ See Custodis, "'unter Auswertung meiner Erfahrungen aktiv mitgestaltend'", pp. 145–62.

have preferred Stravinsky's music. As their correspondence and other evidence reveals, Steinecke was determined to bring Schoenberg to Darmstadt, although, in the event, the composer's ill health meant that he would never return to Europe.²²

The concert received considerable press coverage, which seems to have reflected mixed views of work and performance (although we should remember that most, although not all, of our sources are the press coverage, and thus retain some scepticism concerning circularity). Holger Hagen, critic for *Die Neue Zeitung* (Frankfurt), had served as an American music officer from 1945 to 1948. He proved, as Calico has shown, most vocal in his criticism of resistance to the necessity not only of performing Schoenberg's work in Germany but of the process of re-education that such performance would entail. The text was toned down, for instance omitting the word *Gaskammer* (gas chamber) in favour of an open-ended, undesignated 'deliverance' of the Jews. Nevertheless, the narrator, Hans Olaf Heidemann remained so consumed with distaste for the work as publicly to parade his distaste, eliciting the rebuke from Hagen: 'That a professional performing artist has the nerve to resist participating as the Speaker, and then to take part only (in his words) under moral pressure . . . that is unspeakably shameful.'²³ Willy Werner Göttig, writing for another Frankfurt newspaper, *Die Abendpost*, also referred to the disquiet, 'even before the performance', in 'certain circles that have not yet been completely denazified'.²⁴ Yet, at the same time, and despite severe musical obstacles – many chorus members seem to have declined to participate, viewing the work as anti-German (!) – there were reports that, depleted forces notwithstanding, the performance could be judged a 'gigantic success, of particular worth from both a musical and an ethical standpoint'. It is interesting, though, that those words came from a French-Romanian writer, Antoine Goléa, writing for Steinecke's old newspaper, *Der Mittag*.²⁵

Worse was to come later in the work's performance history, when, in 1956, the music critic, Hans Schnoor, writing for Bielefeld's *Westfalen-Blatt*, would, as part of his general anti-modernist 'bully pulpit', condemn a forthcoming radio broadcast: 'Next Thursday, the Bremen station will broadcast Schoenberg's *A Survivor from Warsaw*, that disagreeable piece that must strike

²² See Friedrich Hommel, "'Die Sache interessiert mich sehr . . .': Arnold Schönbergs Briefwechsel mit Wolfgang Steinecke", *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift*, 39/6 (1984), 314–22.

²³ Review from *Die Neue Zeitung* (23 August 1950); cited in Calico, *A Survivor from Warsaw*, pp. 26–8, and in Kerstin Sicking, *Holocaust-Kompositionen als Medien der Erinnerung: Die Entwicklung eines musikwissenschaftlichen Gedächtniskonzepts* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2008), pp. 276–7.

²⁴ Review from *Abendpost* (25 August 1950); cited in Calico, *A Survivor from Warsaw*, p. 28; and in Sicking, *Holocaust-Kompositionen*, p. 278. Translation slightly modified.

²⁵ Antoine Goléa, 'Hermann Scherchen dirigierte in Darmstadt', *Der Mittag* (24 August 1950); cited in Calico, 'A Survivor from Warsaw', p. 29.

all decent Germans [*anständigen Deutschen*, a phrase favoured by Hitler] as a mockery.²⁶ The column received wider attention than it would have done otherwise, on account of Schnoor's participation a few days later in a conference on 'The Intelligent Person and the Radio', organised by the *FAZ*. Winfried Zillig (himself not without a chequered National Socialist past, most notably as a conductor in occupied Poland) refused to engage with his fellow panellist, having read out Schnoor's piece. The uproar was reported in the *FAZ* by Walter Dirks, and a very public controversy, various lawsuits included, ensued. The details cannot, sadly, be considered here; Calico gives an excellent account.²⁷ However, as well as notable, horrifying, fascinating in itself, the affair is noteworthy, in her words, as a 'counterbalance to the persistent image of the FRG [Federal Republic of Germany] as the post-war utopia of modernist music under the auspices of federally funded radio and festivals: retrenchment in the form of a former Nazi music critic, rehabilitated in name only, resisting the Allied-led, modernist musical remigration with the familiar rhetoric of National Socialist journalism'.²⁸

By the same token, however, we should remember that those with 'pasts', such as Steinecke and Zillig, were also to be found on the 'other' side; if the Federal Republic were to have excluded their like, there would have been very few left. Musical performance and indeed criticism could play a role not only in rehabilitation but in *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, the necessary struggle to come to terms with the past. The study of that struggle is not the least of the areas in which historical treatment of music criticism, and perhaps eventually a more thoroughgoing history of post-war German music criticism can play an important role. As Adorno, an ardent although far from uncritical advocate for Schoenberg, would observe in a 1962 article:

Newspapers and magazines of the radical Right constantly stir up indignation against what is unnatural, over-intellectual, morbid and decadent: they know their readers. The insights of social psychology into the authoritarian personality confirm them. The basic features of this type include conformism, respect for a petrified facade of opinion and society, and resistance to impulses that disturb its order or evoke inner elements of the unconscious that cannot be admitted.²⁹

Adorno went on to mention campaigns against staging of Brecht's plays in West Germany but could equally well have mentioned campaigns against performance and broadcasting of Schoenberg's music.³⁰ That 'radical Right'

²⁶ Calico, 'A Survivor from Warsaw', pp. 31–2. ²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 31–40. ²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

²⁹ Theodor Wiesengrund Adorno, 'Commitment', *Aesthetics and Politics*, trans. Francis McDonagh, ed. Ronald Taylor (London: New Left Books, 1977), p. 179.

³⁰ Adorno, 'Commitment', p. 179.

was – is – larger than many would allow, whether in West Germany or elsewhere. It could, can and will be found in newspapers and magazines not necessarily ‘of the radical Right’, yet which will grant it a voice.

‘Pergolesi in the Pentagon’

Not, of course, that that is the only story; it is certainly not even the only story with respect to the post-war period and relations between Germany and the occupying powers. There were many happy musical examples; I shall confine myself to one. In an interesting self-published memoir from a former American soldier stationed in Frankfurt, we read of James A. Bowman and a fellow soldier, David Dekker, a tenor and budding opera director, offering adaptations of Pergolesi, initially for army audiences, performances subsequently extended to German audiences, albeit in English, as part of America’s Cold War cultural effort to keep West Germany on side. Positive reviews from German newspapers heartened not only Bowman and Dekker, but also the US Army.

In one instance, both the *Frankfurter Rundschau* and the *Frankfurter Neue Presse* sent reviewers, the glowing write-up in the former suggesting that such cultural diplomacy was working rather well – which is not to impute insincerity on either side, however questionable some of the claims to be read below and indeed the claim of Pergolesi’s authorship might have been:

Many things have been said about the North American’s relationship to opera. [Yet] the vast country without an operatic tradition . . . [has helped] . . . various attempts to bring the opera to life again. . . if Germany has the most operatic institutions, then America offers as a counterpart the most attempts to renew the operatic form itself.

A living example of that and of the imagination employed . . . was to be seen in the Studentenhaus in Frankfurt. A few American opera enthusiasts, for the most part United States soldiers, interested themselves in Pergolesi’s half-forgotten opera, *Il Maestro di Musica*, adapted this 200-year old opera somewhat freely, translated it, and added a prologue . . .

. . . if it was self-made, it was by no means plain or dull. On the contrary, it was as fresh and lively as the idea itself, and by striving to leap over some of the venerability of old operatic productions, still paid full tribute to them.³¹

Bowman recalls: ‘We may not have knocked off any Russian tanks, but a review like that was the equivalent of Beethoven complimenting a piano composition by a young American conservatory student.’³²

³¹ James A. Bowman, *Pergolesi in the Pentagon: Life at the Front Lines of the Cultural Cold War* (Bloomington: XLibris, 2014), pp. 79–80, translation of the *Rundschau* article slightly modified.

³² Bowman, *Pergolesi in the Pentagon*, p. 80.

What does such a story tell us? Perhaps not very much, or perhaps it has the potential to suggest more than we might immediately suspect about the position of the American military, German music criticism, and reception by local populations, even perhaps something about the Pergolesi – or ‘Pergolesi, attributed’ – revival. Time will tell; we are not short of material.

Surviving Warsaw in Vienna

We should now, however, turn to the other major German-speaking country under consideration, Austria. For comparison, I shall again consider *A Survivor from Warsaw*, again starting from Calico’s study, so as to build upon previous scholarship. A difference here is that Austria remained under occupation until 1955. The chronology is therefore reversed: first, consideration of the national Schoenberg premiere, and then a brief consideration of music criticism following the signing of the Austrian State Treaty.

Schoenberg was, of course, a Viennese, and considered himself an Austrian – except that, following the dissolution of Austria-Hungary, he had officially, owing to his father’s Slovakian Jewish heritage, been a Czechoslovak citizen and had later become an American citizen.³³ His music, then, might have been understood to be returning home, albeit in anything but straightforward fashion. The Austrian press, of whatever political complexion, was determined that the country should reassert itself as a cultural nation. Given the importance of Mahler’s music for that project, Schoenberg might have had some opportunity to benefit too. Austria remained, however, a nation with deep-seated anti-Semitism, not least in musical circles. Of the 117 musicians in the Vienna Philharmonic, forty-five were Nazi Party members, and half of them had joined *before* the 1938 *Anschluss*; two were members of the SS.³⁴ When Scherchen conducted the 1951 national premiere, then, Schoenberg was in a sense returning to an Austria and to a Vienna only too familiar to him. Anti-modernism and anti-Semitism did not necessarily go together, sometimes quite the contrary, yet often they did.

³³ See Sabine Feisst, *Schoenberg’s New World: The American Years* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 45.

³⁴ By contrast, only eight of the 110 members of the Berlin Philharmonic were party members. Otto Karner, ‘Kulturpolitische Rahmenbedingungen in Österreich am Beginn der Zweiten Republik’, in Markus Grassl, Reinhard Kapp and Eike Rathgeber (eds.), *Österreichs Neue Musik nach 1945: Karl Schiske* (Vienna, Cologne, Weimar: Böhlau, 2008), p. 32. Calico may have misread these statistics; for instance, when citing Karner’s chapter, she writes that 45 *per cent* of the VPO musicians were party members (*A Survivor from Warsaw*, p. 48.)

As Calico argues, the language used to identify Schoenberg in reviews of the concert, as well as that identifying victims and perpetrators of the events to which *A Survivor* referred, ‘reveals much about a divided, occupied city in which each faction is represented by its own media presence’.³⁵ The Soviet *Österreichische Zeitung* boycotted the festival of which the concert was part, declaring it ‘cosmopolitan’ rather than truly international.³⁶ Although Calico does not make the point, the anti-Semitic resonance of ‘cosmopolitan’ would surely have been lost on few; Stalinism and (post-)Nazism had their points in common. The *Wiener Kurier*, newspaper of the US Army Group Press, by contrast, allowed the composer both Austrian and American glory, its reviewer praising ‘the creative power of the old master of the Vienna School (who is highly respected in America)’.³⁷ What was perhaps most striking about all the reviews was that the Nazis were never named; the closest one, and only one came, was a reference to the *Hitler-Zeit*, ‘but he does not assign culpability’; the ambivalence the ailing composer himself felt ‘about symbolic reintegration to Vienna in the form of *A Survivor* was well founded’.³⁸

Austria: Cosy Reinvention of a Nation and a Culture

That celebrated Viennese *Gemütlichkeit* (cosiness, comfortableness) continued, then, to cover a multitude of sins, both past and present. Such would be the case not only through the 1950s, but in many respects, as we shall see in conclusion, unto the present day. The Austrian State Treaty was signed by the four occupying powers, the United States, the United Kingdom, the USSR and France, on 15 May 1955. Although it had been by no means certain over the previous ten years that Austria would escape a German-style Cold War division, it did; a declaration of neutrality followed in October. The fittingness – perhaps too fitting – of the reopening in November of that same year of the Vienna State Opera, which had been performing elsewhere following its near destruction by Allied bombing in 1945, did not go unnoticed; likewise, the fittingness of *Fidelio*, perhaps the ultimate, unsullied musical instantiation of bourgeois freedom, for that reopening. Whether Karl Böhm, whatever his undoubted musical credentials, were the right figure, as Musical Director, to present a new Vienna, a new Austria to the world was a different question, having already served from 1943 to 1945; a further question was whether

³⁵ Calico, ‘*Survivor from Warsaw*’, p. 60.

³⁶ L.N., ‘Weder international noch festlich ... Schlußbilanz des Wiener Internationalen Musikfestes’, *Österreichische Zeitung* (21 April 1951); cited in Calico, *A Survivor from Warsaw*, p. 64.

³⁷ P.L., ‘Gestern beim Musikfest: Pioniere von gestern – heute Meister: Hermann Scherchen dirigierte die Wiener Symphoniker’, *Wiener Kurier* (11 April 1951); cited in Calico, *A Survivor from Warsaw*, p. 60.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 64–5.

Vienna and Austria wished to present themselves in a new light. (Karajan, hardly an uncompromised figure himself, would soon succeed the caretaker Böhm.) The fiction that had, at least in part, enabled the Austrian State Treaty and had prevented the fall of at least part of Austria to the Eastern Bloc was that of Austria as the first victim of National Socialism, invaded(!) by Germany and then liberated by the Allies. ‘New’ arrangements were those of the National Socialist period. For instance, Mödling, where Schoenberg had lived outside Vienna, had been incorporated under Nazism; it now returned to Lower Austria. But to what should Austria return politically? Before the alleged ‘invasion’, Austrofascism had been the order of the day. And to what should Austria return artistically?

There is certainly a parallel, strongly related unanimity in the welcomes afforded both Republic and Opera. The *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, the ‘central organ’ of the Socialist Party, which traced itself proudly back to 1889, had been as fervent as anyone else in its 15 May rejoicing: ‘What we have waited ten years for: Austria finally becomes free.’³⁹ (The experience of occupation had won the USSR no friends.) In November, *Die Presse* judged the ideological mood perfectly, Böhm’s *Fidelio* greeted as ‘Das große Freiheitsfest der Musikstadt Wien’.⁴⁰ The ‘city of music, Vienna’, regained its ‘freedom’ in this ‘festival’. What could be more Beethovenian? Was not Beethoven himself an adoptive Viennese, even if his home town of Bonn were now the capital of West Germany? *Fidelio*, the sub-headline read, fulfilled its ‘mission of binding people together’. The article, continued to extol the historic occasion, the clearly held communal belief that Vienna had witnessed the reopening of the greatest opera house in the world.⁴¹ That is not to say that there was no musical criticism to be heard at all; the *Neue Merkur* at least contrasted the ‘magnificent’ performance of Martha Mödl in the title role with the well sung Florestan of Anton Dermota, which nevertheless ‘lacked personality’.⁴² Yet that was a rare, gingerly made reservation – perhaps unsurprisingly, given the nature of the occasion. Would, however, normal service resume? Or was this, for many, normal service in the ‘city of music’?

The mythology – and as with all mythologies, there is some truth in it – is that, in the words of the inaugural Erasmus Prize of 1958, given to ‘the people of Austria’:

³⁹ Front-page headline, *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (15 May 1955).

⁴⁰ Front-page headline, *Die Presse* (6 November 1955).

⁴¹ C. F. Z., first-page article, *Die Presse* (6 November 1955).

⁴² ‘Die Wiedereröffnung der Wiener Staatsoper 1955: Glanz und Elend der Austrian Coronation’, *Neue Merkur*, republished at der-neue-merker.eu/wien-die-wiedereroeffnung-der-wiener-staatsoper-1955 (accessed 25 April 2016).

Amid political, economic and social circumstances, and confronted with an immense cultural reorientation, Austria did not lose itself in nostalgic longings for a glorious past but set itself the aim of not merely accepting its cultural heritage but of securing it, renewing it and integrating it within a European perspective. Thus Austria, with its capital Vienna, has become the shining example of a positive mentality, of courage, energy and confidence in the future of Europe, by the way in which as a ‘minorité créatrice’ it opened paths for the free nations of Europe to follow.⁴³

The claim of not having lost itself ‘in nostalgic longings for a glorious past’ is the most extraordinary, given an official climate – not enforced, yet more powerful for relative subtlety of officialdom – which almost made Strauss and Hofmannsthal’s *Rosenkavalier* longing for an invented eighteenth-century Vienna appear the height of avant-gardism. The imperative to secure, to renew and, to a certain extent, to integrate, seems closer to the mark, and is understandable – up to a point. After all, much of the more serious German re-examination was yet to come; the difference is more that it would come, never uncontested, but nevertheless with a vengeance. Austrian voices have been lonelier, nowhere more so than in musical criticism.

Regietheater and Accommodationism: To the Present Day

To conclude, I should like to travel forward to some aspects of reception of so-called *Regietheater* in opera, and specifically towards opposition to it, both in ‘official’ criticism and the burgeoning world of more ‘unofficial’ criticism. The Meyerbeer scholar Sieghart Döhring described *Regietheater*, with considerable justification, as the German *Feuilletons*’ ‘favourite word’.⁴⁴ If the word has now become more or less meaningless – what does it mean if it includes almost all but the most creaking revivals and consciously reactionary new stagings? – it has served an important purpose in reshaping musical drama as theatrical drama and musical criticism has played an important role in dissemination and communication as well as in flouncing opposition, perhaps particularly, unsurprisingly, in Vienna, and not least on increasingly vocal websites.

Die Presse, which, having been founded during the ‘liberal’ period of the 1848 revolutions, has long trumpeted its almost classically liberal credentials – one might think of the narrow ideology whose eclipse Carl Schorske traces in his *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna* – had been refounded (as successor to the schismatic

⁴³ Praemium Erasmianum Foundation: Erasmus Prize: Former Laureates: The Austrian People, 1958, available at www.erasmusprijs.org (accessed 4 February 2016).

⁴⁴ Sieghart Döhring, ‘Gedanken zum Regietheater’, in Jürgen Kühnel, Ulrich Müller and Oswald Panagle (eds.), *Regietheater: Konzeption und Praxis am Beispiel der Bühnenwerke Mozarts. Mit einem Anhang zu Franz Schrekers ‘Die Gezeichneten’* (Anif/Salzburg: Mueller-Speiser, 2007), p. 31.

Neue Freue Presse, 1864–1939) in 1946.⁴⁵ The motto ‘frei seit 1848’ thus conceals, even if one were to pass over the CIA work of Otto Schulmeister, its long-term editor-in-chief and publisher.⁴⁶ Whereas the *FAZ*, as we have seen, erred more in the direction of exaggerating its novelty, the new-old *Presse* claimed – and claims – to ‘build upon [the] tradition’ of the ‘liberal *Bürgertum*’. That explicitly included – and includes – its *Feuilleton*.⁴⁷

Its long-term music critic, Wilhelm Sinkovicz, offers an interesting case. With the newspaper since his early 20s, his influential – in Viennese circles, at least – writing has tended to be almost comically conformist, accommodating itself to whatever the official line of the institutions whose work he is employed to criticise might happen to be at the time. The Musikverein and perhaps still more the Vienna State Opera have had their conservatism not only trumpeted but lavishly, embarrassingly praised. For instance, he exalted to the skies the ultra-reactionary Otto Schenk’s most recent production for the Opera, *The Cunning Little Vixen*, and not only for its apparent ability to have one ‘almost smell the forest’, that is, for its hyper-naturalism. In a swipe at anything any of the more interesting opera directors since Richard Wagner might have attempted, he also lauded Schenk’s staging for its resistance to treating the ‘theatre-goer’ as a ‘seminarian’ in political science or psychoanalysis.⁴⁸ Never has Janáček sounded so unmediated, even uninteresting; the theatre-goer might be forgiven for feeling more than a little patronised.

Might one draw connections with *Die Presse*’s worship of the free market, the ‘normal’ opera-goer knowing best? Perhaps, although it should be re-emphasised that such connections tend to be more elusive, if they exist at all, than in political reporting. More important, however, seems to be an almost patriotic line – Austria here quite different from, even more or less diametrically opposed to, Germany – of supporting what is as what should be, and possibly even personal advantage. Sinkovicz’s advocacy was eagerly or wearily anticipated from all quarters in a climate of dissatisfaction, at least in many external quarters, with the Intendancy of Dominique Meyer. The firebrand erstwhile impresario of the Salzburg Festival and Paris Opéra, Gerard Mortier, had, in a doubtless calculated intervention of the previous year, described Meyer as ‘a nice man’ but someone who, artistically, threatened to make his ‘old-fashioned’ predecessor, Ioan Holender, seem

⁴⁵ Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1980).

⁴⁶ Christa Zöchling, ‘Ex-“Presse“-Chef im Dienste der CIA: Otto Schulmeister agierte für den Geheimdienst’, *Profil* (18 April 2009).

⁴⁷ See ‘Die Neugründung nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg’, *Die Presse*, available at diepresse.com/unternehmnen/geschichte/unternehmen/geschichte/10765/index.do (accessed 25 April 2016).

⁴⁸ Wilhelm Sinkovicz, ‘Staatsoper: Der schlaun Füchs in später Wien-Besuch’, *Die Presse* (19 June 2014).

‘almost avant-gardist’.⁴⁹ It may or may not be irrelevant here that Sinkovicz and his wife, Michaela Schlögl (also of *Die Presse*, as well as more specialist music magazines, such as *Opernglas* and *Opernwelt*), have developed a good line in popular ghost-writing and conversation books. Schlögl’s writing of Meyer’s autobiography indeed offers a hagiography to end hagiography, Sinkovicz’s published conversations with Franz Welser-Möst, Music Director prior to a very public falling-out with Meyer, an awkward reminder of alliances past.⁵⁰

Gemütlichkeit has generally been preferred over the ‘nest-fouling’ of those who would criticise, even mention, such comfortable relations, the most internationally famous, and nationally reviled, of such critics in more general terms being the playwrights (and renowned or reviled *Nestbeschmutzer*) Thomas Bernhard and Elfriede Jelinek.⁵¹ The tabloid treatment of such writers in the *Kronen Zeitung*, a supporter of Kurt Waldheim’s presidential candidacy, stand as a warning to those who would engage in more socially-critical artistic creation – but also to those who would engage in similar criticism, and still more so in the allegedly ‘un-political’ music of the historical *Heimat* than in its literature. To say more, one would require not only a detailed prosopographical study but a new Karl Kraus.

Meyer’s State Opera, it might be noted, is still staging the *Tosca* that was new for Karajan and Renata Tebaldi in 1957; I hesitate to describe it as Margarethe Wallmann’s production, since there can hardly be anything left of it beyond the recently ‘restored’ designs. But there is a little method in such apparent madness: the set designs are easily packed away on site, and the Opera thus has a ‘flat-pack’ production in case of emergencies. Sinkovicz, however, seems not to have understood the practical reason for keeping the production on the books, thus proving significantly *plus royaliste que le roi*. In 2013, we find him banging a drum against ‘discussion’. The ‘great classics’ should not be available ‘for discussion’, he wrote in 2013: ‘in *Tosca*, for example, there is nothing to discuss’. Such, then, is the unceremonious end of Puccini studies. Instead, it should merely be a vehicle for singing, in this case by Angela Gheorghiu, Marcelo Álvarez und Željko Lučić: ‘On the playbill

⁴⁹ Barbara Petsch, ‘Mortier: “Ich bin Parsifal und Sisyphos!”’, *Die Presse* (27 April 2013). It is only fair to note that Mortier’s interview was actually with *Die Presse*, although certainly not with Sinkovicz. Meyer’s radio-broadcast (ORF) response, in an interview with Florian Kobler (‘He is a specialist in such declarations. I leave to him his specialism’), made accusations of sour grapes; it may be found at wien.orf.at/news/stories/2600458/, 29 August 2013 (accessed 25 April 2016).

⁵⁰ Dominique Meyer, *Szenenwechsel Wiener Staatsoper*, ed. Michaela Schlögl (Vienna: Styria, 2010); Franz Welser-Möst, *Kadenzten: Notizen und Gespräche*, ed. Wilhelm Sinkovicz (Vienna: Styria, 2013).

⁵¹ See for example, Pia Janke, et al. (eds.), *Die Nestbeschmutzerin: Jelinek und Österreich* (Salzburg: Jung und Jung, 2002); Dagmar Lorenz, ‘The Established Outsider: Thomas Bernhard’, in Matthias Konzett (ed.), *A Companion to the Works of Thomas Bernhard* (Rochester and Woodbridge: Camden House, 2002).

was *Tosca*; on the stage, one sees – *Tosca*.⁵² Directing opera was as easy, or rather as non-existent, a task as that.

The claim was more or less indistinguishable from the cries of an increasingly vocal Facebook group, ‘Against Modern Opera Productions’, three years later, concerning the same production: ‘Timeless productions like these remain fascinating and attractive even after 59 years. Regietheater crap is outdated even at the first night.’⁵³ Such are the ways in which one lauds a non-production (which, I hasten to reiterate, is in no sense a comment upon the ‘original’, long-since vanished). What, however, has that to do with German-speaking criticism? On the face of it, not very much. Look a little closer, however, and one will discover that ‘AMOP’, as it calls itself, is the English-speaking, relatively sanitised version of a German group, ‘Gegen Regietheater in der Oper’. Both frequently contain far-right material and language, not least racial and homophobic slurs upon performers, but the harder-core material is often only to be found in German, semi-free from prying Anglophone eyes. What seems to be a slight misquotation from the late Viennese dramaturge, Marcel Prawy – ‘*Regietheater* is to opera what AIDS is to the human body’ – has been posted approvingly on more than one occasion.⁵⁴

Perhaps more alarmingly still, the Viennese bass-baritone, Bernd Weikl, a renowned Hans Sachs of his day, has written a book couched in not dissimilar terms. Arguing, almost incredibly, that non-‘traditional’ productions of Wagner should meet with criminal prosecution, Weikl favours the hoary old chestnut of *Werktreue*, allegedly ‘the recreation of a work that exists and is cohesive, and thus has already been created’, calling for a reversal of a period of ‘definite decadence in German theaters, ... already visible in the practice of the arts during the decline of the Roman Empire’.⁵⁵

Whilst we should remain on our guard against too-easy identification of reactionary and/or Radical Right aesthetics and politics, there are, then, strong indications that there would be much to learn from further study of such connections. That, again, would have to be a story for another day. For

⁵² Wilhelm Sinkovicz, ‘Genau so muss ein *Tosca* sein’, *Die Presse* (7 September 2013).

⁵³ Against Modern Opera Productions Facebook group, available at www.facebook.com/Against-Modern-Opera-Productions-146292958770872/?fref=ts (accessed 25 April 2016).

⁵⁴ For instance, Facebook discussion on 13 July 2015, www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=994931667213251&id=510344335671989 (accessed 23 March 2016). See Peter Dusek and Christoph Wagner-Trenkowitz (eds.), *Marcel Prawy erzählt aus seinem Leben* (Vienna: Kremayr & Scheriau, 2001), cited in, ‘Marcel Prawy über . . .’, *Wiener Zeitung* (25 February 2003).

⁵⁵ Bernd Weikl, *Swastikas on Stage: Trends in the Productions of Richard Wagner’s Operas in German Theaters Today*, trans. Susan Salms-Moss (Berlin: Pro-Business, 2015), pp. 79–80. Weikl’s book was originally published in German as *Warum Richard Wagner in Deutschland verboten muss* (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2014).

the moment, however, we might remind ourselves why conservative aesthetic stances are long likely to prove more problematic in Germany and Austria than in many other countries, and ask where German-language music criticism had most notoriously heard such claims before. One notorious example would be Goebbels's insistence that performances be described and not discussed, that they be entertainment (*Unterhaltung*), not politically explorative. Fair enough, one might think, for an internet Facebook group, but what a peculiar, self-denying ordinance for a critic such as Sinkovicz to utter. And yet, even in Vienna, things might, just might, be changing; the word in the coffee houses, more interesting and perhaps still more reliable than the Internet, is that, following the announcement of Meyer's departure, *Die Presse* has been enlisting more freelance music writers.

Music Criticism in Italy in the Twentieth Century

RAFFAELE POZZI

Both the concept and practice of what is called ‘music criticism’ underwent profound changes and transformations in the course of the twentieth century. At the beginning of the century, there was an accelerated demographic growth and urban expansion in many Italian cities such as Genoa, Naples, Milan, Rome and Turin. The publishing market expanded, and at the same time the circulation of newspapers and magazines increased.

Driven by new technologies, methods and communication media, criticism became a vast, multiform and pluralistic field of discourse about music. Under that name, in fact, are gathered different metatexts and practices concerning cultural mediation and reflection, be they written, oral or visual, that have music as their subject. These can be traced back to news and news reporting, to literary works, to analysis and critical-hermeneutics evaluation from a historical musicology stance, as well as scholarly research and aesthetic-philosophical reflection.

In this sense, compared to the nineteenth century, in Italy twentieth-century music criticism significantly expanded its ambit and ramifications in terms of the genre of message conveyed. Functions of commercial promotion, media information and new musicological criticism co-exist. A myriad of media now also began to transmit these varying discourses about music. Originally, at the beginning of the century, there were merely printed books, newspapers and periodicals. Then, over the century, came radio, television, vinyl records, CDs and finally the Internet, with its audio-visual-verbal synthesis. This meant that, throughout the century, the multifaceted intellectual activity that we call ‘music criticism’ gradually introduced new dimensions and developments that varied according to the content, critical methods, communication channels and styles used.

The figure of the critic also underwent an evolution comparable to that of music criticism in the span of the twentieth century. In the first half of the nineteenth century the critic was mainly a writer, often a librettist linked

essentially to the theatrical world. In the following century such figures became, in Italy, a minority and largely disappeared. There was constant demand for new capabilities from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards, as critics began to occupy a more autonomous and clearly defined operative area than had been the case in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

The trend towards a proliferation of musical genres and the differing role of the critic demanded by the various media has favoured fragmentation in the work done by music critics, whose profile and status are still only poorly defined, so that they may often be responsible for organising artistic events. Working in this ambit are reporters and journalists with varying, and often inadequate, levels of expertise, together with librarians, scholars and music historians, but also composers and musicians, as well as writers, philosophers and, with the advent of the Internet, the new figure of the blogger-critic.

For much of the first half of the twentieth century, after an earlier phase in a positivist mould that was fuelled by the newly emerging discipline of musicology, Italian music criticism was strongly influenced by the aesthetic-philosophical thought of Benedetto Croce. Croce's influence meant in fact that criticism was exercised only with regard to the practice of music, to its performance, in a position of inferiority compared to philosophical speculation about music. Moreover, in one strand of Italian criticism, one senses a transposition of philosophical language and use of concepts that are often trivialised and rarely reach the deductive depth of Croce's inspiring model.

Following the fall of fascism and the end of the Second World War, a profound change in the cultural climate occurred. After 1945, in the ensuing context of socio-historical and cultural reconstruction, the renewal of language brought about by new music coincided with a renewal of criticism which, at least for the more discerning and aware protagonists, tended to embrace the technical and formal aspects of music considered irrelevant on the previous idealistic-spiritualistic approach. Following a series of global transformations and the advent of a new cultural relativism and intercultural sensitivity, an ethnocentric approach to music was gradually abandoned throughout the second half of the twentieth century, and music criticism opened up to genres that had been excluded from the traditional Western canon. Avant-garde music, jazz (which had been banned by fascism), film and applied music, pop, rock and a multitude of contemporary musical genres proffered by the new media and the Internet broadened and enlivened critical debate.

In the final years of the twentieth century, the older print media entered into crisis. In Italy, at the beginning of the 2000s, the economic crisis and the

fall of the daily newspaper market limited the space given to music criticism. Furthermore, people urgently questioned the very function of music criticism, almost sensing the beginning of a historic decline. In reality, rather than dying out, the manifold discourses on music are being transformed, today adopting new forms and languages, both problematic and ambiguous, which criticism itself must evaluate case by case. Taking into consideration the close relationship that was established from the very outset between critical reflection and wide-ranging historical and aesthetic issues, the evolution of music criticism is reconstructed in this article by touching on some tangles, trends and *querelles* that left their mark on the broader span of history of Italian music in the twentieth century.

Positivism, Idealism, Nationalism, Modernism

In the new economic-industrial and historic-cultural climate that followed the unification of Italy in 1861, publishing and printing entered a phase of accelerated development. Alongside local papers emerged the first national newspapers such as *Il secolo* and *Corriere della sera*, both published in Milan. It was during this heightened period of cultural, social and editorial dynamism in post-unification Italy that Italian music criticism acquired borders that were qualitatively more sharply defined, while also becoming more significant in quantity. The new ‘miscellaneous newspapers’ were increasingly successful with readers and had greater appeal for their editors.¹

During the late nineteenth century, authoritative figures such as Abramo Basevi, Girolamo Alessandro Biaggi, Francesco D’Arcais and Filippo Filippi gradually left the scene, and a new generation of music critics emerged, including Arrigo Boito, Giuseppe Depanis, Amintore Galli, Gino Monaldi, Aldo Nosedà, Enrico Panzacchi, Alfredo Soffredini and Ippolito Franchi Verney (the pseudonym of Ippolito Valetta), who would then become key figures in this new phase of musical information.² In the 1890s, there were also some noteworthy signs of evolution and breakthrough, with the emergence of substantive issues and directions that would engage Italian music criticism throughout the twentieth century. First of all, more and more questions were being asked about the operative profile of critics, their function and their social referent. In an 1894 article written in Turin, entitled ‘La critica musicale nei giornali politici’ and published in the *Gazzetta musicale di*

¹ See Paolo Murialdi, *Storia del giornalismo in Italia. Dalle gazzette a Internet* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1996), pp. 91, 103.

² See Marco Capra, ‘La stampa ritrovata: duecento anni di periodici musicali’, in Alessandro Rigolli (ed.), *La divulgazione musicale in Italia oggi* (Turin: EDT, 2005), pp. 72–3.

Milano (the historic and authoritative weekly newspaper published by Ricordi), Luigi Locati touched on some fundamental aspects of the critical activity exercised by a daily newspaper. The critic must in fact write his article quickly while the iron was still 'hot'; he must have specific and appropriate technical, musical and cultural skills, and he must maintain independence of judgement; lastly, since his point of reference was an audience of non-specialist readers, he should avoid an unsuitable display of erudition when writing in a mainstream newspaper.³

Also in 1894, the publisher Giuseppe Bocca founded the *Rivista musicale italiana* in Turin, the most iconic journal of that time. It adopted the principles of positivism and those relating to scientific and historical-philological research as applied to the study of early music. The influence of end-of-century German *Musikwissenschaft* can be clearly perceived in the orientation of this new publication. In the initial period, a group of scholars and *savants*, among them Oscar Chilesotti, Nicola D'Arienzo, Romualdo Giani, Giovanni Tebaldini, Luigi Torchi and Luigi Torri, collaborated on the periodical, animating debate on the emerging Italian musicology movement.⁴

The themes that animated critical debate in Italy in the period between the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century – both in the press, which followed and wrote reviews on performances, and in the historical musicology field that fuelled the research – coagulated around a few core areas: opera, instrumental music, and sacred music. A strong sense of nationalism united critical reflection in these fields, with only a few exceptions who looked further afield to transalpine models.

Torchi was responsible for an article published in the *Rivista musicale italiana* in 1899 entitled 'La musica istrumentale in Italia nei secoli XVI, XVII e XVIII', in which can be found the origin of the so-called *rinascita dell'antico*, a celebration of the glorious past of Italian instrumental and vocal early music. This ideological position, a cultural expression of nationalism of the post-unification Italy, was connected very often with research studies on ancient music carried out by Oscar Chilesotti and other contributors to the *Rivista musicale italiana*.

³ See Luigi Locati, 'La critica musicale nei giornali politici', *Gazzetta musicale di Milano*, XLIX/52 (30 December 1894), 823–4.

⁴ For an overview of Italian musicology and music criticism between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Giorgio Pestelli, 'La Generazione dell'Ottanta e la resistibile ascesa della musicologia italiana', in Fiamma Nicolodi (ed.), *Musica italiana del primo Novecento: La Generazione dell'Ottanta* (Florence: Olschki, 1981); Marco Capra, 'Periodici e critica musicale tra Ottocento e Novecento: dal Censore universale dei teatri alla Rassegna musicale', in Marco Capra and Fiamma Nicolodi (eds.), *La critica musicale in Italia nella prima metà del Novecento* (Parma: Marsilio, 2011). For an English-language overview, see Alexandra Wilson's 'Music Criticism in Nineteenth-Century Italy', Chapter 10 in this volume.

The interest in early music, particularly Gregorian chant and sacred vocal polyphony, was tied to issues regarding the liturgical reform of Catholic church music in Italy. This ideal of the Cecilian movement was well received by Pius X in his 1903 *Motu proprio*, but had been preceded by lively critical debate in some periodicals dedicated to religious music, which had even involved interventions from Franz Liszt.⁵ In 1877, father Guerrino Amelli founded the periodical *Musica sacra*, and in 1899, *Santa Cecilia* was first published, followed in 1905 by the *Bollettino ceciliano*. The focus on pre-nineteenth century and ancient instrumental music, as well as on piano didactics, is reflected in the publication of Domenico Scarlatti's *Opere complete per clavicembalo* and the magazine *L'arte pianistica* (1914), both edited by Alessandro Longo.

With the new century, the positivist critical approach dominant in the *Rivista musicale italiana* – which gave rise, among other things, to a specific revelatory article by Oscar Chilesotti in 1898 entitled 'L'evoluzione nella musica: appunti sulla teoria di Herbert Spencer'⁶ – was contrasted by anti-positivist currents with a spiritualistic bent that recalled, often only vaguely, the romantic philosophy and the philosophical neo-idealism of Benedetto Croce.

From the beginning of the century, a large part of the Italian music criticism that appeared in specialised magazines made an attempt (which lasted until the period after the Second World War and beyond) to elaborate a theoretical and practical model of music criticism inspired by the authoritative aesthetics of Croce, who published his *Estetica come scienza dell'espressione e linguistica generale* in 1902. From 1907 onwards, this new cultural trend was manifested through the appointment of Fausto Torrefranca to the *Rivista musicale italiana*. Torrefranca's spiritualism, together with his research activity, heralded a softening of the positivist critical orientation that had dominated the first phase of the periodical's foundation. Torchi's Germanism and Wagnerism gave way to Torrefranca's strong sense of nationalism, a sentiment common to often conflicting critical positions and that was strongly felt in the years before and after the First World War.

⁵ On the Cecilian movement and the debate about the reform of Catholic liturgy in Italy, see Raffaele Pozzi, 'L'immagine ottocentesca del Palestrina nel rapporto tra Liszt e il movimento ceciliano', in Lino Bianchi and Giancarlo Rostirolla (eds.), *Atti del ii Convegno internazionale di studi palestriniani* (Palestrina: Fondazione Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina/Centro di Studi Palestriniani, 1991); and Raffaele Pozzi, 'Il mito dell'antico tra restaurazione e modernità. Su alcune intonazioni dell'*Ave Maria* e del *Tantum Ergo* nel secondo Ottocento', in Mauro Casadei Turroni Monti and Cesarino Ruini (eds.), *Aspetti del cecilianesimo nella cultura musicale italiana dell'Ottocento* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004).

⁶ See Oscar Chilesotti, 'L'evoluzione nella musica: appunti sulla teoria di Herbert Spencer', *Rivista musicale italiana*, v/3 (1898), 559–73.

In the early twentieth century, the number of periodicals grew. In addition to the *Giornale dei musicisti* (1907), we should mention the *Riforma musicale* (1913) and, above all, *Harmonia. Rivista italiana di musica* (1913), to which many prominent musicians contributed, such as Ferruccio Busoni, Ildebrando Pizzetti and Ottorino Respighi, as well as Domenico Alaleona and Vincenzo Tommasini. An important role was played in the spread of nationalistic and anti-positivist ideas by the Florentine circle. Periodicals of remarkable cultural and political significance were produced in the period between the first and second decades of the century, such as *Il marzocco*, *Leonardo* and *La voce*. The latter, an authoritative literary review founded in 1908 by Giuseppe Prezzolini, saw the collaboration of Giannotto Bastianelli, Fausto Torrefranca and Ildebrando Pizzetti with articles on music. An exemplary case of the nationalistic climate that was influencing critical debate on opera was the controversial *querelle* between Alfredo Casella and Ildebrando Pizzetti in 1913, centenary of the birth of Giuseppe Verdi. Casella, under the influence of the French critical *milieu*, wrote an article in which he criticised nineteenth-century Italian opera and *Verismo*. Pizzetti responded, defending the Italian opera, and proposed the need to enhance the national music tradition.⁷ In these same years, periodicals dedicated specifically to music were published in Florence, further adding to the cultural upheaval: *La nuova musica*, already founded in 1896, and later *La critica musicale*, which in 1918 began to be published under the editorship of Luigi Parigi.

In twentieth-century Italy, as elsewhere in Europe, the figure of the composer-critic gained greater importance and significance. The aesthetic and linguistic battles, the disputes of modernity and the clash between conservation and artistic innovation fostered by the avant-garde movements pushed composers towards criticism and essay-writing.⁸ A significant example of this phenomenon is the journal *Ars nova*, which Alfredo Casella began to publish after his return to Italy from Paris in 1917. It offered an overview on contemporary artistic debate that was open to visual and plastic arts and the literature of that time.

A similarly innovative cultural line, open to modern music and the world of international music, was taken by *Il pianoforte*, founded in 1920 by Guido Maggiorino Gatti. The journal originally contributed to the reflection on piano didactics like other journals, such as *Santa Cecilia*, *Musica d'oggi*, *La critica musicale* and *L'arte pianistica*. In the following years, the topics

⁷ On the nationalistic climate and the *querelle* between Casella and Pizzetti, see Raffaele Pozzi, 'Jeunesse et indépendance: Alfredo Casella e la Société Musicale Indépendante', *Musica e Storia*, IV (1996), 325–48.

⁸ See Fiamma Nicolodi, 'Su alcune *querelles* dei compositori-critici del Novecento', in Capra and Nicolodi (eds.), *La critica musicale in Italia*.

broadened to meditations on modern music, an open-mindedness that continued and was one of the principal features of the journal during the years when fascism seized power in Italy.

Music Criticism and the Thought of Benedetto Croce in Fascist Italy

In the early twentieth century, the conflict between positivism and idealism was gradually settled in favour of the latter. Neo-idealism became the dominant philosophical horizon in Italy between the First and Second World Wars and during the fascist period. Benedetto Croce and Giovanni Gentile were the figures of reference for neo-idealism. While Gentile's work dealt mainly with theoretical subjects, engaged in political activity and became *the* intellectual for the regime by drafting the 1925 *Manifesto degli intellettuali fascisti*, Croce wrote widely about history and literature, as well as philosophy, profoundly influencing art criticism in the first half of the twentieth century.

There is no specific reflection upon music in Croce's aesthetic philosophy. The fundamental conceptual premise of his vision, which had already been expressed in *Estetica* in 1902, was art viewed as intuition and an expression of the Spirit. The concept of unity of the arts and the consequent external and marginal role reserved for artistic techniques and genres was based on this foundation.⁹ Furthermore, the spread of Croce's thought found favourable ground in fascism's opposition to positivist theories and in the regime's sympathy for all forms of spiritualism with an idealistic cast.

In the period stretching from the twenties to the forties, music criticism in Italy attempted to transpose Croce's vision into reflections on music, though not without contradictions and conceptual aporia, since his critical-aesthetic model focused so strongly on verbal and literary communication. Traces can be perceived, even if they are often vague and lexical rather than philosophically developed, in the premises and language of musical criticism.

In an editorial that marked the founding of the journal *La critica musicale* in 1918, for example, Luigi Parigi stressed the need to promote the culture of fine arts, reaching a meditative, and not merely technical-professional or material-industrial awareness of music. Francesco Vatielli echoed this concept in 1922, in the periodical *La cultura musicale*, imagining a way of exercising

⁹ See the chapter on *L'estetica crociana e la critica musicale* in Enrico Fubini, *Musica e linguaggio nell'estetica contemporanea* (Turin: Einaudi, 1973); and Olga Visentini, 'La critica musicale italiana fra le due guerre: l'influenza di Croce', and 'La critica musicale italiana fra le due guerre: l'impasse idealistica', *Nuova Antologia*, 2142 and 2143 (1982), 219-45 and 246-76.

criticism that did not withdraw into erudition and specialist technicalities but would bring out the spiritual substance and thought of musical works.¹⁰

The most wide-ranging and lively critical debate developed between the thirties and forties in the journal *La Rassegna musicale*, which Guido Maggiorino Gatti founded in 1928 in the wake of the closure of *Il pianoforte*. In addition to Gatti, among the contributors to *La Rassegna musicale* were some of the most outstanding figures in Italian criticism between the two wars, namely Ferdinando Ballo, Attilio Cimbri, Fedele d'Amico, Andrea della Corte, Alberto Mantelli, Massimo Mila, Guido Pannain, Alfredo Parente, Gino Roncaglia, Luigi Rognoni, Luigi Ronga and Gastone Rossi-Doria. Composer-performer-critics such as Alfredo Casella, Gianandrea Gavazzeni and Gian Francesco Malipiero also contributed articles. It was precisely this enlightened cultural and musical openness, this plurality of voices, that would give space to varying positions in *La Rassegna musicale*, including those who supported Italian and European modern music and were hence contested in conservative circles.

The theme of how to translate Benedetto Croce's aesthetic-philosophical model and transpose it into music criticism was among the most debated in *La Rassegna musicale*, directly affecting the concept of art and the status of musical interpretation and performance. In *Aesthetica in nuce*, written in 1928, Croce reiterated his fundamental concept of a unity of the arts founded on a synthesis of intuition and expression.¹¹ Art was precisely that union of intuition and expression that occurred in the inner life of the individual creator. Technique, transmission and interpretation belonged instead to the material sphere of practical communication, secondary when compared to the single essential moment of pure intuition-expression that characterised art. Taxonomies and artistic-literary genres were similarly marginal to Croce. For the philosopher, they were descriptive abstractions that misled the essential nucleus of art, and positivistic criticism had given them improper weight. Despite common reference to the philosopher, one of the most debated, controversial and often contradictory points concerning the adaptation of Croce's thought to the field of aesthetics and music criticism regarded the issue of interpretation. The debate was given space in the new journal, *La Rassegna musicale*, and engaged some authoritative critics, but also composers like Casella, writing in the early thirties.¹²

¹⁰ See Capra and Nicolodi (eds.), *La critica musicale in Italia*, pp. 26–7.

¹¹ See Benedetto Croce, *Aesthetica in nuce* (Naples: Cooperativa Tipografica Sanitaria, 1929).

¹² For the debate on the issue of interpretation and Casella's article, see Luigi Pestalozza (ed.), *La Rassegna musicale: Antologia* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1966), pp. 485–91, 109–30, 514–19.

Between the twenties and thirties, as happens frequently in the history of music criticism, critical consistency or expression of partisan positions were missing from journalism. The provocative and unsystematic journalism of Bruno Barilli in the columns of *Il tempo* or *Il Tevere* deviated from the plethora of *croniqueurs*.¹³ In 1933, the first session of the International Music Congress in Florence, an initiative linked to the first edition of the Maggio Musicale festival, was dedicated to music criticism. While the speakers Guido Pannain and Luigi Ronga essentially explored aesthetic-philosophical and musicological terrain, the discourse by Gaetano Cesari, already a critic for the newspapers *Il secolo* and *Corriere della sera*, focused on militant criticism. Cesari, in his articulate intervention, evoked the distinction that had already surfaced in the debate in Italy between journalistic and musicological criticism.¹⁴

The question of language and new trends in composition, particularly in relation to the reception and acceptance of Schoenberg's twelve-tone technique in Italy, became increasingly important in critical debate between the late thirties and early forties, revealing a strong ideological component which coincided with the downward spiral of fascism. The dispute was inflamed both by the transferral of Croce's eminently literary and logocentric conception into music criticism and by the refusal of the Croce movement to give an aesthetically significant role to the technical-linguistic dimension of music.

One such example was the controversy between Luigi Dallapiccola and Luigi Parente, a strict interpreter of Croce's thought. In 1939, Parente rebuffed atonality as being the result of material technicism, lacking in lyrical intuition and true spiritual inspiration. The identification of atonality with bad music pushed Luigi Dallapiccola to a polemic reply. The conflict was not accidental. The need for linguistic and formal renewal advocated by twentieth-century modernism actually conflicted with the trend in idealistic environments towards a retrospective view, which had its point of reference in romantic music, creating conservative if not reactionary positions, as seen in the 1932 *Manifesto di musicisti italiani per la tradizione dell'arte romantica dell'Ottocento*.¹⁵

The signs of cultural opposition to the regime, which was in evident crisis, can be detected in the founding of the periodical *Corrente*, created by the painter Ernesto Treccani in 1938. Luigi Rognoni, a young musicologist and music critic from Milan raised in Antonio Banfi's philosophical circle, was

¹³ On Italian music criticism in the first half of the twentieth century, see Andrea della Corte, *La critica musicale e i critici* (Turin: Utet, 1961), pp. 649–68.

¹⁴ See Gaetano Cesari, 'Le funzioni, i metodi, gli scopi della critica musicale', in *Atti del primo congresso internazionale di musica Firenze, 30 aprile–4 maggio 1933* (Florence: Felice Le Monnier, 1935).

¹⁵ On the dispute between Dallapiccola and Parente, see Pestalozza (ed.), *La Rassegna musicale: Antologia*, pp. 377–84.

writing about music for *Corrente*. Rognoni, and the fact is significant, would become one of the leading scholars and popularisers of Schoenberg's music and the Vienna School, in the climate of political, cultural and musical renewal in Italy after 1945.

Liberation, the Rise of New Music and the Development of Music Criticism between the 1950s and 1980s

With the fall of fascism in 1943, the Liberation and end of the Second World War in 1945, and finally, the following year, the end of the monarchy and birth of the Republic in Italy, there were clear signs of a strong desire to reconstruct and renew the cultural climate. This recovery, however, occurred gradually in a country that was still emerging from a dictatorship and devastating war. In the years following the Liberation, there began a process of democratically organising information, through the mass media and culture. With the return of press freedom and the relaunching of publications, there were soon purges and trials of the editorial boards, journalists and collaborators who had been compromised by fascism. The two main periodicals of the first half of the century, the *Rivista musicale italiana* and *La Rassegna musicale*, began to be published again. The *Rivista musicale italiana* would cease publication in 1955, and *La Rassegna musicale* in 1962. New magazines emerged, some of which combined reflection on music with literature, science and the arts.

In 1945, following the initiative of Alessandro Bonsanti, the fortnightly *Il mondo* was published in Florence. It united critics, musicologists, composers and creators on widely diffused terrain, which also included dance. Edoardo Cavallini, Fedele d'Amico, Andrea della Corte, Guido Maggiorino Gatti, Gianandrea Gavazzeni, Federico Ghisi, Giorgio Graziosi, Vittorio Gui, Aurel M. Milloss and Goffredo Petrassi all wrote in this periodical. The collapse of fascism and the end of the war clearly engaged music criticism in a project involving the institutional rebuilding and restructuring of artistic activities. The need for a general renewal of music criticism, both at an ethical-political level and in terms of specific skills, was put forward by Luigi Dallapiccola in December 1944, while the last battles of war were being fought, in an article entitled 'Della critica musicale sui quotidiani', published by the newspaper *Corriere del mattino* in Florence.¹⁶

Among the new, often short-lived, periodicals devoted specifically to the music of that period were *Il mondo musicale*, founded in 1944 by Raffaello de

¹⁶ See Luigi Dallapiccola, 'Della critica musicale sui quotidiani', *Corriere del mattino*, 1/94 (9 December 1944), 2.

Rensis (a musicologist and already the music critic for *Il messaggero* and *Il giornale d'Italia* in Rome) and *Musica*, an international journal founded by Matteo Glinski in 1945. The latter, in particular, welcomed contributions and reflections on contemporary music with remarkable openness towards the international scene. Composers became particularly active in the field and process of critical thinking. This activity was also an opportunity to distance themselves from the political and cultural climate of the regime in which many had been involved. Goffredo Petrassi, who had made his name on the national and international stage in the thirties, also published numerous articles in various periodicals such as *Il cosmopolita*, *Il mondo*, *Teatro* and *Musica* in the two-year period from 1945 to 1946.¹⁷ Composer-critics and interpreter-critics also frequently wrote in periodicals dealing with literature and arts that were not specialised in music. Thanks to their training and main activity, they were able to develop a discourse that tended to focus on the concrete reality of musical sound and structure, and therefore tended to go beyond the logocentric and speculative-abstract approach of idealistic criticism.

In 1946, Petrassi reviewed the ninth Festival internazionale di musica, Venice for *Il Mercurio*, where he reported the explosion of controversy between supporters and opponents of twelve-tone music. In the same year, the *Ferienkurse* began in Darmstadt, Germany, the epicentre of new music in Europe. The theme of new music and of the theory, practice and meaning of the avant-garde became one of the recurring subjects of Italian music criticism from the period following the Second World War until the 1980s. The question of musical language, in the framework of a structuralist approach to the musical work, became a dominant topic, albeit a controversial one and the source of spirited *querelles*.

In post-war Italy, a relationship came to be established between new music, the quest for a new language and the transformation of society. In fact, the renewed political and social order in Italy coincided with a change in the aesthetic paradigm: the ideology of neoclassicism, often associated with nationalism, declined and avant-garde ideology emerged.¹⁸ In this context, Diapason: Centro Internazionale della Musica was established in Milan in 1948, with the aim of promoting modern music through a series of concerts. Between 1950 and 1956, the Centre also published a new monthly periodical *Il diapason*. It dedicated a single issue to twelve-tone music in 1952, following

¹⁷ See Goffredo Petrassi, *Scritti e interviste*, ed. Raffaele Pozzi (Milan: Suvini Zerboni, 2009), pp. 33–93.

¹⁸ For an interpretation of neoclassicism as ideology, see Raffaele Pozzi, 'L'ideologia neoclassica', in Jean-Jacques Nattiez (ed.), *Enciclopedia della Musica, i: Il Novecento* (Turin: Einaudi, 2001).

the death of Arnold Schoenberg in 1951, with articles by, among others, Massimo Mila and Roman Vlad. Articles were also published by Luciano Berio and another composer, Giacomo Manzoni, who would later (from 1958 to 1966) practise militant criticism at *L'Unità*, the daily newspaper published by the Italian Communist Party. Luigi Rognoni, who had already been actively involved before the war in *Corrente*, the journal of opposition to the regime, proffered a wide-ranging reflection on modern and contemporary German musicians, from Kurt Weill to Hans Werner Henze. Other figures on the music criticism scene who worked on the editorial board of *Il diapason* and published articles included Herbert Fleischer, Piero Santi and Luigi Pestalozza, a Marxist critic first writing for the newspaper of the Italian Socialist Party, *Avanti!* The latter was also in charge, from 1962 to 1988, of the music column of *Rinascita* (1944), the political and cultural monthly published by the Italian Communist Party.

In the sphere of critical discourse linked to new music, the brief existence of *Incontri musicali: quaderni internazionali di musica contemporanea* founded by Luciano Berio in Milan in 1956 should also be recalled. Published sporadically until 1960, *Incontri musicali*, in the four issues that came out, offered authoritative and crucial articles on numerous issues ranging from electronic music, aleatory music serialism and the relationship between poetry and music that were debated in the world of avant-garde and radical music in those years. In its last issue in 1960, *Incontri musicali* also hosted a lively exchange between Fedele d'Amico and Umberto Eco on the concept of *opera aperta*. In this dialogue, one can clearly evince the distance between Eco's theoretical position close to the avant-garde, and the vision of d'Amico who, while defending the reasons of musical pluralism and the works of contemporary music based on a traditional language, preconfigured his postmodern conception of the twentieth century.¹⁹ In this way, the critical approach proposed by Fedele d'Amico differed from that of Massimo Mila. This openness and interest were well expounded in Mila's critical essay, 'La linea Nono', published in *La Rassegna musicale* in 1960.²⁰

In 1966, a new journal, *Lo spettatore musicale*, was founded. Published on an irregular basis until 1972, and co-edited by Mario Bortolotto and Duilio

¹⁹ See Fedele d'Amico, 'Dell'opera aperta, ossia dell'avanguardia' and Umberto Eco, 'Risposta a d'Amico', *Incontri musicali*, 4 (1960), 89–104 and 105–12. On the music criticism of Fedele d'Amico, see Raffaele Pozzi, 'Il Novecento musicale postmoderno di Fedele d'Amico', in *I casi della musica. Fedele d'Amico vent'anni dopo* (Convegno di studi, Rome: Accademia nazionale di Santa Cecilia, forthcoming).

²⁰ See Massimo Mila, 'La linea Nono (a proposito de *Il canto sospeso*)', *La Rassegna musicale*, 4 (1960), 297–311. On Massimo Mila, see articles in Talia Pecker Berio (ed.), *Intorno a Massimo Mila. Studi sul teatro e il Novecento musicale* (Florence: Olschki, 1994), p. 216; and Paolo Gallarati, 'Gli esordi di Massimo Mila e il suo rapporto con la critica crociana', in Capra and Nicolodi (eds.), *La critica musicale in Italia*.

Courir, it introduced an innovative format that focused on contemporaneity and published writings by Theodor Adorno, who played an important role in the renovation of music criticism in Italy. The new journal also published several articles by, among others, Diego Bertocchi, Beniamino Dal Fabbro, Piero Dallamano, Célestin Deliège, Gioacchino Lanza Tomasi, Heinz-Klaus Metzger, Gustavo Marchesi, Alberto Pironti, Angelo Sguerzi and Gianfranco Zaccaro. The cultural openness of *Lo spettatore musicale* was also witnessed in contributions by literary critic like Ezio Raimondi and, on a regular basis, by writer-music critics such as Giorgio Vigolo and Eugenio Montale, the winner of the 1975 Nobel Prize for Literature.²¹

On the journalism front, from 1945 onwards, criticism that involved reviews of concerts and music theatre began a long period of ascent and consolidation. In the fifties, some new weekly magazines dealing with politics, culture and current events became well established, for example, *L'Europeo* (1945), *Il mondo* (1949) and *L'Espresso* (1955). In some of these, music criticism found a stable and authoritative setting. The music column in *L'Espresso* was headed, for example, by Massimo Mila and later by Fedele d'Amico and Giovanni Carli Ballola.

Between the fifties and eighties, the massive rise in the number of live performances and the creation of local newsrooms for national newspapers broadened the spaces dedicated to music criticism. This process coincided with a general increase in the spread of daily newspapers in Italy during the decade 1980–1990, reaching a peak in 1991 with sales of 6.6 million copies a day.²² This growth of the spread of the press in Italy was accompanied by a concurrent growth of music criticism in the Italian press in the second half of the twentieth century. Franco Abbiati wrote in the *Corriere della sera* in Milan from 1934, followed by Duilio Courir, Paolo Isotta and in Rome by Luigi Bellingardi and Mya Tannenbaum. At *La stampa*, Andrea della Corte began his collaboration in 1919. Later came Massimo Mila, Giorgio Pestelli, Paolo Gallarati and Sandro Cappelletto.

In 1976, Eugenio Scalfari, previously editor of the weekly magazine *L'Espresso*, founded *La repubblica* in Rome, a daily newspaper which gave a great deal of space to music news, for which Michelangelo Zurletti, Dino Villatico and Landa Ketoff worked in Rome, Angelo Foletto in Milan and Marcello de Angelis in Florence. The music editorial board at *Il messaggero* in Rome was also extensive, consisting of Teodoro Celli, Alfredo Gasponi and

²¹ For the music criticism of the two writers, see Giorgio Vigolo, *Mille e una sera all'opera e al concerto* (Florence: Sansoni, 1971), p. 743; and Eugenio Montale, *Prime alla Scala* (Milan: Mondadori, 1981), p. 526.

²² See Murialdi, *Storia del giornalismo in Italia*, p. 321.

Guido Barbieri. There were noteworthy cases of long and constant critical activity too, by figures such as Guido Pannain at *Il tempo* in Rome, Lorenzo Arruga at *Il giorno* in Milan and also at the weekly magazine of political information, *Panorama*, Leonardo Pinzauti at *La nazione* in Florence and Mario Messinis at *Il gazzettino* in Venice. Foremost among the political party newspapers was *L'Unità*. Actively involved in the editorial boards were Erasmo Valente, Giacomo Manzoni, Paolo Petazzi and Rubens Tedeschi. The economic newspaper *Il sole 24 ore* dedicated a remarkable amount of space to music from 1983 onwards, with articles by Quirino Principe, Armando Torno and Carla Moreni.

From the sixties onwards, music journals also underwent a phase of renewal and development. Among the new publications can be mentioned in chronological order *Rivista italiana di musicologia* (1966), *Nuova rivista musicale italiana* (1967), *Studi musicali* (1972), *Musica/Realtà* (1980) and *Il saggiatore musicale* (1994). The field of musical analysis also developed and produced two periodicals: *Analisi: Rivista di Teoria e Pedagogia musicale* (1990) and *Bollettino del Gruppo di Analisi e Teoria della Musica* (1993). The first specialised periodicals geared towards musicians, performers or amateurs had already appeared in the first half of the twentieth century: *Il plettro* (1911), *L'arte pianistica* (1914) and *La Scala* (1949). This phenomenon spread in the second half of the twentieth century with, among others, *Il flauto dolce* (1972), *Il Fronimo* (1972) and *Syrinx* (1989). In the field of musical education came *Musica domani* (1971), *Bequadro* (1981), *La cartellina* (1977) and *Laboratorio musica* (1979), an innovative review edited by Luigi Nono, while 1985 *La musica* (1985) was mainly devoted to contemporary art music. The lively blossoming during the second half of twentieth century of magazines can be testified by *Musica* (1963), *Musica viva* (1977), *Il giornale della musica* (1985), *Musica e Dossier* (1986), *Piano Time* (1983) and *Amadeus* (1989).

The expansion of music criticism and of the media that gave it space between the sixties and eighties was a sign of the growing consideration given to music in the evolution of Italian society. Music education became a school subject, at first optional, with the reform of the Middle School in 1962–3 and subsequently, with the reform of 1977–9, compulsory. Between 1969 and 1990, the number of conservatories of music doubled, rising from thirty-five to sixty-nine institutes. Music courses in Italian universities also followed a slow but constant upward trend. The convergence of these phenomena in the eighties is one of the keys to explaining the general expansion and growth of music criticism at the time and the vigour of musical publishing, which would, however, show the first signs of decline during the nineties.

Radio and Television, Traditional Folk Music, Jazz and Popular Music Criticism

At the end of the Second World War, the profound historical and cultural transformations in progress were accompanied by a growing interest in new musical genres, a general change in the ways of broadcasting and communicating music and, in the following decades, by an ongoing pluralistic broadening of discourses on music. First of all, radio played a new role in the mass media compared to the past. In the schedules of the EIAR (Ente Italiano per le Audizioni Radiofoniche), founded under fascism in 1927, there had been a great deal of music, but as sound essentially, without critical comment. Nevertheless, in Mussolini's vision, the printed press continued to maintain its primacy over radio. With the foundation in 1944 of the public service broadcaster, RAI (Radio Audizioni Italiane), a new phase began in which interest in the radio and its diffusion grew steadily. Between 1947 and 1953, the number of subscribers rose from around two million to about 4.8 million, an increase of about 240 per cent. Polls showed that listeners requested more light music, which coincided with the birth in 1951 of the Sanremo Music Festival, dedicated to Italian pop music, an event which owed much of its successful development to radio and later to television.²³

The Terzo Programma was founded in 1950. This cultural channel dedicated a considerable amount of space to music, and contributions by music critics and musicologists were regularly made to the programmes. Among the various programmes broadcast, *L'Approdo* held a key position. Originally created in 1944, it continued under the editorship of the new Terzo Programma, which was initially directed by the music critic Alberto Mantelli and later by the composer Guido Turchi. It became the periodical *L'Approdo musicale*, founded by Mantelli in 1958.²⁴ With the end of the state monopoly in broadcasting, the liberalisation of private and commercial broadcasters, and the RAI reform in 1975, the Terzo Programma was renamed Radio 3. In the long period that followed, Radio 3 offered a permanent place at its microphones to Italian music criticism, proposing news, comment and introductions on listening to various music genres. Between the seventies and nineties, Radio 3 broadcast long-standing programmes such as *Concerto del mattino*, broadcast in the morning and initially dedicated to classical music; *La baruccia*, dedicated to opera; and *Radio 3 Suite*, a lengthy cultural programme that also incorporated music. The use of live coverage spread, favouring

²³ On the history of radio and television in Italy and for the data quoted, see Franco Monteleone, *Storia della radio e della televisione in Italia* (Venice: Marsilio, 1992), pp. 249–51.

²⁴ See Alberto Mantelli, 'Editoriale', *L'Approdo musicale*, 1 (1958), 3–4.

a colloquial nature of communication and tending to distance itself from the more rigid modalities of fifties programmes that were dominated by a form of verbal communication based on written texts. This change, coming from the radio, had an important influence on the language of music criticism that, also in the press, began to be less formal and literary. Space was also given to criticism in presentations, both from microphones and through programme notes, during the concert seasons played by RAI's national orchestras. RAI's first orchestra was founded in Turin in 1931 and, over the years, the orchestras of Rome, Milan and Naples were added. In 1994, the closure of three orchestras, reduced to one sole orchestra in Turin, was a sign of RAI's progressive withdrawal from the field of promoting and broadcasting art music, even for educational purposes.

After the birth of television, which began broadcasting in 1954, prompting the state broadcaster to change name from Radio Audizioni Italiane to Radiotelevisione Italiana (RAI), the new medium spread rapidly and, over time, contributed to Italy's sociocultural transformation. From being prevalently agricultural, the country became industrial, entering a period of economic boom and consumer affluence, whose symbol was to some extent the possession of a car, household appliances and a television. Radio had previously stolen the monopoly in communication and information from the printed press, but in only a few years the advent of television ousted the radio. In 1965, television overtook the radio, with five million subscriptions, and grew constantly over the following years with the addition, in the second half of the seventies, of private broadcasters.²⁵

Perhaps because of the visual identity of the new medium, or maybe due to the cultural policy pursued by RAI, which with the liberalisation of the airwaves suffered competition from commercial television, the space given to non-commercial music or critical discourse on music was generally marginal and sporadic in Italian television compared to radio. The presence of music criticism on Italian television was limited to a few cases. During the sixties and seventies, this included Roman Vlad's 1962 critical introductions to the performances of the pianist Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli; the broadcast *Specchio sonoro* edited by Vlad in 1964; and the twelve broadcasts entitled *C'è musica & musica* curated by Berio in 1972, at a time when public television had not yet abandoned programmes aimed at educating and disseminating information.²⁶

²⁵ For the statistics, see the report, ISTAT, *Sommario di statistiche storiche, 1926-1985* (Rome, 1986), 28-99.

²⁶ Raffaele Pozzi, 'Remembering *C'è musica e musica* di Luciano Berio: considerazioni attuali su televisione e musica d'oggi', *La musica negli occhi*, International Congress, Il sagggiatore musicale, Bologna (22-24 October 2010).

The highly original and innovative nature of *C'è musica & musica* was based on an open, pluralistic, critical and also 'theatrical' and ironic presentation of the contemporary music scene, as recounted by the protagonists: composers and musicians, but also musicologists and music critics such as Diego Carpitella, Mila, Santi and Vlad. The pluralistic approach of Berio influenced the TV programme *Tutto è musica* (1980–81) run by Gianluigi Gelmetti. Music criticism was partially present in the cultural broadcast *Sapere* (1967–71), in *L'amore è un dardo* (1993) run by Alessandro Baricco and in *All'Opera!* (1999) curated by Antonio Lubrano, both broadcasts devoted to opera.

The specificity of television was naturally attuned to the multimedia and audio-visual unity existing in some of the popular music trends of the eighties. In this field, RAI produced a broadcast titled *Mister fantasy* from 1981 to 1984, an extensive cycle of programmes, curated by the rock music critic Carlo Massarini, which for the first time in Italy was entirely dedicated to the presentation of contemporary rock videos.

Turning to the field of critical reflection on non-classical music, distinct areas emerged in Italy in the twentieth century. Starting from traditional folk music, research into nineteenth-century folk traditions was followed up by the first generation of Italian scholars to study this area: the so-called *etnofonia*, which included Alberto Favara and Giulio Fara. The latter was a contributor to the *Rivista musicale italiana*. Between the wars, numerous scholars, including Francesco Balilla Pratella and Giorgio Nataletti, published articles and critical reflections on national folklore in the periodical *Rassegna dorica*.²⁷

It was in the antifascist climate and in the post-war renewal that the concept of *popolare* shed the populist-nationalist component that had been fuelled by fascism and assumed the traits of an alternative and politically antagonistic way of thinking in opposition to the cultural hegemony of the ruling classes. Antonio Gramsci's political thought, the Italian neorealist literature and cinema of, among others, Primo Levi, Italo Calvino, Roberto Rossellini and Vittorio de Sica witness the social and cultural change. Building on this new vision and influenced by the writings of the ethnologist Ernesto de Martino, ethnomusicology in Italy laid new scientific foundations through field research on music of oral tradition conducted from 1954 to 1955 by Diego Carpitella and Alan Lomax on the one hand, and by Roberto Leydi on the other. It should also be noted that this new vision and study of ethnic music would converge significantly with the rise of new music in Italy during the

²⁷ On folk and ethnic music criticism in the first half of the twentieth century, see Ignazio Macchiarella, 'Tracce di pratiche musicali dell'oralità nelle riviste demologiche dei primi decenni del Novecento', in Capra and Nicolodi (eds.), *La critica musicale in Italia*.

post-war period.²⁸ Critical and, broadly speaking, anthropological reflection on ethnic music of oral tradition had been covered in numerous periodicals, including the journal *Lares* (1912), *Il cantastorie* (1963), *La ricerca folklorica* (1980), *I giorni cantati* (1981) and *Culture musicali* (1982).

Jazz in Italy also began to spread widely with the liberation from fascism, which had opposed it for being a despicable form of North American ‘negritude’. In 1945, on the initiative of Giancarlo Testoni, the review *Musica Jazz* was founded in Milan. In 1938, together with Ezio Levi, Testoni had already published a book entitled *Introduzione alla vera musica Jazz*, which can be considered the first attempt in Italy to create a valid synthetic reflection on the genre.²⁹ Working on the editorial board of the review (by far the longest-lived in this field and still published today) was a group of critics who helped to promote jazz in Italy in the second half of the twentieth century. Among these was Arrigo Polillo, a music critic who would head the magazine without interruption from 1965 to 1984. Other magazines were *Tempo di Jazz* (1962) and, more recently, *Jazzit* (1997).

The flourishing and important presence of periodicals devoted to sound recording and music reproduction across period must also be mentioned. Foremost in this field were *Il disco* (1933), *Musica e dischi* (1945), *Discoteca* (1960), *Suono stereo hi-fi* (1971) and *Stereoplay* (1972).³⁰ In parallel with the mass consumption of popular music in the late twentieth century, which was based on a variegated galaxy of music, from the songs produced by Italian light music to international pop and rock, there emerged a wide range of publications essentially addressing a young audience – namely, *Il musicchiere* (1959), *Tuttamusica* (1962), *Ciao 2001* (1969) or *Muzak* (1973), and *Gong* (1974) – that proposed a new and ironic critical language.

The phenomenon of periodicals specialising in different genres also affected popular music. Two examples devoted to alternative rock are *Rockerilla* (1978) and *Rumore* (1992).³¹ The importance of pop and rock music led to an expansion of the editorial boards of the major national newspapers between the seventies and eighties. Classical music critics increasingly worked alongside new critics who were experts in pop and jazz music. Limiting the overview to the main national newspapers, we see that Mario Luzzatto Fegiz and Vittorio

²⁸ See Diego Carpitella, ‘Convergenze fra indagine etnomusicologica e ricerche espressive contemporanee’, *La Rassegna musicale*, xxxi/4 (1961), 390–6; and Roberto Leydi, ‘George Gershwin e il *Porgy and Bess*’, *Il diapason*, v (1955), 15–23.

²⁹ See Gian Carlo Testoni and Ezio Levi, *Introduzione alla vera musica Jazz* (Milan: Magazzino Musicale, 1938), pp. 115.

³⁰ See Capra, ‘La stampa ritrovata’, p. 81.

³¹ For an overview on the popular music magazines, see Federico Capitoni, *La critica musicale* (Rome: Carocci, 2015), pp. 50, 72–3.

Franchini wrote for the *Corriere della sera*, Giulio Cesare Romana and Franco Fayenz for *Il giornale*, Marco Mangiarotti and Pino Candini for *Il giorno*, Gino Castaldo and Ernesto Assante for *La repubblica*, Marinella Venegoni and Mimmo Candito for *La stampa*, and Fabrizio Zampa, Dario Salvatori and Marco Molendini for *Il messaggero*. From the eighties onwards, the success of popular music in Italy, and its growing relevance in wider culture, produced a specific criticism which has peculiar communicative and linguistic modalities based on more participant observation to the object and more complicity with the reader than the traditional music criticism. Particular attention was paid to popular music by the periodical *Musica/Realtà*, for which Roberto Agostini, Franco Fabbri, Luca Marconi and Paolo Prato wrote, among others.

In the last years of the twentieth century, with the growing supremacy of television superseded by the widespread and global use of the Internet, the methods of producing, communicating and consuming music changed dramatically, and the same happened to the discourses on music. The web transformed the world and the modalities of the information and communication which, at the beginning of the twentieth century, were dominated only by the printed press. Music criticism, and even the identifying profile of the critic, were deeply affected by these changes, and this led to a crisis fraught with questions and reflections on the state of criticism and its future during the nineties.

The issue emerged in an article, 'La critica musicale italiana: un autoritratto', based on a questionnaire, edited by Giuseppina La Face Bianconi, addressed to several Italian music critics published in the *Rivista italiana di musicologia*. A lively roundtable held in Latina in 1991 was also organised by Raffaele Pozzi, titled *Critica musicale e musicologia: quale rapporto?* Critics and musicologists such as Giovanni Carli Ballola, Duilio Courir, Francesco Degrada, Giuseppina La Face Bianconi, Giorgio Pestelli, Agostino Ziino and Michelangelo Zurletti took part in it.³² The theme of the crisis in music criticism in the daily press was addressed by Leonardo Pinzauti, in the wake of an article of the journalist Alberto Papuzzi written in 1994 for the monthly *I concerti dell'Unione musicale*, printed in Turin. Pinzauti collected and commented on the responses by Giorgio Pestelli, Alessandro Baricco, Giovanni Carli Ballola and Paolo Gallarati to Alberto Papuzzi's article by writing another article entitled 'Ma è proprio vero che è morta la critica musicale sui

³² See Giuseppina La Face Bianconi (ed.), 'La critica musicale italiana: un autoritratto', *Rivista italiana di musicologia*, xxvi/1 (1991), 117–35; Raffaele Pozzi (chair), *Critica musicale e musicologia: quale rapporto?* Società e Rivista italiana di musicologia e Associazione nazionale critici musicali, Latina, Palazzo della Cultura (27 September 1991).

giornali?’ published in the *Nuova rivista musicale italiana* in 1995.³³ The cause of the crisis in music criticism, according to Papuzzi’s article, could be blamed on the inability to rouse interest in readers due to a lack of the communication skills that he said characterised the best articles by d’Amico or Mila. In the newspaper reviews dedicated to music, there was also an excess of information that was, so to speak, ‘academic’ or of a literary nature.

In his reply, Giorgio Pestelli advocated, on the contrary, the literary nature of journalistic music criticism, closely bound to the medium of writing, whose task was to convey opinions and not irritate the reader with narratives and controversies that were unrelated to the subject. For Pestelli, the focus of critical reflection for the critic was and must remain the performance of the musical work. The different positions expressed by Patuzzi and Pestelli were significant in that they were a prime example of two different conceptions of criticism in the face of changes that were occurring in the communication modalities of music and music discourse at the end of the twentieth century. Today, in fact, communication tends to be empathic, emotional and influenced by the fast and adrenaline-charged audio-visual language of the Internet, by the synthetic and provocative speed of the blogger messages rather than the slow and pondered rhythms of the written word in splendid literary guise.

Pestelli’s hope for music criticism was that of a communicative model, faithful to the etymology, which would competently mirror, distinguish and formulate opinions, and then motivate them with a stylistically controlled and rational use of words that would inevitably be elitist. This model essentially corresponded to the traditional historical method of music criticism practised by the press, which largely typified the twentieth century. In Patuzzi’s position, on the other hand, one catches sight of a concept that aspires, through the process of music criticism, to evoke an empathic reaction in the reader, implicitly miming the dominant interactive and participative model of mass communication conveyed by the Internet, with which the twentieth century came to a close.

³³ For the debate, see Leonardo Pinzauti (ed.), ‘Ma è proprio vero che è morta la critica musicale sui giornali?’, *Nuova rivista musicale italiana*, xxix/1 (1995), 49–60.

Wider Still and Wider: British Music Criticism since the Second World War

CHRISTOPHER DINGLE

The story of British music criticism since the Second World War is straightforward and disheartening. At least, it is straightforward to the various fellow academics, critics, musicians, promoters and assorted music cognoscenti who have kindly (and sometimes not so kindly) shared their views on the matter with me over the past decade. It is a story of a long golden age, in which venerable figures were given unlimited acres of space to espouse their great wisdom, followed by a precipitous decline in both quantity and quality. It is a perception that echoes a generally nuanced 2001 editorial by Marc Bridle for *Seen & Heard*: ‘Since then [the 1980s], critics have lost their influence as movers and shakers, in part due to philistinism among arts editors and decreased critical coverage in newspapers. Moreover, the decline of classical music is irrevocably linked to the rise of popular music – and the nefarious (and probably incorrect) belief that this is what readers want.’¹ As will become apparent, this widely and sincerely held perception of post-war music criticism in Britain is, at the very least, questionable, if not demonstrably flawed in key respects. It is not that this view is necessarily entirely wrong, but it is certainly simplistic and usually based purely on anecdotal evidence. Throughout the period in question, and especially the decades at each end, the health of British music criticism is more complex and surprising. Moreover, the story told in any history depends on the outlook of the teller and it is a conceit of many of those subscribing to the perspective given above that music criticism means classical music criticism. Popular music criticism does not count in this view; the ‘philistinism’ and ‘decreased critical coverage’ is in relation to classical music as written about in traditional media. Popular music criticism tends to be framed as a threat, often in terms uncannily resonant of those used by opponents of immigration. While individual critics or specific articles may be viewed as decent, criticism of popular music is

Various aspects of this chapter draw on research undertaken jointly with Laura Hamer. I am also grateful to Sophie Redfern for assorted bits of useful ferreting.

¹ Marc Bridle, ‘The Art of Critics and Criticism?’, *Seen & Heard* (November 2001), online, available at www.musicweb-international.com (accessed 15 May 2018).

a discipline that is generalised as being an interloper, bringing its uncivilised ways and stealing ‘our’ reviewing space. And yet, popular music shares the same challenges, as is clear from Simon Frith’s observations in Chapter 26 of this book:

By the turn of the century, the most interesting rock writing was appearing in online rather than print magazines, and the blogosphere had become a significant outlet for established rock writers, as the space in print outlets was steadily reduced . . . the fragmentation of the music market, which was both a cause and an effect of new digital music services, meant that rock criticism had less significance anyway.

There are certainly challenges for criticism of all types of music (and other fields) in twenty-first-century Britain, and there has been a discernible decline in some respects, but the prime causes and location of these are not always as commonly supposed, and the resulting picture is more tangled than that produced by simplified nostalgia for a bygone and often misremembered era.

This chapter falls broadly into two parts. The first considers the main body of the period since the Second World War primarily in terms of the tastes and practices of some notable figures in British music criticism. The second part of the chapter then looks beyond these to consider the context for the British press, notably in the immediate post-war period and then the 1980s, in the hope of providing a deeper perspective for the ensuing discussion of more recent history.

The Post-War Perspective 1: Figures of Varying Quality

In the decade immediately after the Second World War, key positions in the British newspapers and journals were filled by men who were already well established as critics in the 1930s. Like many in their generation, they exhibited in their different ways a broad conservatism suggesting an understandable desire to re-establish the norms that had existed before the war. Ernest Newman continued to make *ex cathedra* pronouncements at *The Sunday Times* and showed no sign of retiring, much to the chagrin of Neville Cardus, who briefly joined the newspaper in 1948 as a cricket writer on his return from spending the war years in Australia writing for the *Sydney Morning Herald*.² After a brief spell at the *Evening Standard* and a short period back in Australia, Cardus eventually settled in London, where his heart-on-sleeve superior eloquence returned to the pages of *The Manchester Guardian*.³ To these titans

² Robin Daniels, *Cardus: Celebrant of Beauty* (Lancaster: Palatine, 2009), p. 270.

³ *The Manchester Guardian* became *The Guardian* in 1959.

can be added Richard Capell, long-standing critic of *The Daily Telegraph*, and Frank Howes, who had taken over from H. C. Colles as chief music critic at *The Times* in 1943. John Amis later described them as being ‘like Canutes trying to stem the tide of modernism’.⁴ That is not to say that there was a lack of insight from the old guard, even if the views often now seem dated. For instance, in a broadly sceptical review of the first British concert performance of Messiaen’s *Turangalîla-Symphonie* in 1954, Cardus notes that ‘In the first “Chant d’amour” a sentimental strain on the strings reminded me of the saying that if you scratch any contemporary French composer you will find Massenet.’⁵ While the comparison may have seemed humorous, even provocative, in the mid-1950s, Messiaen did indeed feel kinship with Massenet, recent research revealing that his admiration extended to various borrowings.⁶

As the grand old man of British music criticism, Newman remained compulsive reading, and his continued advocacy of Wagner in the post-war years was telling. He rarely covered live events, preferring to write about musical issues of the day. That he now belonged to a different age, though, was apparent from his comments in 1958 about the BBC radio programme *Desert Island Discs*. Having described it in one article as ‘the most comically lunatic of all the BBC’s inventions’,⁷ a further column a fortnight later was devoted to responding to the resulting postbag, suggesting that ‘the castaway might have saved a few of his scores from the wreck’ and suggesting that ‘any ordinarily intelligent musician’ would prefer losing hearing to sight.⁸ Newman eventually stepped down as chief music critic at *The Sunday Times* in 1958, a year before his death aged ninety. To a degree, Cardus took over his mantle and was similarly feted, even becoming, in 1966, the first music critic to receive a knighthood (though his cricket writing may have been more instrumental, given Prince Philip’s enthusiasm for the sport). Perhaps most tellingly, he repeatedly used his ‘survey’ articles during the 1950s to promote the cause of Mahler’s music, still a niche area in Britain at that time.

Alongside these older figures, a younger generation soon emerged, many of whom, such as Andrew Porter, Desmond Shawe-Taylor and William Mann, were advocates for new music of all kinds and change in all sorts of aspects of

⁴ John Amis, ‘Critical Pastmasters’, *John Amis Online* (16 December 2011), available at johnnamismusic.blogspot.co.uk (accessed 15 May 2018).

⁵ Neville Cardus, ‘Messiaen’s Turangalîla [sic]: Love Song in Ten Movements’, *Manchester Guardian* (14 April 1954), 5.

⁶ Yves Balmer, Thomas Lacôte and Christopher Brent Murray, ‘“Un cri de passion ne s’analyse pas”: Messiaen’s Harmonic Borrowings from Massenet’, *Twentieth-Century Music*, 13/2 (September 2016), 233–60.

⁷ Ernest Newman, ‘The Mad World of the Diskers [sic]’, *Sunday Times* (22 June 1958), 10.

⁸ Ernest Newman, ‘The Ultimate Things’, *Sunday Times* (6 July 1958), 8.

musical life. The South African-born Porter wrote for various newspapers, including *The Times*, *The Telegraph* and *The Express*, before joining the *Financial Times* as it introduced music criticism to its pages. Wide-ranging in taste, Porter was allowed an unusually generous amount of space and latitude by the *Financial Times* for his discursive style. His particular enthusiasm for opera and new music also helped reinvigorate *The Musical Times*, which he edited from 1960 to 1967. Shawe-Taylor established his credentials as critic for *The New Statesman*, where he was an articulate supporter of new music and a major authority on the voice, before being appointed in 1958 to the daunting position of successor to Ernest Newman as chief music critic for *The Sunday Times*. Not that *The Sunday Times* had been entirely devoid of fresh blood, for Felix Arahamian had been appointed as Newman's deputy a decade earlier in 1948. As all who met him will testify, Arahamian was a larger than life character, neatly encapsulated by John Amis's fond recollection that 'if Felix were put into a book his character would seem overwritten. No one could be at the same time like something out of Proust and something out of P. G. Wodehouse. But he was.'⁹ Arahamian's innate flamboyance was disciplined in his writing by adopting Newman's strict precision and professed objectivity. Crucially, as a friend of both Poulenc and Messiaen, among numerous others, Arahamian was closely acquainted with the radical musical developments of the new generation of composers in Paris and beyond, even if he was not untempered in admiration for them. Similarly, when William Mann joined the music staff of *The Times* in 1948, aged just twenty-four, his writings acted as a progressive counterweight to Frank Howes, who, despite having been a keen champion of British composers such as Walton and Vaughan Williams between the wars, struggled with Britten and Tippett, never mind the continental avant-garde. A staunch advocate of opera in English, Howes also believed strongly in the policy of *The Times* that criticism should be anonymous. Howes's retirement came in 1960, and it was entirely apt that Mann should replace him as chief music critic on the cusp of a decade characterised as looking forwards rather than back.

The figure straddling the generations was William Glock, who had written for *The Telegraph* in the early 1930s and long advocated engaging with the various new compositional paths being forged. After *The Telegraph*, Glock wrote for *The Observer* until October 1945, when the editor, Ivor Brown, reportedly exclaimed that 'one more article about Britten, Tippett, Bartók

⁹ John Amis, *Amiscellany: My Life, My Music* (London: Faber, 1985), pp. 67–8.

and co., and I'll fire you'. The following Sunday, Glock wrote about Bartók and was duly sacked.¹⁰ Brown was profoundly mistaken, though, if he thought that would stem the modernist tide. Glock would go on to become arguably the most influential figure in British music, with his appointment in 1959 as Controller of Music at the BBC, the Proms being added to his portfolio the following year, giving him free rein to implement his conviction that new music and new areas must be explored. The ground was laid for the resulting revolution in both broadcast and concert programming, not just by Glock's writings – after *The Observer* he was briefly a critic for *The Scotsman* then *The New Statesman* as well as founding and editing the journal *The Score* – but also those of the more progressively minded post-war generation, such as Porter, Shawe-Taylor and Mann.

Glock's move from critic to taking charge of what is now BBC Radio 3 and the BBC Proms was repeated three decades later by Nicholas Kenyon, who (presumably coincidentally) also wrote for *The Observer* beforehand.¹¹ Such movement between the role of critic and that of administrator or promoter was not unusual. Aprahamian's multifarious activities, for instance, included a period as *de facto* promoter for various French performers, being employed as a consultant for United Music Publishers (UK distributors for almost all French publishers), an advisor representing the Delius Trust and a leading voice in various organ societies. All of this was at the same time as writing for *The Sunday Times*.¹² Similarly, John Amis, London critic of *The Scotsman* after Glock, was Sir Thomas Beecham's manager for a time, worked for the London Philharmonic Orchestra and was administrative director of Dartington Summer Music School. These diverse activities reflect, perhaps, the fact that, even in the 1950s and 1960s, what would now be termed portfolio careers were the norm for anyone working in the arts. It was usual for critics to be active participants in the musical world, advocates from within, rather than dispassionate observers. That Aprahamian would review an organ concert given at the Royal Festival Hall for which he had written the programme notes, and sometimes advised on the music, or a French performer whose engagements he had arranged, was not seen by him, nor many others, as problematic. Similarly, Amis admitted that, in the post-war period, the anonymity of reviews in several newspapers meant that critics could cover for each

¹⁰ Amis, 'Critical Pastmasters'. Glock's last review for *The Observer* appeared on 28 October 1945 and discussed interesting aspects of upcoming concerts, including works by Bartók and Tippett in Liverpool, and Stravinsky, Prokofiev and Britten in London.

¹¹ Kenyon became Controller of BBC Radio 3 in 1992 and became director of the BBC Proms in 1996. He left the BBC in 2007 to become Managing Director of the Barbican Centre in London.

¹² For an enjoyable insight into the range of Aprahamian's activities, see Felix Aprahamian, *A Life in Music and Criticism*, eds. Lewis Foreman and Susan Foreman (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2015).

other, sometimes even writing two reviews of the same event with differing perspectives.¹³

Aprahamian and Amis lacked formal musical training, bringing the enthusiasm and inquisitiveness of the autodidact, as did in their differing ways Edward Greenfield and Michael Kennedy. While not born into such abject poverty as his esteemed *Manchester Guardian* colleague Neville Cardus, Greenfield was from a working-class background. Having done his national service and then studied languages and law at Cambridge, he served a similar apprenticeship at the newspaper to that of his older colleague, working first as a filing clerk, and then as a lobby correspondent, before getting the chance to write about music as a record critic.¹⁴ Similarly, Kennedy started at the Manchester office of *The Telegraph* as a tea boy in 1941 aged just fifteen, returning as a night editor, following service in the Royal Navy. He started writing about music for the newspaper in 1948 and became a staff critic in 1950.

Despite such self-taught figures, there was marked rise in the number of musicologist-critics who not only had university music degrees, doctorates in some cases, but also continued scholarly research alongside their criticism. As Andrew Porter noted, 'in England, a line between musicology and musical journalism is not strictly drawn',¹⁵ and it was not uncommon for critics to hold posts in universities or music colleges before, after or even alongside their newspaper careers. While Newman led the way, notably with his work on Wagner, Michael Cooper, Winton Dean, Joan Chissell, Stanley Sadie, Stephen Walsh and Barry Millington among the following critical cohorts made telling contributions in both spheres. In particular, Cooper, who wrote for *The Telegraph* gave insight into French repertoire at a time when, despite the two World Wars, Germanic thought and culture still predominated, while several decades later Millington addressed issues of anti-Semitism in Wagner. A specialist in Schumann, Joan Chissell taught at the Royal College of Music, Oxford University and University of London in the 1940s, before tempering the male hegemony of the critical world by joining *The Times* in 1948 (the same year as William Mann) as its first female critic. Stanley Sadie joined *The Times* a generation later, in 1964, moving in 1981 to the *Financial Times*, by which time he had overseen the first of edition of *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* and was already working on various supplementary volumes as well as being editor of *The Musical Times*.

¹³ Amis, *Amiscellany*, p. 165.

¹⁴ Stephen Walsh, 'Portrait of a Guardian Music Critic', *The Spectator* (8 February 2014), available at www.spectator.co.uk (accessed 15 May 2018).

¹⁵ Andrew Porter, *Music of Three Seasons 1974–1977* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1978), p. ix.

The presence of active scholars among the critics meant that there was informed debate, from some quarters at least, as research was put into practice. In particular, as the push for historically informed performance gained increasing traction from the 1960s onwards, there were critics aware of the scholarship underpinning what were often viewed initially as cranky attempts at musical archaeology.

People have begun to realize that style in performance is no abstract thing, and that it cannot be dissociated from instruments themselves . . . During 1968 I also heard, in the Purcell Room, Couperin on a harpsichord of authentic size and specification, and Mozart on a contemporary fortepiano: in each case use of the proper means gives sharper insight on the composer's ends.¹⁶

Not that there was an un-nuanced welcome for all such experiments, as is clear from a 1974 round-up of recordings by Sadie, where Jean-Claude Malgoire's approach to Handel reminded him 'that authenticity may have its painful side', going on to observe that it would be preferable for performers 'to think in terms of a composer's ideal rather than some possible, disagreeable actuality'. By contrast, the same round-up enthuses about a Mozart horn concerto 'on a natural horn, whose patchiness of tone – expected, of course, by Mozart – puts phrase after phrase in a new light'.¹⁷

While what would later come to be termed Historically Informed Performance increasingly challenged the hegemony of the late-Romantic approach to performance in the 1970s, Glock's encouragement of new (and old) music at the BBC was reinforced by critics such as Bayan Northcott and Paul Griffiths who were thoroughly immersed in the various strands of contemporary experimentation. Neither Northcott nor Griffiths trained initially in music. Griffiths studied biochemistry and microbiology but immediately started a career in music writing, editing articles on twentieth-century music for *The New Grove*.¹⁸ He started writing for *The Times* as a freelancer in 1973, rapidly being recognised as an authority on new currents in music with fluency of word and thought in areas often thought difficult. He became chief music critic at *The Times* for a decade from 1982 and also wrote articles for numerous journals, as well as books on key figures such as Barraqué, Boulez, Cage, Ligeti, Maxwell Davies, Messiaen and Stravinsky, along with several influential overviews of new music.¹⁹ Having read English at Oxford,

¹⁶ Stanley Sadie, 'Sound as a Clue to Style', *The Times* (Friday 17 January 1969), 12.

¹⁷ Standley Sadie, 'The Sound of Authenticity', *The Times* (Saturday 15 June 1974), 11.

¹⁸ Rosemary Williamson, 'Griffiths, Paul' *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, available at www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed 17 January 2017).

¹⁹ Notably, *Modern Music: A Concise History from Debussy to Boulez* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978); *Modern Music: The Avant Garde since 1945* (London: Dent, 1981); *Modern Music and After: Directions since 1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

Northcott spent much of the 1960s working as a teacher, but his developing interest in composition turned at the end of the decade to formal study at Southampton with Alexander Goehr and Jonathan Harvey. He became music critic for the *New Statesman* in 1973, and then *The Sunday Telegraph* in 1976, writing primarily about new music.²⁰ Northcott joined *The Independent* as chief music critic when it launched in 1986. As Fiona Maddocks, the first classical music editor, recalls, ‘the Saturday music page every week had a big article from Bayan on really quite tricky subjects and they were not commercial subjects at all, they were entirely music driven’.²¹

As a new national broadsheet, *The Independent* shook up arts coverage in British newspapers, with much more explicit delineation of different types of music being reviewed, such as a specific music page with a feature at the top and usually three reviews below.²² It also attempted to break the London-centric critical focus. Whereas one of the contracted critics from other newspapers would, in the words of Maddocks, ‘be sent to Manchester or to Birmingham or Liverpool or to Glasgow or Edinburgh to sort of look around, report, and come back again’, *The Independent* would use local voices such as Raymond Monelle.²³ Unsurprisingly, the influence of *The Independent* on the way that newspaper criticism was undertaken was at its height in the early years of its existence, for its rivals soon adopted aspects of its approach.

There were, of course, other outlets for music criticism aside from newspapers, notably various magazines and journals. Indeed, for much of the period covered by this chapter, magazines and fanzines were generally the prime, if not the only outlet for written criticism of popular music and jazz. Many of these were led by consideration of reviewing recordings, while, in the classical sphere, *Gramophone* was the enduring survivor, with no sustained competition until the 1990s. Broadcasting also provided new opportunities, with radio programmes such as ‘Musical Magazine’ on the BBC’s Home Service having periodic reviews of events, recordings and books on music.²⁴ BBC Radio 3’s long-running *Record Review* dates itself back to 1949 on the Third Programme and 1957 as a regular slot, though the Light Programme²⁵ featured a weekly programme with the same name from 1945 to 1946, usually

²⁰ Rosemary Williamson, ‘Northcott, Bayan’ *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, available at www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed 17 January 2017).

²¹ Jennifer Skellington, ‘Transforming Music Criticism? An Examination of Changes in Music Journalism in the English Broadsheet Press from 1981 to 1991’, unpublished PhD thesis, Oxford Brookes University (2010), 439.

²² *Ibid.*, 440. ²³ *Ibid.*, 438.

²⁴ Details of individual programmes can be found by searching the BBC Genome Project website, genome.ch.bbc.co.uk.

²⁵ The Third Programme and Light Programmes were the names of BBC radio stations, not individual programmes.

presented by Christopher Stone, *The Gramophone's* London editor. Not that such opportunities necessarily represented a broadening of the pool of critics, as, throughout the period of this chapter, many of those writing for national newspapers also contributed to *The Gramophone* and appeared on BBC programmes.

Closely related to BBC output was the magazine *The Listener*. Originally set up in 1929 to publish scripts and transcripts of talks on BBC programmes, it soon featured previews and reviews as well as essays. Aimed at an intelligent readership, with relatively long essays that sometimes stopped only a little way short of musicological, its eventual demise in January 1991 was much lamented in some quarters. In musical circles it is sometimes described as having been replaced by *BBC Music Magazine*, which launched the following year. However, this can only be partially accurate, as music formed a relatively small portion of *The Listener's* content, which also encompassed areas as diverse as drama, gardening and chess. In fact, *BBC Music Magazine* was more of a rival to *Gramophone*, though it was actually a general music title, with recordings forming just part of its remit. Having played a crucial role at *The Independent*, Fiona Maddocks was engaged as the founding editor of *BBC Music Magazine*, with the thinking behind the new glossy being in part to attract the new potential audience for classical music revealed by the success of *The Three Tenors*.²⁶ In September 1992, just after the first issue of *BBC Music Magazine* appeared, a new radio station, Classic FM, started broadcasting and itself soon launched a magazine. Marked as it is by such new ventures, which had parallels in other musical genres, as well as the arrival of *The Independent* and a general expansion of overall coverage, this period may be viewed as representing a high-water mark in terms of music criticism in its traditional print formats. However, in order to put recent developments into perspective, it is necessary to consider the broader context of newspaper publishing, not just in the new millennium, but across the period as a whole.

The Post-War Perspective 2: Figures of Varying Quantity

Just as with other aspects of life, the Second World War had a discernible impact on music criticism in Britain for years after the end of fighting in the summer of 1945. The outbreak of war saw the British government use emergency powers to impose rationing on newsprint, controlling not just the number of pages in newspapers and magazines, but also pegging their circulations at their 1939 levels. As the war continued, the restrictions on the

²⁶ Skellington, "Transforming Music Criticism?", 443-4.

number of pages tightened. In 1939, 'full sheet' or 'broadsheet' daily newspapers averaged sixteen to twenty-four pages. By 1945, this had fallen to four pages for most papers, notable exceptions being *The Times* with eight to ten pages, *The Manchester Guardian* with six to eight pages and *The Telegraph* with four to six pages.²⁷ The situation was similar for magazines, with *The Listener* dropping from a pre-war size of fifty-two pages to twenty-eight pages. This had an obvious effect on every aspect of newspaper content, with the number and length of music reviews and news pieces falling dramatically.

Such a situation during the war is not so surprising. However, as with food, clothing and fuel, the severely damaged infrastructure, combined with an economy bankrupted and distorted by fighting the war, meant that rationing continued until well into the 1950s. In 1954, the United Kingdom's supply of paper was still only two-thirds of pre-war levels,²⁸ reflected by the fact that *The Times*, which had twenty pages on 1 September 1939 and a mere ten on 1 September 1945, had just twelve pages on 1 September 1954. Even when the supply of paper became more plentiful, the newspapers were in no rush for the restrictions to be lifted. In marked contrast to the cutthroat world of the 1930s (and the present day), which saw numerous titles come and mostly go, the government controls of the 1940s and 1950s provided an absolutely predictable business model in which significant growth in newspaper size or circulation was impossible without government approval, while decline was unlikely. The situation was neatly summarised by Lord Beaverbrook, who ironically observed that the government had given the press freedom in four respects: freedom from competition, advertising revenue, newsprint and enterprise.²⁹

What this meant in practical terms is that, from the outbreak of the war until the late 1950s, the amount of writing about music in newspapers and journals was significantly less than before the war. For example, in the week beginning 6 June 1946, *The Times* carried seven live reviews of around 300 words and one record review (see Table 32.1), while *The Manchester Guardian* published just four reviews. By the mid-1960s, the number of reviews in *The Times* had more than doubled and, while some were barely 230 words, others were closer to 650 words. In terms of classical content, there was a slight dip in the number of concert reviews in 1988, but this was offset by a long review of records. Moreover, there was now also popular music content, with one article, one review and a 'rock' round-up of recordings, while jazz also had

²⁷ Figures from J. Edward Gerald, *The British Press under Government Economic Controls* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956), p. 201.

²⁸ Gerald, *The British Press*, p. 31. ²⁹ Gerald, *The British Press*, p. 34.

Table 32.1 *Samples of music content in The Times*

Year (all 6–11 June)	Concert reviews	Record reviews	Articles
1946	7	1	0
1966	17	0	2
1988	16 (13 classical, 1 popular, 1 jazz)	3 (1 classical, 1 rock, 1 jazz)	1 (popular)
2011	18 (10 classical, 7 popular, 1 jazz)	11 (3 classical, 6 popular, 1 jazz)	6 (1 general, 2 classical, 3 popular) plus 3 obituaries (2 popular, 1 classical)

two gig reviews as well as a record review. Far from a drastic decline, the equivalent week in 2011 saw an expansion of coverage. Popular content had increased significantly and, although there are slightly fewer classical concert reviews, this is more than balanced by the articles, one of which, ‘When Barenboim met Boulez’, is over 1,500 words and was also advertised in a banner on the newspaper’s front page.

While there are naturally variants, the figures in Table 32.1 broadly reflect those for further sampling. What becomes clear is that when reviews of ‘rock’ events appeared on a more frequent and regular basis in *The Times* from the 1980s, any consequent reduction in classical coverage was slight, as overall music coverage increased, at least until the mid-2010s. In other words, popular music was part of the expansion of British newspapers in size and scope that occurred in the latter part of the twentieth century, with much larger sections for sport and areas such as cookery, motoring or holidays on a more regular basis.

Such figures are given greater nuance for a specific period in Jennifer Skellington’s commendably detailed study of changes in music coverage in British broadsheets between 1981 and 1991, one strand of which sampled three daily newspapers and three Sunday titles in each year of the decade. She found, for instance, that the number of words devoted to classical coverage in *The Guardian* stayed broadly steady, peaking in 1988; the figure for *The Times* in this decade declined, yet there was a notable increase in *The Sunday Times* towards the end of the decade. In terms of rock and pop, there was a slight increase in *The Guardian* and a significant one in *The Times*, while the *Sunday Times* actually saw a fall. Even this is simplifying, for the figures for *The*

Guardian show a fall for rock and pop at the end of the period and a rise for the number of words given to classical music.³⁰ Skellington's study finds slightly different experiences within each newspaper and, if repeated for the following decade, might find significantly different results. For instance, while the period covered by her study partially supports the notion of classical coverage in *The Times* being squeezed by popular music, Graham Stewart is clear that classical reporting strengthened at the end of the decade with the appointment of Richard Morrison as arts editor and 'during the nineties coverage increased again'.³¹

Alongside such quantitative matters, there has also been a significant qualitative change in the nature of British newspapers over the last half century, prompted initially by the rise of broadcast media, especially the advent of rolling news channels towards the end of the last century. This transformation might be characterised rather simplistically as moving from reporting what has happened to commenting on it or on what might happen as a consequence. Given that they are expected to convey views, much of what critics wrote already anticipated this transformation. Even so, reviews that pre-date it have a much greater sense of straightforward provision of information. Critics were also responsible for brief news items that would now be regarded as too mundane without contextualisation or comment. The following punctilious announcement in *The Times* is a typical unmediated regurgitation of a press release:

COVENT GARDEN OPERA

A change in the cast of Mr. Benjamin Britten's opera *Gloriana* at the Royal Opera House to-morrow night will see Miss Constance Shacklock in the part of Queen Elizabeth I and Mr. John Lanigan in that of Essex. These two singers will also perform these parts on July 9. On Friday the Covent Garden Opera Company will give the first of four performances of *Die Meistersinger* under Mr. Clemens Krauss. All of them will be sung in German, and in the cast will be Mr. Frederick Dalberg, Mr. Murray Dickie, Mr. Richard Holm, Mr. Hans Hopf, Mr. Karl Kamann, Mr. Benno Kusche, Mr. Paul Schoeffler, Miss Elizabeth Schwarzkopf, and Miss Shacklock.³²

While critics were generally adroit at grabbing their readers' attention at the opening of reviews, it was not uncommon for them to open in a similarly prosaic manner: 'Mr David Oistrakh played two concertos with the Philharmonia Orchestra at the Albert Hall last night before a large audience –

³⁰ Jennifer Skellington, 'Transforming Music Criticism?', 74–80.

³¹ Graham Stewart, *The History of The Times: The Murdoch Years* (London: HarperCollins, 2005), pp. 447–52.

³² Unsigned, 'Covent Garden Opera', *The Times* (29 June 1953), 11.

Brahms's, which was conducted by Mr. Norman Del Mar, and Khachaturian's, conducted by the composer, who is here with the party of artists and scientists now on a visit from Russia to this country.³³

The shift in approach by newspapers, from which music coverage was not immune, was most marked in the 1980s. Profound changes in technology with the introduction of computer typesetting and new forms of printing went hand in hand with the greater emphasis on comment and a more image-led approach to page construction. Skellington summarises the effects of this transformation on music criticism as follows:

At the beginning of the period, music-related writing typically appeared on a single arts page, comprising a series of overnight concert reviews predominantly associated with classical music, alongside an occasional small black and white photographic accompaniment, with written material most often supplied by long-standing music specialists employed directly by the newspaper, although in some cases by editors or staff writers from other areas of the newspaper who possessed an interest in music. However, by the end of the period examined newspapers had dramatically expanded in size and music coverage was often placed not only on the arts pages but also within the many different component parts of the newspaper, including supplementary magazines; music coverage was frequently accompanied by large pictorial illustrations, which were increasingly printed in colour, and music writing was more often provided by an increased number of freelance music journalists. By the end of the period examined, the broadsheet press appears to have shifted its stance to one which readily embraced popular music coverage, to the extent that the former dominance of classical music was being challenged, and overnight concert reviewing was diminishing in favour of feature writing, an approach preoccupied with personalities and celebrity rather than the music itself.³⁴

This qualitative change in the nature of newspapers underlines the fact that they are very different beasts today from thirty-five or seventy years ago, a point that is conveyed succinctly by considering a little more quantitative data. While the pagination of *The Times* had increased in the late 1950s to its pre-war proportions of around twenty-four pages and grown to around thirty-two pages by the 1980s, the move away from hot metal to computer-based printing in that decade presaged a vast expansion so that editions in the 2010s regularly comprised substantially more than 100 pages. A whole host of caveats needs to be made with such comparisons, not least that the page size was smaller and the font size and number of columns changed at various

³³ Unsigned, 'Mr David Oistrakh: Two Concertos', *The Times* (26 November 1954), 5.

³⁴ Jennifer Skellington, 'Transforming Music Criticism?', 14.

points over the period in question. Even charting word counts can be misleading, since modern newspapers use images to a far greater extent, so that a piece with fewer words may have much greater prominence on the page. In essence, a British newspaper from the 2010s bears as much resemblance to its counterpart from sixty years ago as an out-of-town supermarket does to a 1950s corner store, containing many things that were simply not thought part of their remit before.³⁵ This is obvious at a glance since, in the post-war period, the front pages of *The Times* and *The Manchester Guardian* did not carry news but were filled with classified advertisements. While most lower-brow newspapers had the now-familiar front-page headlines from early in the century, and most broadsheets changed during the war, *The Manchester Guardian* only adopted what many regarded as an uncouth American trait in September 1952, and *The Times* did not relent until May 1966.

In terms of where music fits into these changes, it is dangerous to generalise, and all sorts of factors can distort the picture. An extreme instance comes from the fact that there was no musical content at all in *The Times* for nearly a year as an industrial dispute caused the paper to cease production from 1 December 1978 to 12 November 1979. Many of the figures provided in this chapter have come from *The Times*, but other titles will show a different ebb and flow. These are caused not just by major external factors, but also matters as local as the character of the editor and owner of each newspaper, who will each have their own preferences. For instance, coverage of music in *The Telegraph* contracted significantly in the first decade-and-a-half of the new century. Conversely, music content at *The Guardian* suffered no worse than other areas of the newspaper (which is not to say it did not suffer) in the various rounds of belt-tightening in the 2000s, possibly a reflection of the fact that the editor was the classical music-loving Alan Rusbridger. It is too early to tell the extent or nature of change prompted by his departure at the end of 2015, but initial signs suggest a discernible contraction of coverage.

Among critics themselves, there was much disquiet in the new century, as typified by comments made in 2006 by Tom Sutcliffe, deputy arts editor at *The Guardian* until 1985:³⁶

³⁵ For more on the methodological challenges of charting changes in newspaper coverage of music criticism, see Christopher Dingle and Laura Hamer, 'False Memories and Dissonant Truths: Digital Newspaper Archives as a Catalyst for a New Approach to Music Reception Studies', in Clare Mills, Michael Pidd and Esther Ward (eds.), *Proceedings of the Digital Humanities Congress 2012. Studies in the Digital Humanities* (Sheffield: HRI Online Publications, 2014), 1–22. Skellington's excellent thesis takes a mixed approach to charting developments across a single decade.

³⁶ Not to be confused with his namesake who, among other things, was the first arts editor at *The Independent*.

As we've got towards the year 2000 . . . editors don't really see any distinction between the different forms of music . . . They feel that classical music doesn't have as a large an audience, isn't as interesting to their readers, their young readers in particular . . . so they feel they are still doing a perfectly good job even though the perception among classical music critics of the Critics' Circle,³⁷ of which I'm Chairman, is that in fact the situation is a complete disaster.³⁸

Sutcliffe goes on to bemoan the coverage of culture as entertainment, which is 'simply to provide people with a useful consumer guide'.³⁹ It is a sentiment that echoes Charles Kensington Salaman's observation about the general state of music and criticism that 'We are living in a utilitarian, not an artistic or poetic age. This is the "golden age" of royalties and advertisements! From the dignity of a profession, music appears to be fast descending to a trade.' Except that Salaman was speaking in the nineteenth century.⁴⁰ Closer to Sutcliffe's time, and with his newspaper in mind, Cardus referred to the subeditors' room at *The Guardian* as 'the abattoir' for their lack of sensitivity to the subject, acting 'like a butcher cutting a weekend joint'.⁴¹

Despite this, the fact that there are many precedents for Sutcliffe's remarks does not necessarily invalidate them. The move away from reporting to commenting, along with a greater concentration on images, made it harder to justify chronicling events that were neither part of a series nor had repeat performances. In other words, the issue was not the amount of space given to various genres of music, but the change in sensibility of newspapers. Hilary Finch, one of the staff critics for *The Times*, is clear that classical coverage in the 1980s 'wasn't so much elbowed out by the other genres of music as by features', noting that 'once you got a great big feature at the top with a great big photo . . . it halved your space for reviews'.⁴² Such observations are an important corrective to the view of popular and classical music as being in competition, opposition even. This easy fallacy reflects the anxieties and prejudices of both camps (or, rather, those who view themselves as belonging to a camp, regardless of which it is). In terms of British outlets, while there are numerous variations from time to time and newspaper to newspaper, total coverage for music expanded dramatically from the 1980s until well into the 2000s, sometimes dramatically. Even in the less frivolous tabloids, what might be called the semi-serious press, the evidence can be surprising. Eric Mason,

³⁷ A kind of society for arts critics, though many are not members.

³⁸ Jennifer Skellington, 'Transforming Music Criticism?', 493. ³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Charles Kensington Salaman, 'On Musical Criticism', *Proceedings of the Musical Association*, Second Session (1875-76), 7.

⁴¹ Christopher Brookes, *His Own Man: The Life of Neville Cardus* (London: Methuen, 1985), p. 257.

⁴² Jennifer Skellington, 'Transforming Music Criticism?', p. 401.

the *Daily Mail* music critic in the 1960s generally had around 130 words, sometimes much less, to convey his thoughts. In the 2000s, there was considerable coverage of popular music, but classical music had not disappeared, and Mason's successor, David Gillard, generally had around 380 words to play with. Moreover, it is also important to remember that newspapers going defunct is not a new phenomenon. For instance, younger composers in the post-war years found a keen advocate in Scott Goddard until his newspaper, the liberal-minded *News Chronicle*, was absorbed by Mason's employers at the right-wing *Daily Mail*.

One consequence of popular music and other genres taking a regular place alongside criticism of classical music in newspapers was a greater demarcation of music into subcategories. When William Mann wrote his famed article about The Beatles in *The Times* in 1963, the surprise, outrage for some, was that he viewed the music worthy of discussion. The notion that this would need a distinct kind of critical coverage did not occur. Music critics in newspapers wrote about any music that was deemed of interest, whether Beethoven or The Beatles, jazz, folk or Chinese opera. Classical music dominated, but other genres did get discussed. When *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* was released in 1967, it was reviewed in *The Guardian* by Edward Greenfield as part of his 'Gramophone Records' column alongside releases of music by Copland and Penderecki, Greenfield musing that 'In intention and even in execution they [Aaron Copland and Krzysztof Penderecki] do not strike me as very different from some of the way-out sounds on the Beatles' latest LP . . . There is no longer any need, thank goodness, to apologise for talking seriously about Beatles music.'⁴³

As they came to be more regular features, newspapers started to delineate between types of music in their layout. By the end of the century, it was commonplace to have separate columns or sections variously for classical, pop or rock, jazz, folk and/or world music, each with their own specialist critics. By the 2010s, on newspaper websites such as *theguardian.com*, arts coverage was now within a 'Culture' section, 'Music' primarily referring to various forms of popular music, while 'Classical' was a distinct category. As such demarcations became more common in the 1980s, critics within each field were often wide-ranging. For instance, Richard Williams's 1983 'rock' columns included artists as diverse as Luther Vandross, Elkie Brookes, Culture Club, Nile Rodgers, Joni Mitchell, New Order and Eddy Grant. In terms of criticism, the term 'rock' was largely synonymous with 'popular', but denoted a seriousness of intent by the writer. This is similar to the way that most of

⁴³ Edward Greenfield, 'Gramophone Records', *The Guardian* (Monday 12 June 1967), 7.

those writing about classical music for newspapers and magazines tended to describe themselves as critics rather than journalists.⁴⁴ It is also worth noting that the prestige attached to criticism in a given publication varied according to the genre, Matt Brennan observing that:

This press hierarchy for the independent rock field finds glossy music magazines at the top and broadsheets roughly at the bottom of the list. But this hierarchy is reversed in the jazz sector: quality dailies become the most desirable form of coverage, while jazz magazines are relegated to the bottom.⁴⁵

Told from the perspective of popular music, the notion that there has been a persistent expansion of coverage from the 1950s onwards lacks nuance. It is possible to cite the appearance of magazines, such as *New Musical Express* (*NME*) in 1952, and the equally significant shift in various newspapers towards a much more populist approach, the gradual appearance of rock criticism in broadsheet newspapers and successive waves of new magazines. However, brief consideration of an iconic title like *Melody Maker* is instructive. It started in 1926 essentially as a jazz journal, and the 1950s saw coverage of pop and jazz side-by-side, but by the 1960s its coverage was almost exclusively pop in orientation.⁴⁶ This gradual transformation was significant for the development of rock criticism, but was doubtless mourned by the *Melody Maker*'s jazz aficionados. Despite numerous competitors, the magazine thrived in its new guise, though, as noted by Simon Frith in Chapter 26 in this volume, a group of its writers left in 1970 to form a new magazine, *Sounds*, and an injection of new blood from the underground press at *NME* left *Melody Maker* trailing behind the circulation of its principal rival. New competition came in the 1980s and 1990s, initially from new teen-oriented titles such as *Smash Hits* on the populist side and *The Wire* for more searching readers, then glossies like *Q* and *Uncut* that also encompassed an older readership. Despite these newcomers, *Melody Maker* retained its reputation as the musician's paper, covering indie and alternative rock. As the new millennium approached, its circulation dropped from its 1970s high of 200,000 to 32,500⁴⁷ and the magazine folded in 2000. According to Dave Laing, it was a failure to engage with the emerging dance music of the 1980s that was ultimately the principal factor in the closure

⁴⁴ Readily noticed anecdotally, this trait is one of the emerging strands in Gemma Harries and Karin Wahl-Jorgensen, 'The Culture of Arts Journalists: Elitists, Saviors or Manic Depressives?', *Journalism*, 8/6 (2007), 619–39.

⁴⁵ Matt Brennan, 'The Rough Guide to Critics: Musicians Discuss the Role of the Music Press', *Popular Music*, 25/2 (2006), 225.

⁴⁶ Barney Hoskyns, 'Melody Maker, 1926–2000, RIP', *Rock's Backpages* (15 December 2000), available at www.rocksbackpages.com (accessed 15 May 2018).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

of *Melody Maker*.⁴⁸ However, the establishment of rock criticism and more extensive coverage of popular music in newspapers and non-music magazines may also have been a factor. As Caroline Sullivan observed, ‘suddenly everyone from broadsheets to fashion magazines were [*sic*] covering the antics of Oasis and Blur . . . *Melody Maker* should have been ideally placed to benefit, but when the Gallaghers began turning up in *Vogue* there was no need to read an inky weekly.’⁴⁹ The hard-won success of rock criticism within the mainstream may have undermined the utility of some specialist titles.

What this brief digest of the existence of the *Melody Maker* underlines is the fact that the fortunes of newspapers and magazines of all types, even iconic titles, have always fluctuated and been inherently unpredictable. While the UK saw a vast expansion of outlets for popular music criticism in the latter half of the twentieth century, with it becoming a standard feature of the broadsheet press from the late-1980s onwards, rock criticism also saw its high-profile casualties. *Smash Hits* folded in 2006, and though *NME* may have sustained a higher circulation than *Melody Maker*, ultimately outlasting its rival, it ceased hard-copy publication and became a purely online entity in 2018.

The British experience in the new century has been that, where coverage of classical music has declined, this has generally reflected an existential challenge for the newspaper in question, with numerous other areas, including aspects of news reporting, also being severely cut back in the face of competition from the Internet and the effects of the 2008 financial crash. Even before the latter, the commercial context for all types of music had changed significantly. In 2006, Matt Brennan noted substantial shifts in retail markets, with the majority of records being sold in supermarkets, while, beyond their limited selection, just five chains of record stores accounted for 75 per cent of the sales of jazz records.⁵⁰ In terms of the press, while the long waning of a national title like *The Independent* was especially visible, the regional and local newspapers saw the most dramatic changes. London’s *Evening Standard* became a freesheet in 2009 as part of a new financial model. Outside of the capital, local papers either disappeared or changed from daily to weekly publication, with the *Birmingham Post* even ceasing to pay for music coverage since the end of 2017, the critics being expected to work for no fee. With the national press remaining preponderantly London-centric in its coverage, the

⁴⁸ Dave Laing, ‘Anglo-American Music Journalism: Texts and Contexts’, in Andy Bennett, Barry Shank and Jason Toynbee (eds.), *The Popular Music Studies Reader* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 335.

⁴⁹ Caroline Sullivan, ‘Magazine No Longer in Tune with Tastes of Teenagers’, *The Guardian* (15 December 2000), 7.

⁵⁰ Matt Brennan, ‘The Rough Guide to Critics’, 223–4.

decline of local newspapers saw the most substantial drop in dedicated coverage of music.

In the 2010s, overall music content in *The Times* and *The Guardian* was still higher than thirty years before, with classical coverage broadly holding steady even if the number of critics and amount of reviewing had fallen. There were signs of a contraction at *The Guardian* from the middle of the decade. Similarly, music coverage at *The Telegraph* had shrunk considerably by this point, with no content at all on some days each week, but classical reviews were generally predominant in what remained.

Nonetheless, even though the ongoing challenges for newspapers resulted in a reduction of music content in some titles, this was countered by the proliferation and expansion of magazines and specialist journals as well as the appearance and growth of internet journals and websites such as *Seen & Heard International*, *MusicWeb International*, *MusicalCriticism.com*, *Drowned in Sound*, *The Arts Desk* and *Bachtrack*, as well as numerous individual blogs. These have often enabled much lengthier, more detailed writing than has ever tended to be possible in the daily press. Within the classical sphere, coverage was still strong in the first decade-and-a-half of the new century and roamed far wider in terms of repertoire and musical approach than in the post-war period, and British critics remained predominant in two of the magazines with the widest international readership, *BBC Music Magazine* and *Gramophone*. British music criticism in the decade after the Second World War was restricted in terms of quantity by rationing, but was also dominated by voices that were broadly conservative in outlook. This coincided with a period of unprecedented stability in the British press afforded by government paper controls. After that time, there was a vast increase in the amount of writing and range of genres covered, resulting in a diversity of style, scope and subject matter that was simply unimaginable in 1945. The new century saw immense change, with external factors causing the future of many of the existing structures for music criticism to be uncertain, with the traditional media arguably facing existential challenges. And yet, amid the profound instability, new outlets for criticism were created, with greater scope for new voices, repertoires and approaches. The story of British music criticism since the Second World War is neither straightforward nor necessarily disheartening.

Music Criticism in France since the Second World War

CHRISTOPHER BRENT MURRAY

The following chapter is devoted to music criticism in France¹ from the Occupation (1940) to the present day, embracing some seventy-five years of writing in the general, non-academic press. Explicitly philosophical criticism destined for specialised, intellectual readerships is not addressed, but this chapter does broach the place of other writing on music. Indeed, critics during this period also played a broader journalistic role, writing editorial pieces, reporting on musical life and conducting interviews.

The categories of media producing music criticism in France rapidly diversified during the second half of the twentieth century. While the rise of television, the golden age of the magazine and the advent of the Internet are of course worldwide phenomena, factors such as France's strong centralisation, its unique geopolitical role during the Second World War and the Cold War, and the enduring ties between the nation's government and its media have led to local variations of universal media trends that have affected music criticism. These include the spectacular post-war boom (and bust) of new daily newspapers, the creation of unique French monthly news magazines and the heyday of the Minitel, among others.² Although, for practical reasons, this chapter is limited to the written word, future projects will surely focus on the ways in which broadcast and digital media have complemented, intersected with and, at times, surpassed the impact of written music criticism.

Media diversification brought changes to the critic's role, presence and channels of distribution. Many, if not most, of this period's prominent critics in print journalism also garnered influence and income from radio and television programmes devoted to music. Take for instance the activities of Bernard Gavoty, head critic at *Le Figaro* from 1945 to 1981. In 1952, Gavoty's article 'La musique contemporaine est-elle condamnée?' for the *Journal musical*

¹ The choice to focus on France and, by extension, principally Parisian-based publications, should not obscure the fact that other regions of France as well as Francophone Belgium, Switzerland, Canada and France's former colonies have or once had significant traditions of Francophone music criticism.

² The Minitel was a French ancestor of the web with dial-up access and home terminals that became common in French households during the 1980s.

français inaugurated a series exploring contemporary music in terms of a perceived divide between composers and the audiences of traditional classical concerts.³ These articles were transformed into a 1954–55 radio programme *Pour ou contre la musique moderne?* co-hosted by Gavoty and the composer-administrator Daniel-Lesur. In turn, the scripts of the radio programme were adapted for publication as a book. Not only had Gavoty succeeded in dictating the terms of a perennial post-war polemic (in which he had taken a clearly conservative position), he kept the ball in the air for a number of years, fluidly steering his forum from print to broadcast media and back again.

The second half of the twentieth century also saw the rising popularity and increasing intellectual legitimacy of rock and other popular genres in France. Although rock became the object of specialised magazines shortly after arriving in France in the 1960s, critical attention for it and other new, popular genres only seeped into national dailies between the 1970s and 1990s, sweeping from left to right and joining the ranks of articles on classical music, jazz and *chanson* present in those sources since before the war. The diversification of genres addressed by the print media was also concomitant with the shift in the function of music journalism. Speaking to a broader range of tastes and operating under new economic constraints, critics in non-specialised publications could no longer limit themselves to reviews of single concerts. They focused more energy on preparing readers for upcoming events, conducting interviews or writing profiles of musicians.

At present, articles on music in French periodicals are dominated by pre-event profiles or previews (sometimes referred to in French as an *avant-première*, a term more often associated with film previews), often based on press releases intended for the promotion of concerts, tours or recordings. This sort of article existed well before 1940, but was not as prevalent as it has become. Concert reviews began to vanish from daily papers in the 1970s and 1980s. Today, traditional reviews still exist, notably of landmark events, such as new opera productions, but the review's domination of music journalism in the printed press has passed. The causes of this change likely lie in the intertwined commercial interests of the entertainment and media industries. Former critic for *Le Monde*, Jacques Lonchampt, suggested that the replacement of traditional reviews by *avant-premières* was due to the rise of the weekly magazine. In trying to scoop the post-concert coverage of dailies by printing film previews, magazines pushed newspapers to follow suit, in both cinema and the other arts.

³ Yves Balmer, 'Portrait de Daniel-Lesur en critique musical: pour ou contre la musique moderne?', in Cécile Auzolle (ed.), *Regards sur Daniel-Lesur* (Paris: PUF-PUPS, 2009).

Lonchampt explained that once a story was run, editors were less likely to run a second piece reviewing the event.⁴ Previews also better suit the needs of agents and record companies, who, for evident reasons, prefer promotional profiles to the risk of a bad review.

Periods of political tension or change may provide convenient historical signposts, but considered alone they fail to frame the history of music adequately, let alone musical criticism. While the period covered by this chapter saw a number of dramatic events (the Second World War; the end of a colonial empire marked by bloody conflicts in French Indochina (1946–54) and Algeria (1954–62); the tensions of the Cold War; the creation of the Fourth and Fifth Republics), not to mention a number of influential political figures from de Gaulle to Robert Schuman to André Malraux, none of these events or leaders mark distinct shifts in practices or objects of music criticism. Political and social movements do of course have an influence upon musical life. The student uprisings of May 1968 or the election of François Mitterrand may not have had an immediately identifiable impact upon music criticism, but these events marked the collective memory and have come to evoke the tone of particular periods in the cultural history of France.

The following article is organised in loosely chronological order and is framed in terms of major historical events, major publications and major critics. The period of the Occupation created dramatically different conditions for French musical life and is therefore addressed in three subsections: first the state of media and criticism in general, and then on *L'Information musicale* and *Comœdia*, two important sources of criticism for the period. After a brief overview of the changed media landscape that accompanied the period now known as the Liberation, there follows a survey of news dailies, weeklies and specialised cultural newspapers that were born in the aftermath of the war. The following section deals with the rise of the magazine and discusses a number of specialised magazines that were born in the 1950s and 1960s, often devoted to particular genres. Shifts in French society that led to or resulted from the events of May 1968 can be linked to the birth of new publications and their evolution into the Mitterrand years – be it in relation to the rise of new popular genres (*Rock & Folk*) or new perspectives in the daily news media (*Libération*). The chapter closes with an overview of recently developed sources of French music criticism both online and in the free press.

⁴ Bruno Serrou and Jacques Lonchampt, 'Chapitre 100, Éthique', in *Musique et mémoires, Jacques Lonchampt*, filmed interview (Paris: INA-SACEM, year not indicated), available at entretiens.ina.fr/consulter/Musique (accessed 2 October 2014).

Music Criticism in Occupied France

The events of the Second World War were a breaking point for many French periodicals. Long-standing institutions fell victim to the pressures of the Occupation, and were later penalised for political compromises or succumbed to the material instability of the conflict. Following the German invasion of France in May 1940, a number of specialised publications like *Le Ménestrel*, *Le Guide du concert* and *La Revue musicale* suspended publication. Other titles took refuge in the Unoccupied Zone, where they resumed operation as best they could. For example, *Paris-Soir*, one of the most popular pre-war daily newspapers, returned to activity in Lyon and Marseille. Meanwhile, in Paris, the German occupiers usurped the title in hopes of winning over the paper's pre-war readership. For a time, there were two separate newspapers titled *Paris-Soir* and employing different critics in the Occupied and Unoccupied Zones.

Nazi propaganda sought to establish a sense of continuity in French cultural life to mask the long-term goal of dismantling France's cultural prestige and establishing German cultural domination.⁵ Music critics in officially sanctioned papers contributed towards this project, knowingly or unwittingly, by lauding the cultural initiatives of the occupiers, or, more frequently, by merely furnishing reassuring descriptions of the latest concerts and musical attractions, an ostensible harbinger of the return to normal daily life.⁶ The tribune held by prominent critics made them a tempting and, at times, willing target of Nazi propaganda. For example, eleven of the twenty-two French invitees who responded favourably to an invitation by the German authorities to attend the Vienna Mozart Week of 1941 were critics. They effectively participated in a luxurious press junket and later wrote flattering accounts of the initiative upon their return.⁷

Although journalists in the Unoccupied Zone had slightly broader margins for manoeuvre, whether supervised by the Propaganda Abteilung or the puppet government of Vichy, newspapers were reorganised, tightly controlled, subject to censorship and often told what stories to run.⁸ Ultimately, the propagandistic abuse of newspapers discredited print media and contributed towards the emergence of radio as a preferred news source. On the other hand, by 1941, resistant-printed clandestine tracts and

⁵ Karine Le Bail, *La Musique au pas. Être musicien sous l'Occupation* (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2016), pp. 77–90.

⁶ Sara Iglesias, "L'âme, le cœur et toute l'aspiration d'un peuple": La Critique musicale française, relais de la politique de collaboration?", in Myriam Chimènes and Yannick Simon (eds.), *La Musique à Paris sous l'Occupation* (Paris: Fayard, 2013).

⁷ Marie-Hélène Benoit-Otis and Cécile Quesney, "A Nazi Pilgrimage to Vienna? The French Delegation at the 1941 "Mozart Week of the German Reich"", *Musical Quarterly*, 99/1 (March 2016), 6–59.

⁸ Pierre Albert, *Histoire de la presse*, 11th ed. (Paris: PUF, 2010), pp. 104–5.

newspapers like *Musiciens d'aujourd'hui* were denouncing the collaboration of certain actors in French musical life in print. This is a rather different category of criticism that should also be factored into considerations of writing on music during the war.

The beginning of the Occupation saw rising newspaper circulation stimulated by a population eager for news on rationing, prisoners of war and movement on the fronts. This initial boom in popular dailies was followed by a decline from the autumn of 1940 until 1942. From then on, the number of periodicals in print remained relatively stable to the end of the Occupation, although paper shortages caused formats to shrink dramatically in late 1943 and 1944.⁹ Even with the war over, supplies continued to be scarce: and most dailies were limited to a single, small recto-verso page until the lifting of paper restrictions in June 1946.¹⁰

The space regularly devoted to music criticism in the best-circulated popular news dailies (*Paris-Soir*, *Le Petit Parisien*, *Le Matin* and *L'Œuvre*) was minimal. Although a few feuilleton-length columns persisted at the beginning of the war, notably in *L'Œuvre*, dailies generally dedicated a few short paragraphs to each review, giving marked preference to the genres of *chanson* and music hall, followed by opera, operetta and ballet. Reviews of symphonic or chamber music concerts were scarce, and these were often devoted to special German-organised events. Critics at popular dailies included Georges Pioch and Marcel Brunel¹¹ at *L'Œuvre*; Alain Borchard at *Le Petit Parisien*; and Louis Blanquie, Paul Le Flem and Charles Quinel at *Le Matin*. Other daily and weekly newspapers also published music criticism, such as Marcel Delannoy and Robert Bernard's columns for *Les Nouveaux temps*,¹² Emile Vuillermoz's writing for *Candide* and José Bruyr's column for *Tout et tout*. Music criticism could also be found in weekly and monthly literary and cultural papers printed during the Occupation, such as the *Cahiers franco-allemands* or *La Nouvelle revue française*.¹³ Beyond these general sources, two specialised revues published during the Occupation merit further note here: *L'Information musicale* and *Comœdia*.

⁹ Jean-François Picard, 'Tableaux des tirages de la presse nationale de 1803 à 1944', in Pierre Albert, Gilles Feyel and Jean-François Picard (eds.), *Documents pour l'histoire de la presse nationale aux XIXe et XXe siècles* (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 1973).

¹⁰ Yves-Marc Aichenbaum, *Combat 1941-1974. Une utopie de la Résistance, une aventure de presse*, new ed. (Paris: Gallimard, 2013), p. 287.

¹¹ Pseudonym of Marcel Emile Blondel.

¹² Cécile Quesney, 'Compositeurs français à l'heure allemande (1940-1944): le cas de Marcel Delannoy', unpublished PhD dissertation, Université Paris-Sorbonne/Université de Montréal (2014), 213-29, 330-7.

¹³ Sara Iglesias, *Musicologie et Occupation. Science, musique et politique dans la France des "années noires"* (Paris: Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2014), pp. 80-3.

L'Information musicale

The composer and critic Robert Bernard, long associated with the suspended *La Revue musicale*, published the first issue of a new weekly music magazine, *L'Information musicale*, on 22 November 1940. *L'Information musicale* was virtually the only specialised music publication of significance that appeared during the Occupation, and featured a weekly concert agenda accompanied by numerous short reviews. Although Bernard turned to many of *La Revue musicale*'s former contributors to create *L'Information musicale*, he pragmatically chose to occupy the former niche of the suspended *Le Guide du concert* in terms of its function, tone and target audience.¹⁴ Bernard had initially announced in-depth articles on music history for *L'Information musicale*, but these were soon abandoned as paper restrictions caused the magazine to shrink from thirty-two pages in 1940 to four in 1944. A host of critics and composers active both before and after the war contributed articles and reviews to *L'Information musicale*. Although editorial secretary Guy Ferchaud and other contributors praised the cultural policies of Alfred Cortot and the German occupiers, much of *L'Information musicale* was given over to concert announcements and reviews of a relatively independent tone.¹⁵ It is a valuable resource to researchers on musical life during the Occupation.

Comœdia

Comœdia was a Paris-based cultural newspaper that existed as a daily from 1907 to 1937, apart from during the First World War. Reappearing as a weekly on 21 June 1941 and printed at 30,000 to 46,000 copies per week,¹⁶ the wartime version of *Comœdia* chronicled theatre, literature, fine arts and fashion and was illustrated on nearly all of its six to eight pages until its final issue on 5 August 1944. *Comœdia* became available by subscription in the Unoccupied Zone beginning in the fall of 1941 and also regularly featured stories on musical life in provincial cities.

Recent scholarship has presented contrasting portraits of *Comœdia*. Olivier Gouranton suggests that the wartime politics of *Comœdia*'s director, René Delange, were ambiguous, underlines the revue's editorial freedom and

¹⁴ Myriam Chimènes, 'L'Information musicale: "parenthèse" de *La Revue musicale*?', *La Revue des revues*, 24 (1997), 91–110; Yannick Simon, 'Les périodiques musicaux français pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale', *Fontes artis musicae*, 49/1–2 (2002), 73.

¹⁵ Chimènes, 'L'information musicale', 93–4.

¹⁶ Olivier Gouranton, 'Comœdia. Un journal sous influences', *La Revue des revues*, 24 (1997), 111; Picard, 'Tableaux des tirages', 78. Both sources base their information on data found in the Archives de la Préfecture de Police de Paris, B/A 1713.

remarks upon the broad range of intellectuals from Le Corbusier to Jean-Louis Barrault that contributed to the revue.¹⁷ Yannick Simon presents a more critical reading, noting that the new *Comœdia* was founded in a ‘collaborationist perspective’ with the participation of the Institut Allemand. Indeed, each issue featured a page of articles celebrating the spirit of a ‘New Europe’ (‘Connaître l’Europe’) in conformance with the policies of the German occupiers. Sara Iglesias confirms that *Comœdia*’s reappearance corresponded to the German strategy of *Tarnung*, or camouflage, in which a previously renowned French publication was revived under French editors but controlled by German interests – offering the revue *Beaux-Arts* as another example of this strategy.¹⁸

Arthur Honegger was the most prominent among *Comœdia*’s wartime music critics, and perhaps the best-known living composer in France at that time.¹⁹ His articles are marked by frequent harangues against unimaginative concert programmes and repeated calls for the revival of works by French composers he considered undeservedly neglected.²⁰ The political implications of Honegger’s critical writing, compounded with his general visibility during the war and his participation in the Vienna Mozart Week, likely caused the dip in his popularity during the political account settling that followed the Liberation.²¹ Nevertheless, Honegger was an undeniably privileged observer of musical life during the Occupation. Unwilling to abandon technical musical vocabulary, his reviews preserve a composer’s vision of the works they discuss, from repertory warhorses to his praise for the latest works of Olivier Messiaen.

Other regular contributors of music criticism to *Comœdia* included Gustave Fréjaville, primarily writing on music hall and cabaret; Pierre Leroi, a frequent chronicler of concerts and recitals, but also author of propaganda for the ‘Connaître l’Europe’ page of the paper; the multifaceted composer Arthur Hoérée, writing articles on musical life, operetta, record reviews and, especially, extensive film reviews which devoted a special place to music; and the composer Tony Aubin, who began writing a regular column on musical premieres in 1942.

A New Beginning?

As France was liberated, a series of rulings known as the *Ordonnances de 1944* were issued by the free French between May and November 1944 to assure the

¹⁷ Gouranton, ‘*Comœdia*’, 111–12. ¹⁸ Iglesias, *Musicologie et Occupation*, pp. 79–80.

¹⁹ Yannick Simon, *Composer sous Vichy* (Lyon: Symétrie, 2009), pp. 262–83. ²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 278–9.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 264–98; Leslie Sprout, *The Musical Legacy of Wartime France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), pp. 38–79.

political plurality and purification or purge (*épuration*) of the nation's press. Periodicals that had promoted political collaboration with the occupiers or that had been directly under German control were eliminated, and their infrastructures were transferred to new enterprises, frequently the new, public versions of formerly clandestine Resistance publications.²² The years immediately following the war saw an impressive multiplication of new daily titles that reached an unsustainable high-water mark in 1946 before dropping sharply into the 1950s. The decline in the number of titles printed in France has continued, albeit at a slower rate, ever since.²³

In the wake of the war, journalists, critics, composers and musicians suspected of collaborationist activities were often tried before multiple civil and professional tribunals in divisive hearings. Some felt their professions were unfairly targeted for their extreme visibility, while others held that the courts were too indulgent.²⁴ Beginning in the fall of 1944, a debate on the severity of the *épuration* raged between François Mauriac at *Le Figaro* and Albert Camus at *Combat*.²⁵ Some journalists were executed and others were sentenced to hard labour, while others received little or no punishment. Professional tribunals approved new press credentials and could effectively prevent journalists from working. In both music and journalism, severe retribution was reserved for a symbolic few – although one could be banned from the profession for life, the vast majority of probations lasted from six months to two years. Many music critics active during the war soon returned to their former occupations, and none were disciplined for their writing on music alone, an activity many claimed was necessary to earning a living.²⁶ *Le Monde* critic René Dumesnil painted an optimistic and consolatory vision of the recent past in an article on wartime musical life in France, translated for Anglophone readers, in which he claimed that 'resistance to German oppression' had 'existed in every French heart'.²⁷ This sort of whitewashing reflected a relatively widespread desire in certain sectors of French society, one encouraged by the politics of General de Gaulle, to move beyond the divisive years of the *épuration* and present a unified and honourable image of France as the nation moved forward within the new geopolitical constellations of the Cold War. Leslie Sprout has traced the complex debates and political tensions of the post-war years as they

²² Albert, *Histoire de la presse*, p. 118.

²³ Jean-Marie Charon, *La Presse en France de 1945 à nos jours* (Paris: Seuil, 1991), p. 94; Albert, *Histoire de la presse*, p. 119.

²⁴ Christian Delporte, 'L'Épuration des journalistes: polémiques, mythes, réalités', *Matériaux pour l'histoire de notre temps*, 39–40 (1995), 28–31.

²⁵ Pierre Assouline, *L'Épuration des intellectuels* (Brussels: Complexe, 1996), p. 28.

²⁶ Quesney, 'Compositeurs français à l'heure allemande', 215–16.

²⁷ René Dumesnil, 'French Music During the Years of War', *The American Society Legion of Honor Magazine*, 17/2 (1946), 369–90, notably 374.

manifested themselves in Paris' concert halls and newspapers, focusing on how critical polemics on the aesthetic future of new French music, although polarised around the figures of Stravinsky and Messiaen, were also 'ostensibly trading insinuations about collaboration and wartime guilt'.²⁸

The 1944–45 musical season may have been artistically intense, but there was little space for criticism in the reduced format of news dailies and weeklies. Moreover, specialised musical publications did not immediately return to newsstands. In February of 1946, Claude Rostand noted that the government had seen fit to grant paper to musical periodicals a full year after the Liberation and in the wake of concessions to 'crosswords, papers for fishermen and *boules* players, fashion albums, suggestive publications and a number of poetic revues of prolix obscurity'.²⁹ Still, Rostand applauded the return of pre-war titles like *Le Guide du concert*³⁰ and the *Revue musicale*, as well as the creation of new publications like *La Revue des Jeunesses musicales de France*, *Contrepoints*, *Images musicales* and *Opéra*.³¹ The same month, *La Revue musicale* published a list of music critics working for some fourteen Parisian dailies, sixteen weekly newspapers or magazines and mentioning *Musique et Radio*,³² *Radio 46* and *L'Éducation musicale* in addition to the titles cited by Rostand.³³

The Decline of the Composer-Critic?

The Occupation marked the end of an era for the composer-critic. Although a handful of composers, including Honegger, continued work as critics in the years following the Second World War, their numbers dropped sharply following the Liberation and would dwindle into the 1950s and 1960s. Valérie Dufour posits that the reasons for this decline include the possibility of other, more stable and intellectually prestigious sources of income offered to composers by institutional teaching positions. She also points out that young composers of the avant-garde increasingly wrote on subjects too technical to interest the average reader.³⁴ Dufour singles out Pierre Boulez as an example of this increasing specialisation in the profession and of the changing

²⁸ Sprout, *The Musical Legacy*, pp. 151–84, notably p. 156.

²⁹ Claude Rostand, 'Regard sur la presse musicale', *Carrefour* (7 February 1946), 7.

³⁰ *Le Guide de Concert* reappeared on newsstands under the direction of Gabriel Bender in November 1945. This reliable source of short and varied reviews of French musical life continued to exist into the 1970s.

³¹ Rostand, 'Regard sur la presse musicale', 7.

³² A publication that existed before, during, and after the war, Eric Sarnette's *Musique et Radio* (1939–64) deserves further scholarly attention for its rarely cited in-depth reviews of books, recordings, new musical editions and premières.

³³ Supplement, 'La Vie musicale. Échos et nouvelles' to *La Revue musicale*, 198 (1946), v.

³⁴ Valérie Dufour, 'Compositeur et critique musical: De la coïncidence des deux activités. Le Cas de Florent Schmitt', *Bulletin de la classe des Beaux-Arts*, [Belgium], 18/7–12 (2007), 319.

relation of composers to the domain of traditional classical music in general. A few French music critics active since the war have also been composers, for instance, Pierre Petit, but none have been prominent as composers *and* journalists in the image of Paul Dukas, Reynaldo Hahn, Florent Schmitt or Arthur Honegger. In his *Traité de la critique musicale*, published in 1946, Armand Machabey argued that composers, with their strong personal opinions, did not make the sort of impartial critics that the educated public deserved. Machabey also decried a decline in the music journalism of daily papers since the turn of the century and placed his hopes in the ‘*haute musicographie*’ of publications like the *Revue musicale*.³⁵

After the war, composer-critics were gradually supplanted by professional music journalists who made their living writing for multiple publications, sometimes also working for radio, and later, television. Composers continued to be solicited for their opinions on cultural life in interviews and profiles, but they were no longer the central players in enterprises of music journalism. In early 1950, when *Combat* interviewed major figures of France’s musical community on the state of French opera, its interlocutors, placed on a plane of equal importance, were largely composers *or* critics, not both. Those in the latter category included *Le Monde*’s literary critic Robert Kemp (Robert Dezarnaux), the same paper’s music critic, René Dumesnil, *Carrefour*’s Claude Rostand, *Paris-Inter*’s Gérard Michel and *Le Figaro*’s Bernard Gavoty. Critics also came to play an important role in political decisions. When André Malraux created a committee to evaluate the state of French musical life in 1962, the critics René Dumesnil, Robert Siohan and Claude Rostand figured on the committee alongside prominent composers and administrators.³⁶

Combat

Appearing in its new format in August 1944, *Combat* was one of several new Parisian dailies that first existed as a clandestine Resistance newspaper. It would last much longer than most of its peers, continuing to appear until 1974. In spite of space restrictions, *Combat* included cultural content shortly after it first appeared, with the first weekly column on music by Roland-Manuel (the pen name of Roland Alexis Manuel Lévy) printed on Saturday, 4 November 1944. Yves-Marc Ajchenbaum’s study of *Combat* portrays Roland-Manuel’s music writing as a sort of respite from the social tensions

³⁵ Armand Machabey, *Traité de la critique musicale* (Paris: Richard-Masse, 1946), pp. 125–34, 199–203.

³⁶ Eric Drott, *Music and the Elusive Revolution: Cultural Politics and Political Culture in France, 1968–1981* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), p. 213.

that dominated the paper's content, but closer reading reveals otherwise.³⁷ Already in November 1944, Roland-Manuel described the political tensions that surfaced in audiences of Parisian concerts. Not unlike Honegger before him, he called upon Parisian symphonic societies (which he likened to aristocratic *émigrés* of the French Revolution, remembering all of their wartime suffering, but learning nothing from the experience) to strive for greater variety and venture beyond Ravel, Debussy and Dukas when programming French music. He pointed out that the average twenty-year-old in 1944 knew only the music that the Propaganda-Staffel had allowed them to hear.³⁸ In debates spawned by the Stravinsky Festival of 1945 (six concerts played by the Orchestre national from January to July), Roland-Manuel defended Stravinsky, whose neo-classical works were interrupted by protests from the young students of Messiaen, including Boulez and Serge Nigg.³⁹ Roland-Manuel only wrote for *Combat* for a few years before moving on to teach at the Paris Conservatoire and work in cultural administration.

Social tension marked the France of the late 1940s. The nation was rocked by massive strikes, and torn between the American-orchestrated Marshall Plan and the programme of the French Communist Party (at the height of its power and still closely aligned with central policy-making in the Soviet Union). Serge Nigg's political convictions led him to abandon twelve-tone techniques and adhere to the Prague Manifesto of 1948 as a member of the Association internationale de musiciens progressistes.⁴⁰ Nigg's political engagement, like that of several of his colleagues, would ultimately extend beyond his creative work to take the form of writing on music for the public forum, notably in publications associated with the Communist Party like *Les lettres françaises*.⁴¹ Such alliances marked new dividing lines in the musical landscape that further complicated aesthetic and political divisions created during the Occupation and *épuration*. These became apparent in the face of anti-Communist initiatives like the Œuvre du XX^e siècle, a cultural festival organised by the United States in Paris in 1952.

Contrepoints and *Polyphonie*

The post-war years also saw the birth of two specialised, rather more intellectual music journals – *Contrepoints* (1946–53) and *Polyphonie* (1947–56) – that

³⁷ Ajchenbaum, *Combat 1941–1974*, p. 297.

³⁸ Roland-Manuel, 'La Musique', *Combat* (11 November 1944), 2.

³⁹ Sprout, *The Musical Legacy*, pp. 151–84, particularly, pp. 166–72.

⁴⁰ Mark Carroll, *Music and Ideology in Cold War Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 37–58; Michèle Alten, *Musiciens français dans la guerre froide (1945–1956)* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2000), pp. 75–94.

⁴¹ Sprout, *The Musical Legacy*, pp. 179–80.

marked, each in its own way, a rebirth in thinking and writing on music in post-war France.⁴² In spite of their comparatively small readerships, they had a significant impact on the musical community at large, comparable to that of the later *Musique en jeu* in the 1970s.⁴³ The title of *Contrepoints*, founded by Fred Goldbeck in 1946, made reference to the diversity of subjects and opinions that Goldbeck intended to present.⁴⁴ *Contrepoints'* range of authors and subject matter marked a stark contrast with Occupation-era publications, notably the landmark article 'La Propagande allemande et la musique', written by Marc Pincherle, also a critic for *Le Progrès* and *Les Nouvelles littéraires*, and one of the rare musicologists who chose to stop writing during the war.⁴⁵ Later issues of *Contrepoints* included contributions from a range of figures including John Cage, Pierre Boulez, Virgil Thomson and Pierre Souvtchinsky. *Polyphonie*, founded by André Souris, focused more explicitly on exploring diverse currents of contemporary music. Although the review had its origins in much earlier projects, Cécile Quesney indicates it was quite likely inspired by the success of *Contrepoints*.⁴⁶ *Polyphonie*, like later issues of *Contrepoints*, immediately adapted the practice of organising its issues around a central theme. Contributors to *Polyphonie* included a mix of influential thinkers and composers who would mark the second half of the twentieth century, including Boris de Schloezer, Pierre Boulez, René Leibowitz and Luigi Dallapiccola.

Opéra

Emile Vuillermoz was already an established influential critic and author on subjects relating to music and cinema well before the Second World War. Although his association with collaborationist enterprises tarnished his reputation following the Liberation,⁴⁷ after a hiatus he later wrote for *Opéra*, a weekly cultural newspaper clandestinely founded by Jacques Chabannes during the war, which would be renamed *Arts Spectacles* in 1952. *Opéra's* earlier contributors included Louis Aubert and Louis Beydts (both composers of a certain age), but also the younger Marcel Landowski and Jean Barreyre

⁴² Cécile Quesney, 'Les Revues d'après-guerre: notes sur *Contrepoints* et *Polyphonie*', in Laurent Fenechrou and Alain Poirier (eds.), *De la Libération au Domaine musical: Dix ans de musique en France (1944-1954)* (Paris: Vrin, 2019).

⁴³ On the importance of *Musique en jeu*, a quarterly journal founded by Dominique Jameux, published from 1970 to 1978, see Nicolas Donin, 'Le Moment *Musique en jeu*', *Circuit: musiques contemporaines*, 20/1-2 (2010), 25-31.

⁴⁴ Already a prominent critic in France between the wars, Goldbeck's Jewish origins led him to take refuge in Spain during the war; see Iglesias, *Musicologie et Occupation*, p. 359.

⁴⁵ Iglesias, *Musicologie et Occupation*, pp. 359, 363.

⁴⁶ Quesney, 'Les Revues d'après-guerre', forthcoming.

⁴⁷ Iglesias, *Musicologie et Occupation*, pp. 302, 335, 372; Le Bail, *La Musique au pas*, pp. 99, 194.

(writing on music hall and cabaret), not to mention occasional pieces from Antoine Goléa, Bernard Gavoty and René Dumesnil. By 1950, *Opéra* featured a full page of music criticism, with Vuillermoz's feuilleton-length tribune and regular columns by Bernard Gavoty, Jacques Bourgeois and Pierre Guitton. Among the younger generation of contributors to *Opéra's* continuation as *Arts Spectacles* were the ubiquitous Boris Vian, writing on jazz, and Henry-Louis de La Grange.

Carrefour

Carrefour (subtitled *La semaine en France et dans le monde*) was a weekly paper devoted to news and cultural issues that was published from 1944 to 1977. The paper's diverting content and numerous political cartoons likened it to satirical papers such as *Le Canard enchaîné*. The entertaining and opinionated Claude Rostand served as one of *Carrefour's* first music critics. Rostand proved sceptical of any sort of paratextual 'propaganda' that might accompany music – dismissing as superfluous the programmes and notes associated with the music of composers from Messiaen to Shostakovich. Christian Mégret wrote on *chanson*, *variétés* and other popular genres for *Carrefour* for nearly the entire length of its existence. The progressive Antoine Goléa, in many ways a sort of anti-Gavoty, was appointed critic at *Carrefour* in 1958. Goléa was also a radio host and wrote for a number of other publications including *Témoignage chrétien* and *Diapason*. Today he is best remembered for his interest in contemporary music, his interviews with composers and for his writing on opera and vocal repertoires.

Survivors: *Le Figaro* and *Le Monde*

Although *Le Figaro* and *Le Temps* were certainly not France's most popular newspapers between the wars, they were the major daily papers read by the elite of the Third Republic. With *L'Humanité*, they are among the few French national dailies reborn after the war that have remained in print to the present day, persisting in the case of *Le Figaro* and metamorphosing in the case of *Le Temps*, which became *Le Monde*.

Le Figaro has been published with relative continuity since the nineteenth century. Although the paper continued to be printed during the Occupation, it was able to continue using its title when it reappeared in 1944 because its staff had fled Paris for the Unoccupied Zone, where it worked under the jurisdiction of the Vichy puppet government rather than being directly controlled by the German occupiers. When the German army occupied the whole

of France in November 1942, *Le Figaro*'s director Pierre Brisson chose to scuttle the paper instead of submitting to German control.⁴⁸ By contrast, *Le Monde*'s ancestor, the austere diplomatic paper *Le Temps*, the prestige of which de Gaulle wished to salvage, had to undergo a post-war makeover.⁴⁹ The format and content of *Le Monde* were extremely similar to those of the former *Le Temps* and represented both a continuation of the old institution's prestige and a political renewal under the new direction of Hubert Beuve-Méry.

Today, *Le Monde* is France's centre-left newspaper of record. In recent years, the paper's editorial line has perceptibly shifted leftward, whereas *Le Figaro* has moved from a traditionalist centre-right to become a more sharply defined mouthpiece for Les Républicains, the political party of former president Nicolas Sarkozy (formerly known as the UMP). The increasing political polarisation of France's two major national dailies results from their need for outside sources of revenue and from the politics of their investors. In the seventy years since the war, both papers have devoted significant space to music criticism.

Before the war, both papers consolidated music criticism into weekly or bi-weekly feuilletons compiled by respected senior composers born in the early days of the Third Republic: Reynaldo Hahn at *Le Figaro* and Florent Schmitt at *Le Temps*. Following the war, the profile of the papers' lead critics changed – the relatively young Bernard Gavoty took over at *Le Figaro* and the rather more senior critic and literary expert René Dumesnil took over at *Le Monde*. While not composers, both men were public intellectual figures in their own right. Although they occasionally printed longer feuilletons, they also maintained a frequent presence in their papers by writing shorter reviews of concerts and recordings alongside other less prominently featured critics, often specialists of genres other than classical music. Since the end of these critics' respective reigns, the former dominance of classical music in the pages they once directed has subsided.

Bernard Gavoty and His Successors at *Le Figaro*

When *Le Figaro* reappeared after the Liberation, Reynaldo Hahn, knowing he would soon become director of the Paris Opera, passed the torch to the young, Jesuit-educated organist Bernard Gavoty, whose first review appeared

⁴⁸ The symbolic verb choice of 'scuttle' (*saborder*) to describe the shuttering of papers printed in the Unoccupied Zone upon the extension of the German occupation in 1942 is linked by metaphor with Vichy's choice to scuttle the French fleet in the harbour of Toulon on 27 November 1942.

⁴⁹ Jean-Noël Jeanneney, *Les Grandes heures de la presse qui ont fait l'histoire* (Paris: Flammarion, 2013), pp. 126–8.

five days later. Gavoty had caught Hahn's attention during the interwar years, but only began working regularly as a critic during the Occupation, writing reviews for *L'Information musicale* and becoming involved as a lecturer for the hugely influential *Jeunesses musicales de France*.⁵⁰ Gavoty recalled that Hahn closely supervised his progress and served as a mentor during his first year at *Le Figaro*, and although he would use his real name when writing for other publications, he signed his columns for *Le Figaro* as 'Clarendon' until his death in 1981, perhaps in deference to Hahn, who had chosen his pseudonym.⁵¹

In 1948, just a few years after beginning at *Figaro*, Gavoty began creating programmes on classical music for French radio and later, television. Through his work in broadcast media, notably on the television shows *Les grands interprètes* and *Au cœur de la musique*, he was the privileged interviewer of celebrated performers such as Maria Callas, Arthur Rubinstein and Mstislav Rostropovitch. Gavoty also wrote for other publications including *Images musicales* and *Opéra*. Today he is perhaps best known for launching the post-war debate on the music of Messiaen, which came to be known by the subtitle of his polemical article: 'Le Cas Messiaen'.⁵² A sceptical, antagonistic attitude towards the more progressive musical styles that emerged in the post-war years, notably that of Boulez and other post-Webernian serialists, came to be a trademark of Gavoty's critical writing.

Before Gavoty's death in 1981, the traditionalist composer Pierre Petit, who had built a successful career hosting programmes for French radio and television, began working as a classical music critic for *Le Figaro* in 1975. Jacques Doucelin (classical) and Georges Tabet (rock, jazz) also wrote on music for *Figaro* during the 1970s. It is worth noting that, during this period, reviews of non-classical genres were comparatively rare and often devoted to old and even deceased figures in their fields: a sample from 1975 yields only very short pieces on Duke Ellington's orchestra playing at the Salle Pleyel and Chuck Berry in concert at the Olympia.⁵³ But even the conservative *Figaro* gradually evolved, with reviews of popular genres by Jean-Luc Wachthausen appearing more frequently in the 1980s. More recently, Christian Merlin and Bertrand Dicale have written for *Le Figaro* on classical and other genres, respectively.

⁵⁰ Chimènes, 'L'Information musicale', 97. Although there is not room to examine it in detail here, it is important to underline the impact of criticism in the various publications of *Jeunesses Musicales de France* (*Journal musical français*, etc.) towards educating a new generation of classical concert-goers in the post-war years.

⁵¹ Bernard Gavoty, *Anicroches* (Paris: Buchet/ Chastel, 1979), pp. 19–21.

⁵² Bernard Gavoty, 'Musique et mystique. Le "Cas" Messiaen', *Études* (October 1945), 21–37.

⁵³ Georges Tabet, 'Rock. Chuck Berry l'inventeur', *Le Figaro* (26 February 1975), 24; Georges Tabet, 'L'Orchestre de Duke Ellington', *Le Figaro* (27 February 1975), 25.

René Dumesnil and His Successors at *Le Monde*

René Dumesnil began writing for *Le Monde* directly after the war in a familiar, traditional style connected to the past. His feuilleton on the first Prix de Rome since the Liberation is a veritable chestnut that reads like similar columns penned between the wars, with no reflection on the competition's ever-increasing obsolescence.⁵⁴ By 1950, and in addition to his feuilleton, Dumesnil was also signing about ten shorter concert, record and book reviews per month. These were complemented by Pierre Drouin's reviews of recordings, jazz music and radio broadcasts. Drouin was essentially an economics reporter. As his importance at *Le Monde* grew, he came to sign his reviews of jazz and classical recordings 'Philidor'. Drouin wrote knowledgeably about the jazz landscape in France, crafting his reviews not for the devoted fan, but to the average *Le Monde* reader who might be interested in learning more about jazz – a tone rather different from that of specialised publications like *Jazz Hot*.⁵⁵ Also of note in the *Le Monde* during the 1960s, are the early articles by cultural reporter Yvonne Baby and her reviews of popular music.⁵⁶ The examples of Drouin and Baby show that while classical music criticism in the French media often remained the domain of specialists, it was felt that jazz and popular genres could be attributed to journalists with a broader range of experiences and whose relationship to music was often that of the passionate amateur.

Jacques Lonchampt worked as a classical music critic for *Le Monde* from 1961 to 1991,⁵⁷ taking over from Dumesnil as head critic in 1965. He later looked back upon his life as a critic and remarked that he had always fought to maintain an open mind when faced with new music so that he could identify works of interest and transmit the news to his readers.⁵⁸ An example of such openness can be read in his 1986 review of Steve Reich's *The Desert Music* at the Rencontres de Metz. In spite of the work's mixed reception and a certain dose of scepticism, Lonchampt recognised its merit and called for 'scores of this quality' from American '*compositeurs répétitifs*' to be included on traditional symphonic programmes.⁵⁹ Classical critics active at *Le Monde* since the time of Lonchampt have included Gérard Condé, Alain Lompech, Anne Rey and, more recently, Renaud Machart, Marie-Aude Roux and Pierre Gervasoni.⁶⁰

⁵⁴ René Dumesnil, 'La Musique. Les Prix de Rome', *Le Monde* (30 September/1 October 1945), 2.

⁵⁵ See for example Pierre Drouin, 'Les Disques. Jazz 1949', *Le Monde* (7 January 1950), 7.

⁵⁶ Xavier Ternisien, 'Disparitions. Journaliste. Pierre Drouin', *Le Monde* (12–13 September 2010), 25.

⁵⁷ Serrou and Lonchampt, filmed interview, *Musique et Mémoires, Jacques Lonchampt*.

⁵⁸ Jacques Lonchampt, *Le Bon plaisir. Journal de musique contemporaine* (Paris: Plume, 1994), pp. 15–16.

⁵⁹ Jacques Lonchampt, "Les Déserts fourmillants de Steve Reich", *Le Monde* (25 November 1986), 16.

⁶⁰ Although there is not room for a complete profile here, *Le Monde de la musique* merits mention as an important monthly musical chronicle that was a joint venture between *Le Monde* and *Télérama* (1979–2009).

Claude Fléouter wrote on rock, *chanson* and other non-classical genres for *Le Monde* from the mid-1960s to the 1980s. His obituary of Janice Joplin shows that even the staid *Le Monde*,⁶¹ though referring to Joplin as a ‘jazz singer’ in the title, was aware that an icon had passed.⁶² Fléouter may not have had the word counts and bylines of Lonchampt, but his articles demonstrate that the hierarchy of genres had weakened considerably since the war. *Cahiers du jazz* founder Lucien Malson also wrote on jazz for *Le Monde* from the 1940s and contributed articles on popular music in general, including an anthropologically toned piece on the rise of nightclubs and the difficulties of being a DJ (explaining the new term for *Le Monde*’s readers).⁶³ Francis Marmande has been a regular contributor on jazz to *Le Monde* since the 1980s.

The Rise of the Magazine

Although illustrated news magazines were popular in France from the beginning of the century, as a media market distinct from the newspaper, French magazines began to diversify in the 1930s, truly took off following the Liberation and peaked in the 1960s and 1970s as advertisers came to prefer them to newspapers.⁶⁴ The heyday of weekly news magazines such as *L’Express*, *Le Nouvel observateur* and *Le Point* also contributed to the decline of the newspaper. The same period saw the birth of specialised magazines devoted to popular musical genres. With a number of publications already devoted to classical music in general and the popularity of the new long-playing records on the rise, publishers turned to special niche magazines devoted to monthly criticism of recordings aimed at the record collector, most notably *Diapason* (1954–) and *Harmonie* (1964–80). *Diapason* continues to be an influential publication within the evolving world of classical music recordings, thanks in part to its comprehensive review of new classical music releases in France. Handsomely illustrated, issues of *Harmonie* were bound like little square paperback books and featured work by critics who would prove influential over the following decades, including Gilles Cantagrel, Harry Halbreich and Claude Samuel. Weekly television guides became popular in the 1950s, and *Télérama*, which still exists today, has long

⁶¹ Only in the past twenty-five years, for example, has *Le Monde* taken to regularly illustrating its articles with photographs and political cartoons.

⁶² Claude Fléouter, ‘Mort de la chanteuse de jazz Janis Joplin’, *Le Monde* (6 November 1970), 28.

⁶³ Lucien Malson, ‘Dans des centaines de discothèques pop’ [*sic*] on achève aussi les jockeys’, *Le Monde* (8 October 1970), 17.

⁶⁴ Jean-Marie Charon, *La Presse magazine* (Paris: La Découverte, 2008), pp. 11, 74. Charon also cites a 2007 study showing that 84 per cent of the French population regularly read magazines, but only 7 per cent regularly read magazines specifically devoted to cultural topics such as music.

been a useful source of cultural criticism. In more recent years, there has also been a trend towards magazine publications aimed at increasingly specific markets, devoted fan bases of specific genres such as *Dreamwest*, *Metallian*, *Obsküre Magazine*, *Tsugi* and others.⁶⁵ A selection of French music magazines is examined below.

Musica

Musica was a monthly magazine on classical music (1954–66) that adopted the title of a previous illustrated publication that had had some success before the First World War (1902–14) and would come to be associated with the publications of the *Jeunesses musicales de France* youth movement. Handsomely illustrated with colour images but still affordable, *Musica* was written by a who's who of music criticism in mid-century France (Bruyr, Dumesnil, Goléa, Lonchamp, Machabey, Rostand and Vuillermoz, among others). The magazine published articles on music history, composer profiles and lightweight analyses of music (nevertheless illustrated with musical examples). Although *Musica* devoted a limited space to music criticism, the magazine frequently printed metacritical debates between its regular contributors. Beginning in 1954,

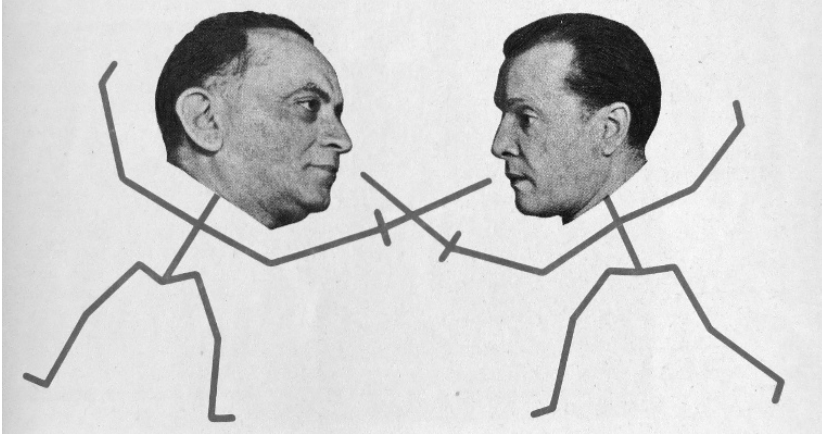


Figure 33.1 Duelling critics Antoine Goléa (left) and Bernard Gavoty (right) in an uncredited photomontage for *Musica* magazine, December 1956.

⁶⁵ Fabien Hein, 'The Issue of Musical Genres in France', in Hugh Dauncey and Philippe Le Guern (eds.), *Stereo: Comparative Perspectives on the Sociological Study of Popular Music in France and Britain* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011).

Armand Machabey and Jacques Feschotte crossed swords over the role of the critic. The dénouement of these exchanges in turn opened the door for Antoine Goléa and Bernard Gavoty to disagree about whether contemporary music needed to be a continually innovating reflection of its time.⁶⁶

Jazz Hot and Writing on Jazz

Jazz Hot, founded by Hugues Panassié and Charles Delaunay in 1935, was the 'official organ of the Hot Club de France' and is one of the earliest and longest-running specialised publications on jazz in France and indeed, the world (it continues to be produced in a free, online format).⁶⁷ Reappearing after the war in October 1945, *Jazz Hot* was soon joined by a host of competing publications, including the *Bulletin du Hot Club de France*, *La Revue du Jazz* and, in 1954, *Jazz Magazine*, among others.

One of *Jazz Hot*'s frequent contributors, Boris Vian, is perhaps best known as the author of the enormously popular novel *L'Écume des jours* and songs like 'Le Déserteur' or 'Je suis snob'. Not only a legendary author and musician, Vian was a veritable graphomaniac. He churned out serious, perceptive jazz criticism between 1945 and his death in 1959 that now occupies three volumes of his complete works. Vian would contribute to *Jazz Hot* for twelve years – not only as an author of texts, but also of photos, caricatures and gossip from the jazz world. Vian also published texts in dozens of other periodicals, and was a true monument of mid-century French music criticism.⁶⁸

Although the standing of jazz as a popular genre was eroded by the arrival of bebop as well as American-style rock and pop in the late 1950s and early 1960s, fans and experts continued to cover and debate jazz's many subgenres, often in increasingly intellectualised terms borrowed from philosophy and literary theory.⁶⁹ In studying associations between free jazz and the events of May 1968, Eric Drott has described how French jazz publications hailed the arrival of free jazz in 1965. Discussion of the jazz avant-garde spread from specialised publications like *Jazz Hot* and *Jazz Magazine* (whose critical positions were often heatedly opposed) to general news sources like *Le Monde* and *Le Nouvel Observateur*.⁷⁰ Drott observes that the defence of new jazz subgenres allowed new critics to establish careers in an already occupied field, and he likens this renewal to that of the post-war defenders of bebop who had

⁶⁶ See *Musica* (November 1954, August 1955, August 1956, September 1956 and December 1956).

⁶⁷ Martin Guerpin, 'Une histoire oubliée: la presse jazz en France (1929–2011)', in Danièle Pistone (ed.), *Recherches sur la presse musicale française* (Paris: Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2011).

⁶⁸ Boris Vian, *Œuvres. Tome huitième*, ed. Claude Rameil (Paris: Fayard, 2001), pp. 423–37.

⁶⁹ Drott, *Music and the Elusive Revolution*, p. 122. ⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 111–23.

similarly defined themselves in terms of an opposition with the past.⁷¹ A comparable phenomenon had occurred in classical music, with figures like Antoine Goléa emerging partly thanks to their reputation as defenders of progressive contemporary music.

Writing on Rock and Other Popular Genres

Although rock began to infiltrate France in the late 1950s, early reviews of the genre in *Jazz Hot* reveal that it was first met with critical incomprehension.⁷² Into the vacuum arrived the fan magazine *Salut les copains* (1962–76). Named after a popular radio show, the tremendously popular and colourful star-oriented content of the magazine was an innovation in French music publications.⁷³ *Salut les copains* was followed by *Rock & Folk* (1966–) and *Best* (1968–95). According to Marc Savev, *Rock & Folk* can be understood as a critical reaction to the less objective fan magazine content of *Salut les copains*, a return to a more traditional critical distance with the musical object.⁷⁴ In January 1968, *Rock & Folk* made it clear that it intended to cover all popular genres, adding the words ‘Pop Music, Rhythm and Blues et Jazz’ underneath its title.

Rock & Folk was initially dominated by the American and British acts that had taken France by storm. Reporting on French rock only emerged well after the 1968 uprisings, in the early 1970s.⁷⁵ Early contributors included Philippe Koechlin (who also wrote for *Rock & Folk*’s parent magazine *Jazz Hot* and the news weekly *Nouvel Observateur*), but also rock criticism pioneers François Jouffa and Jacques Barsamian, who had created a news and music programme called *Campus* in the midst of the 1968 uprisings, as well as Alain Dister, Philippe Constantin and Philippe Garnier.⁷⁶ Since the creation of *Rock & Folk*, other journalistic ventures have aimed to renew the popular music press and have marked the generations that were teenagers at the time of their creation, notably *Les Inrockuptibles* (1986–) and *Technikart* (1991–).

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

⁷² Gilles Verlant (ed.), *Le Rock et La Plume. Une histoire du rock par les meilleurs journalistes français 1960–1975* (Paris: Éditions Hors Collection, 2000), pp. 11–13.

⁷³ On *Salut les copains* and its predecessors see Matthew Pires, ‘The Popular Music Press’, in Hugh Dauncey and Steve Cannon (eds.), *Popular Music in France from Chanson to Techno* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003).

⁷⁴ Marc Savev, ‘Deux exemples de presse musicale jeune en France, de 1966 à 1969: *Salut Les Copains* et *Rock & Folk*’, *Volume!* 3/1 (2004), 5–28, notably 7.

⁷⁵ Drott, *Music and the Elusive Revolution*, pp. 167–78. See also Philippe Teillet, ‘Rock and Culture in France: Ways, Processes and Conditions of Integration’, in Dauncey and Cannon (eds.), *Popular Music in France*.

⁷⁶ Unattributed, ‘Campus sur Europe’, *Rock & Folk* (May 1968), 8. See also Drott, *Music and the Elusive Revolution*, p. 164.

Libération

As its title indicates, *Libération*, the successful daily paper of the new left in the Mitterrandian 1980s, was born out of the 1968 student movement, and was founded as a leftist alternative news daily in 1973, at a time when publications like *Combat* and *Carrefour* were fading. Liberated it was, more so than any French daily paper of a national scope had been before. Employing a casual language, the paper's pages included sexually explicit cartoons, free personal ads and film reviews by Simone de Beauvoir. The *Libération* of the 1970s only printed occasional write-ups of concerts or recordings, and these were dominated by alternative, popular genres favoured by the paper's readers. The young newspaper's critics (Alain Dister, Alain Leiblang, Philippe Conrath, Pierre Goldman, Alain Pacadis) had atypical profiles and wrote pieces that covered a range of cultural issues, including groundbreaking accounts on subjects like the punk scene and gay nightlife.

In an effort to become a viable national daily (and attain financial stability), *Libération's* director Serge July relaunched the paper on 13 May 1981, three days after the election of Mitterrand. This move led to a considerable moderation of the paper's tone. Although many of *Libération's* writers and editors remained the same, the emphasis of its content shifted from political activism to social and cultural reporting. Improvements in circulation followed *Libération's* refoundation, mounting from 40,000 in 1980 to 192,000 in 1988.⁷⁷ The pages of *Libération* in the 1980s saw the triumph of the interview as the preferred format for music reporting. The paper itself also occasionally played a very active role in crafting musical tastes, tracking down and re-editing, for example, recordings of neglected but influential (according to Bayon) French rocker Ronnie Bird.⁷⁸ Since the 1980s, *Libération* has drifted even further from its leftist roots. Its music columns have become less focused on unearthing new trends, while classical music reporting, virtually absent in the paper's first two decades, has taken a place alongside pieces on other genres.

Perspectives

The landscape of music criticism in contemporary France is no longer dominated by newspapers and magazines as it was in the decades following the Second World War, but rather has been diluted across a broad spectrum

⁷⁷ Patrick Eveno, *Histoire de la Presse Française de Théophrase Renaudot à la révolution numérique* (Paris: Flammarion, 2012), pp. 254–5.

⁷⁸ Bayon [Bruno Taravant], 'Ronnie Bird, la compulsion', *Libération* (8 April 1985), 23.

of media that include the Internet and free print media. In France as throughout the world, much of the population has turned to online sources for its news and cultural reporting. In a 2013 study concerning internet usage in France, 78 per cent of those surveyed had internet access in their homes, compared with 54 per cent in 2007 and only 12 per cent in 2000.⁷⁹ In the same survey, although 75 per cent of the French population reported having used the Internet within the past three months, only about 30 per cent of this group reported using the Internet to read online newspapers and magazines. This latter figure reflects a trend that began long before the arrival of the Internet – and seems to confirm the domination broadcast media over print news sources.⁸⁰ A dwindling minority of the French population continues to receive its news via the written word, whether in print or online, a decline that spans and defines the period covered here.

Online publications include alternative webzines, blogs and interactive forums, and provide critical content from authors with a broad range of qualifications, from trained journalists to amateurs and trolls. The Médiathèque of the Cité de la Musique maintains an up-to-date list of active online resources, many of which include criticism and reporting on musical life (blogs, websites of print publications, independent webzines).⁸¹ Recent but influential online subscription-based alternative newspapers like *Rue89 [sic]* include cultural reporting in their offers. An example of traditional criticism within this new format is the column of former *Le Monde de la musique* editor Nathalie Krafft. ‘Drôles de gammes’ takes the form of a blog housed by the larger online presence of the newspaper *Rue89*, and publishes a range of cultural reporting, from criticism to *avant-premières* to obituaries.

Since the first free newspapers were distributed in the Paris Métro in 2002,⁸² free print media have come to surpass greatly the circulation of traditional paid formats. Titles like *Métro*, *20 Minutes*, *À Nous Paris* and *Le Bonbon* are aimed at local urban readerships and propose activities and pastimes in the form of short blurbs. More considerable in scope and content, free cultural papers such as *Cadences* and *La Terrasse* – often distributed to spectators entering theatres and concert halls or left in stands outside of these establishments – publish signed reviews, profiles and interviews alongside concert calendars and paid advertising related to local cultural life.

⁷⁹ Vincent Gombault and Xavier Reif, ‘L’Internet de plus en plus prisé, l’internaute de plus en plus mobile’, *Insee Première*, 1452 (2013), available at www.insee.fr (accessed 3 February 2017).

⁸⁰ Olivier Donnat and Denis Cogneau, *Les Pratiques culturelles des Français 1973–1989* (Paris: La Découverte/La Documentation Française, 1990).

⁸¹ Available at mediatheque.cite-musique.fr (accessed 3 February 2017).

⁸² Jean-Marie Charon, *La Presse quotidienne*, 3rd ed. (Paris: La Découverte, 2013), pp. 22, 47–8.

Although the status, authors and media of information on French musical life have dramatically transformed over the past seventy-five years, it would be inaccurate to say that music criticism is dying.⁸³ Based on current trends, it seems safe to predict that the future of music criticism in France will be increasingly online, interactive, multimedia and international.

⁸³ Moreover, in musicological research, French music criticism is an increasingly popular object of study for groups in France and abroad. These include CELLAM (Université Rennes 2), IReMus (Université Paris-Sorbonne), LaM (Université libre de Bruxelles) and OICRM (Université de Montréal).

Old Divisions and New Debates: Music Criticism in Post-War America

SOPHIE REDFERN

'I do not believe that any mechanical device will put it out of business', wrote the veteran Sunday editor of the *New York Times*, Lester Markel, on the fate of the daily newspaper in 1946.¹ Radio had failed to curb America's appetite for the daily, and Markel was confident that television, then the latest curiosity, would not do so either. Of course, the impact of technological change would, despite Markel's scepticism, be one of the major factors affecting post-war music criticism in the United States. Television changed the nation's habits, particularly in terms of news coverage, while newspapers merged and faltered. In the digital age, the entire print journalism model has been transformed as new platforms emerge and open up opportunities. These changes have combined with the major social and cultural shifts that effectively shattered former boundaries and hierarchies about what music gets criticised. As jazz, pop and rock grew in dominance over the century, whole new spheres of criticism developed and became established. These genres claimed the mainstream, leaving classical music an increasingly marginalised interest.²

The vagaries of the press have dictated the careers of many critics, and so inevitably the newspaper business forms much of the backdrop to this chapter. More generally, the aim has been to highlight some of the principal figures, major points of contention and odd events that shed light on the culture and direction of classical music criticism in America. The primary focus is on New York, and as such it does little to challenge existing accounts, which are dominated by a handful of critics holding leading positions at the city's major publications. Still, despite the geographical limitation, there are some sound reasons for attention to be concentrated here. New York has a unique position at the forefront of not only US but worldwide artistic activity. It is a city that has often set the artistic agenda, both in terms of what is new and what is prestigious. At the same time, it has long been home to some of the country's most august musical institutions – the Metropolitan

¹ David R. Davies, *The Postwar Decline of American Newspapers, 1945–1965* (Westport: Praeger, 2006), p. 4.

² This chapter reflects the common usage of certain phrases: America for the United States, classical music for Western art music, New York for New York City.

Opera House, the New York Philharmonic, Juilliard, Carnegie Hall – and has been a major draw for international artists and companies since the nineteenth century. Moreover, while there is no national press, New York newspapers have the widest circulation nationally.³ Given all these conditions, it is understandable that critics based at its most prominent publications have an outsized position in the musical story of the country. Nevertheless, while this chapter continues to concentrate attention on New York, it does so with a full understanding that any history of music criticism in New York is far from the sum of music criticism in North America. There is considerable scope for research on regional centres that may well challenge, add nuance to and reconfigure the current narrative, nor should it be forgotten that criticism in Canada has its own distinct history.

The Past

In 1946, as the world reckoned with the aftermath of war, the United Nations General Assembly met for the first time, the atomic bomb was tested underwater at Bikini Atoll and Winston Churchill gave his famous ‘Iron Curtain’ speech. Within the world of American music criticism, two events seem to herald a time of change: on 21 July the respected critic Paul Rosenfeld died, and in autumn the final issue of *Modern Music* was published. These can seem small – the death of a critic who never wrote for a major daily and the closure of a specialist music magazine – but both had supported and promoted a whole generation of composers who came of age in the 1920s and 30s and were integral components in the new music scene.

Rosenfeld (1890–1946) had no formal musical background but, according to Aaron Copland, ‘believed passionately in the emergence of an important school of contemporary American composers’.⁴ Writing for magazines including *The Seven Arts*, *Nation*, *New Republic*, *The Dial* and *Vanity Fair*, he was considered essential reading for anyone interested in new music in the twenties (Copland notes how it was in Rosenfeld articles that he first became aware of Ernest Bloch, Roger Sessions and Stravinsky).⁵ Up-and-coming composers championed by Rosenfeld included Carlos Chávez, Lukas Foss, Roy Harris, Leo Ornstein and Copland, while his critical gaze also looked to re-establish a place for maligned artists like Charles

³ As a guide, the six biggest daily newspapers by circulation in 2013 were *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *USA Today* (Virginia), *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Daily News* and *New York Post*; see ‘Top 25 US Newspapers for March 2013’, *Alliance for Audited Media* (30 April 2013), available at auditedmedia.com (accessed 1 August 2018).

⁴ Aaron Copland, ‘Memorial to Paul Rosenfeld’, *Notes*, 4/2 (1947), 148.

⁵ Aaron Copland and Vivian Perlis, *Copland: 1900 through 1942* (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), p. 101.

Ives.⁶ Today, Rosenfeld's writings can seem somewhat flowery, but Mark N. Grant has noted how he was the first critic to write respectfully about new currents in music.⁷ Furthermore, immersed in the artistic world he documented, he acted as part critic, part patron and part agent, sometimes financially supporting the young composers he wrote about (in a move at odds with current ethical practices). Rosenfeld was a critic, but he was also a powerbroker for those on the contemporary scene.

It was through Rosenfeld that Copland first met Minna Lederman (1896–1995), the 'brand-new editor of the brand-new magazine *The League of Composers' Review*', founded in 1924.⁸ Lederman presided over the magazine, which changed its name to *Modern Music* in 1925, for its entire twenty-three-volume, eighty-nine-issue run.⁹ Dominated by contributions from composers, it was a formidable forum for the discussion of new music, as even a snapshot of those who wrote for it indicates: Antheil, Auric, Berg, Bartók, Bernstein, Cage, Carter, Chávez, Copland, Cowell, Roy Harris, Lou Harrison, Krenek, McPhee, Milhaud, Martinů, Prokofiev, Sessions, Schoenberg, Shostakovich, Thomson and Weill all contributed reviews, commentaries and composer profiles. The focus was on the latest musical ideas in the Americas and Europe, and battle lines were regularly drawn, with provocations from one writer often rebutted in a barbed letter from another. Nevertheless, while there was plenty of critical fire and internecine warfare within its covers, the reason for *Modern Music's* existence at all is notable.

It grew out of a need identified by the newly established League of Composers: its concerts were either purposely overlooked by the press or critiqued by those ignorant or inherently hostile to contemporary music.¹⁰ European publications dedicated to documenting and debating new music had been eagerly consumed in New York in the early 1920s, and they showed the level of critical insight and status afforded contemporary music outside of America.¹¹ *Modern Music* was an attempt at a response, a space for the serious

⁶ See Copland, 'Memorial to Paul Rosenfeld', 147–51.

⁷ Mark N. Grant, *Maestros of the Pen: A History of Classical Music Criticism in America* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), p. 288.

⁸ Copland and Perlis, *Copland: 1900 through 1942*, p. 102.

⁹ Key sources on *Modern Music* include Lederman's own *The Life and Death of a Small Magazine* (*Modern Music, 1924–1946*), ISAM Monographs 18 (New York: Institute for Studies in American Music, 1983); Wayne D. Shirley, *Modern Music: An Analytical Index*, eds. William and Carolyn Lichtenwanger (New York: AMS Press, 1976); and Carol Oja (ed.), *Stravinsky in Modern Music (1924–1946)* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1982).

¹⁰ The League of Composers was established for the promotion of new music in 1923. See David Metzger, 'The League of Composers: The Initial Years', *American Music*, 15/1 (1997), 45–69.

¹¹ Lederman lists *La Revue musicale*, *Die Musik*, *La Rassegna musicale*, *Schrifttanz*, *Musikblätter des Anbruch* and *Querschnitt* as the 'imposing European magazines' reaching composers and art dealers in New York (*Life and Death of a Small Magazine*, p. 3).

and considered discussion of new developments in music, and a much-needed platform for its promotion. No school or approach was promoted above any other, but notably absent was any discussion of performers. The stars of the day dominated classical music coverage in the mainstream press, and for Lederman, barring a ‘few illustrious examples’, their reliance on standard repertoire and aversion to new music meant they were ‘beyond the pale’.¹²

Financial pressures eventually caused *Modern Music*’s closure and left those within its orbit in mourning, as Virgil Thomson’s obituary in the *New York Herald Tribune* testifies: ‘Musicians and laymen who are part of the contemporary musical movement will of necessity be moved by this announcement, because *Modern Music* has been for them all a Bible and a new organ, a forum, a source of world information, and a defender of their faith.’¹³ Of course Thomson (1896–1989), composer and critic, was a regular contributor. However, through the praise he lavished on it, he revealed an understanding of both its central value for the future, and also something about his views on composer-critics:

Its twenty-three volumes are history written by the men who made it. For the history of music in any epoch is the story of its composers and of their compositions. Nobody ever tells the story right but the composers themselves . . . Thanks to *Modern Music* the last quarter century has probably a better chance of being written up convincingly than any other, save possibly those years between 1820 and 1845, when Schumann, Berlioz, Liszt, Weber and Jean-Paul Richter all wrote voluminously about their contemporaries.¹⁴

Thomson stated in 1947 what Lederman later also stressed, and it is certainly because of its composer-critics that *Modern Music* is seen as so remarkable.¹⁵ But while its readership at the time was small (3,000 by 1946), Lederman thought it ‘helped erode the then-solid resistance of the American press to what was new and changing in the world of art’.¹⁶ Mainstream newspaper critics were supposedly the enemy of new music – Elliott Carter in 1939 wrote of how ‘critics are not well-informed about American music.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹³ Virgil Thomson, ‘A War’s End’, *New York Herald Tribune* (12 January 1947); reprinted in *Virgil Thomson: Music Chronicles 1940–1954*, ed. Tim Page (New York: The Library of America, 2014). Quotations from *Musical Chronicles* are from the unpaginated e-book edition.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Lederman, *Life and Death of a Small Magazine*, p. 205. For a reflection from 1964, see Eric Salzman, ‘*Modern Music* in Retrospect’, *Perspectives on New Music*, 2/2 (1964), 14–20.

¹⁶ Lederman, *Life and Death of a Small Magazine*, pp. 9, 5. Olin Downes described its closure as ‘distressing news’, but also noted that it was prone to ‘inbreeding and mutual admiration between individuals and cliques of composers’. Downes, ‘Magazine Folding: *Modern Music*, Voice of Composers, to Quit’, *New York Times* (12 January 1947), 7.

How could they be? They do not cover concerts devoted to it¹⁷ – and so further specialised publications attempted to fill the gap left by *Modern Music*.¹⁸ However, new music had become more prominent in the press following the appointment of Thomson to the chief music critic position at the *New York Herald Tribune*. Since 1940, one of *Modern Music*'s own composer-critics had been ensconced in the world of the daily.

Downes, Thomson and the New York Dailies

In the years immediately following the war, the newspaper industry in America briefly flourished; circulation went up and the number of daily newspapers increased too.¹⁹ In New York there were seven dailies that included music criticism: the *Brooklyn Eagle*, *New York Herald Tribune*, *New York Journal-American*, *New York Post*, *New York Sun*, *New York Times* and *New York World-Telegram*.²⁰ (By the late 1960s, only the *Times* and *Post* remained.) The most respected were the *New York Herald Tribune*, known for its literary style and lively arts coverage, and the *New York Times*, which had a bigger circulation but a drier tone (it prided itself on its comprehensiveness). Thomson's tenure at the *Herald Tribune* coincided with the final period of the long career of the *Times* chief critic Olin Downes (1886–1955), a newspaper veteran who joined the *Times* in 1924 after nearly two decades at the *Boston Post* (he started in 1906). Both in position before America entered the war, they were the two most prominent daily critics documenting the New York scene until the mid-1950s; Thomson left the *Herald Tribune* in 1954, while Downes remained at the *Times* until his death in 1955.

Downes is now best remembered for his crucial role in establishing Sibelius's reputation in America. The composer was, in his words, 'the towering symphonic master of today and the prophet of tomorrow', a view in direct opposition to many of those appraising the Finn's music in Europe.²¹ Downes's championing of Sibelius and coolness towards neoclassicism and serialism – in 1942 he condemned Stravinsky's latest scores as 'sterile, feeble,

¹⁷ Quoted in Suzanne Robinson, "'A Ping, Qualified by a Thud': Music Criticism in Manhattan and the Case of Cage (1943–58)", *Journal of the Society for American Music*, 1/1 (2007), 79.

¹⁸ For example, the League of Composers founded the *Composer's News Record* in 1947. It ceased publication in 1949.

¹⁹ Davies, *Postwar Decline*, p. 3.

²⁰ Robinson, "'A Ping, Qualified by a Thud'", 79. These were the ones with music criticism, not the only dailies (other dailies include the *Daily News* and *Mirror*). There was also *PM*, in print 1940–48.

²¹ Olin Downes, 'Classic Master', *New York Times* (3 December 1950), X7. For more, see Glenda Dawn Goss, *Jean Sibelius and Olin Downes: Music, Friendship, Criticism* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1995).

melodically commonplace creations²² – has seen him labelled as against new developments in music, though the reality is more nuanced.²³ What his writings do show is him prizing emotion and rallying against objectivity or compositional method being revered as musical qualities in themselves.

It was, for example, on the basis of emotion that in 1952 Downes revised his view of Honegger's *Jeanne d'Arc au bûcher*, going from considering it an accomplished but superficial work to claiming it to be a work of 'profound feeling as well as dramatic power'.²⁴ Of a performance of Berg's Violin Concerto, his dislike of the composer's approach was tempered by the expressive effect of the score: it was 'in at least the greater part, most poignant and intensely beautiful emotional music'.²⁵ That Downes felt at odds with contemporary thought on valuing emotion is apparent from the quips he slotted into his reviews. In a critique of Leonard Bernstein's Second Symphony, *The Age of Anxiety*, he noted, 'One must be careful in calling for emotion today in music, or he may earn the horrible name of a romanticist.'²⁶ A similar wry comment can be found in a glowing review of Prokofiev's Fifth Symphony.²⁷

To understand the role of *Times* chief critic at the time, it is important to note some practicalities. Downes was head critic of the newspaper with the largest music desk in New York (in the late 1940s, Ross Parmenter, Carter Harman and Howard Taubman were all on staff, while stringers²⁸ added to their number). Furthermore, while Downes was seen to have considerable influence, his status was unusual. Grant has written of how Downes was 'the first *Times* man in whom that power devolved', and the reason was simply the nature of the newspaper business.²⁹ As newspapers folded, there were fewer music critics, meaning greater authority was placed on those who remained.³⁰ Of course, whatever power Downes had, the realities of writing to a deadline must never be forgotten. The TV journalist Daniel Schorr remembered vividly the time he met the critic:

²² Olin Downes, 'Neo-Classicism', *New York Times* (3 February 1942), X7; reprinted as 'The "Neo-Classicism" of the Bright Boys', in Olin Downes, *Olin Downes on Music*, ed. Irene Downes (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1957), p. 306.

²³ Downes would not have considered himself against new music and wrote about his responsibility to composers and new music. See Olin Downes, 'Native Composers and Critics', *New York Times* (4 March 1934), X6.

²⁴ Olin Downes, 'Philadelphia Orchestra, 2 Choirs Join in *Joan of Arc at the Stake*', *New York Times* (19 November 1952), 36; reprinted as 'A Frank Change of Mind about Honegger's *Jeanne d'Arc au bûcher*', in *Downes on Music*, p. 408.

²⁵ Olin Downes, 'Szigeti Is Soloist for Philharmonic', *New York Times* (16 December 1949), 37.

²⁶ Olin Downes, 'Bernstein Offers His Own Symphony', *New York Times* (24 February 1950), 26; reprinted in *Downes on Music*, p. 387.

²⁷ Olin Downes, 'Prokofiev's Fifth Played Here Again', *New York Times* (14 February 1946), 33; reprinted as 'The Finest Russian Symphony in Twenty-Five Years: Prokofiev's Fifth', in *Downes on Music*, p. 338.

²⁸ Freelance journalists. ²⁹ Grant, *Maestros of the Pen*, p. 267. ³⁰ *Ibid.*

Once I was invited to meet with Olin Downes, the most famous critic of his time. In the subway on the way to Times Square, I read a Downes review of a Carnegie Hall performance by the violinist Josef Szigeti. Downes had written that Szigeti's tone was fine, but that the 'profile of his tone' left something to be desired. Awed by the dimension of musical understanding that this indicated, I asked Downes what the line meant. Cheerfully he said, 'Don't give it a second thought. That's just the kind of bullshit you put down when you're up against a deadline'.³¹

Schorr made a call there and then: 'being a music critic was not an honourable profession'.³²

While few now would look to Downes's writing style in admiration (it stands firmly as a testament to its time and the *Times*),³³ his counterpart Virgil Thomson would be quite different.³⁴ Thomson joined the *Herald Tribune*, a 'gentleman's paper', in 1940 and remembered his response to being offered the post: 'I replied that the general standard of music reviewing in New York had sunk so far that almost any change might bring improvement.'³⁵ With a savvy sense of the music business, he also saw an opportunity: 'I thought perhaps my presence in a post so prominent might stimulate performance of my works.'³⁶

Thomson was a major composer by this stage. One of the generation of American composers for whom France held the key to music's future, he studied with Nadia Boulanger, lived in Paris from 1925 to 1940 and had been immersed in the modernist artistic life of that city (befriending Gertrude Stein there and collaborating with her on the operas *Four Saints in Three Acts* and later *The Mother of Us All*). His own music, which ranged from piano sonatas to film scores, showed broad influences including his church background in Kansas City, Missouri and the musical approach of Satie (whom he particularly admired). Before joining the *Herald Tribune* he had written articles for *Modern Music* and *Vanity Fair*, though he was most known for his strident 1939 book *The State of Music*.³⁷ And so, apart from never having written to a deadline, Thomson was a known quantity when he was

³¹ Daniel Schorr, *Staying Tuned: A Life in Journalism* (New York: Pocket Books, 2001), p. 8. ³² *Ibid.*

³³ What now seem dated style policies were strictly enforced until well into the 1970s. See Joseph Horowitz, 'Reflections on the *Times*', *ARTicles* (2002), available at josephhorowitz.com (accessed 1 August 2018).

³⁴ Tim Page has said, 'There isn't a critic out there who will not learn something from reading Virgil Thomson and I would say the same thing about anybody who is really serious about music.' Page interview, 'Critical Condition: Revisiting Composer Virgil Thomson's Masterful Prose', *NPR Music* (15 September 2016), available at www.npr.org (accessed 1 August 2018).

³⁵ Virgil Thomson, *Virgil Thomson* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967), pp. 321–2.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 321.

³⁷ Virgil Thomson, *The State of Music* (New York: William Morrow, 1939); reprinted in *Virgil Thomson: The State of Music and Other Writings*, ed. Tim Page (New York: The Library of America, 2016).

appointed: a forthright and irreverent musical insider who knew both the history of music and its most recent developments. He was also a hugely engaging writer; he described his style as ‘at once sassy and classy’.³⁸

Despite the prominence he would gain as a critic, Thomson never wavered in his assertion that he was a composer who wrote criticism and not a critic who composed. He also never wavered in his views on the authority of composers as critics, repeating to an interviewer in 1985 what he had set out in his *Modern Music* obituary: ‘the best critics have always been the composers’.³⁹ Being a composer obviously coloured what he chose to feature, and the sheer volume of new music that the *Herald Tribune* covered during his tenure is testament to this. He reportedly told those who worked for him to cover ‘every experimental, off-beat, or novel idiom that prepares music for going forward in new ways’.⁴⁰ And it did have an effect. In a revealing study, Suzanne Robinson has shown the impact of Thomson and those he employed on the reception of John Cage’s music in New York between 1943 and 1958.⁴¹ Not only were Thomson and his coterie responsible for writing more than a third of the 150 reviews of Cage’s music published during this period, there was a marked decline in how favourably Cage’s music was covered after Thomson left his post.⁴²

If those perceived to be propelling music forward gained his approval, the business of classical music in New York was a constant target of his ire. Attacking everything from the stolid nineteenth-century Austro-German fare that formed the diet of the major orchestras to the racketeering he witnessed being played out by behind-the-scenes executives – Arthur Judson, business manager of the Philharmonic and Columbia Artists, was a particular bête noire⁴³ – his position afforded him a platform to champion and lampoon. In his first column he took on the Philharmonic: ‘The menu was routine, the playing ditto’.⁴⁴ With a sweeping dismissal of Sibelius’s Second Symphony included too, Thomson simultaneously took aim at one of New York’s most prestigious organisations and the musical taste of

³⁸ Virgil Thomson, ‘Preface’ to *From Music Reviewed 1940–1954*; reprinted in *Music Chronicles*.

³⁹ Virgil Thomson, interview with Bruce Duffie (1985), available at www.bruceduffie.com/vt.html (accessed 1 August 2018).

⁴⁰ Quoted in Robinson, “‘A Ping, Qualified by a Thud’”, 80.

⁴¹ Ibid. For more on the Thomson and Cage relationship, see Anthony Tommasini, *Virgil Thomson: Composer on the Aisle* (New York and London: Norton, 1997), pp. 440–50.

⁴² Robinson, “‘A Ping, Qualified by a Thud’”.

⁴³ Thomson, ‘The Philharmonic Crisis’, *New York Herald Tribune* (9 February 1947); reprinted in *Music Chronicles*. Judson at one point threatened to pull advertising from the paper unless Thomson was removed (see Tommasini, *Virgil Thomson*, pp. 343–5).

⁴⁴ Virgil Thomson, ‘Covering the Orchestras’, *New York Herald Tribune* (11 October 1940); reprinted in *Music Chronicles*.

Downes.⁴⁵ Unsurprisingly, celebrated performers fared little better (following the *Modern Music* stance). Their role in perpetuating the miserable state of programming and desire to dazzle the public with their technical wares seemed to cause both amusement and frustration. Vladimir Horowitz's playing gave the impression that 'Brahms was a sort of flippant Gershwin who had worked in a high-class night club', while Jascha Heifetz, who 'can fiddle', seemed to define himself by his polish: 'To ask anything else of him is like asking tenderness of the ocelot.'⁴⁶ Thomson wrote his own headlines; the Heifetz review was titled 'Silk-Underwear Music'.

As to what extent Thomson's own agenda affected his judgement, he always claimed an air of objectivity, stressing that his job was to describe an event for his readers (some of his reviews see him address them directly).⁴⁷ The reviewer's opinion would come through he claimed, but ultimately description was 'more important than the estimate of value'.⁴⁸ Despite this, Thomson's biases were often barely concealed. There were conflicts of interest at every turn and he did little to minimise them, instead exploiting and revelling in his platform. He would lavish warm praise on his friends' music and on those who performed or commissioned his music, while pouring scorn on those he had a spat with. He also consistently demonstrated his preference for French and American music over Germanic.⁴⁹

Thomson's views and approach were passed on to those he recruited, and an important, if unsurprising, aspect of his tenure was that he only employed composer-critics. Over the years a formidable roster of *ex-Modern Music* contributors including Arthur Berger, Paul Bowles, Peggy Glanville-Hicks, Lou Harrison and Lester Trimble wrote for the newspaper (Carter and Cage contributed occasional articles too).⁵⁰ They all reviewed each other's music, so the question of bias looms large. As for their place at the *Herald Tribune*, critic Timothy Mangan, who has collected the writing of Paul Bowles (1910–99), describes the Bowles's role as one of a 'critical infantryman',

⁴⁵ Thomson described the symphony as 'vulgar, self-indulgent and provincial beyond all description'; *ibid.*

⁴⁶ Virgil Thomson, 'Master of Distortion and Exaggeration', *New York Herald Tribune* (26 October 1942), and 'Silk-Underwear Music', *New York Herald Tribune* (31 October 1940); both reprinted in *Music Chronicles*.

⁴⁷ See Thomson's reference to 'my readers' in 'More Beecham' (14 April 1941), 'Levant Tough and Tender' (18 February 1942), and 'Mélisande' (30 January 1944), all *New York Herald Tribune*; reprinted in *Music Chronicles*.

⁴⁸ Virgil Thomson, 'The Music Reviewer and His Assignment', Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the National Institute of Arts and Letters (1954); reprinted in *Music Chronicles*.

⁴⁹ See Karen L. Carter, 'Virgil Thomson on Modern Music: Critical Writings in the *New York Herald Tribune*', unpublished MA thesis, McMaster University (1990).

⁵⁰ Robinson, "'A Ping, Qualified by a Thud'", 87 n. 34. See also the recently released CD *Composer-Critics of the New York Herald Tribune*, Other Minds Records, OM 1024-2 (2017). It features remastered recordings drawn from a series of LPs Thomson coordinated in the 1950s for Columbia Records.

often ‘relegated to a peculiar kind of critical hell, reviewing the concerts of wannabes, hopefuls, and has-beens attempting to make their names with a New York recital’.⁵¹ Thomson rarely intervened on articles, but Bowles did remember him impressing his philosophy:

What you’re doing is reporting on an event, like a fire in the Bronx or something . . . you don’t say, ‘I didn’t like the color of the fire. I don’t like the smell of the burning rubber.’ Don’t tell what you like or what you don’t like because no one cares.⁵²

The extent to which Thomson followed his own advice is debatable.

Another member of Thomson’s infantry was the Australian-born composer Glanville-Hicks (1912–90).⁵³ She was hired after writing on Bowles for *Music & Letters* in 1945 and publishing commentaries on the 1947 International Society for Contemporary Music Festival in Copenhagen for the *Musical Courier* and *Composer’s News Record*.⁵⁴ Over the next eight years she wrote hundreds of reviews for the *Herald Tribune* and became increasingly in demand elsewhere, with her writings on modern music appearing in publications ranging from mainstream magazines like *Cue* and *Vogue* to the rather more highbrow *Juilliard Review*.⁵⁵ Her work as a composer was even directly affected by her role at the newspaper: in 1949 she composed *Thomsoniana*, a birthday present for Thomson in which she set some of his reviews for voice, horn and piano. Though she was a stringer at the paper, Glanville-Hicks lobbied for a permanent position in 1953 and also put herself forward to replace Thomson when he retired.⁵⁶ Overlooked, she believed her sex played a part.⁵⁷ In the end, the Columbia musicologist Paul Henry Lang, a man whose tastes ranged far from Thomson’s (one friend claimed Lang believed ‘music ceased to exist at the death of Schubert’), would be his successor.⁵⁸

⁵¹ Timothy Mangan, ‘Introduction’ to Paul Bowles, *Paul Bowles on Music*, eds. Timothy Mangan and Irene Herrmann (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), xvi.

⁵² Bowles, *Paul Bowles on Music*, p. 265.

⁵³ Thomson’s view is in Thomson, *Virgil Thomson*, pp. 344–5. He describes her as an ‘indispensable colleague’, but there is more than a hint of sexism.

⁵⁴ The *Musical Courier*, known for its coverage of musical instrument developments, was published between 1880 and 1962. See Peter H. Adams, *An Annotated Index to Selected Articles from the Musical Courier, 1880–1940*, 2 vols. (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2009).

⁵⁵ See Victoria Rogers, *The Music of Peggy Glanville-Hicks* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 81–4. For the *Juilliard Review*, see Liesbeth Hoedemacker, ‘The *Juilliard Review*’, *Retrospective Index to Music Periodicals (RIPM)*, available at ripm.org (accessed 1 August 2018).

⁵⁶ Rogers, *The Music of Peggy Glanville-Hicks*, p. 84; Tommasini, *Virgil Thomson*, pp. 428–9.

⁵⁷ Karen L. Carter-Schwendler has written on the change in Thomson’s language when commenting on female composers in ‘Virgil Thomson’s *Herald Tribune* Writings: Fulfilling the “Cultural Obligation” Selectively’, *IAWM Journal* (June 1995), 12–15.

⁵⁸ Tommasini, *Virgil Thomson*, p. 428.

Critics Unite

While it is easy to position critics as isolated ideologues, there are also many instances of critics coming together to organise activities and reflect on the profession. A look at some of these activities reveals critics to be congenial (at least at times), and also highlights the place of women critics and African American critics within the wider community. One remarkable event in the immediate post-war period was a symposium on music criticism that took place at Harvard on 1–3 May 1947.⁵⁹ Ambitious in nature, it featured talks, roundtables and concerts of newly commissioned music written by major figures like Copland, Hindemith, Martinů and Schoenberg. Those invited to speak addressed topics that recur time and again as preoccupations: Roger Sessions focused on ‘The Scope of Music Criticism’, Olga Samaroff on ‘The Performer as Critic’ and Thomson on ‘The Art of Judging Music’; proceedings opened with a lecture by E. M. Forster titled ‘The Raison d’Être of Criticism in the Arts’.⁶⁰ Downes chaired one of the meetings and wrote an extensive column on the three-day conference, which he reported had over one hundred critics in attendance and ‘brought a degree of attention to a little understood and a generally undervalued art which cannot fail [to be] of great cultural benefit to press and public’.⁶¹

Of those presenting, Sessions and Thomson were composer-critics, but Texas-born Olga Samaroff (1882–1948) represented a different background: she was a performer-critic.⁶² A Paris Conservatoire-trained pianist and influential teacher, Samaroff’s time as a critic was short but important: she was the first female music critic at a major daily, holding the chief position at the *New York Post* in 1926 and 1927 (one of many firsts she achieved).⁶³ While she was a critic who understood the power of showmanship – ‘the brilliantly censorious critic is the virtuoso of the profession’⁶⁴ – she was judicious in

⁵⁹ Overview and schedule in ‘Music Symposium Ticket Allotment Starts this Afternoon at Paine Hall’, *The Harvard Crimson* (29 April 1947), available at www.thecrimson.com (1 August 2018).

⁶⁰ The contributions were published as Richard French (ed.), *Music and Criticism: A Symposium* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948). Sessions, Thomson and Forster also in Sessions, *Roger Sessions on Music: Collected Essays*, ed. Edward T. Cone (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979); Thomson, *The Art of Judging Music* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948) (and *Music Chronicles*); and Forster, *Two Cheers for Democracy* (London: Arnold; New York: Harcourt Brace, 1951).

⁶¹ Olin Downes, ‘Composer and Critic’, *New York Times* (18 May 1947), X7.

⁶² Lucy Hickenlooper changed her name to Samaroff when her career as a pianist took off. See Olga Samaroff Stokowski, *An American Musician’s Story* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1939).

⁶³ Samaroff was the first American female pianist to enter the piano class at the Paris Conservatoire, to debut at Carnegie Hall and to perform the thirty-two Beethoven sonatas. She was also the first American-born pianist on the piano faculty at Juilliard; see Donna Staley Kline, *An American Virtuoso on the World Stage: Olga Samaroff Stokowski* (Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 1996).

⁶⁴ Quoted in Robert D. Schick, *Classical Music Criticism* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1996), p. 56.

her own use of it and a particular feature of her tenure was her refusal to review performances she considered inadequate due to the impact it could have on a musician's career. If the composer-critics supported new music and focused on the future of music, Samaroff's attention was on supporting (or at least not damaging) any performer's. Amusingly, despite his own biases, Thomson was particularly scathing on performer-critics: they were, he claimed, 'very dangerous'.⁶⁵

Samaroff was one of a handful of female music critics who held a newspaper position during the early- and mid-twentieth century.⁶⁶ In Chicago, Claudia Cassidy (1899–1996) had a particularly esteemed career from the 1920s to the 1960s, while in New York, the most prominent after Samaroff was Harriett Johnson (?1908–87).⁶⁷ Johnson had studied piano with Samaroff and would follow her teacher by becoming chief music critic at the *Post*. Unlike Samaroff, however, Johnson's tenure lasted an impressive forty-three years (1943–86), with her obituary in the *Times* describing her as a popular and respected presence in the opera house.⁶⁸ Johnson's primary interest was reportedly vocal music, but she wrote on dance (as her appearances in Martha Graham's scrapbooks testify) and also composed music for children (William Warfield was the narrator in the premiere of her 1953 work *Chuggy and the Blue Caboose*).⁶⁹ Despite her accomplishments, as of 2018 she has no entry in *Grove* and appears only sporadically in footnotes. Nevertheless, she is an example (along with Samaroff, Cassidy and Glanville-Hicks) of women forging careers in the mainstream press. In contrast, black critics operated outside of it, documenting the music scene largely for African American newspapers and magazines.

Commentary on classical music began to appear in the African American press in the early years of the twentieth century. Newspapers such as the *Afro-American*, *Chicago Defender*, *Chicago New Crusader*, *Indianapolis Freeman*, *New York Age*, *New York Amsterdam News* and *Pittsburgh Courier* all featured articles on the classical music scene and therefore, as Doris Evans McGinty has

⁶⁵ Thomson, interview with Bruce Duffie.

⁶⁶ See Barbara Jepson, 'Women Critics in the United States', in Judith Lang Zaimont, Catherine Overhauser and Jane Gottlieb (eds.), *The Musical Woman: An International Perspective* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1983).

⁶⁷ Cassidy wrote for the *Chicago Journal of Commerce* (1925–41), *Chicago Sun* (1941–2) and *Chicago Tribune* (1942–65). She also hosted 'Critic's Choice' on Chicago radio. Thomas Willis, 'Claudia Cassidy', *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, available at www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed 1 September 2018).

⁶⁸ Unsigned, 'Harriett Johnson, 79, A New York Post Critic', *New York Times* (2 July 1987), 9.

⁶⁹ Pat Padua, 'Pic of the Week: Critical Edition', *In the Music: Performing Arts Blog*, Library of Congress (2 May 2012), available at blogs.loc.gov (accessed 1 August 2018); 'Warfield to Sing New Musical Score', *Jet*, 4/13 (6 August 1953), 59. *Chuggy* reviewed in the *Times*: R. P. [Ross Parmenter], 'Narrative Music of Critic Played', *New York Times* (17 January 1954), 82.

highlighted, performed an important function in growing an audience for classical music within the black community.⁷⁰ Those who wrote for these publications were black critics writing for a black readership, with Sylvester Russell (*Chicago Defender*) and Cleveland Allen (*New York Age*, *Chicago Defender* and *Indianapolis Freeman*) respected figures within the field.⁷¹ Allen also wrote for *Musical America*, signifying that while most day-to-day activities divided those writing for African American-owned and white-owned publications, there were exceptions. Furthermore, black critics were very much part of the wider music critics community, as George Garner III's presence at the 1947 Harvard symposium shows. In a photograph from the event – which would still be a remarkably diverse image of music critics today⁷² – Garner III (of the African American-owned *Los Angeles Sentinel*) is joking with Samaroff, who in turn is seated next to Thomson and Hilmar Grondahl (*Portland Oregonian*).⁷³

Perhaps the most remarkable critic writing for the African American press in the early to mid-twentieth century was Nora Douglas Holt (1885–1974), who in 1945 was invited by Thomson to join the Music Critics' Circle of New York. She was its first black member.⁷⁴ Previous to this she had had been the first African American to gain a Master's in composition and she played a major role in organising musical activity for black musicians.⁷⁵ Her career as a critic saw her write first for the *Chicago Defender* and later, after a period in Europe (which included studying with Nadia Boulanger at Fontainebleau), return to New York and take up a post at the *New York Amsterdam News*.⁷⁶ Among her other pioneering work, in 1921 she established the magazine *Music and Poetry* which, despite a limited run, has the distinction of being

⁷⁰ Doris Evans McGinty, "'As Large as She Can Make It': The Role of Black Women Activists in Music, 1880–1945", in Ralph P. Locke and Cyrilla Barr (eds.), *Cultivating Music in America: Women Patrons and Activists Since 1860* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), p. 227.

⁷¹ Brief overview in Grant, *Maestros of the Pen*, pp. 319–20. For a list of critics (no distinction made on classical critics), see Philip McGuire, 'Black Music Critics and the Classic Blues Singers', *The Black Perspective in Music*, 14/2 (1986), 108.

⁷² A 2005 survey showed the profession to be 92 per cent white; see 'The Classical Music Critic: A Survey of Music Critics at General-Interest and Specialized New Publications in America', Music Critics Association of North America and the National Arts Journal Program at Columbia University (2005), 14, available at www.mcana.org (accessed 1 August 2018).

⁷³ Grant, *Maestros of the Pen*, unpaginated illustrations after p. 194.

⁷⁴ McGinty, "'As Large as She Can Make It'", p. 227.

⁷⁵ Her role as an organiser and educator is discussed in relation to the ideology of racial uplift in Lawrence Schenbeck, *Racial Uplift and American Music, 1878–1943* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2012), pp. 171–208.

⁷⁶ Precise dates are not agreed between secondary sources: c. 1917–21/23 (and 1938–43?) at the *Defender*, and from c. 1943/4 on at the *New York Amsterdam News*. See McGinty, "'As Large as She Can Make It'", p. 227; Helen Walker-Hill, *From Spirituals to Symphonies: African-American Women Composers and their Music* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007), p. 27; Unsigned, 'Nora Holt Dead; Music Critic 89', *New York Times* (30 January 1974), 38; Karen M. Bryan, 'Nora Holt', *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, available at www.oxfordmusiconline.com (1 August 2018).

the second magazine on music published by an African American.⁷⁷ In the light of her considerable role as composer, performer, critic and activist, Thomson's 1945 invitation to join the Critics' Circle can be seen as over due recognition of her place in the cultural fabric of New York at the time.

As an organisation, the Critics' Circle had been founded by Downes and Thomson in 1941. The aim was to bring together critics to 'promote a better understanding between writers on music and those concerned with the presentation of music'.⁷⁸ It was a new idea. The Critics' Circle would bestow awards, and significantly the awards were to be presented for American composers and works.⁷⁹ Here were American critics trying to support living composers and build an American repertory. For most of its life there were about thirty members of the Critic' Circle and it remained active until the 1960s, at which point it became part of the Music Critics Association of North America (MCANA).⁸⁰ Founded in 1956 and still in existence today, MCANA's stated mission is 'to strengthen the profession of classical musical journalism'.⁸¹ As the only association for professional classical music critics in America, it demonstrates the continued tradition of US critics finding ways to support and reflect on both the profession and the musical activity they document. In an echo of the Critics' Circle awards founded decades earlier, in 2017 MCANA even established an annual award for best new opera.

Mid-Century Divisions and Developments

With the reign of Downes and Thomson ending in the mid-1950s, the prominent posts at the two major New York dailies would be occupied by new voices. At the *Herald Tribune* the Hungarian-born Lang, who had been an assistant at the *Revue musicale* as a young man in Paris, brought his vast knowledge of music history to the newspaper from 1954 to 1964 while pursuing musicological interests elsewhere (as editor of the *Musical Quarterly* and a founder of the American Musicological Society). Alan Rich (1924–2010) took up the post after him, having moved briefly from the *Boston Herald* to the *New York Times* beforehand. Rich's tenure would be cut short as botched mergers with the *World-Telegram* and *Journal-American* failed to prolong the life of the once esteemed *Herald Tribune*; it ceased publication in 1966. This was a significant loss of serious and comprehensive criticism in the city, though its demise did little to dent Rich's career. He would play a pivotal

⁷⁷ McGinty, "As Large as She Can Make It", p. 227. ⁷⁸ Tommasini, *Virgil Thomson*, pp. 342–3.

⁷⁹ Ibid. ⁸⁰ 'Notes', in *Music Chronicles*.

⁸¹ 'History of MCANA', available at www.mcana.org/historyofmcana.html (accessed 1 August 2018).

role in the developing Los Angeles classical music scene and go on to write for a host of notable newspapers and magazines on both the east and west coasts.⁸²

If the *Herald Tribune* succumbed to the turmoil engulfing the newspaper business, the *Times* was far more stable. Howard Taubman (1907–96) led the musical conversation from 1955 to 1960 before an arts desk shuffle resulted in him taking up the prestigious chief theatre critic position (after the retirement of Brooks Atkinson, who had occupied the post for four decades). Harold C. Schonberg (1915–2003) then took over as senior music critic from 1960 to 1980. The first music critic to win a Pulitzer Prize (he was awarded it in 1971), Schonberg had an impressive background writing on music, having contributed to the *Musical Advance*, *American Music Lover* (later *American Record Guide*), *Musical Courier*, *Musical Digest* and the *New York Sun*, before joining the *Times* as record editor.⁸³ He was particularly knowledgeable on nineteenth-century repertoire and piano music.

Stories of Schonberg rattling off his reviews in forty-five minutes while his wife waited in a taxi outside the *Times* building do not do justice to a man who took his role very seriously.⁸⁴ The ethical questions that hovered around the *Herald Tribune* were anathema to him: ‘Virgil Thomson once said that he could review his own grandmother and it would make no difference. I was skeptical about that statement then and I remain skeptical now.’⁸⁵ He was clear that being friends with a musician was not acceptable and stressed that no *Times* critic should be a performer, composer or someone who writes for any publication that may hint at a conflict of interest.⁸⁶ As for his aims, while Thomson’s stated approach was to report and describe for readers, Schonberg claimed to ‘write for no audience’: ‘I write for myself: I have been stimulated, or bored, or excited, or repelled, and I put my feeling down on paper.’⁸⁷ He certainly did not believe in the authority of composers, and the idea of a music critic wielding power seemed faintly ridiculous: ‘There is no case in history where a great piece of music or a great performer has been mortally wounded by a negative or stupid review. Critics don’t make careers. Artists do.’⁸⁸ He supported this statement with reference to the consistent disdain he showed for Leonard Bernstein’s conducting: ‘What difference did an unfavourable review make to him except bruise his ego?’⁸⁹ He had a point.

⁸² Writings from the 1980s onwards are on Rich’s blog, available at www.soiveheard.com (accessed 1 August 2018). See also Alan Rich, *So I’ve Heard: Notes of a Migratory Music Critic* (Pompton Plains: Amadeus Press, 2006).

⁸³ For his own recollections see Harold Schonberg, *Facing the Music* (New York: Schirmer, 1981).

⁸⁴ Allan Kozinn, ‘Harold C. Schonberg, 87, Dies’, *New York Times* (27 July 2003).

⁸⁵ Harold C. Schonberg, ‘A Lifetime of Listening’, *New York Times* (8 February 1981), 40.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 41. ⁸⁷ *Ibid.* ⁸⁸ *Ibid.* ⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

Bernstein's antics on the podium also fell foul of Winthrop Sargeant at the *New Yorker*, who remarked that Bernstein's movements during a concert of Mahler in 1961 saw him 'fencing, hula-dancing and calling upon the heavens to witness his agonies. I care about Mahler's agonies, but I do not care a bit about Mr. Bernstein's'.⁹⁰ Sargeant had been an orchestral violinist but moved to criticism in 1937, writing for *Musical America*, the *Brooklyn Eagle*, *New York American*, *Time* magazine and *Life*, before joining the *New Yorker* in the late 1940s. There for over two decades he advocated for jazz and praised the music of Gian Carlo Menotti, Carlisle Floyd and Vittorio Giannini.⁹¹ Of the more forward-looking music emerging at the time, he had little positive to say. This positioned him in direct opposition to those who championed the avant-garde, like Eric Salzman (1933–), a composer-critic who had studied with Babbitt, attended Darmstadt and contributed to the *Times* and *Herald Tribune* (as well as magazines like *High Fidelity* and *Stereo Review*) from the late 1950s.⁹² The old dividing lines that separated critics on whether they supported contemporary developments were as well-drawn in the twentieth century as in any other.

Two books published in the mid-1950s exemplify this: Nicolas Slonimsky's *Lexicon of Musical Invective: Critical Assaults on Composers since Beethoven's Time* (1953) and Henry Pleasant's *The Agony of Modern Music* (1955), the latter described by Grant as 'possibly the most notorious volume in twentieth-century American music criticism'.⁹³ In his *Lexicon*, Slonimsky (1894–1995) – a lexicographer, pianist, composer and conductor who had been a staunch advocate for new music since the 1930s – gathered together 'biased, unfair, ill-tempered, and singularly unprophetic judgements' hurled at major composers and their works upon first hearing.⁹⁴ A much-loved source for programme annotators everywhere, it is fundamentally a polemical book, with Slonimsky stating how his intention was 'to demonstrate that music is an art in progress, and that objections levelled at every musical innovator are all derived from the same psychological inhibition, which may be described as Non-Acceptance of the Unfamiliar'.⁹⁵ The *Lexicon* was a balm for all those who feared that the latest musical experiments would forever be greeted with derision. It promised a bright future for contemporary composers by arguing that, given

⁹⁰ Humphrey Burton, *Leonard Bernstein* (London: Faber and Faber, 1994), p. 321.

⁹¹ For a broader discussion of Sargeant, see Grant, *Maestros of the Pen*, pp. 302–6.

⁹² Salzman has an extensive website detailing his activities, available at www.ericssalzman.com (accessed 1 August 2018).

⁹³ Nicolas Slonimsky, *Lexicon of Musical Invective: Critical Assaults on Composers since Beethoven's Time* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1953); Henry Pleasants, *The Agony of Modern Music* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1955); Grant, *Maestros of the Pen*, p. 295.

⁹⁴ Slonimsky, *Lexicon*, p. 3. ⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

time, what was once horrifying can be declared not only acceptable, but a masterpiece.⁹⁶

In contrast, Henry Pleasants (1910–2000), a Curtis-trained pianist, singer, composer and critic, believed contemporary music had lost all cultural validity. Before his wartime service in the army, Pleasants was a reviewer for the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* (between 1930 and 1942) and contributed to the *Times* and *Modern Music* (after the war he moved to Europe, where he combined a career as a spy with extensive writing on music).⁹⁷ Given his early career saw him specialise in reviewing and reporting on new music, he was an unlikely candidate to rally against the cause, but by 1955 he had come to view new art music as a failure; the future lay in jazz and popular music. This is what he set out in *The Agony of Modern Music*.

As the title indicates, Pleasants delighted in being provocative: ‘Modern music is not modern and is rarely music,’ he wrote as the first point in his summary, before declaring serious music a ‘dead art’.⁹⁸ Confrontational, inflammatory and entertaining, Pleasants covered aspects ranging from the relationship between composer and audience to the musical materials itself. He positioned the contemporary composer as a figure disdainful of performers, audiences, and anything regarded as popular, highlighting how jazz musicians had no such failings. As for Slonimsky’s argument, Pleasants addressed him head-on. Dismissing the evolutionist theory of continued musical progress he saw espoused in the *Lexicon*, Pleasants sought to counter the ‘fable’ of the misunderstood composer creating art in a world not yet able to understand it.⁹⁹ He considered this a dangerous and hack version of history which had skewed and distorted public perception, and so he rebutted it by quoting some of the grandest praise lavished on composers.¹⁰⁰ Pleasants’s point was clear: audiences and critics have often been right. It was all ammunition in support of his central thesis: jazz and popular genres were in fact the real modern music (an argument he expanded in two further books).¹⁰¹

With Winthrop Sargeant and Henry Pleasants, the classical avant-garde was denounced while jazz was celebrated, but as the twentieth century wore on, new dividing lines emerged. Classical music continued to fracture: old organisations and institutions continued on as they had before, while composers,

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁹⁷ Pleasants was in the Foreign Service. He wrote for the *New York Times*, *High Fidelity*, *HiFi Stereo Review*, *Jazz Quarterly* and eventually, after settling in London, the *International Herald Tribune* (where he was London critic from 1967 to 1997).

⁹⁸ Pleasants, *Agony of Modern Music*, p. 3 and back cover. The book prompted responses for and against. See ‘Publisher’s Note’, in the second paperback ed. (1965), pp. v–vi.

⁹⁹ Pleasants, *Agony of Modern Music*, pp. 47–82. ¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 62–82.

¹⁰¹ Henry Pleasants, *Death of a Music? The Decline of the European Tradition and the Rise of Jazz* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1961); and *Serious Music – and All That Jazz!* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1969).

schools and collectives experimented in ever new ways for, it seems, ever more niche audiences. At the same time, popular music continued to grow, and though it dominated the mainstream, it too shattered into new genres and subgenres with unique identities and followings. All of this activity was documented and debated.

In many ways critics became more specialised, often working within the confines of a particular subgenre, and yet this was also the point when critics broke the mould and opened up their musical horizons by working across boundaries. John Rockwell (1940–), the first *Times* critic to write on classical and popular music (with the newspaper from 1972), is seen as a pioneer in this regard.¹⁰² For Rockwell, a “music critic” had no business excluding entire traditions that most of the world thought of as “music” just because they didn’t conform to his own cultural prejudices.¹⁰³ But as all critics must have their opposite, Rockwell’s pluralistic approach was denounced by Samuel Lipman (1934–94), a concert pianist who called for the preservation, and re-establishment in many cases, of high culture and elite music in his books and criticism (he wrote for *Commentary* from 1976 and co-founded the politically conservative and culturally high-minded magazine the *New Criterion* in 1982).

The fundamentals of criticism changed very little as critics and cultural commentators fought personal battles in print, much as they always had. In establishing a magazine as a platform to espouse his views and reach the right readers, Lipman followed many who had come before. Every publication had its own audience, its own tone and its own outlook. And as the cultural life of the city changed, so too did the newspapers, magazines and journals that documented it.

The Alternative Press

In 1955 Dan Wolf, Ed Fancher and Norman Mailer responded to the societal shifts they witnessed around them and founded the *Village Voice*, America’s first alt-weekly (alternative weekly newspaper). From the start, the arts, particularly underground and alternative scenes, were a focus; the *Voice* was a space for the vibrant downtown cultural world to be reported. Composer and critic Kyle Gann (1955–), who wrote for the *Voice* from 1986 to 2005, has set out the importance of understanding that the *Voice* was a downtown

¹⁰² Rockwell wrote for the *Oakland Tribune* and *Los Angeles Times* before starting at the *Times* in 1972. He wrote for the *Times* until 2006 (brief hiatus 1994–98), and has held classical, pop, dance and broader cultural and editorial positions. For a selection of his writings, see John Rockwell, *Outsider: John Rockwell on the Arts, 1967–2006* (Pompton Plains: Limelight Editions, 2006).

¹⁰³ John Rockwell, *All American Music: Composition in the Late Twentieth Century* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1997), p. ix; reprinted in Grant, *Maestros of the Pen*, pp. 308–9.

publication.¹⁰⁴ It meant that the music reviewed was downtown music, which existed within a distinct scene to that of so-called uptown music:

The Uptowners, such as Milton Babbitt and Jacob Druckman, wrote complicated music in European genres, heavily dominated at that time by Arnold Schoenberg's 12-tone thinking and its derivatives. Downtown music was simpler and less pretentious, drawing on the nature- and accident-accepting philosophy of John Cage. Conceptualism and minimalism were, then, the two primary Downtown movements; artrock and free improvisation would soon join them.¹⁰⁵

Gann's position as a composer-critic embedded within the downtown scene at the *Voice* is worth remembering when he states it was 'the only newspaper in America to cover new music, Downtown music, on a regular basis'.¹⁰⁶ But as he points to those who preceded him and established the direction of the music coverage – namely Leighton Kerner, Carman Moore, Tom Johnson and Greg Sandow – he effectively highlights those who defined, and documented, a scene beyond the day-to-day remit of critics elsewhere. Of Tom Johnson (1939–), the *Voice*'s 'first real new-music critic', Gann is quick to stress how he provided 'insightful coverage to hundreds of premieres in Downtown lofts, churches, and other unconventional spaces'.¹⁰⁷ Clearly the venues were important in defining this as non-mainstream, and it shows a striking resemblance to Thomson's statement about finding new music in unusual places in previous decades.

As an example of coverage, to read Johnson's reviews now is to be plunged into the exploratory and visceral world of the 1970s minimalist scene. At the forefront of documenting the latest experiments for the *Voice* between 1972 and 1982, Johnson was a minimalist composer himself, and in the early seventies he had a predilection for its most extreme strands ('when someone would play the same gong for an hour, or repeat a few verbal phrases for a long time'), though his view later softened.¹⁰⁸ Still, whatever personal preferences he had, his reviews and writings mostly demonstrate his desire to elucidate what was trying to be achieved. Even when he writes of the aims of those immersed in the scene with hindsight, the vitality and single-mindedness of

¹⁰⁴ Kyle Gann, *Music Downtown: Writings from the Village Voice* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006), xiii. Gann wrote weekly between 1989 and 1997, and more sporadically from 1997 to 2005.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, xiii.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, xv. Gann notes here that the first serious reviews he read of Terry Riley and Philip Glass were in *Playboy*.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ Tom Johnson, 'Introduction' to *The Voice of New Music: New York City 1972–82* (Stichting: Het Apollohuis, 1989); available as a digital ed. at www.tvonm.editions75.com (accessed 1 August 2018).

that moment in musical history materialises: ‘The search for total stasis, for the beauty of absolute zero, was a search for a mirage. But what an exciting mirage, and how essential it was for us!’¹⁰⁹

The downtown scene then was highly specific. Within it, the term ‘new music’ was not vague and all-encompassing; it had distinct parameters relating to the approaches advocated and adopted.¹¹⁰ Moreover, it had its own view of musical history, with Gann pointing to the continued inspiration provided by the ‘fount of American experimentalism flowing from Charles Ives, Henry Cowell, Harry Partch, John Cage, Conlon Nancarrow, Pauline Oliveros and other great figures disdained by the classical music establishment.’¹¹¹ This is the lineage of downtown music, with its own list of ‘great’ composers and figures who existed outside of the so-called establishment. There is a sense that those documenting, celebrating, advocating and critiquing it also identified themselves as outsiders (though they were ‘insiders’ in relation to the scene). The parallels with Simon Frith’s observations in Chapter 26 of this volume on rock music critics and the culture and identity surrounding them seems acute.

For much of the *Voice*’s existence, the latest developments in new music were a feature, but by the early 2000s coverage decreased. This foreshadowed a period of decline. In 2013 the *Voice*’s circulation was 144,203 (the highest of all the country’s alt-weeklies), but by 2015 this had halved to 70,394 (dropping it down to fourth in terms of circulation).¹¹² Even as the most historic and iconic alt-weekly, it was unable to adapt sufficiently to survive. On 21 September 2017 its last print edition was published, and on 31 August 2018 the remaining digital arm closed for good. In an opinion piece for the *Times*, the former *Voice* columnist Tricia Romano highlighted how the alternative culture documented by the *Voice* had moved online. There is no need for a critic to recommend an unusual band or arthouse film in the age of Spotify and Netflix: ‘The *Voice* was once a lodestar to freaks and geeks everywhere. Now the lodestar is both nowhere and everywhere.’¹¹³

Tumultuous Times

As of 2018, the American classical music critic working in traditional media lives in a time of uncertainty. Alex Ross, who has been the *New Yorker*’s chief

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. ¹¹⁰ Gann, *Music Downtown*, p. xvi. ¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Monica Anderson, ‘5 Facts about Alternative Weeklies’, Fact Tank Blog, Pew Research Center (11 July 2014); and Elisa Shearer, ‘Alternative Weeklies: Fact Sheet’, in *State of the New Media*, Pew Research Center (June 2016), 95, both available at www.pewresearch.org (1 August 2018).

¹¹³ Tricia Romano, ‘Last Rites for the *Village Voice*, a Bohemian Who Stayed on Too Long’, *New York Times* (5 September 2018), available at www.nytimes.com (accessed 1 August 2018).

music critic since 1996 and is a prominent voice within the profession, summed up the picture in March 2017:

In 1992, when I moved to New York and began to write about classical music, every major city newspaper had at least one writer covering the field, sometimes several writers. I would see knots of critics at performances, gaggles of them at big premieres. In the intervening years, the ranks of the profession have steadily dwindled, to the point where fewer than ten American papers have full-time classical critics on staff. Longtime colleagues have taken buyouts . . . It's like being in an exceedingly dull, slow version of Agatha Christie's *And Then There Were None*.¹¹⁴

While Ross went with Agatha Christie, Joseph Carman, writing for the online *San Francisco Classical Voice* a few months later, likened the situation to Haydn's 'Farewell' Symphony: 'the players, snuffing out their candles, slowly exit the stage one by one'.¹¹⁵ It has led to considerable reflection.

At the turn of the twenty-first century, Scott Cantrell – then chief classical music critic of the *Dallas Morning News* – surveyed the profession and noted that full-time critics had been lost from *Time* and *Newsweek*, while the magazines *High Fidelity*, *Musical America*, *Ovation*, *Classical* and *Opus* were also a thing of the past.¹¹⁶ The concern then was that cities were becoming 'one-paper towns', meaning the opinion of a single critic was the only record of events.¹¹⁷ By 2015 the conversation was about the loss of that single critic. Cantrell himself took a buyout from his post at the *Morning News* that year, leaving no full-time classical critic in the state of Texas. Across the country, arts desks were decimated: only two full-time dance critics remained, while the figures for classical music hovered around twelve, down from nearer sixty-five in the 1990s.¹¹⁸ But as Douglas McLennan, founder of the arts coverage amalgamator *Arts Journal* (artsjournal.com), has stated, 'Let's not equate the golden age of criticism with the situation twenty years ago'.¹¹⁹ He remembered a lot of newspaper journalism being poor, and has highlighted the high quality of coverage and comment now available online.

¹¹⁴ Alex Ross, 'The Fate of the Critic in the Clickbait Age', *New Yorker* (13 March 2017), available at www.newyorker.com (accessed 1 August 2018).

¹¹⁵ Joseph Carman, 'Diminution: Is Classical Music Journalism Fading to Silence?', *San Francisco Classical Voice* (11 July 2017), available at www.sfcv.org (accessed 1 August 2018).

¹¹⁶ Scott Cantrell, 'Classical Music Criticism', in James R. Heintze and Michael Saffle (eds.) *Reflections on American Music: The Twentieth Century and the New Millennium* (Hillside: Pendragon Press, 2000), pp. 82–3.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ Madison Mainwaring, 'The Death of the American Dance Critic', *The Atlantic* (6 August 2015), available at www.theatlantic.com; 'As Newspapers Cut Music Critics, a Dark Times for the Arts or Dawn of a New Age?', *WQXR* (11 August 2015), available at www.wqxr.org (accessed 1 August 2018).

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

In 2005, MCANA and the National Arts Journalism Program at Columbia University produced a state of the profession report based on a survey of 181 working classical music critics.¹²⁰ The timing of its publication is significant: social media was in its infancy, and so the report now stands as a valuable source, a record of a profession on the brink of change. Since then, a seemingly infinite number of websites, blogs and forums have been established for the discussion of music. Responsive to this new environment, professional critics have carved out spaces, with their online pronouncements given increased weight by their offline status (Alex Ross's *The Rest is Noise* blog is a prominent example). Organisations have also been proactive: MCANA created an online journal, *Classical Voice America* (classicalvoiceamerica.org), as a counter to the decline in print opportunities in 2013.¹²¹ But the digital world is not just for professionals, and any individual is now able to be part of, and add to, the musical conversation.

Today, criticism has become democratised in a way unthinkable at any previous point. Editors, publishers and institutions are no longer the sole gatekeepers to the profession. The result is that while the full-time critic may be a rare breed, critical commentary on classical music is more extensive than it has ever been. And if history reveals anything, it is that whatever the platform, old debates will continue to rage as new dividing lines open up. The future of American music criticism is secure, even if it is uncertain.

¹²⁰ 'The Classical Music Critic: A Survey'.

¹²¹ See Barbara Jepson, 'Coming Soon: Classical Voice North America, a New Online Music Journal', *Classical Voice America*, available at classicalvoiceamerica.org (accessed 30 July 2018).

· POSTLUDE ·

Stop the Press? The Changing Media of Music Criticism

CHRISTOPHER DINGLE AND DOMINIC MCHUGH

Writing in *BBC Music Magazine* in July 1999, editor Helen Wallace remarked on the rapid decline in space allocated to classical music criticism in British newspapers, notably in *The Times*, *The Independent*, *The Guardian* and *Financial Times*, all of which had previously provided extensive, important coverage. ‘Concert reports provide the very oxygen needed to keep a flourishing musical scene alive’, she noted, and ‘[if] an event is ignored, it is as if it did not exist.’ However, she perceived a ‘ray of hope’ in the Internet, which ‘has no space restriction: maybe the dawn of a new era is nigh ...’.¹ Twenty years later, Wallace’s comments seem prescient. Newspapers now operate regularly updated websites as a matter of course, and many of them offer additional content that is not made available in print editions. Online content has helped to sustain the viability of newspapers in the digital age, capitalising on the tantalising opportunity to report news – and post reviews – instantly. There has also been a proliferation of e-zines devoted to music criticism, starting with titles such as *Seen and Heard* and *Classical Source*, allowing amateur enthusiasts to fill the gap left by shrinking column inches by providing reviews of a much wider range of events, such as complete coverage of the BBC Proms by *Classical Source*; the success of these ventures has led to other sites such as *The Arts Desk*, whose reviews are written mainly by professional journalists. Yet Wallace’s prediction for the future missed one crucial and unexpected component: the advent of Facebook and, particularly, Twitter has taken criticism out of its privileged domain as a specialist activity and enabled the general public to give individual responses to performances based on personal experience rather than perceived qualification. This chapter examines this shift from the primacy of professional music critics in the twentieth century to the impact of the Internet on how music criticism is generated, disseminated and consumed within the context of earlier developments in the media of criticism and the consequent changing relationship between the critic and those in receipt of their insights. The potential democratisation of

¹ Helen Wallace, ‘A Critical Point’, *BBC Music Magazine* (July 1999), 5.

the process of reporting on concerts in the twenty-first century could be seen as a positive move, reflecting the subjectivity of individual responses to music, but at what cost to expertise, clarity and accuracy?

Of course, it had taken many centuries for music criticism to evolve to its twentieth-century format. The earliest types of criticism were undoubtedly part of oral cultures and traditions, just like the music they would have been discussing. When theories about music began to be preserved in written form on clay and papyrus, they will have been preceded (and succeeded) by questions, discussion and debate. The comprehensive systems of musical theory and philosophy that emerged in ancient China and ancient Greece, to name but two, could not have arisen without such a hinterland, and the same was true in the Western European tradition as it became codified. Given the intertwining in ancient Chinese theory and practice of music and the proper functioning of state,² those that might now be regarded in some form as practising music criticism are likely to have been government officials. Whatever their societal status elsewhere, various treatises and other theoretical writings provide much of the existent evidence of the practice of music criticism before the modern era. Nonetheless, as is made clear by Christopher Page in Chapter 1 of this volume, evidence of musical criticism and debate about plainchant can be gleaned not just from treatises, but also other literary sources, including letters, chronicles, *Lives* of saints and catalogues of notable figures. A few centuries later, as noted in Carrie Churnside's contribution to this volume, Chapter 3, to these might be added travel journals or diaries. Such apparently restricted and personal items often provide insight into broader discussion.

Nonetheless, it was with the ever-increasing prevalence of published books, pamphlets and polemics that resulted from the invention of the printing press, as well as the subsequent rise in literacy, that music criticism became a relationship between an individual and a potentially broad swathe of their society. As journals and newspapers began to appear in the eighteenth century, various forms of critical writing developed that, in their essence, are familiar today, from reviews, previews and news pieces about performances and works to more reflective articles and longer essays. To these could be added the French 'feuilleton', a genre developed by the pioneering French critic Julien-Louis Geoffroy (1743–1814). Literally meaning 'little page', the term originally meant a part-page, usually a bottom quarter, with a thick black

² Alan R. Thrasher, 'China, People's Republic of: §1. Introduction: Historical, Regional and Study Perspectives; 3. Sources and Perspectives: i) The Imperial Period', *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, available at www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed 15 May 2018).

line delineating that it was distinct from news reporting. A term soon adopted by journals in other languages, the *feuilleton* quickly came to denote a sometimes lengthy, discursive essay, extending across part or all of several pages, in later usage even denoting a distinct publication. Often prompted by a specific performance or work, but ranging more broadly in the manner of what today might be termed a review article, they tended to be marked by their witty and vibrant language.

As well as the types of format, the proliferation of specialist titles devoted to specific repertoires, genres or instruments naturally resulted in criticism tailored to the respective readerships, with the use of technical or niche terminology not appropriate in newspapers or general musical journals. In essence, criticism of recordings merely added another set of specialist journals, as did the development of criticism in areas such as jazz, popular, folk, world music and so on. However, broadcasting enabled an entirely new medium for criticism. Prime examples on radio would be the long-running *Record Review* on BBC Radio 3 or the French *La Tribune des critiques de disques*,³ while the BBC's *Juke Box Jury* was a prominent example of television criticism. More recently, publications such as *BBC Music Magazine* experimented with monthly podcasts where various editorial staff discussed a selection of discs.

Once criticism in the form of reviews and articles started to be published, the writers needed to decide how to sign it, with approaches varying from outlet to outlet and policy changing within each publication from period to period, making it difficult to generalise for any historical area. However, there are five broad approaches to the authorship of a review: the critic's name, the critic's initials, a pseudonym, signed by role and unsigned. Broadly speaking, the straightforward use of the critic's name increasingly became the norm during the course of the twentieth century, but was not uncommon in earlier times, and was by no means universally adopted early in the twenty-first century. It implies a direct personal responsibility by the critic for the views being expressed, emphasising that the review has been written by an individual, even though, in reality, it may have been cut or even changed by editors. The use of initials may simply be a device either to save space or avoid needless repetition, with an index providing full names, an approach that was used by *Gramophone* for many years. The critic is readily identifiable, though the lack of a name does create a degree of detachment. In other situations, initials may be used without any identifier, making them akin to a pseudonym. Few readers

³ Several editions of *La Tribune des critiques de disques* are available on YouTube by searching the programme title, including a filmed edition from the INA archive featuring a classic panel of critics, as well as Peter Ustinov's witty parody of the programme. I am grateful to Julian Anderson for drawing the latter two to my attention [CD].

outside the business would have known that, for instance, ‘N.C.’ of the *Manchester Guardian* was Neville Cardus, especially in his early years, and even fewer would have realised that he was also ‘Cricketer’ for the same newspaper. Pseudonyms have persisted in various guises throughout printed history, ranging from ‘A Ghost’, ‘Peregrine Puff’, ‘Criticus’ and ‘Harmonicus’ in the early days of *The Times*,⁴ via the multiple characters of Schumann’s ‘Davidsbund’, George Bernard Shaw’s ‘Corno di Bassetto’, Debussy’s ‘Monsieur Croche’ and ‘Musœus’ (the still unidentified critic for the *New York American*),⁵ to their prevalence as user names for many contributors to blogs. The use of the pseudonym is often another form of anonymity for the general reader, but one that has some sense of a character attached to it. In many cases, the identity of the reviewer is known to musical insiders, meaning that the anonymity does not tend to extend to those affected most directly, but the mask adopted with a pseudonym can also imply a degree of distance. Like a fiction writer, the opinions expressed are those of the character and not necessarily shared by the author.

While the choice of a pseudonym is usually that of the individual critic, other approaches are often dictated by the current house style of the newspaper or journal in question. Although relatively rare in print media these days, it was commonplace until the mid-twentieth century for arts reviews (and other content) in newspapers and journals in some countries either to be completely unsigned or identified with formulas such as ‘from our Music Critic’ or ‘from our Special Correspondent’. The anonymity of reviews that were either unsigned or simply gave the role often emphasised that, while they written by individuals, the views were expressed on behalf of the newspaper as a whole. This is reflected in the language used. Critics have often avoided the first person altogether, an approach that not only adds authority to the prose, presenting the pronouncements as fact, but is also usually more succinct. However, in those newspapers where, in keeping with other content, reviews and articles were unsigned or attributed to a role, any use of first person was in the plural, emphasising that the views were corporate, as in this 1921 review of Stravinsky’s *Le Sacre du Printemps*: ‘we must be content to remain outside the movement and to confess that a great deal of the ballet was for us merely a tedious posturing in sight and sound . . . we left wondering what on earth all the fuss and fury was about’.⁶

⁴ Sarah J. Wynn, *The Emergence of the Music Critic in Late 18th Century London: Composers, Performers, Reporters* (Memphis: Langford & Associates, 2001), p. 12.

⁵ See Mark McKnight’s contribution to this volume, Chapter 15, for more information about ‘Musœus’.

⁶ Unsigned, “‘Le Sacre du Printemps’ – Russian Ballet at the Princes’, *The Times* (28 June 1921), 8.

By the end of the twentieth century, many newspapers and magazines had moved to encouraging their critics to include instances of first person singular within their reviews and articles, emphasising the individuality of the perspective proffered. At the same time as the traditional press had switched more or less wholesale to what might be termed full critical transparency, some weblogs and internet sites were emerging where reviews were either published anonymously or under a pseudonym. Blogs in particular normally lack editorial oversight, thereby rendering the lack of transparency caused by anonymity even more problematic when criticism is unbalanced, inaccurate or extreme.

Alongside the medium of the review, it is also important to consider the changing rhythm in the practice of the critic. While deadlines in journals, with their less frequent publication, have always been relatively leisurely, the competition between newspapers led to a desire to be, if not first, then not behind their rivals in any aspect of reporting. With the invention of the telegraph and then the telephone, the practice emerged of posting reviews the same evening as the concert so that the review could appear in the newspaper the following day. With print deadlines around midnight, this meant that critics needed to be swift writers, drafting their reviews in the interval or while the music was still playing. This inevitably meant that the first half of a concert usually had prime importance in the formulation of a review. Moreover, if a concert ran late, the critic might leave early in order to ensure the review appeared in the early edition of the newspaper, as reflected in Andrew Porter's remark that 'the critics of *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph* seldom saw the last act of a long opera'.⁷ In order to submit their reviews, critics needed the specialist skills of the journalist for dictating copy over the telephone. The increasing use of computers and email communication in the 1990s actually coincided with many newspapers starting to take a more relaxed approach to getting concert reviews into print. At more or less the same time, and despite the complete lack of any print deadline, online reviews often appeared the same evening. The rise of social media added to the imperative for swift posting, with the first review published being likely to be tagged in promoters' Twitter feeds and shared by audience members, who might also add their comments. As a consequence, it was not uncommon for a review to appear on a newspaper website a day or two before it appeared in print.

In addition to the media of the criticism, it is useful also to note the variety of objects of review. For the most part, the chapters in this volume have

⁷ Andrew Porter, *Music of Three Seasons 1974–1977* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1978), p. xiii.

discussed criticism as it pertains either to musical works or to the performances of musical works, in both cases primarily either in concerts or on recordings. However, some areas have barely arisen or, if they have, this has been implicit rather than explicit. Chief among these is the criticism of musical scores. This is not to fault the contributors to the volume. For periods when scores were the focus, this is so obvious that explicit mention either seems superfluous or does not occur to the writer, while, for those dealing with more recent times, the almost complete absence of such reviewing in any but the most specialised journals means that, again, it does not arise. It is only with the longer view that a substantive shift becomes apparent. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, much of the criticism of musical works, possibly the majority in many areas and situations, would be made from reading and playing scores rather than hearing the work in performance. A significant amount of the discussion of music was not in terms of whether to go and hear a particular work, and not, of course, about buying a recording. Rather, it was about whether the reader would wish to purchase a copy of the music for their personal library in order to play it themselves.

Far from disappearing with the advent of recording, there was, if anything, an increase of the sale of scores and consequent critical discussion as significant numbers of the resulting new audience for music invested in scores to follow while listening to their records. However, the latter half of the twentieth century saw a marked decline in the sale of musical scores, along with a concurrent disappearance of music shops from many high streets. The reasons for this significant change, which started long before the appearance of the Internet, are not entirely clear. One unsurprising result, though, has been that the notion of reviewing scores has gradually disappeared from most areas of music criticism. Even in 1969, Hans W. Heinsheimer, director of publications at G. Schirmer, was bemoaning the disappearance of music reviewing from a host of music journals:

Once in a while one thinks nostalgically of the prewar European situation, when musical magazines such as *Die Musik*, *Signale für die musikalische Welt*, *La Revue musicale*, *Musica d'Oggi*, and a considerable number of similar publications in Austria, Scandinavia, Holland, Czechoslovakia, and Poland reviewed every important new score . . . All this is gone, though some regular reviewing of printed music is still done in England, particularly in the *Musical Times*.⁸

⁸ Hans W. Heinsheimer, 'A Music Publisher's View on Reviewing', *Notes* Second Series, 26/2 (December 1969), 229.

By the end of the century, reviews of music had also disappeared from journals such as *Tempo* and *Musical Times*. With the notable exception of *Notes*, reviews of scores now tend to appear primarily in magazines devoted to specific instruments or instrumental families. Heinsheimer also observed that, while book publishers spent as much as 10 per cent of their promotional budget on review copies, the number of outlets was so small for music publishers that review copies were often not even included in calculations, accounting for around 0.1 per cent of the budget.⁹ In the UK, music publishers will often set aside just half-a-dozen promotional copies, and even that seems generous in many cases.

Another area of music criticism that is easy to overlook is reviewing books about music. Although rare, music book reviews are not entirely absent from newspaper columns even today, and are regular features of magazines such as *Gramophone*, *Opera* and *BBC Music Magazine* as well as scholarly journals. On occasion, music books have even won generalist literary awards, relatively recent examples being the second volume of David Cairns's Berlioz biography (Samuel Johnson Prize and best biography in The Whitbread Book Awards) and Alex Ross's *The Rest is Noise* (*Guardian* First Book Award). It should also be remembered that there are objects of review where the music is often thought of as secondary. Opera will be reviewed by a music critic, but ballet and dance critics will not be primarily musical in their training. Similarly, musical theatre will usually be reviewed by theatre critics. In each of these areas, though, it is not unheard of for a music critic to review them, sometimes even in addition to the dance or theatre critic. For example, when English National Opera includes a Broadway musical in its season, the music critics who would normally review the company's work usually attend that production too. A consequence of this is that they often project negativity into their assessments, perhaps because of their own discomfort about the assignment or impatience at the displacement of art music by a popular genre; the assessment of a theatre critic, accustomed to reviewing musicals regularly in both the West End and the subsidised sector, may be quite different. By contrast, it is extremely unlikely that any film, television programme or computer game would be covered by a music critic unless the subject matter itself was musical. Nonetheless, these are all areas of significant musical activity that increasingly attract scholarly investigation, but are largely overlooked in terms of critical attention, unless the music is divorced from its usual medium and placed in a concert setting.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 226.

Furthermore, while reviewing recordings is now part of the critical furniture, it is rare that broadcasts are considered, whether on radio or television. It may seem obvious that this should be the case, since it is surely better to have a review from a critic who actually attended an event, but it could also be argued that the critic might benefit from reviewing from the perspective that the event is experienced by the overwhelming majority of its audience, numbering many times that in the hall or opera house. In 2010, the website *Musical Pointers* reviewed a number of that year's BBC Proms from the broadcast or using the 'listen again' function, while a quotation from a 2009 review of the HD cinema broadcast of the Metropolitan Opera's production of *Aida*, published on the site *Musical Criticism*, was used for promotional purposes on the Blu-ray release of the same broadcast by Decca, hinting at a shift towards the legitimisation both of the broadcast as the subject of a review and of online criticism as a marketing tool by a major record label.

Online criticism has been shown to have numerous benefits: speed of delivery to the reader, limitless space, the ability to provide hyperlinks between related articles and the provision of a forum for voices – both artists and critics – that might not otherwise have the opportunity to be heard or represented. For a time in the 2010s, *The Guardian* and *Sunday Times* would print additional reviews to those appearing in the print version of the newspaper, proving that the Internet can enhance and complement print publications rather than automatically supplanting them. But with this scope comes a variety of dangers. The pressure to provide reviews as quickly as possible can lead to mistakes and a lack of reflection (though this was also a pitfall of the old practice of phoning in reviews the same night). The lack of a word limit can encourage writers to lose focus and concision, instead providing a stream of consciousness and endless minutiae; by contrast, print critics are typically skilled in getting to the point and summarising overall impact within a set word limit. Reliability is a further problem, where the plethora of opinions expressed between the many print, website and blog reviews for a major concert or production can obscure a sense of recording an event. On the other hand, arts organisations are encouraging the general public to bypass critics when the reviews might not be quotable for marketing purposes. For example, email advertising for the 2018 revival of *Carmen* at Covent Garden used positive audience tweets rather than newspaper quotations to encourage ticket sales, and each of the company's productions now has an official Twitter hashtag (starting #ROH) to encourage 'trending' and make the performances noteworthy events regardless of traditional media coverage.

To some degree, therefore, everyone's a critic in the digital age, and there can be a healthy aspect to enabling open debate rather than relying on a small

coterie of critics from a limited demographic (one that may well not represent the whole audience adequately). One example of this is the scope for the readers of a review then to engage immediately in critique of the critic, often through comments facilities on the site in question. While the dangers of intemperate comment rapidly became apparent, leading many sites either to remove such comments or add moderation facilities, when working well this enables the review to become a starting point for what at times can become a dynamic debate. In some cases, the critic will engage with such comments, either to rebut a point, clarify a misunderstanding, acknowledge an error or oversight, or simply to make further points in what has become an intriguing discussion. Whatever the quality of the comments, this personal engagement between critic and readership marked a substantial shift from the anonymously published review with response only being by a letter, which was unlikely to make it into print. The irony is that, while the critics for newspapers and magazines are now named, those making comments are frequently either anonymous or go by a username that is essentially a pseudonym.

This freedom can also lead to criticism being replaced by fandom, which has the potential to facilitate nuance and detail but also obsession. Online criticism is often used to shape personal identity, such as in *parterre box*, which was published in print form (with the subtitle *the queer opera zine*) from 1993–2001, but has taken on a much more popular and influential role as a website in news/blog format that actively encourages reader interaction. The *Barihunks* blog similarly addresses a mainly queer audience, but its focus on the visual signals an arguably negative trend in classical music criticism of a greater emphasis on image at the expense of the music.¹⁰ This may be a reflection of how art music has gravitated towards elements of marketing and even production similar to popular music, where imagery and iconography are of prime importance; in recent years, classical music albums have similarly often featured the products of elaborate photo shoots and performers are more heavily styled than before. Many classical artists now have a significant online presence, especially when they are signed to a major record label, and the links between online reviews, artist websites and album downloads can be vital in selling records. Yet websites run by fans of performers can arguably lead to invasive levels of detail about the artists' whereabouts and activities. One such site devoted to the baritone Simon Keenlyside provides a calendar disclosing all his performances, allowing readers to know where he is in the world at any point, while more pernicious examples are increasingly

¹⁰ The site does, however, produce a charity calendar annually to support young artists.

prevalent. Meanwhile, more serious attempts at online criticism can encounter difficulties in obtaining press accreditation to gain access not only to tickets and recordings, but also the artists themselves. The interviews given to the traditional press to preview concerts and opera productions have often proved vital to understanding and framing those performances, so the need for online journalists to have this kind of access to write previews can be vital, if not always forthcoming.

Whatever the relative merits and challenges for music criticism and critics in the daily newspapers and online, there is one key difference. Writing about music on a reviewing website or, for that matter, a music magazine, is for a readership that already has a degree of interest or enthusiasm. No such assumption can be made with newspapers (though it frequently is). People do not generally buy newspapers for music alone, but to be informed about everything from politics to literature to cookery. Each person will have their own preferred elements within their preferred newspaper, but will often also at least glance at other things to see if they are of interest. In other words, print newspapers have a much greater degree of passing trade not available to the specialist journal or website. The latter are generally preaching to the converted within a ghetto.

Given the nature of this book, it is worth considering the possible implications of all this for those studying music criticism. It is already clear that developments of recent times, notably broadcasts and electronic media, will pose substantial challenges to future historians. On the one hand, the permanence and means of preserving such media are still far from clear. It is too soon to be certain of the extent to which the vast amount of material on the Internet, in particular, will be maintained, curated and conserved in a practicable way for future generations of scholars. Even the most secure and well-established sites are barely two decades old and computer coding has changed significantly in that relatively brief time. On the other hand, if all the newspaper, magazine and reviewing sites, personal blogs, podcasts and even individual emails are archived in some way, along with the increased availability of existing historical sources, the amount of material to traverse and filter in order to make any kind of historical sense of even a narrow area of music criticism will be overwhelming. Nevertheless, there are issues even with the archiving of traditional print media, for many newspapers printed several editions each day, meaning that a review submitted late may not appear in a morning or early afternoon edition. Since digital archives only preserve one edition, it is far from certain that all content has been archived. Moreover, there are also new possibilities with electronic media, notably the rise of computer-aided approaches such as corpus linguistics, in which the

prevalence of key words can be charted across vast amounts of material in order to perceive developing trends.

Concerns about the decline in the quality and/or quantity of criticism may be almost as old as regularly published criticism itself, and from the earliest days part of the impetus of criticism has been concern about broader musical, cultural or national decline. This may make such voices analogous to the Gauls in Goscinnny's *Astérix* books, whose recurrent anxiety is the sky falling on their heads. Norman Lebrecht's *Who Killed Classical Music* concludes that the field of music and thus, presumably, musical writing is already dead, implying his subsequent remarkably robust career – including overseeing a popular website, *Slipped Disc* – is a form of literary necrophilia.¹¹ Nonetheless, the mere fact that critics have cried wolf about the decline of their profession on numerous previous occasions does not of itself mean that the existential concerns of some at present are necessarily unfounded. The expansion in the quantity and scope of music criticism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries outlined in many of the preceding chapters was relatively rapid in historical terms. It is possible that it could contract with equal swiftness. Barring extraordinary societal changes, this is unlikely to be across the board, but it is certainly conceivable that one or a combination of types of critical format, criticism of particular genres, or critics in a particular region may suffer a precipitous decline. Indeed, that has arguably happened already in some areas. Certainly the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have seen significant cultural changes in many countries, while there is an ongoing transformation of the news media due to television and the Internet. The developments of recent years may have the whiff of the Wild West about them, in that there is seemingly unregulated opportunity in remarkable new areas of activity, but also sharp practice. The situation was similar when newspapers and journals were first appearing, and for some time after.

It is tempting to say that whether the arrival of the Internet and subsequent upheavals in the printed press are regarded as disastrous or as creating new opportunities merely reflects whether the observer is a pessimist or optimist, seeing the glass as either half-empty or half-full. However, it is more pertinent to remember that wine was previously drunk out of pewter, clay or leather goblets, cups and tankards. Moreover, as generations of students will testify, if the glass breaks, another receptacle will be found. One lesson of this volume has been that whenever and wherever music is made, in whatever genre, there will be those who wish to discuss, describe and debate it, argue, attack or

¹¹ It is, of course, debatable whether what Lebrecht means by classical music corresponds to others' understanding.

advocate it, read, reflect and write about it in whatever medium is available. They may or may not be paid or labelled a music critic, they may or may not write or speak eloquently, and they may or may not be perceptive and insightful, but, whether on paper, on the airwaves, on a computer screen or some medium not yet conceived, music criticism will continue.

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