The Composer and Musical Identities in Nineteenth-Century Fiction

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Music is a world within itself
With a language we all understand

Stevie Wonder, 'Sir Duke' (1976)

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This thesis is dedicated to my grandparents.

Abstract

This thesis explores representations of the composer in nineteenth-century fiction, with a primary focus on fiction in English, discussing well-known novels such as George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* (1876) and George du Maurier's *Trilby* (1894) alongside less familiar fictionalisations of composers, real and imaginary. It reveals the under-acknowledged breadth of musical-literary interactions throughout the century, showing fiction's part in working out new conceptions of the composer's role and identity, and the importance of the composer figure for authors as a point of aspiration and differentiation. After introducing a radical new Romantic mode of conceptualising music at the beginning of the century, the thesis uses fiction to trace this mode's afterlife: how it was reshaped by new ideas about music and its relationship to identity, but also its persistence long after the end of the Romantic period in other arts. In writing about the composer, authors explore the attribution of meaning to music, engaging with the Romantic commonplace that music is ineffable. Perpetuating the idea that music stood for the unexplained or inexplicable, but also exposing the cultural construction of musical meaning, fictional representations of the composer are both idealistic and realistic. The chapters offer a range of approaches for understanding the composer's construction in, and impact on, the literary text. They reveal fiction's dialogue with ideas about the composer, from Romantic beginnings which exalted the composer as an artist, to *fin-de-siècle* fears about the composer as a mad, dangerous genius. The composer embodies questions about music's relationship to national, racial, and gender identities, and activates an experimental approach to selfhood which anticipates modernist literary engagements with music. The persistence of the Romantic mode, this thesis suggests, consists in an unabating exchange between literature and music. Fiction not only reflects shared cultural understandings about music, but actively produces them.

Introduction

> musical handling of the art of writing; one should write as the composer composes.[1]
>
> Novalis (1802)

> A creative artist is no more a mere musician than a great statesman is a mere politician. We are not ingenious puppets, sir, who live in a box and look out on the world only when it is gaping for amusement. We help to rule the nations and make the age as much as any other public men. We count ourselves on level benches with legislators. And a man who speaks effectively through music is compelled to something more difficult than parliamentary eloquence.[2]
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> Julius Klesmer, *Daniel Deronda* (George Eliot, 1876)

This thesis explores representations of the composer in nineteenth-century fiction from the 1830s to the *fin de siècle*. At the beginning of the period, music's intimate relationship to identity was newly imagined, and the composer was newly imagined as an artist and genius. These factors are essential to a Romantic mode of conceptualising music which had an extensive, influential afterlife. Taking fiction as not only a receptacle of ideas about music but also a place in which these ideas were actively shaped, this thesis focuses on the composer to explore how far Romantic paradigms persisted throughout the century, and how far they underwent permutations. Music's role and significance was shaped not only by contextual developments such as the rise of commerce and popular culture, the politics of nationalism and imperialism, and advances across various sciences, but also by literature itself. In writing about the composer, authors explore the attribution of meaning to music, engaging with the Romantic commonplace that music is ineffable, and question the possibilities and limitations of alluding to music within the literary work. Fiction reflects and revises the idealism and ambiguities imbued in the figure of the composer since its inauguration at the beginning of the century.

This study begins at the moment when it became customary to discuss the composer as a figure of real significance in relation to music. This is not to suggest that composers were of no importance prior to the nineteenth century, but that certain developments across Europe, primarily a revised understanding of music's status as an art, now privileged their role in music-

[1] *Novalis Werke*, Munich 1969, 527; quoted in R. Murray Schafer, *E.T.A Hoffmann and Music* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), 9.
[2] George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, ed. Graham Handley (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984), 224.

making. Lydia Goehr's central claim in *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works* is a useful starting point:

> The claim is that given certain changes in the late eighteenth century, persons who thought, spoke about, or produced music were able for the first time to comprehend and treat the activity of producing music as one primarily involving the composition and performance of works. The work-concept at this point found its regulative rôle.[3]

Music had until this point held an ambiguous social position in much of Europe. Goehr explains: 'the history of Western music [is] a struggle on the part of musicians to have their practice regarded as a bona fide part of whatever at a given time counted as good, serious, or civilized living'.[4] Literature and the visual arts were afforded the status of fine arts in the emergent discipline of aesthetics because of their unworldliness and possession of some vaunted intellectual idea: they existed in an exalted realm, distinct from the everyday, and promised the beholder some kind of insight. Under what Goehr describes as the 'regulative' norms of composition in the eighteenth century, music could hardly be considered a fine art. Composers were mostly employed by patrons, generally in the church or aristocracy. Under these terms, music typically had two main functions: worship or entertainment. Pieces were valued according to how well they met the demands of the occasion. Expanding on Goehr's 'work-concept' theory, Michael Talbot adds that 'composer-centredness' took on a 'regulative role' between, approximately, 1780 and 1820.[5] Pieces were increasingly (though not exclusively) composed in the name of art, and their creators became artists and no longer 'artisan-functionaries'.[6] This theoretical shift was accompanied not only by extensive speculation on music's meaning and value by writers on aesthetics, but by a huge expansion in musical culture across Europe. Cities such as London, Paris, and Vienna became major centres for public performance, and institutions were founded to promote music criticism, education, and the sale

[3] Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), 113.
[4] Goehr, *Imaginary Museum,* 120.
[5] Michael Talbot, 'The Work-Concept and Composer-Centredness', in *The Musical Work: Reality or Invention?,* ed. Michael Talbot (Liverpool: University of Liverpool Press, 2000), 172.
[6] Talbot, 'Work-Concept and Composer-Centredness', 169.

of instruments and sheet music.[7] Our modern understanding of the composer's significance was born in this period of transformation, as Talbot points out: 'We feel that we are not ready to assimilate a piece of music unless we can place it in a frame of reference defined first and foremost by its composer'.[8] 'Composer-centredness' operated predominantly in the classical sphere, whose differentiation from (and implicit superiority to) the popular was upheld by this very focus on the distinguished, original artist.

Throughout this thesis I focus on the figure of the composer to reveal how fiction engages with currents of thought about music during the nineteenth century. Contemporary music aesthetics encouraged such identification between the composer and ideas about music. One significant development was the notion that, as G.W.F. Hegel wrote, 'music takes as its subject-matter the subjective inner life itself'.[9] Connections between music and the emotions were not new: in the Enlightenment aesthetics of the mid-eighteenth century, the primary way of explaining instrumental music, in the absence of representational signifiers such as word or image, was through the mimetic system of *Affektenlehre,* or the idea that music imitated human emotions. Alexander Wilfing explains that 'although the *Affektenlehre* gave major weight to emotion and feeling, it did so in terms of a shared lexicon of musical gestures on the part of the composer and emotive arousal on the part of the listener, whereas Romanticism framed this question in terms of individual expression'.[10] In other words, when E.T.A. Hoffmann identified 'awe', 'fear', 'terror', and 'pain' in Ludwig van Beethoven's Fifth Symphony (in a seminal review of 1810), these emotions were conveyed not as they were generally agreed to sound in musical

[7] See William Weber, *Music and the Middle Class: The Social Structure of Concert Life in London, Paris and Vienna between 1830 and 1848* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004); Katharine Ellis, 'The Structures of Musical Life', in *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music*, ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 343-70.
[8] Talbot, 'Work-Concept and Composer-Centredness', 180.
[9] G.W.F. Hegel, *Hegel's Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art, Volume 2*, ed. and trans. T.M. Knox (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 909.
[10] Alexander Wilfing, 'Music and Value in Romantic Musical Aesthetics', in *The Cambridge Companion to Music and Romanticism,* ed. Benedict Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 185.

terms, but as Beethoven *really felt* them, and transmitted them into his composition.[11] At the same time, and somewhat paradoxically, the transmission of these emotions was considered to have universal significance, so that the composer fulfilled the Kantian ideal of (in Jim Samson's paraphrase) 'reveal[ing] the world in expressing himself'.[12]

The Romantic emphasis on the expression of interiority – what Carl Dahlhaus calls the 'expressive theory of aesthetics' – inaugurated a mode of reception which significantly shaped nineteenth-century music and persists today, as Talbot suggests: 'we like to think that, consciously or not, a musical composition reflects the state and course of a composer's inner life'.[13] To take a typical example, from an 1880s group biography of 'great' composers: 'without exception, the lives of such men, being so closely related to their work that the one can hardly exist or be understood without the other, never fail to be interesting and full of what we call 'romance' interwoven with everything they conceived, achieved, or were foiled in'.[14] Prefacing the book, this statement implicitly announces that a criterion for inclusion among the great composers (or the newly developed canon) was this symmetry between work and life. Beethoven, the first prominent composer to be discussed and received in Romantic terms, purportedly stated, 'I live only within my notes', confirming the 'expressive theory of aesthetics' as a regulative framework for reading the composer and, thereby, reading music.[15]

The composer in literature is, then, a metonym for ideas about music. In what follows, I conceive of the composer as a figure of both inspiration and differentiation for the author. Philosophers in the Romantic tradition, from Novalis to Nietzsche, envisioned their work in

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[11] E.T.A. Hoffmann, 'Review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony', in *E.T.A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings: Kreisleriana, The Poet and the Composer, Music Criticism*, ed. David Charlton, trans. Martyn Clarke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 238.

[12] Jim Samson, 'The Musical Work and Nineteenth-Century History', in *Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music,* ed. Samson, 22.

[13] Carl Dahlhaus, *Between Romanticism and Modernism: Four Studies in the Music of the Late Nineteenth Century,* trans. Mary Whittall (London: University of California Press, 1980), 3; 'The Work-Concept and Composer-Centredness', 180.

[14] C.E. Bourne, *The Great Composers, or, Stories of the Lives of Eminent Musicians* (London: W. Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1883), 7.

[15] Quoted in Walter Salmen, *The Social Status of the Professional Musician from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Pendragon Press, 1983), 268.

parallel to that of composers; but for literary authors, the relationship to the composer was one of magnetism, a constant push and pull. Composers were creators of an art which was now considered to have narrative and intellectual possibilities like literature, but whose performative instantiations had a more direct, emotive affect. The standardisation of musical notation produced a concept of musical 'textuality' roughly corresponding to literary textuality, particularly in its emphasis on originality. Goehr explains the ideal of *Werktreue*, which newly identified the composer's original score as the definitive version of a work, with all performances measured by their fidelity to this score.[16] *Werktreue* is an essential overarching concept in all the following chapters; it explains how the composer came to assume such authority in valorisations of music, but it also insinuates a 'new relation between work and performance as well as between performer and composer', whose tensions Goehr elaborates.[17] Expectations changed throughout the years and depended on context, but by and large, the *Werktreue* obliged performers to achieve a balance between faithful rendering and distinctive expressivity. Nineteenth-century audiences exclusively heard music in the form of live performances, and the singularity of this experience – the sense, prior to recording technology, that a work could never be heard in the same way twice – gave music its unique, intriguing appeal. The composer's position as creator of an apparently immanent text was always challenged by the spectre of performance. The musical work was both abstract and concrete: its capacity for both monumentality and fleeting pleasure made it a compelling Romantic phenomenon.

Writers of fiction may also have been interested in the composer as a figure of authenticity, which was a privileged quality in Romantic discourses. With the growth of commercial markets for both literature and music, authors, composers, and critics alike sought authenticity as a guard against debasement.[18] Composers were all the more uninhibited in their

[16] Goehr, *Imaginary Museum,* 231-34.
[17] Goehr, *Imaginary Museum,* 231.
[18] See Tim Milnes & Kerry Sinanan, eds., *Romanticism, Sincerity, and Authenticity* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

confessions of sincere feeling because they used music, rather than words: 'even poetry relied on the seemingly arbitrary symbols and syntax of language, and thus inserted a layer of artifice and convention between subjective experience and its artistic expression'.[19] In representing the composer, authors necessarily foreground these differences between their respective arts, with the result frequently amounting to Walter Pater's famous proclamation (in 'The School of Giorgione', 1877; included in *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* in 1888) that '*all art constantly aspires towards the condition of music*'.[20] Yet the composer's role in the text complicated, as much as it endorsed, this aspiration. As an embodiment of music in a person, the composer reminds readers of music's relationship to identity, including the exclusionary aspects of this relationship as figured in Romantic discourses. As Karen Leistra-Jones points out, the emphasis on the expression of interiority as essential to the creation of art led to the exclusion of certain groups from compositional prestige on debatable grounds of authenticity: particularly, in this period, Jews and women.[21] Fiction, at times, offers a corrective to these exclusions, creating a continuous dialogue with the 'regulative' concepts, inherited from Romanticism, which underwrote audiences' engagement with music.

What Max Paddison describes as 'a remarkable change in the aesthetic status of music in the hundred years from the 1780s to the 1880s' is an essential context for literary representations of the composer.[22] While Kant had famously placed music lowest among the fine arts, comparing it to a well-set dinner table, the revision of his category of the noumenal to include music can be traced right through the nineteenth century in the writings of E.T.A. Hoffmann, Arthur Schopenhauer, Richard Wagner, and Friedrich Nietzsche.[23] Each made

[19] Karen Leistra-Jones, 'Music, Expression, and the Aesthetics of Authenticity', in *Cambridge Companion to Music and Romanticism,* ed. Taylor, 219.
[20] Walter Pater, 'The School of Giorgione', in *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* (London: Macmillan, 1888), 140 (emphasis original). This chapter was not included in the first edition of the book (entitled *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*) in 1873, nor the second edition in 1877.
[21] Leistra-Jones, 'Music, Expression, and the Aesthetics of Authenticity', 223.
[22] Max Paddison, 'Music as Ideal: The Aesthetics of Autonomy', in *Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music*, ed. Samson, 318.
[23] Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement,* trans. James Creed Meredith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 206 & 184.

important modifications to the metaphysics of music which inflected its reception in criticism and fiction, but they have in common an essentially Romantic interest in music's transcendent qualities. Although first posited in late-eighteenth-century discussions of instrumental music, the belief in music's transcendence had wider ramifications for non-instrumental genres such as opera and song, since it necessarily challenged the traditional notion of music's subordination to words.

The writings of W.H. Wackenroder and Ludwig Tieck provide examples of elevated subjective responses to instrumental music which shifted the emphasis from its imitation of human emotions (as in Enlightenment aesthetics) to its embodiment of inexplicable yearning. John Daverio refers to the Romantic 'tendency to think of instrumental music not merely as an abstract play of tones, but as the representation of some kind of emotional content', and Romantic writers thus included music with the other arts in their emphasis on emotion over reason.[24] In *Phantasies on Art for the Friends of Art* (1799), written with Tieck, Wackenroder discusses music through the fictional composer Joseph Berglinger. For Berglinger, music is an exalted spiritual realm; he can 'close [his] eyes to all the strife of the world – and withdraw quietly into the land of music'.[25] This abstraction is enabled by music's non-representational nature, which no longer needs explaining through some mimetic system, but has become the grounds for music's close relationship to the non-phenomenal world:

> it portrays human feelings in a superhuman way, because it shows us all the emotions of our soul above our heads in incorporeal form, clothed in golden clouds of airy harmonies, because it speaks a language which we do not know in our ordinary life, which we have learned, we do not know where and how, and which one would consider to be solely the language of angels.[26]

Wackenroder's exaltation of music offered a model for literary descriptions throughout the century, but it was grounded in the philosophy of contemporaries such as Friedrich Schlegel,

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[24] John Daverio, *Nineteenth-Century Music and the German Romantic Ideology* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1993), 5.
[25] W.H. Wackenroder, 'Phantasies on Art for the Friends of Art', in Mary Ethel Hurst Schubert, 'Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder's "Confessions and Phantasies": Translated and Annotated with a Critical Introduction' (PhD diss., Stanford University, 1970), 339.
[26] Wackenroder, 'Phantasies on Art', 343.

Friedrich Schiller, Novalis, and Johann Gottfried Herder.[27] As Mark Evan Bonds points out, although these Idealist writers centralised music's emotionalism, they also made it a vehicle for intellectual thought. Kant's denigration of instrumental music had been predicated on its inability to convey ideas, whereas 'within the idealist aesthetic', Bonds writes, 'listeners no longer considered [music's] imprecision in relation to nature, language, or human emotions, but rather in relation to a higher, ideal world'.[28] Music's inability to convey ideas was positively reformulated as a striving towards an uncapturable essence, or the 'ideal' on which Idealist philosophy focused.

Schlegel viewed the work of art as the means for approaching the ideal and, therefore, as consonant with the aims of philosophy. Noting how themes in music are 'developed, reaffirmed, varied, and contrasted in the same way as the subject of meditation in a philosophical succession of ideas', Schlegel placed music 'highest among all the arts' because it embodies the 'longing for the infinite' which characterises not just the philosopher's task, but all human life.[29] This longing, which elsewhere informs Schlegel's preference for the fragment, is best captured by music because it obeys a rational set of rules (the laws of harmony and rhythm) and yet produces a response which cannot be explained. Daverio identifies this mystery as central to Wackenroder's praise of music: 'the musical initiate will revel in sound precisely because of the unbridgeable gap between *Gefühl* – the exalted feeling that music can inspire – and *Wissenschaft* – the mathematical laws that silently govern its creation'.[30] That 'unbridgeable gap' was the motivating force in Romantic philosophy, encouraging Novalis's view of the shared task of the composer and philosopher. As Daniel Melnick explains, the 'metaphor of music' celebrates a lack

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[27] See Mark Evan Bonds, *Music as Thought: Listening to the Symphony in the Age of Beethoven* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 5-28; Tomás McAuley, 'Music in Early German Romantic Philosophy', in *Cambridge Companion to Music and Romanticism,* ed. Taylor, 165-82; Andrew Bowie, 'Music and the Rise of Aesthetics', in *Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music,* ed. Samson, 29-54.
[28] Bonds, *Music as Thought,* 14.
[29] Friedrich Schlegel, *Athenaeumsfragmente* 116, I: 2, 182 / *Lucinde and the Fragments*, trans. Peter Firchow (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971), 175; Friedrich Schlegel*, Literarische Notizen 1797–1801*, ed. Hans Eichner (Frankfurt: Ullstein Materialien, 1980), fragment 1417 (page 151); translations modified by McAuley, 'Music in Early German Romantic Philosophy', 170-71.
[30] Daverio, *Nineteenth-Century Music and the German Romantic Ideology,* 5.

of finitude: it implicates the 'glorious and costly ideal of transcendence' not in an attempt to 'persuad[e] us of the transcendental possibility of wholeness', but to 'evok[e] for us the paradoxical and contingent struggle toward such transcendence'.[31] Or as Wackenroder put it: 'Are questions answered for us here? Are secrets revealed to us? – O, no! but, in the place of all answers and revelations, airy, beautiful cloud formations are shown to us, the sight of which calms us, we do not know how'.[32]

Since music embodied the 'longing for the infinite', 'the composer assumed a new role as a mediator between heaven and earth, a divinely inspired human who could help to connect the mundane and the divine', as Bonds writes.[33] Conspicuously absent from most of this philosophical speculation, however, are the names of any composers in whose works these ideals could be heard; indeed, Jean-Pierre Barricelli has claimed: 'The Romantics loved music in a spiritual sense as profoundly as they ignored it in a technical sense'.[34] (Romantic poets in English, too, dealt predominantly with music as an idea).[35] It was not until the writings of E.T.A. Hoffmann that the Romantic Idealist view of music was explicitly applied to any composers. In his 1810 review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, Hoffmann produced what David Charlton calls 'an epoch-making statement of Romantic theory'.[36] For Hoffmann, music 'reveals to man an unknown realm', 'in which he leaves behind all feelings circumscribed by intellect in order to embrace the inexpressible'.[37] As well as solidifying Idealist claims that music brought listeners into the 'wonderful realm of the infinite', the review praised Beethoven as godlike in his ability

[31] Daniel Melnick, *Fullness of Dissonance: Modern Fiction and the Aesthetics of Music* (London: Associated University Press, 1994), 17.
[32] Wackenroder, 'Phantasies on Art', 340.
[33] Bonds, *Music as Thought,* 16.
[34] Jean-Pierre Barricelli, *Melopoiesis: Approaches to the Study of Literature and Music* (London: New York University Press, 1988), 89. Bonds argues that these German philosophers cannot have failed to be familiar with contemporary music-making.
[35] See André Cœuroy, 'Musical Inspiration in English Literature of the Nineteenth Century', *The Musical Quarterly* 10, no. 3 (July 1924): 305-25; Francis O'Gorman, 'Music in Romantic and Victorian Poetry', in *The Edinburgh Companion to Music and Literature,* ed. Delia da Sousa Correa (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), 453-61.
[36] David Charlton, preface to 'Review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony', in *E.T.A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings,* ed. Charlton, 236.
[37] E.T.A. Hoffmann, 'Review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony', in *E.T.A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings,* ed. Charlton, 236.

to convey the essential striving felt by all human beings.[38] Bonds writes: 'Beethoven's music created a new aesthetic, one in which listeners were compelled to *rise to the level of the composer*'.[39]

Hoffmann's review bestowed a new set of terms onto music writing for the nineteenth century, in which the composer's new role as primary determinant of musical meaning and value was envisioned in terms of godliness, spiritual vocation, and even supernaturalism, magic, and wizardry. The *OED* shows the term *Maestro* coming to be used primarily of musicians, specifically 'a great musical composer, teacher, or conductor', in the nineteenth century, complemented by the German eighteenth-century term *Kapellmeister* (traditionally a musician employed at a court or church) and the English equivalent, 'music master'.[40] All convey the composer's mastery over his musical materials, which spills over into the characterisation of the composer as someone of more general authority and, potentially, danger. Fictional intimations of the composer's possible demagoguery gathered pace from mid-century, following the advent of Wagner ('*The Meister*', according to the London Wagner Society's dedicated journal) and of political understandings of music, or musical nationalism. In this way, the more extreme Romantic Idealist claims about music were transformed by developments in European musical culture.

In early German Romanticism, music was a subject not just for aesthetics but also for fiction, 'romantic' connoting, originally, the form of the novel (*roman*). Critics have long recognised a tradition of German fiction about musicians, while any such trend in English fiction has yet to be extensively explored.[41] More than any other author, Hoffmann created the figure of

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[38] Hoffmann, 'Review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony', 238.
[39] Bonds, *Music as Thought,* 9 (emphasis added).
[40] 'maestro, n.', *OED* Online < https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/112113?redirectedFrom=maestro#eid>, accessed 05/12/22.
[41] One exception is Cynthia Westerbeck, 'Jubal's journey: The Musician as Exile in Victorian Literature' (PhD diss., Washington University, 2000). For German fiction, see Celia Applegate, *The Necessity of Music: Variations on a German Theme* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020), 78-81; George C. Schoolfield, *The Figure of the Musician in German Literature* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1956); John Neubauer, *The Persistence of Voice: Instrumental Music and Romantic Orality* (Leiden: Brill, 2017). These examples span the late seventeenth to early nineteenth centuries.

the fictional composer: from the ghostly figure of Gluck in 'Ritter Gluck' to the critical dialogue of 'Der Dichter und die Komponist', and, most significantly, the composer Johannes Kreisler. First appearing as a mouthpiece for Hoffmann's criticism in 1810, Kreisler formed a kind of fictional double for the author. In the collection 'Kreisleriana' (featured in *Fantasiestücke in Callots Manier* in 1814), Hoffmann elaborated on the fictional Kapellmeister's character. In one section, titled 'Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler's Musical Sufferings', Kreisler bemoans the profaning of the 'noble and sacred art of music' by amateurs, while in 'Thoughts About the Great Value of Music', he comments ironically on 'the artist, who must eke out a miserable existence in his world of fantasy', mimicking popular opinion that composers were not 'useful members of society' (the same theme runs throughout *Tonkünstlers Leben*, an unfinished novel by Hoffmann's contemporary Carl Maria von Weber).[42] Hoffmann's 1822 novel *Lebensansichten des Katers Murr* revisits these themes. As its subtitle, referring to the 'fragmentary biography of Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler', suggests, the novel is structured on the premise that sections of Kreisler's biography have accidentally been mixed up with the *Bildungsroman* of the titular (and literate) cat. As Murray Schafer describes, Kreisler was 'an extreme personification of the composer in the modern sense', defining 'perhaps more than any real composer' their 'new role in society'. He was also quintessentially Romantic in that, like Wackenroder's earlier composer mouthpiece, Berglinger, and reputedly like Beethoven, he lived 'only in his notes' and thereby 'exposed the tragic consequences of a compulsive and overindulgent philosophy of music'.[43] Kreisler, like his fictional successors, provided a commentary on Romanticism's ideal of musical immersion at the same time as he emblematised this ideal for readers across Europe and across the decades. In my first chapter, I describe how real composers fashioned themselves in response to these literary configurations; in chapter six, I suggest the lasting interest of these figures of Romantic excess and genius for decadent authors.

[42] Hoffmann, *E.T.A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings,* 85 & 95.
[43] Schafer, *E.T.A. Hoffmann and Music,* 112.

The persistence of Romanticism which I propose in the following chapters complicates traditional periodisations of the Romantic movements. Discussing 'Romanticism' in reference to music and literature together presents chronological difficulties, beyond the already considerable problem of defining this vast 'ism'. The Romantic movements in literature and the visual arts span the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, while in music, the term 'Romantic' has often been applied indiscriminately across the nineteenth century, spanning composers from Schumann and Chopin, Liszt and Wagner, to Tchaikovsky and Grieg.[44] Only in the case of the first two or three could 'musical Romanticism' be said to align with Romanticism in the other arts. For that brief period, Dahlhaus writes, 'profound and significant thought could legitimately be expressed in straightforward musical language, inasmuch as directness and simplicity were in accord with the romantic zeitgeist'.[45] By the end of the century, however, music was 'romantic in an unromantic age, dominated by positivism and realism'.[46] Although music became 'untimely',[47] this disjunction increasingly proved music's value in a modernising world: 'its very dissociation from the prevailing spirit of the age enabled it to fulfil a spiritual, cultural, and ideological function of a magnitude which can hardly be exaggerated: it stood for an alternative world'.[48] My use of the term 'Romanticism' therefore purposely engages anachronism as a hallmark of perspectives on music in the late nineteenth century. Authors consciously respond to a set of ideas and values which they differentiate from the present as a kind of inheritance, but which they also bring into the present and renew.

I also intend to foreground interdisciplinarity by avoiding the terms 'musical Romanticism' or 'literary Romanticism'. My study confines its understanding of Romanticism to that which arises from interactions between music and texts: Romantic paradigms, for my

[44] See Schafer, *E.T.A. Hoffmann and Music,* 6; Benedict Taylor, 'Defining the Indefinable: Romanticism and Music', in *Cambridge Companion to Music and Romanticism,* ed. Taylor, 3-16.
[45] Dahlhaus, *Between Romanticism and Modernism,* 13-14.
[46] Dahlhaus, *Between Romanticism and Modernism,* 5.
[47] Nietzsche praised Wagner and Bayreuth in a volume titled *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen* – normally translated as *Thoughts Out of Season,* it nonetheless captures this same sense of 'untimeliness' in music's relationship to the era.
[48] Dahlhaus, *Between Romanticism and Modernism*, 5.

purposes, are those found in writing *about* music in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. To give an example, Hoffmann in his seminal review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony bestows the description of 'romantic' not only on that composer, but on Mozart and Haydn.[49] This classification is debatable from a music-history standpoint, but Hoffmann uses the term less in terms of historical or stylistic specificity, and more in terms of what he calls the 'spirit' of the musical work.[50] Similarly, Schumann doubted that 'a distinct romantic school could be found in music, which is itself romantic'.[51] For both, 'romantic' is a transhistorical term referring to a mode of comprehension. This is not to suggest that the term 'romantic' does not have chronological and stylistic significance: it emerged from a particular milieu, and referred to particular characteristics, as I have traced. At the same time, these examples prove that it was an adaptable term, whose connotations both of a specific period and of timelessness lend an uncanny quality to invocations of Romanticism in literature later in the century. These examples also underline the term's intrinsic interdisciplinarity – when Hoffmann calls Mozart and Haydn 'romantic', he intends the reader to understand the term as it was applied in contemporary writing about music.

My work contributes to a growing body of interdisciplinary research on music and literature, in particular the area of music in fiction.[52] In a pioneering mid-twentieth-century study uniting the disciplines, Calvin Brown was somewhat dismissive of this area: 'A host of writers with a passion for music have brought it into their novels as subject matter: even the famous "musical" works of E.T.A. Hoffmann hardly achieved more than this. And this writing *about* music shows the influence of music on literature to exactly the same extent that Lamb's *Dissertation on Roast Pig* shows the influence of cookery'.[53] However, the emergence of the New Musicology in the 1980s (in the work of critics such as Lawrence Kramer and Suzanne McClary)

[49] Hoffmann, 'Review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony', 237.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Quoted in Schafer, *E.T.A. Hoffmann and Music,* 10.
[52] See the recent *Edinburgh Companion to Music and Literature,* ed. da Sousa Correa.
[53] Calvin S. Brown, *Music and Literature: A Comparison of the Arts* (London: University Press of New England, 1948), 209.

expanded musicology's concerns, moving beyond formalist analysis to consider music as a form of cultural production which is in dialogue with social and historical contexts. This has in turn expanded the field of musical-literary studies to accommodate fiction featuring music as 'subject matter', as fiction has been recognised as a context interacting with the production of music, and vice versa. In their introduction to *The Idea of Music in Victorian Fiction,* Sophie Fuller and Nicky Losseff argue that 'fiction is a natural (though not unproblematic) interpreter of cultural meaning', and 'in our attempts to understand the cultural contexts of music as fully as possible, we may turn to it as a "folk" documenter of music historiography – not in a technical or even accurate sense, but to elicit information about what music meant to its performers and listeners (often also members of the novelists' own audience)'.[54] This thesis is not only about what happens in fiction when the composer features as a character, but how fiction produces and influences shared cultural understandings of the meaning and value of music. As Nathan Waddell notes, 'certain "musical" works of literature can be reclaimed as an extension of musicology by other means', and Emma Sutton writes about Virginia Woolf 'extend[ing] the boundaries of music criticism into fiction' through protracted engagement with musical works.[55]

Like these critics, I focus on fiction rather than poetry – the main subject of Brown's seminal study, and whose fitness for discussion alongside music is intuitive given their shared rhythmic and sonic preoccupations.[56] However, Fuller and Losseff's qualification that fiction may not give a 'technical or even accurate sense' about music seems overly apologetic. Contrary to Brown's claim that the influence of music on literature was 'somewhat sporadic' and 'largely isolated or confined to small groups of writers', numerous nineteenth-century authors

[54] Sophie Fuller & Nicky Losseff, eds., *The Idea of Music in Victorian Fiction* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), xiv.
[55] Nathan Waddell, *Moonlighting: Beethoven and Literary Modernism (*Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 46; Emma Sutton, 'Fiction as Musical Critique: Virginia Woolf, *The Voyage Out* and the Case of Wagner', in *Words and Notes in the Long Nineteenth Century,* ed. Phyllis Weliver & Katharine Ellis (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2013), 147.
[56] See also Miranda Stanyon, 'Music and Romantic Literature', in *Cambridge Companion to Music and Romanticism,* ed. Taylor, 37-55.

responded to music in their fiction.[57] The notion that fiction has little to tell us about music is born of a disciplinary differentiation many in the nineteenth century would not have recognised: not least Richard Wagner, who appears in my study as both composer and author. The most infamous proponent of unity between words and music, Wagner was also a significant influence on the literature of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Beyond Wagner, Peter Dayan has written about the prevalence of 'a style of writing that refused to recognize clear boundaries between the literary, the critical, and the musical', which was 'simultaneously literary and musical (since it defined literature as music, and heard music as poetic), and a critical reflection on the literary and the musical'.[58] Numerous composers throughout the period – Hoffmann, Schumann, Wagner, Weber, Berlioz, Liszt – also wrote fiction and/or critical prose. Their voracious reading of literature is well known, prompting statements such as Barricelli's that 'the influence of Romantic writers on composers is greater than that of composers on writers'.[59] Nonetheless, the writers I look at throughout this study were significantly involved with contemporary musical culture in ways which inflect their writing. George Sand and Marie d'Agoult were proficient pianists, as well as being the partners of well-known pianists. George Eliot played the piano, sang, and wrote critically on music. Marie Corelli made forays into a career as an improvising pianist before turning to fiction.[60] George Du Maurier was fond of singing and even considered an operatic career.[61] Elizabeth Sara Sheppard, the teenage author of *Charles Auchester,* was a music teacher and occasional composer.[62] George Bernard Shaw and Vernon Lee wrote extensive music criticism. Stanley Makower, author of *The Mirror of Music,* seems to have dabbled in composing, while his fascination with Wagnerism was shared by

[57] Brown, *Music and Literature*, 219.
[58] Peter Dayan, *Music Writing Literature, from Sand via Debussy to Derrida* (Routledge, 2017), 14.
[59] Barricelli, *Melopoiesis*, 76.
[60] Alisha Siebers, 'Marie Corelli's Magnetic Revitalizing Power', in *Victorian Literary Mesmerism,* ed. Martin Willis and Catherine Wynne (Amsterdam: Brill, 2006), 189.
[61] Leonée Ormond, *George du Maurier* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), 27 & 56.
[62] Sheppard is called a 'capable musician' in her *Dictionary of National Biography* entry; Elizabeth Lee and Megan A. Stephan, 'Sheppard, Elizabeth Sara (bap. 1826, d. 1862), novelist', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography;* <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-25341>, accessed 04/03/22. She is elsewhere identified as the composer of six songs collected under the title 'Jerusalem' in c.1855.

nearly all the authors I include who were writing after that movement's arrival in Britain around 1876 (with the notable exception of Du Maurier).[63] I conclude with a brief glance at James Huneker, one of the period's most prolific writers on music, who took piano lessons with one of Liszt's students.

The truth may then be closer to Daverio's suggestion that 'the music and literature of the nineteenth century engaged in a mutually conditioning exchange', and as Phyllis Weliver and Katharine Ellis remind us: 'Authors writing during the long nineteenth century…frequently faced tremendous creative and ideological possibilities in the interplay between words and notes precisely because readers experienced music as a concrete presence in their lives'.[64] It is not only an *idea* of music that these authors explore in their representations of composers, but also music as a cultural product and process. Indeed, this interplay between music as an idea and as an embodied reality is what makes fiction a useful and intriguing place of response to the Romantic trajectory unfolding across the century. Part of this intriguing response is its transnationalism: although I focus on Anglophone literature following the first chapter's consideration of European texts, my scope remains pan-European throughout. Music was felt to transcend national borders, participating in cosmopolitan networks of production and reception, whilst simultaneously telling us something about the socio-political and cultural construction of those borders themselves. Equally, the study of 'musical' fiction addresses itself to the borders of music and literature: my fictional texts suggest how musical and literary cultures interacted and intersected throughout the century, and how the disciplines came to define themselves through and against each other.

A post-Kantian aesthetics of music, elaborated by figures such as Hoffmann, Schopenhauer, Wagner, and Nietzsche, forms a background to these interactions. With each figure's contribution, as well as in the work of the authors I discuss here, Romantic precedents

[63] Evelyn Sharp records John Lane's wife singing a setting by Makower of a French lyric; 'A Group of the Nineties', *The Manchester Guardian* (19 January 1924): 7.
[64] Daverio, *Nineteenth-Century Music and the German Romantic Ideology*, 8; Weliver and Ellis, 'Introduction', in *Words and Notes in the Long Nineteenth Century,* ed. Weliver and Ellis, 3.

were revised. Theories posited at the beginning of the century splintered as the decades went by. New relationships sprang up between concepts of performance and composition, between ideas of musical identities and communities, and perhaps most famously, between language and music. Sometimes called the 'War of the Romantics', the mid-century debate over 'absolute' and 'programmatic' music centred on musical meaning and its reliance on, or independence from, non-musical signifiers.[65] In his treatise *On the Beautiful in Music* (1854), critic Eduard Hanslick insisted that music's creation of meaning was definite but irreducible to any explanation other than a musical one. Instrumental music was 'a language that we can speak and understand, but are unable to translate', an important modification to Wackenroder's characterisation of music as 'a language which we do not know in our ordinary life, which we have learned, we do not know where and how'.[66] Fiction featuring composers brings multiple interpretations into dialogue. Did music seem to communicate universally because it had a fixed, inherent meaning which was more accessible than language; or was it ineffable, expressing something about the universal human condition in its never quite realised attempts to capture the 'infinite'?

As Barricelli explains, the 'ineffable and sublime in music' had constituted a 'defect' for eighteenth-century commentators, but became for the Romantics 'music's true virtue'.[67] Not just for the Romantics, but for every generation since, Kramer suggests: 'music has figured familiarly in modern Western culture as the vehicle for everything that cannot be represented or denoted'.[68] The association between music, the ineffable, and character in the following fictional texts posits something ineffable about identity. To be a musical person in these texts, especially a person who writes music, is to challenge rigid demarcations of selfhood. The 'musical identity' suggests that which cannot be explained by language, a claim which depends upon the

[65] See Carl Dahlhaus, *The Idea of Absolute Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); Mark Evan Bonds, *Absolute Music: The History of an Idea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); David Larkin, 'The "War" of the Romantics', in *Liszt in Context,* ed. Joanne Cormac (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 85-93.
[66] Eduard Hanslick, *The Beautiful in Music*, trans. Gustav Cohen (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1957), 71.
[67] *Melopoiesis,* 77.
[68] Lawrence Kramer, *Classical Music and Postmodern Knowledge* (London: University of California Press, 1995), xi.

continued belief that music has some connection to what cannot be defined. As David Deutsch has explored, for example, the widespread perception of classical music's indeterminacy inspired authors at the end of the century who were interested in enunciating queer identities.[69] By asserting music's ineffability, authors echo Hegel's sense that music resembles the 'subjective inner life', but stress the inexplicabilities and contradictions in how that inner life combines with sociocultural constructions of selfhood to form identity. The composer's presence, as a metonym for the inexplicable yet potent force of music, generates new, unsettling, and affirming conceptions of identity across these fictional texts. (Indeed, while I have focused on the term 'composer' to highlight ideas about creativity and originality, the composer itself constituted a changeable identity in the period, as these texts show, combining the roles of performer, improviser, conductor, and teacher too). Fiction's engagement with the composer participates in, and even motivates, new understandings of identity in European cultures at the *fin de siècle* and early twentieth century. For literary modernists, music enables a focus on subjectivity, or what Zoltan Varga has recently called 'the acoustic self'.[70]

Yet fiction works against, as well as alongside, the notion of ineffability. Kramer writes that 'during the nineteenth century, esoteric conceptions of music based on its apparent transcendence of signification coexisted and contended with semantic conceptions that imbued music with poetic, narrative, or philosophical meaning and with sociocultural agency'.[71] It is this coexistence and contention which are played out in fiction (indeed, Kramer's comment follows a passage quoted from Willa Cather's 1915 *The Song of the Lark*, a novel about the career of a Wagnerian soprano). In the nineteenth century, important examples of discourse imbuing music with particular meaning and sociocultural agency include the criticism of formalists such as Hanslick, the scientific investigations of Hermann von Helmholtz, Herbert Spencer, Charles

[69] See David Deutsch, 'Distinguishing a musical homoeroticism: Pater, Forster, and their aesthetic descendants', in *British Literature and Classical Music: Cultural Contexts 1870-1945* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 139-84.
[70] Zoltan Varga, *The Acoustic Self in English Modernism and Beyond: Writing Musically* (New York: Routledge, 2022).
[71] *Classical Music and Postmodern Knowledge*, xi.

Darwin, and Edmund Gurney, and the nationalist movements across Europe in 1848 and beyond. While the fictional representations of composers in this thesis often affirm classical music's exalted existence beyond the realm of signification, they just as often deal with concrete meanings which contradict the very ineffability with which the term 'classical' become synonymous. In fiction, the idea of music combines with realities relating to performance, reception, affect, canonicity, and professionalisation. Tensions often arise when the composer is *not,* as Romantic aesthetics proclaimed him to be, a metonym for the music he makes. Du Maurier's *Trilby* (1894) takes a deconstructive attitude to core nineteenth-century ideals regarding repertory, the composer's omnipotence, and audience affect. Depictions of musical women revise the figurations of the composer passed down from the Romantic era, modifying the attribution of authority and authenticity to men. A similar engagement with Romantic precedents plays out in representations of Jewish musicianship, where music's vaunted universalism comes under scrutiny. As well as documenting the changing reception of Romantic thought, fiction featuring composers actively informs this reception.

The chapters which follow take a thematic approach while also moving chronologically across the period. Chapter one begins with a European scope, to introduce paradigms undergirding the whole study about the Romantic composer in fiction. Hoffmann's Kreisler is the best-known and most representative Romantic composer in fiction, but he has been well explored elsewhere; I have opted for a selection of texts from the richly musical-literary circle of 1830s Paris. These *romans à clef* and biographies by Honoré de Balzac, George Sand, Daniel Stern (pseudonym of Marie d'Agoult), and Franz Liszt convey the inter-referentiality of musical and literary spheres, just as Hoffmann's work does, and suggest my definition of composer fictions as intimately related to composer *non*-fictions. I pair Liszt's biography of Chopin with Sheppard's fictionalisation of Mendelssohn (in the novel *Charles Auchester*) to illustrate this. The chapter considers how literary forms interacted with two important, conflicting dynamics for the Romantic composer: celebrity and posterity.

The remainder of the thesis focuses on fiction in English. Chapter two looks at the British reception of Romantic constructions of the composer. Surveying the infamous perception of Victorian Britain's lack of native composers and anxiety about Austro-German hegemony, I suggest how fiction complicates music's relationship to national identity, firstly in representations of the foreign composer in Britain, and secondly in representations of the British composer. From Sheppard's *Charles Auchester* to Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* and Du Maurier's *Trilby,* authors use foreign composers to engage with the Romantic ideal of music as a 'universal language', suggesting both a liberal humanist transcendence of national borders and a cosmopolitan unsettling of identity. In George Bernard Shaw's *Love Among the Artists* (1881) and George Gissing's *The Whirlpool* (1897), the British composer represents divergent conceptions of the place of music in national culture towards the end of the century, conceptions in which Romantic ideas still played a constitutive part. The third chapter proposes Jewishness as paradigmatic of changing perceptions of the composer's relevance to identity. I chart the persistence of the literary trope of the musical Jew, and how it exposes limits and contradictions in Romantic writing about music. For Sheppard and Benjamin Disraeli, this musical example of racial essentialism offered a way of negotiating between tribalism and participation in Western culture. Wagner was similarly essentialist in his 'Jewishness in Music' (1850), though with the opposite aim of discrediting Jewish composers' contributions to music. Although not a fictional work, Wagner's article illustrates the trends informing fictional characterisations of Jewish composers in *Daniel Deronda* and *Trilby,* both of which I position as ambivalent responses to Wagner which undo essentialism and privilege indeterminacy. Jewish identity is at the heart of questions about cosmopolitanism, nationalism, artistry, and modernity, with which authors engage through the figure of the composer.

I turn to gender in the next two chapters. Gender was the most important matrix through which ideas about performance and composition were mutually constructed. In chapter four, I use the male composer as a focal point for literary constructions of the female singer, returning to *Deronda* and *Trilby* to discuss the singer as an emergent challenge to the Romantic

paradigms embodied in the composer. Chapter five looks at depictions of female composers by Mona Caird (*The Daughters of Danaus,* 1894) and Marie Corelli (*A Romance of Two Worlds,* 1886). Here, my notion of the composer as a point of aspiration and differentiation for the author comes to the fore: taking up the largely invisible figure of the female composer, Caird and Corelli idealise musical creation as an arena for women's expression, while hesitating over the several barriers to fulfilment faced by this figure. I focus on attitudes to the printed score and publication in these novels, revealing women's alienation from the musical 'text' and confinement to performance. This confinement in turn motivated an association between women's bodies and music's dangerous physical effects. My final chapter considers the entrance of the language of pathology into musical discourse, as reflected in Vernon Lee's 'A Wicked Voice' (1890) and Stanley Makower's *The Mirror of Music* (1895). It focuses on the interlinking of genius and madness, a Romantic trope which recurred in decadent writing. The Romantic conflation of composer and music placed a moral imperative on composers to be healthy, lest their music endanger listeners' health. Considering music and madness as extremes of representation, the chapter ultimately reveals the relationship between the text and the composer as one of possibility and attempted containment.

While the primary rationale for discussing each of the following literary texts has been their inclusion of composers as characters, focusing on this point of similarity reveals new complementarities among otherwise disparate works and movements. I use the figure of the composer as a common thread to bring together widely read works such as *Daniel Deronda* and *Trilby* with the little-known *Mirror of Music* and Shaw's unfinished, unpublished *Love Among the Artists.* Attending to the variety of responses to music and the composer in nineteenth-century fiction, my choice of texts accounts for writing by authors who were well informed on music (such as Shaw, Eliot, and Lee), as well as those who might be thought of as enthusiastic amateurs (Du Maurier, Gissing, and Sheppard), to suggest the wide currency of Romantic discourses. Beginning with examples of Continental fiction, I also suggest that a focus on music can take us beyond considerations of national literatures, revealing the abiding appeal of

musical writing by German figures such as Hoffmann and Heinrich Heine for writers in English later in the century. I will return to Henry James's opinion of Eliot's composer, Klesmer, as a character who 'makes the drama seem multitudinous, like life' in my conclusion, by which point I hope to have justified the unusual step of discussing certain novels in multiple chapters.[72] What James implies, and what I wish to prove through this thesis's unique focus on the figure of the composer, is that this figure imparts into fiction a host of discourses, and moreover, can often invoke the same discourse in multiple, contradictory ways at the same time. To limit my discussion of *Deronda* or *Trilby* to one chapter would risk overlooking the sustained engagement, from various angles, undertaken by Eliot and Du Maurier with the figure of the composer. Placing these texts in varied contexts, revealing their correspondences with, for instance, the British reception of Continental Romanticism, the anti-Semitic invective of Wagner, or the rising authority of the female singer, I hope to coax out the 'multitudinous' significances of the composer. Like its counterpart, Romanticism – another multitudinous, capacious, contradictory set of ideas – the figure of the composer tempts authors in complex, compelling ways.

[72] Henry James, 'Daniel Deronda: A Conversation', *The Atlantic Monthly* 38 (Jul-Dec 1876): 693.

1. Celebrity and Posterity: Inscribing the Romantic Composer in Fiction

> Don't you lament as deeply as I the manner of exaggeration that has taken possession of so many people? That rage spreading throughout the entire world to 'Byronize' and 'Werther-ize' the shallowest minds and crown the most unimportant brows with laurels? [1]
>
> Franz Liszt to George Sand (1837)

The early nineteenth century saw the composer take on a new kind of visibility for a widening musical public, as a figure caught between fleeting celebrity and lasting posterity. Authors in this period turned frequently to this figure to contemplate the endurance of the arts. Both ephemerally uncapturable and redolent of timelessness, music epitomised the Romantic artist's preoccupations with fame. Considering the potency of music's temporalities for Romantic poets, Francis O'Gorman writes: '[music] came from a particular moment in history, from a composer situated in time', and yet '[stretched] into perpetuity, boundless and unconfined'.[2] Music's commercialisation in this period, moreover, made it all the more pertinent to questions of fame. In this chapter, I consider how fiction interacts with these competing impulses. I look at two types of life-writing, the *roman à clef* and biographical literature, to explore how genre affected the text's capacity to undermine or promote the Romantic goal of lasting fame.

The depictions of composers in this chapter, ranging from the 1830s to the 1850s, reflect major developments in the music industry as well as rich debates about music in contemporary journalism and philosophy. My scope here is transnational, as was the spread of Romantic ideas about music: I discuss texts by Honoré de Balzac, Daniel Stern (pseudonym of Marie d'Agoult), George Sand, Elizabeth Sara Sheppard, and Franz Liszt. In spite of their differing approaches to their composer subjects, all of these authors invoke a primary tenet of Romantic ideology: that music was superior to other arts by virtue of its autonomous expression. It was the purest epitome of art, as Nicholas Vazsonyi explains: 'offering experiences of religious intensity, transcendental in its reach, and unconcerned with earthly and transitory

[1] *The Collected Writings of Franz Liszt, Volume 2: Essays and Letters of a Traveling Bachelor of Music*, ed. Janita R. Hall-Swadley (Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2012), 318.
[2] Francis O'Gorman, 'Music in Romantic and Victorian Poetry', in *Edinburgh Companion to Music and Literature,* ed. da Sousa Correa, 456.

considerations of profit and success'. Vazsonyi emphasises this latter point: 'any artwork whose creation was geared towards an appeal to the masses and to financial gain was deemed *ipso facto* unworthy, its creator despised'.[3] Many composers dismissed financial gain by thinking of themselves in vocational terms. In a set of articles in 1835 titled 'On the Situation of Artists', Liszt projects his ideal role for the maker of art: 'He will be a priest and an artist'.[4] As Janita Hall-Swadley notes, referring to artists as 'priests' was not uncommon in this period, since they revealed their genius (a God-given quality) in their works, which in turn inspired others to higher understanding.[5] Liszt also drew on the teachings of Saint-Simonism, a French movement of the 1830s in which the arts were accorded the validity and power to effect a transformation in the social hierarchy.[6] As Vazsonyi points out, the change in the composer's role was induced not only by aesthetic doctrine but by the 'rise of the secular, bourgeois state and the concurrent demise of religious and aristocratic institutions in the wake of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution'.[7] No longer beholden to clerical or upper-class patrons, composers could convene directly with audiences and be recognised as geniuses rather than mere workmen. Liszt summed up the new, meritocratic order: '"Noblesse oblige" of yesterday now becomes nobler. Now, I say: Génie oblige!'[8]

Contradictions arose, however, when it came to the question of who recognised that 'Génie oblige' – and when. Freed from patrons and sharing in the 'revolutionary freedoms claimed by a rising professional middle class', as Lydia Goehr writes, composers now engaged with a marketplace.[9] Middle-class populations became the primary consumers of classical music

[3] Nicholas Vazsonyi, 'A German in Paris: Richard Wagner and the Masking of Commodification', in *The Idea of Art Music in a Commercial World, 1800-1930,* ed. Christina Bashford and Roberta Montemorra Marvin (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2016), 118.
[4] Franz Liszt, 'On the Situation of Artists', in *Collected Writings of Franz Liszt, Volume 2,* ed. Hall-Swadley, 117.
[5] *Collected Writings of Franz Liszt, Volume 2,* 135, n.129.
[6] Ralph P. Locke, 'Liszt's Saint-Simonian Adventure', *Nineteenth-Century Music* 4, no. 3 (Spring 1981): 209-27; for the complementarity of art and religion for Liszt, who followed Saint-Simonism and his friend the Abbé Lamennais in this regard and later became an Abbé himself, see Eftychia Papanikolaou, 'Liszt and Religion', in *Liszt in Context,* ed. Cormac, 163-72.
[7] Nicholas Vazsonyi, *Richard Wagner: Self-Promotion and the Making of a Brand* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 17.
[8] Franz Liszt, 'Paganini: A Eulogy', in *Collected Writings of Franz Liszt, Volume 2,* 292.
[9] Goehr, *Imaginary Museum,* 206.

across Europe and, although they were reliant on fledgling publishing and performance industries, composers could reach wider audiences than ever before.[10] The wider the audience, the greater the concern that music might be commodified. The Romantic sanctification of music as an authentic expression of emotion required its creator to privilege artistic criteria over financial considerations. Yet this position was almost untenable under the new social conditions within which most composers were working a few decades into the nineteenth century. Too great an insistence on music's new status as a fine art, which took time to appreciate, might result in the neglect Carl Maria von Weber bemoaned: 'All too often [composers] die of hunger, only to be applauded after their death by hungry publishers'.[11]

Popularity was an ambivalent prospect, essential to assuage the composer's physical 'hunger', but threatening debasement of their art. Composers' investment in posterity arose in part as a result of these market conditions. H.J. Jackson has explored the idea of posterity in a Romantic literary context, tracing the classical roots of the desire for immortality and of a notion of 'fame as an organic process in which the relatively narrow circles of recognition in one's lifetime widened steadily after death'.[12] While Weber's complaint indicates that posthumous renown was not especially desirable when faced with present poverty, composers nonetheless signalled a preference for posterity as a way of disavowing commodification. As Walter Salmen records, Liszt insisted he composed in order to 'fling a spear into the limitless distances of the future'. Salmen points out that anti-presentism could mask dissatisfaction at contemporary audiences' lack of interest, and this was certainly the accusation levelled in the 1850s at the *Zukunftsmusikers,* or 'Musicians of the Future', a group which included Wagner and Liszt.[13] Composers placed trust in future audiences' abilities to recognise their innovations, not

[10] John Rink, 'The Profession of Music', in *Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music,* ed. Samson, 55-86.
[11] Carl Maria von Weber, *Writings on Music,* ed. John Warrack, trans. Martin Cooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 43.
[12] H.J. Jackson, *Those Who Write for Immortality: Romantic Reputations and the Dream of Lasting Fame* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 4.
[13] Salmen, *Social Status of the Professional Musician*, 272; Larkin, '"War" of the Romantics', in *Liszt in Context,* ed. Cormac, 86.

unlike Wordsworth's description of the author's 'task of *creating* the taste by which he is to be enjoyed'.[14]

Hence Liszt desired some form of 'museum' of musical works, from which Goehr gets her title. Not only would a museum counteract the devaluing potential of present fame, but it would preserve music for posterity, establishing a lineage attesting to music's continuing value. It would develop in tandem with the canon which was being forged at this time. Gradually, as the nineteenth century progressed, music of the past received equal billing in concert programming with music of the present, and music histories began to be written.[15] The musical score now represented a monumental work of art, like the literary text. Music was still vulnerable to the vagaries of history – just as literary texts could be lost and forgotten – but the increasing importance attached to scores meant that composers could for the first time fully share in authors' aspirations to immortality. A preoccupation with present and future fame is part of the common currency of Romanticism across literary and musical cultures in this period.

Many composers made peace with what Goehr calls a 'double musical role', writing alternately for a refined (perhaps imaginary or projected) audience and for a popular one.[16] Some, such as Chopin, elected to attract upper-class patrons, updating the eighteenth-century patronage model. Many courted the public – more or less willingly – making use of the latest technologies to fashion themselves as celebrities. In Chris Rojek's definition, celebrity can be thought of in three forms: ascribed, sensational, and achieved.[17] Liszt's 'Génie oblige' suggests the placement of composers in the category of 'achieved' celebrity, earned through public recognition of works. Yet composers might be compromised by achieving celebrity based on non-musical factors such as visual representations, self-promotion and marketing, and reports about their private lives. Celebrity status was achieved not only by becoming known as a

[14] William Wordsworth, 'Essay, Supplementary to the Preface', in *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth,* 3 vols, ed. W.J.B. Owen & J.W. Smyser (Oxford: Clarendon, 1974), III, 80.
[15] Christopher Wiley, 'Biography and Life-Writing', in *The Oxford Handbook of Music and Intellectual Culture in the Nineteenth Century,* eds. Paul Watt, Sarah Collins, and Michael Allis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 77-102.
[16] Goehr, *Imaginary Museum,* 209-10.
[17] Chris Rojek, 'Celebrity', in *Encyclopedia of Social Theory,* ed. George Ritzer (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2005), 83.

composer of published scores, but by performing in public, appearing in newspaper articles, and becoming recognisable in portraits, caricatures, and (from around mid-century) photographs. All of these factors might detract from the composer's music itself, or undermine its appeal as based mainly on the charisma of its creator. As Rojek notes, 'sensational' celebrity, or notoriety, is an inevitable offshoot of 'advanced industrial society based around universal systems of mass communication' – a situation towards which nineteenth-century European societies were moving.[18]

In the following texts, authors are both worried by and engaged in the process of constructing composers' fame by non-musical means. Preoccupations about music's capacity to reach audiences without the aid of image or text are linked to the critical debate about 'absolute' and 'programmatic' music, which came to a head in the middle of the century. Programmatic music was promoted by the *Zukunftsmusikers* – also called the 'New German School' – who argued that unification with poetry and visual art was the aim of musical composition.[19] Absolute music was summarised by the critic Eduard Hanslick, whose *On the Beautiful in Music* (1854) claimed that music was intellectually complete in itself, and would be devalued by attempts to pair it with other arts. This debate forms a background to my analysis of the following texts, informing how authors thought about the impact of the image and written word (including their own texts) on the fame of their composer subjects.

Music's visual dimensions became contentious as public concerts became more common. The most prominent type of musical celebrity in the early decades of the nineteenth century was the virtuoso, in whose performances 'the possibility of going over the brink of visual excess' was ever present, as Lawrence Kramer explores in 'Franz Liszt and the Virtuoso Public Sphere'.[20] The virtuoso's mannerisms, exaggerated gestures, and striking appearance might all detract from the idealist experience of music as an autonomous fine art with quasi-spiritual

[18] Ibid.
[19] See James Deaville, 'The New German School', in *Liszt in Context,* ed. Cormac, 48-57.
[20] Lawrence Kramer, *Musical Meaning: Toward a Critical History* (London: University of California Press, 2002), 71.

meaning for its listener. Goethe summarised this position in *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*: 'true music is intended for the ear alone'.[21] Yet only to hear, and not see, music was near-impossible for nineteenth-century audiences: prior to the invention of the phonograph, all musical listening necessarily involved seeing performers, and the 'sight of sound' was an important site in 'forming the social meaning of music'.[22] Dana Gooley writes: 'since their emergence in the early nineteenth century, the print and visual media have produced a nagging anxiety that charisma might be an illusion called into play by mechanized habits of spectatorship and consumption, rather than an essence that pours forth from a talented individual'.[23] Similarly, the charismatic allure of musicians' performances produced anxieties that music's appeal relied on an illusion of spectatorship and not the inherent sublimity of the music itself. For Gillen d'Arcy Wood, virtuosity is a foundational 'bogey' of Romantic ideology.[24] The figure of the composer emerged in contradistinction to ideas about virtuosity, as the fictionalisations of Liszt below suggest (and as I explore further in chapter four).

Negotiating fame was a complex and often contradictory process. For two of the nineteenth century's most prominent composers, Wagner and Liszt, image and text were useful tools in ensuring the immediate attention of audiences and the future monumentalising of their music, and their use of these tools reveals tensions between Romantic ideology and an incipient 'culture industry'. Vazsonyi has studied Wagner's self-promotion alongside Theodor Adorno's writing on the emergence of this 'culture industry' and Pierre Bourdieu's identification of counter-culturalism, or avant-gardism, as a tacit marketing strategy.[25] As Vazsonyi points out, Wagner used the medium of prose to increase his present fame whilst simultaneously

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[21] Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship,* trans. Thomas Carlyle (New York: Collier Books, 1962), 486.
[22] Kramer, *Musical Meaning,* 74. See Richard Leppert*, The Sight of Sound: Music, Representation, and the History of the Body* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).
[23] Dana Gooley, 'From the Top: Liszt's Aristocratic Airs', in *Constructing Charisma: Celebrity, Fame, and Power in Nineteenth-Century Europe,* ed. Edward Berenson and Eva Giloi (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2013), 192.
[24] See Gillen d'Arcy Wood, *Romanticism and Music Culture in Britain, 1770-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
[25] Vazsonyi, *Self-Promotion and the Making of a Brand,* 3-4.

disparaging market forces and proclaiming the artwork's immortality.[26] The composer encouraged readers of his voluminous autobiographical writing to consider such work as 'a record of the life's work of an artist', indissoluble from his compositional work, anticipating tendencies later in the century to take the entirety of Wagner's life and output into account when summarising his dangerousness as a composer (see chapter six).[27] Meanwhile, Liszt's negotiation of idealism and commercialism was remarked upon in his lifetime: Heinrich Heine called him 'general manager of his fame', adept at inspiring 'Lisztomania'.[28] Liszt may have spoken against 'Werther-izing' – referring to the fan frenzy incited by Goethe's 1774 novel – but he was well aware of the value of cultivating celebrity through non-musical channels. As Gooley describes, he was 'fully modern in his use of print media to facilitate a sense of familiarity and emotional identification on the part of the audience', and 'it was literally the *face,* reproduced ad infinitum in journals, lithograph portraits, and other ephemera, that had created and sustained Liszt's pan-European celebrity'.[29]

Heinrich Heine's writings demonstrate these tensions between an idealist belief in music's autonomy, and a persistent interest in music's relation to – perhaps dependence upon – images. As a significant chronicler of the Parisian circle with which most of this chapter is concerned, Heine is worth pausing on before I turn to my main texts. He wrote of Liszt: 'every tone his hand strikes from the piano raises a corresponding sound-image [*Klangfigur*] in my spirit, in short, the music becomes visible in my inner eye'.[30] The *Klangfigur* recurs in Heine's writing about another virtuoso, Niccolò Paganini. In the story collection *Florentine Nights* (1836), the narrator describes Paganini's performance as 'a coloured shadow drama, wherein

[26] See also James Treadwell, 'The Urge to Communicate: the prose writings as theory and practice', in *The Cambridge Companion to Wagner,* ed. Thomas S. Grey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 190; Treadwell points out that Wagner ultimately hoped that 'literary-journalistic intervention' to promote music would become unnecessary.
[27] Quoted in John Deathridge, 'Wagner Lives: Issues in Autobiography', in *Cambridge Companion to Wagner,* ed. Grey, 10.
[28] Heinrich Heine, *Lutezia* in *Historisch-Kritische Gesamtausgabe der Werke, XVI,* ed. Manfred Windfuhr (Düsseldorf: Hoffmann u. Campe, 1973-97), 245-46.
[29] Gooley, 'Liszt's Aristocratic Airs', 197 & 192.
[30] Heinrich Heine, 'Über die Französische Bühne, Zehnte Bri hefe', quoted in Kramer, *Musical Meaning,* 76.

he, in his playing, always assumed the chief character'.[31] Among the guises in which the violinist appears is that of 'a wizard commanding the elements', reflecting recent transformations in the composer's role: he was now 'the master', a supernatural 'wizard' with all-powerful 'command' over musical meaning and effect.[32] Pushing Liszt's 'priest'-like characterisation of the composer to an extreme, the account deifies the composer as creator of a newly sanctified art: 'as he stood there, firm and secure, an exalted and divine image, playing upon his violin, it seemed as if an entire creation obeyed his melodies. He was Man as planet, round whom the universe revolved'.[33] The virtuoso is 'considered extraordinary and treated as endowed by supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers' which are 'not accessible to the ordinary person', as in Max Weber's definition of charisma.[34] These attributes became typical in Romantic characterisations of musicians, but Heine's account suggests that their recognition cannot come through music alone. *Florentine Nights* offers contrasting ways of thinking about music's autonomy in relation to fame. Firstly, it suggests the vulnerability of music to 'visual excess', its debasement in the hands of a sensational celebrity performer. Yet it leaves open the prospect that its imagistic descriptions convey a sense of the faithful 'realization of the composed work': music's intrinsic value is ameliorated by visual experience, and thereby conferred the quality of immortality.[35]

These tensions between fleeting and lasting fame underlie the representations of composers in the novels by Heine's contemporaries, Balzac, Stern, and Sand, and they persisted throughout the century. George du Maurier's Svengali (in *Trilby*) is a perverse reworking of Romantic wizardry. The mesmerised singer Trilby, like Heine's Paganini, evokes a series of *Klangfigur* in her audience's imaginations. As Du Maurier's novel also implies, those who cultivate sensational celebrity make music secondary to personality (Svengali's music is, after

[31] Heinrich Heine, *Florentine Nights* (London: Gerald Howe, 1933), 42.
[32] Ibid*,* 46, 48.
[33] Ibid*,* 51-52.
[34] Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology, vol. 1*, ed. Guenther Roth & Charles Wittich (London: University of California Press, 1978), 241.
[35] Kramer, *Musical Meaning,* 74.

all, only 'his own love for himself turned inside out').[36] Yet the conflation of the composer's personality and his music, making one publicly recognisable by way of the other, was an important factor in creating what might be called a 'brand'. The composer became, in Simon Morgan's definition of celebrity, 'a known individual who has become a marketable commodity'.[37] Morgan's conjunction of 'individual' and 'commodity' recalls the slippage between person and production in Romantic writing about music, discussed in my introduction as the 'expressive theory of aesthetics'. Alessandra Comini has shown how the complete identification of composer and works became typical of Beethoven's reception.[38] As Comini's study of 'mythmaking' around Beethoven shows, and as Roland Barthes recognised when he referred to the 'bio-mythology' of Beethoven, the attribution of Romantic qualities (such as turbulence, striving, fortitude, depth, and mysterious interiority) interchangeably to the composer and his work was essential in ensuring his posthumous reputation.[39] At the same time, the perception that a composer's works revealed their secret interiority could foster immediate, sometimes scurrilous, interest: Heine's reference to a 'frolic character' appearing behind Paganini, whose 'slender hairy hands…helpfully touched the strings', nods to the popular gossip about the violinist having sold his soul to the devil in exchange for otherworldly talent.[40]

A sense that the narratives attaching to composers constitute a kind of 'mythology' informs my focus, in this chapter, on fictionalisations of real composers, while later chapters deal with fictional composers with less definite foundations in real figures. Because of the pervasive interrelations between literary and musical cultures in this period, the real and fictional are by no means a strict dichotomy where representations of composers are concerned. Hoffmann's fictional composer, Kreisler, who appears in the 'Kreisleriana' sketches in 1814 and the novel *Lebensansichten des Katers Murr* in 1822, is a case in point. Murray Schafer has

[36] George du Maurier, *Trilby* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 299.
[37] Simon Morgan, 'Celebrity: Academic 'Pseudo-Event' or a Useful Concept for Historians?' *Cultural and Social History* 8, no. 1 (2011): 98.
[38] Alessandra Comini, *The Changing Image of Beethoven: A Study in Mythmaking* (New York: Rizzoli, 1987), 16.
[39] Roland Barthes, 'Musica Practica', in *Image, Music, Text,* ed. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana, 1977), 151.
[40] Heine, *Florentine Nights,* 46.

described how Kreisler became 'symbolic of the spirit of music itself' in nineteenth-century Germany and beyond, perhaps more so than any historical composer.[41] Schumann, an avid reader of Hoffmann, drew on the character for his musical sketches entitled 'Kreisleriana'. Balzac, describing his admiration for a great singer, wrote: 'I am a Kreisler for her'.[42] Schafer records that 'the young Brahms often spoke of himself as Johannes Kreisler, Junior, and wrote down all his favourite sayings about music in a little volume he called *Des jungen Kreislers Schatzkästlein*'.[43]

The written text, therefore, was a place in which the composer's fame was created, sustained, and debated. There were obvious ideological motivations for composers themselves participating in this process, intervening on their own behalf or to propound the rights of composers as a collective, acting as producers as well as subjects of these musical mythologies. This is illustrated by the repeated appearances of Liszt, in different guises, across this chapter – though I could just as well, and on the same grounds, have included Wagner, whose appearances in fiction have been discussed elsewhere.[44] Vazsonyi distinguishes Wagner from his predecessor: 'Where Franz Liszt often tried to influence what was written about him, Wagner went a step further by writing it himself, whenever possible'.[45] In fact, Liszt was actively engaged (if not quite to the same extent as Wagner) in literary self-representation, notably in his 1852 biography of Frédéric Chopin, which I discuss alongside *Charles Auchester* (1853) by Elizabeth Sara Sheppard, a loosely biographical evocation of the life and works of Felix Mendelssohn. With its thinly veiled depiction of historical figures, Sheppard's novel could be considered a *roman à clef,* but I discuss it alongside Liszt's biography to foreground how writing about composers disrupts the demarcations of genre. The *roman à clef* and the biography were two popular mid-nineteenth-century genres in which the composer appeared, sometimes as a sensationalised celebrity, sometimes as a part of history. Although *romans à clef* might be more readily

[41] Schafer, *E.T.A. Hoffmann and Music*, 119.
[42] Quoted in Marcel Bouteron, 'Le Culte de Balzac', *Revue des Deux Mondes* 21, no. 2 (May 15, 1924) : 444.
[43] Schafer, *E.T.A. Hoffmann and Music,* 119.
[44] See Alex Ross, *Wagnerism: Art and Politics in the Shadow of Music* (London: 4th Estate, 2020), 220, 303, 463.
[45] Vazsonyi, *Self-Promotion and the Making of a Brand,* 28.

associated with the immediacy of celebrity, and biographies with aspirations to posterity, by bringing together representations of composers in both genres I propose that their authors may have had more nuanced ideas about how textual forms influence fame.

'Draped in unflattering robes': Balzac, Stern, and Sand

> Can't you see her, with the gaze of a sibyl, crunching such a genius as Chopin, he exhaling his melodious sigh as he expired?[46]
>
> James Huneker on George Sand (1899)

Reflecting on Chopin at the end of the century, American critic and author James Huneker felt the pianist and composer had been ill treated by his partner George Sand. He was in agreement with many of the couple's contemporaries that her novel, *Lucrezia Floriani* (1847), had unfairly misrepresented Chopin. Huneker opines that the 'golden reticence of the music artist' is preferable to the 'mortifying misunderstandings of the worker in verse', upholding a Romantic view of music's sanctified ineffability.[47] '[T]he pang which must come from the nudity of the written word' is mercifully, for Huneker, spared the composer because his self-revelation through art is 'reticent' – that is, until he is represented in the written word by someone else. Continuing the clothing analogy, Franz Liszt found himself addressing rumours that Balzac had 'draped [him] in unflattering robes' by depicting him in the novel *Béatrix* (1839).[48] Exposure in the 'nudity of the written word' or 'unflattering robes' came again in 1846, when Liszt's erstwhile partner Marie d'Agoult (under the pseudonym Daniel Stern) published *Nélida*.[49] These *romans à clef* by Balzac, Stern, and Sand form the basis of my discussion. The *roman à clef* often capitalises on public interest in a celebrity subject. It achieves a degree of biographical validity if its author is also a celebrity, whose relationship with the subject is widely known: such was the case with all these novels, since Stern and Sand were ex-partners of their subjects, and Balzac

[46] James Huneker, *Mezzotints in Modern Music: Brahms, Tschaïkowsky, Chopin, Richard Strauss, Liszt and Wagner* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899), 160.
[47] Huneker, *Mezzotints,* 161.
[48] Quoted in Jean-Pierre Barricelli, *Balzac and Music: Its Place and Meaning in his Life and Work* (London: Routledge, 2016), 170.
[49] I have referred to 'Stern', rather than 'd'Agoult', in discussing *Nélida,* to maintain consistency with Sand (rarely referred to as 'Dudevant'). Liszt was yet again 'draped in unflattering robes' by an ex-student, Olga Janina (under the pseudonym Robert Franz), in *Souvenirs d'Une Cosaque* (Paris: Librairie Internationale, 1874).

had moved in the same circles as them all in 1830s Paris. At the same time, the *roman à clef*'s divergence from fact into tendentious fiction gives it its sensational appeal. As a genre, it trades in immediacy, public perceptions, and gossip. Contemporary reception is an important context, revealing how contentious 'unflattering robes' might be, especially when the 'draping' was being done by female authors like Stern and Sand. However, the fact that these apparently unflattering portraits mattered so much reveals the improving status of the composer as a public figure, whose lasting reputation ought to be protected. Rather than reading these *romans à clef* solely in the light of celebrity, I consider their links to posterity, arguing that their authors – despite what contemporary readers felt – endeavoured to consign their subjects to history and prove the transcendent, spiritual qualities of music. In taking this broader view, I am concerned not merely with the (in)accuracies of individual portraits, but with the work performed by these texts for the composer profession collectively.[50]

In Balzac's *Béatrix,* the character of the singer and composer Gennaro Conti was taken for Liszt: 'a man of medium height, thin and slender, with chestnut hair', whose head was 'precisely the well-known head of Lord Byron'.[51] The Byron comparison gestures to Liszt's reverence for the Romantic poet, and the musician was frequently imagined in visual art of the 1830s through typological comparison to Byron; but Balzac's interest in physiognomy as a 'true science' suggests a deeper parallel being drawn, uniting the two as artistic equals.[52] At the same time, when characters suggest that Conti is like Paganini on the violin and Liszt himself on the piano, Balzac maintains popular assumptions about virtuosi.[53] Conti's charisma is derided as 'jugglery' and 'humbuggery'; when he performs, he 'casts an ecstatic glance' upon the audience, 'examining their enthusiasm [and] asking himself: "Am I really a god to them?"'.[54] Like Heine's

[50] Wiley is particularly attentive to the need to keep collective narratives in mind, in 'Biography and Life-Writing', 81-82.
[51] Honoré de Balzac, *Béatrix*, trans. Katharine Prescott Wormeley (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1895), 148.
[52] Christopher Rivers, *Face Value: Physiognomical Thought and the Legible Body in Malraux, Lavater, Balzac, Gautier, and Zola* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994), 148. See Alan Davison, 'Studies in the Iconography of Franz Liszt' (PhD diss., University of Melbourne, 2001), 50-51.
[53] Balzac, *Béatrix,* 117.
[54] Ibid, 118.

Paganini, the performing artist perversely assumes qualities 'usually reserved for the divine', as Holly Watkins writes.[55] Attached to this egotism in the musical sphere is his egotism in love. Camille, a female author character who manifestly represents Sand, takes a dim view of his charisma: 'His nature is charming, apparently, and detestable beneath its surface'.[56] In describing Conti, she consistently links his allure in a musical and romantic sense as equally dishonest, which is borne out in the narrative when he is unfaithful to Béatrix (who represents Marie d'Agoult). As Jean-Pierre Barricelli writes, 'Conti detracts from his stature as a composer and accomplished singer by acting like a petty and selfish scoundrel'.[57] Conti is a sensationalised figure: a 'juggler' and 'humbug' for whom music is secondary to self-indulgence.

On the other hand, Conti's character reflects emergent dynamics distinguishing the celebrity performer from the composer with more long-term aspirations. Camille opines that 'as a composer he has talent, though he will never attain to the first rank', mirroring the general view of Liszt in 1839, when he was known as a virtuoso pianist and occasional transcriber of other composers' works, not a composer in his own right.[58] Yet Conti 'would rather be a man of genius like Rossini than a performer like Rubini', and his compositional seriousness endows the depiction with Romantic depth.[59] Liszt's Saint-Simonian doctrine, set out in 'On the Situation of Artists' four years previously, reappears in Conti's opinion that 'the artist is a missionary. Art is a religion, which has its priests and ought to have its martyrs'.[60] Although Camille represents this opinion as hypocritically at odds with Conti's egocentric performances, Balzac's narrative contradicts this by linking Conti's music to the psychological ruminations of other characters, giving his music emotional significance in common with the Romantic idea that music was the

[55] Holly Watkins, 'From the Mine to the Shrine: The Critical Origins of Musical Depth', *19th-Century Music* 27, no. 3 (Spring 2004): 184.
[56] Balzac, *Béatrix,* 118.
[57] Barricelli, *Balzac and Music*, 167.
[58] Balzac, *Béatrix,* 117.
[59] Ibid, 119.
[60] Ibid.

most apposite art for exploring interiority.[61] Witnessing Conti's duet with an ex-lover (from Zingarelli's 'Romeo e Giulietta'), the protagonist experiences an epiphany:

> Not only had Music arisen before [his] eyes…touching him with her divine wand until he stood in presence of Creation from which she rent the veil, but he was dumfounded by Conti's genius. In spite of what Camille had told him of the musician's character, he now believed in the beauty of the soul, in the heart that expressed such love.[62]

Barricelli writes that Conti's performances constitute 'an intensification of spiritual attitudes toward the art of music, its more effusive as well as its more incisive moods', as Balzac weaves his singing into the characters' psychological drama.[63] Conti is just one example from Balzac's *La Comédie Humaine* demonstrating his conviction that 'music is the first of arts'.[64]

However, most of the immediate response to the novel focused on finding the 'key' to its characters. To his future wife, Ewelina Hańska, Balzac admitted: 'yes, [Camille] is George Sand; yes, Béatrix is Madame d'Agoult only too well'.[65] On Liszt, however, he declared he 'adored in Liszt the talent and the man, and to claim that [Conti] can resemble him is a double insult to both him and me'.[66] Indeed, Barricelli urges caution in identifying Conti with Liszt, quoting Balzac's comment that 'Conti is Sandeau in musician's garb' (referring to George Sand's erstwhile partner). Barricelli continues: 'Conti's inflated egoism, calculated falseness, and narrowmindedness, not to mention his physical traits, are not consistent with the Lisztian personality as we know it'.[67] Hence, Liszt failed to recognise himself in Conti, claiming: 'as I did not recognize myself in him, I have not accepted the portrait'.[68] Yet 'inflated egoism' and 'calculated falseness' *were* traits frequently associated with Liszt, regardless of whether they formed part of his self-conception or Balzac's impression. Gooley writes: 'Liszt was constantly

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[61] Watkins, 'From the Mine to the Shrine', 192.
[62] Balzac, *Béatrix,* 155.
[63] Barricelli, *Balzac and Music,* 177.
[64] Balzac, *Béatrix,* 154; see *Gambara* (1837), which dramatizes musicianship in conflict with romance and ordinary life.
[65] Quoted in Thérèse Marix-Spire, 'Histoire d'un amitié: Fr. Liszt et H. de Balzac', *Revue des études hongroises* 11 (1934): 46.
[66] Quoted in ibid, 45.
[67] Barricelli, *Balzac and Music,* 167.
[68] Quoted in ibid, 170.

being accused of arrogance, excess, histrionics, and triviality'.[69] The late 1830s were a turning-point in Liszt's career: while he was still publicly regarded as a showy virtuoso, he was turning to composition, supported by prose writing, to assert a more serious position in the music world. (I suggest below that Liszt's partner at this time, d'Agoult, was instrumental in this turn, and some critics have even claimed she was the real author of various articles in which Liszt espoused a high-flown vocational attitude to composition).[70] Balzac would have been aware of this turn, and the representation in *Béatrix* therefore straddles private insight and public opinion, the latter often proving overbearing. Even Balzac's opinion of Liszt's integrity changed, ironically, after a romantic quarrel in 1844 (Balzac erroneously believed Liszt and Hańska had become involved). After this, Liszt appears in Balzac's letters under a series of insults relating to virtuosic triviality: a 'monkey', 'real Bohemian', 'mountebank', 'piccaninny', and a 'Lara' (the Byronic allusion in *Béatrix* now inverted by reference to the dissolute hero), who 'has only fingers…[and] ignores everything outside of musical execution'.[71]

Contrasting the reception of *Nélida,* published by d'Agoult under the pseudonym Daniel Stern, as we will now see, Balzac's initial admissions about his prototypes in *Béatrix* suggest an imperative to protect the male composer from (to return to Huneker's phrase) 'the nudity of the written word', while the women he depicted could be freely identified. As authors themselves, who in the following decade produced their own *romans à clef,* Stern and Sand seemingly consented to the identification of their characters and their personal lives, investing in themselves as, recalling Morgan's definition of celebrity, 'known individual[s] who [have] become a marketable commodity'. This assumption has governed responses to *Nélida,* which was published in 1846, a couple of years after Stern's relationship with Liszt ended.[72] In her introduction to the novel, Lynn Hoggard charts the variety of critical opinion about its

[69] Gooley, 'Liszt's Aristocratic Airs', 240.
[70] Richard Bolster suggests 'one can detect Marie's more disciplined style' in some of Liszt's articles from 1835-36; see *Marie d'Agoult: the Rebel Countess* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 138. See also Dorothea Redepenning's claim that Liszt's writing was 'highly dependent' on his most important companions, d'Agoult and Carolyne von Sayn-Wittgenstein ('Liszt as Writer', in *Liszt in Context,* ed. Cormac, 125).
[71] Quoted in Barricelli, *Balzac and Music,* 172.
[72] The title is an anagram of her pen-name Daniel, also the name of Stern's son with Liszt.

biographical validity. For some, it is wholly factual: 'the work of a brilliant historian…Marie's ability to fabricate and invent…[was] weaker than her eye for historical detail'. For others, it is 'the product of Marie's fantasy' with 'scarcely any literary merit', and for others again, a 'transparent concoction of fact into feeble fiction'.[73] That the same novel can strike different readers as both historically accurate and almost entirely fantastical indicates the generic slipperiness of the *roman à clef*. While Stern drew on publicly known facts about her life, the account was coloured by readers' assumptions that her intentions must be vindictive. Subsequent readers, as Hoggard cites, have assumed Stern intended to damage Liszt's reputation by emphasising his egoistic pursuit of celebrity: yet a closer reading of the novel reveals her interest in posterity, especially an interest in the social importance of the artist which Stern shared with Liszt.[74] Even Hoggard, while redressing earlier critics' assumptions, suggests Stern achieved a kind of vindication in writing the novel, a reading which still focalises the author's vengefulness. I want instead to suggest that *Nélida* is a testament to the artistic values Stern and Liszt had in common, and that the character in whom Liszt was recognised, Guermann Regnier, is a necessarily contradictory representation of the struggles of the idealistic artist within the modern culture industry.

Although he is a painter, not a musician, Guermann is a Romantic artist in the style of Liszt. *Nélida*, which traces the eponymous young woman's conventual upbringing and affair with the painter, gives ample space to Lisztian opinions delivered in a heightened religious vernacular: 'Art is holy. Art is immortal. The artist is the first, the noblest of men. He feels God's invisible presence in creation with greater intensity than anyone else and expresses it with more power. Here on earth he performs the duties of a defiled but noble priesthood'.[75] If this did not overtly enough recall Liszt's diction in 'On the Situation of Artists', we are told that

[73] Lynn Hoggard, 'Introduction', Daniel Stern, *Nélida,* trans. Hoggard (New York: State University of New York Press, 2003), xvi.
[74] For the shared views of Stern and Liszt, see Bolster, *Marie d'Agoult,* 130.
[75] Stern, *Nélida,* 61.

Guermann is a 'fervent disciple' of 'Saint-Simonian opinions'.[76] He may be a painter, but his general defence of artists has particular resonance for musicians, given their recent emancipation from patronal dependence. He complains: 'society treats us like dirty artisans who deal in lumps of marble or a few yards of color-smeared canvas. It's convinced that our ultimate ambition should be to praise grand, overindulged lords and divert bored, wrought-up women'.[77] Guermann could easily be discussing composers, who harboured greater ambitions for classical music than its eighteenth-century use as an upper-class diversion. Stern's account is sympathetic to these aspirations. Guermann's charisma does not threaten to compromise his artistry, like Balzac's Conti in *Béatrix,* but complements his egalitarianism: 'As with all eminent artists, he had the gift of attraction that seduces and captivates even the most unsophisticated people. The village children followed him, and having sometimes seen him take a pencil to sketch a picturesque face or costume, they begged him for pictures'. Such celebrity is, initially, not incompatible with Guermann's higher aims: 'He was generous. He knew how to give gracefully'.[78]

However, *Nélida* soon exposes the contradictions of its Lisztian artist's ideals. Guermann's pursuit of Nélida, leading her to leave her aristocratic husband, is figured as an extension of his determination to 'level prejudice, show the dazzled and conquered world the omnipotence of genius, thereby obliterating all distinctions invented by men, breaking the aristocracy's pride'. Nélida becomes a cipher for Guermann's socio-political ambitions: 'obliterating all distinctions' explicitly involves 'subjecting to his power the beauty, virtue, and honor of this peerless woman'.[79] Initially 'listen[ing] hungrily to the artist's speech', 'perceiving art's mysteries for the first time through these words', Nélida comes to see the egotism of Guermann's ideals when he gains renown.[80] Their flight to Switzerland (mirroring that of Stern and Liszt in reality) coincides with success in his work, and the couple become celebrities. A

[76] Ibid, 62.
[77] Ibid, 61.
[78] Ibid, 102.
[79] Ibid, 107.
[80] Ibid, 56.

friend reports that people are 'ripping you apart but are dying to meet you'.[81] Stern exposes the disparities of fame for the aspiring male artist and his female partner, whose aristocratic, conventual background defines her morality throughout. For Guermann, fame promises 'the fulfillment of his dreams: the world in submission to his genius, society in his dominion'; for Nélida, 'her feminine and romantic sensibilities were offended at the thought of exhibiting her private fate to the public'.[82] When a friend writes to her that 'society and your family are closed to you forever', she decides to leave Guermann, and her inability to share in his ambitions only aggravates his egotism: 'His glory threatened, the artist was no longer sensitive to others' pain. In his vainglorious soul, an instant sufficed to dry up the long-tended spring of love'.[83] Nélida, like Stern, jeopardises her place in society through her adulterous, class-crossing relationship; while Guermann, like Liszt, seems free to court fame and rail against society.[84]

Despite the ironic undertones – given that the novel is a *roman à clef* – of Nélida's horror at 'exhibiting her private fate to the public', Stern in fact anticipated the double bind by which her work would be judged. After the controversy over *Nélida*'s autobiographical elements, she returned to the less contentious, because apparently more objective, genre of historical writing. Her novel has been read as a true exhibition of her 'private fate', and a falsified account with only passing resemblance to real events, skewed by the author's emotional investment in her subject. Hoggard speculates that Stern's alterations to her autobiographical material may amount to wish-fulfilment: as well as adducing her own perspective to the narrative of Balzac, who had seven years earlier depicted the equally faithless Béatrix and Conti, she accomplished in *Nélida* 'a personal, emotional purging through art that replaces the need for vengeance in life'.[85] For instance, Guermann falls fatally ill after his split from Nélida and affair with a rival. Calling her to his deathbed, he assures her she had always been first in his affections. Stern alters her own fate from betrayed ex-partner (Liszt was shortly to meet the Princess Carolyne

[81] Ibid, 124.
[82] Ibid, 125 & 123.
[83] Ibid, 130 & 133.
[84] Bolster, *Marie d'Agoult,* 129-52.
[85] Hoggard, 'Introduction', *Nélida,* xviii.

von Sayn-Wittgenstein, with whom he would be involved in some form for the next forty years) to triumphant soulmate.

Just as he had not accepted Balzac's portrait, Liszt rejected Stern's: to acknowledge another's representation would have been to undermine his own carefully considered self-representation and the hegemony of his 'brand'. Liszt 'denied that the book upset him and even pretended it was about someone other than himself', but Hoggard opines that he 'never forgave its author, never stopped referring to her as "Nelida" [*sic*], and never missed an opportunity to punish her'.[86] Liszt's conflation of author and protagonist reveals his recognition of truth in the portrait: if Nélida is Stern, Guermann must at least *suggest* Liszt. The novel was not as damaging to Liszt's lasting fame as he may have feared, which may imply that readers simply dismissed it as a biased account by an apparently vengeful woman. Yet Stern's intention was not entirely vengeful. One important alteration she made to the narrative was to have Guermann, following the success of his art, finance the couple's flight to Switzerland: in reality, Stern and Liszt had escaped Paris using Stern's money.[87] This alteration is not just a minor moment of generosity but an indication of Stern's own belief in sanctified artistry. In her account, the Saint-Simonian artist (who implicitly speaks for the rights of composers too) manages to find acclaim that is both remunerative and uncompromising. Richard Bolster agrees that, notwithstanding the vagaries of Guermann's career and characterisation, 'art itself is seen as a noble activity which can contribute to social progress'.[88] Though she highlights the pressures and gendered dynamics of fame, Stern is devoted to an ideal of future renown which was not only cherished by Liszt but actively encouraged by Stern; she had defended him by writing about 'the feeling of the infinite' which 'carries his soul far beyond all earthly fame and pleasure', and Bolster suggests she 'believed [Liszt] should be remembered for greater things than applause and scandal'.[89] Taking into account the degree of Stern's own fervour for Saint-Simonian ideology,

[86] Ibid, xv.
[87] Ibid, xx.
[88] Bolster, *Marie d'Agoult,* 201.
[89] Quoted in ibid, 151; ibid, 191.

the idealist exaltation of music, and the glories of lasting fame, *Nélida* should be reconsidered: more than an exposé of Liszt's hollow and hypocritical egotism, it was a tribute to the ideals she and Liszt shared.

Turning lastly to George Sand's *Lucrezia Floriani*, written at the end of the author's relationship with Frédéric Chopin, we see even more starkly the contemporary concern that texts might negatively interfere with the composer's fame. Benita Eisler records that Eugène Delacroix was painting his double portrait of the couple at the time of the novel's writing: 'As he listened to Sand's reading of *Lucrezia Floriani*, Delacroix heard his own unfinished likeness of the couple brought to demonic completion'.[90] Like Delacroix's portrait, which illuminates the couple's right profiles and leaves the left in shadow, the novel appears one-sided. Unlike Delacroix's portrait, the novel's Chopin-figure does not play the piano, nor is he associated with music at all. Karol Roswald, a German prince who stays at the palace of the eponymous retired actress and mother of three, ostensibly bears little resemblance to the Polish pianist who charmed Paris with his compositions and teaching. Yet in transforming her subject from composer to prince (an association lightly invoked in *Nélida* too, through the surname 'Regnier', a near-homophone of the French verb *régner*), Sand retains a notion of 'ascribed', God-given superiority. Karol is 'like those ideal creatures whose poetry, in the Middle Ages, adorned Christian temples; an angel with a beautiful face, like a great, sad woman, pure and slender in shape, like a young Olympic god'.[91] These comparisons place the Chopin-figure out of his time and place. Despite being no artist, he retains the Romantic quality of 'poetry'.

Although the angelic was frequently invoked to describe Chopin and his music, for some this 'version' of Chopin was unacceptable.[92] Huneker, sceptical of attempts to truly render musicians in prose, contests the narrative of Chopin as 'a hysterical, jaded, morbid invalid', for

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[90] Benita Eisler, *Chopin's Funeral* (London: Little, Brown, 2003), 151.

[91] 'comme ces créatures idéales dont la poésie du moyen âge ornait les temples chrétiens; un ange, beau de visage, comme une grande femme triste, pur et svelte de formes comme un jeune dieu d'Olympe'; George Sand, *Lucrezia Floriani* (Brussels: A. Lebègue, 1846), 10-14 (translations mine).

[92] Jeffrey Kallberg, 'Small Fairy Voices: Sex, History, and Meaning in Chopin', in *Chopin at the Boundaries: Sex, History, and Musical Genre* (London: Harvard University Press, 1996), 62-86.

which 'the woman in his nature and the idolatry of women' are to blame.[93] Ostensibly, women were at fault for feminising Chopin: as well as Sand's novel, Huneker laments the characterisation of Chopin in Liszt's 1852 biography as a 'Camille of the keyboard, with his violets, his tears and tuberculosis', and as my next section discusses, this biography may have been partially written by Liszt's partner, Princess Carolyne.[94] Male biographers constructed equally exaggerated, but opposite, Chopins, like the 'bull-necked athlete, who almost played Polish cricket and had aspirations towards the prize ring'.[95] In fact, Sand's Chopin is more androgynous than feminine. Considering his 'exceptional physiognomy, which had, so to speak, neither age nor sex', the comparisons to medieval angels and Olympic gods represent, more than anything, Karol's supra-humanity.[96] Sand, like her friends Stern and Liszt, envisions the Romantic artist as otherworldly.

Nonetheless, contemporary attention focused on *Lucrezia Floriani*'s connection to its celebrity subjects. Karol shares traits with Chopin that friends of the couple recognised and felt Sand had unfairly exaggerated. His Romantic detachment eventually becomes apathy: 'Every day, he detached himself further from humanity, of which he no longer believed he was a part…Apparently, he thought, God had not given him a duty to worry about'.[97] Weak in mind and body (like Chopin, he suffers from illness), Karol, unlike the other fictionalised composers in this chapter, lacks any artistic vocation. Detaching the composer from his music, Sand focuses on the private life, analysing the jealousy which had curtailed their relationship: 'Another day, Karol was jealous of the priest…Another day, he was jealous of a beggar he took to be a suitor in disguise. Another day, he was jealous of a servant'.[98] These personal details shocked contemporary readers. Hortense Allart wrote: 'She has handed us a Chopin complete with his

[93] Huneker, *Mezzotints*, 211.
[94] Huneker, *Mezzotints*, 221.
[95] Ibid; Huneker refers to the 1877 life and letters by Chopin's countryman Maurycy Karasowski.
[96] 'physionomie exceptionnelle, qui n'avait, pour ainsi dire, point d'âge ni de sexe'; Sand, *Lucrezia Floriani*, 13.
[97] 'il se détachait chaque jour de l'humanité, dont il croyait déjà ne plus faire partie…Apparemment, pensait-il, Dieu ne lui avait pas donné mission de s'en inquiéter'; ibid, 20.
[98] 'Un autre jour, Karol fut jaloux du curé…Un autre jour, il fut jaloux d'un mendiant qu'il prit pour un galant déguisé. Un autre jour, il fut jaloux d'un domestique'; ibid, 232-33.

ugliest little habits', and Heine lamented: 'She has treated my friend Chopin outrageously in a divinely written novel'.[99] The incident reveals the importance of the connection between composers and their works in the mid-century Romantic imagination: to dissolve that connection and present the reader with a private character seemingly at odds with the publicly known music was an unfair concession to the demands of sensational celebrity culture.

According to Eisler, the novel was received purely as fact, and this sparked the backlash against it: 'Whether fueled by malice, envy, or sincere distaste for art that copied life so nakedly, outrage was aimed at what Sand had revealed – not invented. Indiscretion, not calumny, was the issue'.[100] Sand's known proximity to her subject encouraged a kind of generic shift whereby *Lucrezia Floriani* came to be seen less as a *roman à clef* than a biographical source. Later in the century, English critic Joseph Bennett's study of Chopin claims highest authenticity for the two sources whose writers knew him personally: 'the Chopin best known in our time is without question, that of Liszt, which the Prince Karol of George Sand resembles sufficiently to serve for a confirmation'.[101] Liszt's account, as biography, takes precedence, but is confirmed by a novel. In fact, Liszt's biography of Chopin interpolates quotations from *Lucrezia Floriani* (other writers who feature later in this thesis, such as George Upton and the Reverend H.R. Haweis, similarly quote passages from *Lucrezia Floriani* in recounting Chopin's biography).[102] Sand thereby becomes, despite the controversy of the novel's immediate reception, a custodian of Chopin's reputation for posterity. Huneker registered this – somewhat ambivalently – when, fifty years later, he referred to Sand as a 'skilful literary midwife'. Though he condemns her 'deliver[ing] men of genius' as a vampiric process of 'devour[ing] their souls after forcing from them in

[99] Letter to Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve, 16 May 1847; letter to Henry Laube, 12 October 1850; both quoted in Eisler, *Chopin's Funeral,* 152.
[100] Ibid, 154.
[101] Joseph Bennett, *Frédéric Chopin* (London: Novello, 1899), 4-5.
[102] See *Liszt's Chopin,* ed. Meirion Hughes (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 108; as Hughes explains, Liszt turned to his friend's novel after failing to obtain extensive biographical details from Chopin's family. George Upton, *Woman in Music* (Illinois: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1886), 155-56; H.R. Haweis, *Music and Morals* (London: Strahan, 1871), 299-300.

intolerable agony the most exquisite music', nonetheless his reproductive metaphor casts Sand and her literary abilities as necessary components in the endurance of Chopin's fame.[103]

For her own part, Sand was elusive about her novel's relationship to reality and therefore how far it might have been intended to consecrate Chopin and his works to the burgeoning canon. Chopin, like Liszt and *Nélida,* conflated the author and eponymous character, once telling a friend in frustration that he was 'near to cursing Lucrezia'.[104] Yet Delacroix reported that, on the novel's first reading, 'Sand was perfectly at ease and Chopin could hardly stop making admiring comments'.[105] Perhaps, like Liszt, he recognised that a degree of distance from these portraits (who were, anyway, not even musicians) might be maintained if the alleged prototypes refused to recognise themselves. Sand later wrote: 'Chopin, in reading the manuscript every day on my writing-desk, had not the slightest inclination to deceive himself' and only 'enemies made him believe that this romance was a revelation of his character'.[106] For Sand, her removal of Chopin's artistry in transmuting his character into fiction prevented identification with Karol. As she later wrote: 'Prince Karol is not an artist. He is a dreamer, and nothing more; having no genius, he has not the rights of genius'.[107] Like Stern, Sand makes important alterations to her autobiographical material. Despite Karol's illness, it is Lucrezia, the Sand-character, who dies at the end of the novel, while the narrator explicitly professes a disinclination to 'punish' or 'sacrifice' any of the other characters.[108] Elsewhere, Sand insists: 'Nature does not design like art, however realistic it may be'.[109] In pointing to 'design', or a process of selective discernment, Sand emphasises the construction underlying any textual representation. This is an important factor to bear in mind in my following section, as I turn to consider how biographical texts constructed the composer.

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[103] Huneker, *Mezzotints*, 160.
[104] Letter to Wojciech Grzymała, 17-18 November 1848; quoted in Frederick Niecks, *Frederick Chopin* (Luton: AUK Classics, 2012), 1503.
[105] Eisler, *Chopin's Funeral,* 152.
[106] Quoted in Niecks, *Frederick Chopin,* 1247-50.
[107] Quoted in Niecks, *Frederick Chopin,* 1247.
[108] Sand, *Lucrezia Floriani,* 256.
[109] Quoted in Niecks, *Frederick Chopin,* 1247.

The *roman à clef* certainly contributed to the image of the composer as a marketable, commodified celebrity whose intimate life could be laid bare for public enjoyment. Yet the genre's complex relationship to the factual means that these novels have participated – if contentiously – in the formation of lasting conceptions about the composers they supposedly depict. The closeness of these authors to their subjects (a factor which fanned the flames of the novels' appeal) suggests the texts' participation in a common musical-literary Romantic discourse which emphasised the composer's authority, his connection to interiority, and his importance to history. Two of these novels followed breakdowns in relationships between their authors and subjects, a quality they share with Liszt's biography of Chopin: yet only the latter has been discussed for its intention to consecrate its subject to history, while any considerations of posterity in Stern's and Sand's representations have been overlooked in favour of a focus on vindictive intentions.[110] These dynamics of fame and misrepresentation could be just as complex in biographical writing.

'Glory beyond the grave': Sheppard and Liszt

Following the turn to 'composer-centredness' in conceptions of the musical work, the early nineteenth century saw the first standalone biographies of composers (excepting John Mainwaring's *Memoirs of the Life of the Late George Frederic Handel,* published in 1760).[111] Composers' admission into the genre came at a time when biography was becoming, in Max Saunders's words, 'the quintessential Victorian genre'.[112] Important Romantic precedents, including autobiographical writing by Rousseau, Goethe, and Wordsworth, established the explicatory function of the 'life' in relation to an artist's works. Saunders discusses 'Romanticism's attempt to tie literary works to the personality of their author', arguing that this produced the Victorian understanding that 'not just history, but art, literature, thought – all

[110] See Charles Cooke, 'Chopin and Liszt with a Ghostly Twist', *Notes* 22, no. 2 (Winter, 1965): 857; and Edward N. Waters, 'Chopin by Liszt', *The Musical Quarterly* 47, no. 2 (April 1961): 170-94. Both accounts present Liszt's intentions as conciliatory, while discussing *Nélida* as a revenge novel and emphasising the rivalry between Stern and Sand.

[111] See Talbot, 'Work-Concept and Composer-Centredness', 168-86.

[112] Max Saunders, *Self Impression: Life-Writing, Autobiografiction, and the Forms of Modern Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 2.

human production – were best accounted for biographically'.[113] As Christopher Wiley describes, musical biographies facilitated the 'development of interpretive strategies', founded on Romantic musical aesthetics, 'by which music, even interrogated analytically at the level of the scores themselves, may be read in the light of the subject's biographical circumstances and associated sociocultural resonances'.[114] Biographies were often didactic, encouraging emulation of their subject; as Hermione Lee writes, from its beginnings in antiquity, through medieval hagiographies, to the moralising of Victorian biographies, the genre has always centred on a tension 'between wanting to identify and emulate, and wanting to know about a life inconceivably different to one's own'.[115] Finally, the biographical text was valued for its ability to confer lasting renown: for instance, Johann Nikolaus Forkel's 1802 biography of J.S. Bach intended to 'rescue' him from the obscurity into which he had fallen since his death in 1750.[116] The following texts were written more closely following the deaths of their subjects, who did not require 'rescue' so much as a consolidation of the fame experienced in their lifetime into immortality. In this section, I focus on Sheppard's *Charles Auchester* (1853) and Liszt's *F. Chopin* (1852; English translation 1863), drawing out similarities between the authors' implementation of a specific biographical mode – the heroizing mode established by Thomas Carlyle a decade earlier in *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History* (1840) – to grant their subjects posterity.

The appearance of composer biographies in this period elevated the profession and contributed to canon formation. As such, these texts are significant beyond the individual representation of one figure. Murray Schafer points out, discussing Josef Danhauser's somewhat fanciful painting *Liszt at the Piano* (1840), that such an image could not have existed forty years earlier, since the implication it makes by placing a bust of Beethoven on Liszt's piano – that a composer could form an object of veneration, even appear as the progenitor of an honoured

[113] Ibid.
[114] Wiley, 'Biography and Life-Writing', 95.
[115] Hermione Lee, *Biography: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 27.
[116] Hughes, *Liszt's Chopin,* 37.

lineage – was unheard of.[117] Likewise, biographical writing presents its subject as one of an honoured group. Prosopography, or group biography, is the most overt figuration of the canon: inclusion in these volumes ratified a composer's status as much as frequent appearances in concert programming. Beyond reference works such as François-Joseph Fétis's *Biographie universelle des musiciens* (1835-44) and George Grove's *Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (from 1879), the genre of prosopography flourished later in the century, with titles such as *The Private Life of the Great Composers* (John Rowbotham, 1892) and *Days with the Great Composers* (a multi-authored series of the 1900s and 1910s). 'The great composers' – a phraseology which began appearing in titles in the 1880s and reached its height in the first two decades of the twentieth century – signalled to the reader that they would encounter figures, such as Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven, who belonged to what was now a recognised canon.

In bringing together a novel and biography to discuss how texts conferred lasting fame on their subjects, I want to suggest the inter-referentiality of these genres, which meet under the term 'life-writing'.[118] *Charles Auchester* could well be termed a *roman à clef* (the 1928 Everyman edition features a key to the novel's characters), but it closely traces Mendelssohn's biography. In *F. Chopin*, the 'promise of a shared social judgment of an individual's life, the hope of objective knowledge and moral certainty', which Saunders suggests the Victorian biography offered readers, was mitigated by Liszt's ideologically inflected writing and scanty possession of biographical details about Chopin.[119] Although composer biographies and prosopographies promised 'the hope of objective knowledge', in style they often mimicked the narrative and character devices of fiction. Rowbotham's *Private Life of the Great Composers* juxtaposed discussions of each composer's domestic life with imaginative passages about their compositional process. The *Days with the Great Composers* series similarly maintained a factual basis yet dramatized 'day in the life' episodes of its subjects. Both suggest that the composer, as a subject, seemed to invite imaginative, even romantic, treatment.

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[117] Schafer, *E.T.A. Hoffmann and Music,* 130.
[118] Wiley, 'Biography and Life-Writing', 96.
[119] Saunders, *Self Impression,* 3.

Not all composer biographies integrated fictional techniques, but a text like *The Life and Letters of Louis Moreau Gottschalk* (1870) usefully demonstrates these close generic interactions. Written by the American musician and critic Mary Alice Seymour (under her pen-name Octavia Hensel), the biography includes imagined scenes featuring the pianist and composer Gottschalk, alongside passages from his letters and recollections. It takes Beethoven's 'Moonlight' Sonata as its structural basis, with sections named after the movements ('Adagio', 'Allegretto', 'Presto') and chapters named after performance directions ('*piano*', '*senza forte*', '*molto tranquillo*').[120] For Kramer, Hensel uses the sonata as 'the key to her subject's life'.[121] In addition, by interpolating the 'Moonlight' Sonata, Hensel hopes to elevate Gottschalk to the level of 'bio-mythology' and timelessness achieved by Beethoven. Like Sheppard and Liszt, Hensel published her account soon after her subject's death, in 1869, in an attempt to memorialise him. Given the prevailing opinion, by mid-century, that composers were 'best judged outside [their] own time, so that a true evaluation could be made, unconfused by transitory values of fashion and novelty', as Colin Eatock explains, the text was vital to canonisation: following its subject's death quickly enough to ensure public interest was still high, but guiding its readers' focus to the wider horizons of music history.[122] Turning now to Sheppard and Liszt, their memorialising intent becomes clear in their shared depiction of their subjects as Carlylean heroes whose fame would only increase in death.

In his 1894 introduction to Sheppard's *Charles Auchester: A Memorial,* George Upton writes: 'It is well known that Seraphael, its leading character, is the author's ideal of Mendelssohn, and that the romance was intended to be a memorial of him'.[123] Both fictionalised 'romance' and quasi-factual 'memorial', its hybridity affirms Saunders's suggestion that fiction

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[120] Octavia Hensel, *The Life and Letters of Louis Moreau Gottschalk* (Boston: Oliver Ditson, 1870).
[121] Kramer, *Musical Meaning,* 41; in the text's 'Presto' section, Gottschalk performs – confusingly – the Sonata's 'Adagio' movement for a female lover; as Kramer's chapter shows, the movement had come to represent a certain pianistic eroticism by this time.
[122] Colin Eatock, 'The Crystal Palace Concerts: Canon Formation and the English Musical Renaissance', *19th-Century Music* 34, no. 1 (Summer 2010): 88.
[123] George Upton, 'Introduction', in Elizabeth Sara Sheppard, *Charles Auchester* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg, 1894), 7. References to Upton's introduction are taken from this 1894 edition, but forthcoming references to the text of the novel are taken from Elizabeth Sara Sheppard, *Charles Auchester* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1928).

in the mid-nineteenth century became 'an arena for granting female experience an equivalent reality [to biography] in the public sphere'.[124] Using the term 'fictive autobiography', Saunders argues that the androcentricity of 'formal' biographical writing made fiction a more accessible genre for female authors.[125] Also, as I have suggested, the delineation between fiction and biography was especially blurred in writing about composers. For Sheppard, Mendelssohn's life story was not connected to her autobiography – she did not know him personally – but she turned to fiction in the way Saunders suggests, constructing a narrative which would memorialise her subject as a biography might.

When Sheppard began writing the novel aged sixteen,[126] no English-language biography of Mendelssohn yet existed. Julius Benedict's recollections of the composer, which appeared in 1850 (following Mendelssohn's death in 1847), most likely provided a source for Sheppard's account, which was published in 1853. As Upton writes, Sheppard worked to extend the present fame of her subject: '[the] period of Mendelssohn worship in England [was] as ardent and wellnigh as universal as the Handel worship of the previous century had been…Mendelssohn had been dead but six years, and his name was still a household word in every English family'.[127] Through fiction, Sheppard could dynamically convey and re-enact this 'worship'; her use of first-person narration implicates the reader in a parasocial relationship between the eponymous young boy and Seraphael, the Mendelssohn figure. This encounter provides a lens for select elements of Mendelssohn's biography (his prodigious feats in composing and conducting, his marriage, and his premature death).

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[124] Saunders, *Self Impression,* 11.

[125] Other novels by women, similarly depicting composer-figures and featuring meticulous historical detail, include *Alcestis* by Blanche Warre Cornish (1873) and *Signa* by Ouida (1875). They are not discussed here because their eighteenth-century settings make them more apposite to a consideration of bio-mythologies about composers from that period (Cornish's novel features the historical composer C.W. Gluck); but their appearance in the second half of the nineteenth century testifies to the depth of interest in music history as a discipline by this time.

[126] While all accounts suggest Sheppard began the novel aged sixteen, there is some disagreement about when this was: Upton's introduction dates her birth to 1837, Jessie Middleton (in the 1928 edition) to 1830, and the *DNB* records her baptism in 1826. By the latter two accounts, Sheppard would have commenced writing the novel during Mendelssohn's lifetime. Upton seems to have deduced her birthyear from two facts: that she was known to have written the novel aged sixteen, and it was published in 1853; but it seems more likely that the novel was written over a few years.

[127] Upton, 'Introduction', 7.

Like Sand's Karol, Seraphael's regal characterisation – the 'innocent regality of his manner' – affirms the ascendancy of composers in the new meritocracy.[128] His first name, Chevalier, implies high social status, while the surname Seraphael combines a celestial being with the name of an archangel. To Charles, Seraphael looks 'like a child of royal blood' with a 'kingly head'.[129] Even his handkerchief is 'a royal-purple silk'.[130] Like Liszt's comparisons of composers to priests, these associations confirm that composers were no longer a class of lowly artisans. In Rojek's description of 'ascribed celebrity', royalty is a type of fame reliant on 'relatively fixed and stable hierarchies of power' which place the monarch at a privileged distance from ordinary people.[131] There was nothing 'stable' about the social position composers occupied, but Sheppard's naming and characterisation of Seraphael presents his pre-eminence as a foregone conclusion. Royalty was an especially good analogue in the British context, given the traditionally low social standing of musicians (see chapter two). *Charles Auchester* explicitly draws attention to this prejudice, forcibly contesting it by fusing a Romantic musical vernacular – such as we have seen in the novels by Balzac, Stern, and Sand – with 'images of royal glory', to use a phrase Dana Gooley has applied to contemporary accounts of Liszt-worship.[132]

Charles's romantic descriptions of Seraphael's image suggest not virtuosic excess, as in Heine's Paganini, but a harmonic concordance with the natural world: 'So beautiful was he that I could not help looking at his face. So we are drawn to the evening star, so to the morning roses'.[133] Experience of this beauty is likened to 'the brightness of heaven' 'pour[ing] itself upon my soul'.[134] This is a Romantic figure with supernatural authority, but Seraphael is not 'Man as planet', exerting dominion over the natural world. Instead, as my next chapter elaborates, Seraphael inspires Charles and, in turn, the entire nation of Britain – so that the novel mimics

[128] Sheppard, *Charles Auchester,* 155.
[129] Ibid, 216 & 401.
[130] Ibid, 159.
[131] Rojek, 'Celebrity', 83-84.
[132] Gooley, 'Liszt's Aristocratic Airs', 219.
[133] Sheppard, *Charles Auchester,* 155.
[134] Ibid, 169 & 159.

the emulative didactic function of much Victorian biography. In likening Seraphael's fame to modestly royal, rather than unabashedly self-promoting, models, Sheppard reveals an intention to elevate her composer subject through a Carlylean 'Great Man' narrative. *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History* emphasised the moral benefits to be drawn from reading the biographies of eminent figures: 'worship of a Hero is transcendent admiration of a Great Man'.[135] For Carlyle, the hero is 'the living light-fountain, which it is good and pleasant to be near', 'a natural luminary shining by the gift of Heaven', who 'has enlightened the darkness of the world'.[136] Seraphael's bestowal of the 'brightness of heaven' on Charles makes him this 'natural luminary', with a charisma distinct from the virtuosi in Heine and Balzac. *Charles Auchester* restructures Mendelssohn's life as fulfilment of a vocation, rather than a career cut short in its prime. Seraphael dies young, but from his fortuitous arrival in Charles's hometown to conduct at a festival, to his elevation of British musical culture, he is presented as completing his life's work. As he puts it: 'Shall I die young, and not be believed to have died for music?'[137] Sheppard claims for composers, like Carlyle's Great Men, a single, ennobling purpose.

Carlyle's conception of the modern-day hero resonates with the unworldly Romantic composer. Just as Hoffmann's Kreisler, for instance, is granted 'no place of refuge on this earth' because of his 'dealings with higher things', so Carlyle's hero 'has had to cramp himself into strange shapes: the world knows not well at any time what to do with him, so foreign is his aspect in the world!'[138] Sheppard draws on this notion to grant Mendelssohn posterity. Like Carlyle, she historicises her subject even while emphasising his singularity by placing him outside history. For instance, Carlyle suggests the continuity between Dante and Shakespeare:

> In some sense it may be said that this glorious Elizabethan Era with its Shakspeare [*sic*], as the outcome and flowerage of all which had preceded it, is itself attributable

[135] Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero Worship and the Heroic in History* (Electric Book Company, 2000), 16.
[136] Carlyle, *On Heroes,* 6.
[137] Sheppard, *Charles Auchester,* 405.
[138] E.T.A. Hoffmann, *The Life and Opinions of the Tomcat Murr,* trans. Anthea Bell (London: Penguin, 1999), 181; Carlyle, *On Heroes,* 179.

> to the Catholicism of the Middle Ages. The Christian Faith, which was the theme of Dante's Song, had produced this Practical Life which Shakspeare was to sing.[139]

Carlyle's study relies on a teleological, historicist model. Yet he suggests that 'the latest generations of men will find new meanings' in Shakespeare, speculating on his worth for future generations.[140] Carlyle also notes the avant-gardism of his heroes, whose submission to their vocation brings the world forward into a new era: 'the finished Poet…is a symptom that his epoch itself has reached perfection and is finished; that before long there will be a new epoch, new Reformers needed'.[141] Like Wordsworth's statement that the writer must create 'the taste by which he is to be enjoyed', this preference for posthumous appreciation rescues the composer, newly exposed to the vagaries of the marketplace, from charges of degrading commercialism. Sheppard's account is devoid of any suggestion that Seraphael demurs to contemporary tastes or writes with a public in mind, focusing rather on his 'reformation' of musical culture in Germany and Britain. Seraphael's effect on his milieu is messianic: 'An odour of heavenly altars had swept our temple – we were fitter to receive him than we had been'.[142] *Charles Auchester* asserts that the composer is as valuable to history as the poets, statesmen, and religious figures Carlyle eulogises.

Historical continuity and timeless heroic values coexist for Carlyle. His conservative model suited Sheppard's sense of her Anglo-Jewish identity, in which she was inspired by the novel's dedicatee Benjamin Disraeli (see chapter three). It also befitted a memorial to Mendelssohn, who had written: 'The first obligation of any artist should be to have respect for the *great men* and to bow down before them'.[143] Sheppard echoes this, as Seraphael places a portrait of Bach, Mendelssohn's most important influence, over his bed. Seraphael, child of 'royal blood', becomes member of a lineage of which Bach is the progenitor. Another visual analogue for the text's intention is a portrait painted of Seraphael, in which he has 'the still,

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[139] Carlyle, *On Heroes,* 119.
[140] Ibid, 126.
[141] Ibid, 136.
[142] Sheppard, *Charles Auchester,* 409.
[143] *Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy Briefe,* vol. 2, ed. Rudolf Elvers (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1984), 256 (emphasis added).

immortal visage, the aspect of glory beyond the grave, the lustre unearthly, but not of death'.[144] Sheppard claims immortality for this Mendelssohn figure by stressing his value not solely to his immediate circle but to all of history, as the lasting artefact of the portrait will attest. The image, in tandem with Sheppard's text, ensures the composer's 'glory beyond the grave'.

The novel canonises Mendelssohn by testifying to his appeal for his contemporaries, his continuity with his predecessors, and his significance for future generations. Indeed, the novel has generally been considered, for better or worse, a teenage author's attempt at hagiography. Upton writes about its 'remarkable display of hero-worship', and the critic Henry Fothergill Chorley – a friend of Mendelssohn – was aghast in his unsigned review of the 'strange, wild, affected, incongruous, mystical Art-novel', claiming the 'sentimental and sublime Seraphael' could not possibly represent Mendelssohn.[145] Chorley's opinion that the novel contains 'more of rhapsody…than of reality' has prevailed, and it is valued mainly as evidence of the outpouring of British affection for Mendelssohn at the time of his death.[146] Yet Upton and Chorley both grant some validity to the novel for the same reason I have included it here: its integration of a Carlylean model of hero-worship to a musical subject. Upton considered that Sheppard 'has expressed the very spirit of music in language', while Chorley wrote: 'We are introduced into an Arcady of Art, where the men are Gods' and admitted that '[p]erhaps the musician and the amateur will be neither of them the worse for giving himself up to the spirit of the dream'.[147] By looking beyond the novel's depiction (and transformation) of Mendelssohn to consider its presentation of the figure of the composer, we can situate it in a trajectory of transforming attitudes throughout the century: from the beginning, when Forkel's biography 'rescued' Bach from obscurity, to the end, when prosopographies spoke of a recognised set of 'great composers'.

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[144] Sheppard, *Charles Auchester,* 397.

[145] Upton, 'Introduction', 6; Henry Fothergill Chorley, 'Charles Auchester: a Memorial', *Athenaeum* 1359 (Nov 12, 1853): 1352; Colin Eatock attributes this review to Chorley in *Mendelssohn and Victorian England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 122.

[146] See Stephen Banfield, 'The Artist and Society', in *The Romantic Age, 1800-1914: Music in Britain,* ed. Nicholas Temperley (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 22.

[147] Upton, 'Introduction', 8; Chorley, 'Charles Auchester: a Memorial', 1353. Chorley's own romantic musical novel, *A Prodigy: a Tale of Music,* would follow in 1866.

Turning to Liszt's *F. Chopin*, the musician had made forays into prose on his own behalf since the 1830s, but in writing a biography of Chopin, he intended to memorialise another composer. In this biography, Liszt's long-held convictions about composers' rightful social status combine with the memorialising narrative strategies employed by Sheppard. Despite its generic claim to objectivity, Liszt's text reveals strong literary influences. In asides, he quotes from authors he revered such as Byron and Schiller.[148] Passages describing Chopin's death resemble contemporary fiction such as *La dame aux camélias* by Alexandre Dumas *fils* (1848) and *Scènes de la vie de bohème* by Henri Murger (1851) – hence Huneker's critique of Liszt's Chopin as a 'Camille of the keyboard'. Like the heroines in these works, Chopin's declining health is intertwined with the rupture of a relationship (with Sand), he is attended by an Abbé in his final hours, and after death his body is surrounded by bouquets of flowers (recalling the violets Rodolphe brings Mimi in Murger's story). These details were embellished by Liszt, who, although he had been friends with Chopin, was not present at his death in 1849, and had been unable to obtain all the details for the biography he had requested from Chopin's sister Ludwika.[149]

The biography shares elements of characterisation with Sheppard's novel, particularly the regal associations. The notion of Chopin as quasi-aristocratic attached itself to the composer soon after his arrival in Paris from Poland.[150] Sand's *Lucrezia Floriani* had magnified this perception by transforming Chopin into an actual prince. For Huneker, 'Chopin was a genius, but a gentleman'.[151] Huneker's pointed conjunction reflects the lowly status of the musical profession even at the end of the century, a problem Chopin circumvented by making noble connections to whom his teaching and compositions were dedicated: as Liszt put it, he 'cultivat[ed] a select audience'.[152] Gooley explains that, despite the ascendancy of an 'artistic elite' which included composers, many still relied on noble patronage and therefore created for

[148] Joanne Cormac, 'Life-Writing', in *Liszt in Context,* 293.
[149] See Waters, 'Chopin by Liszt', 170-94.
[150] Waters, 'Chopin by Liszt', 188.
[151] Huneker, *Mezzotints*, 217.
[152] Hughes, *Liszt's Chopin,* 86.

themselves a noble public image.[153] An 'aristocratic aura' was an important part of Liszt's own self-fashioning, but Liszt interpolated this air of detachment within a branding strategy which still ultimately involved making his person available to large audiences in performance, unlike Chopin.[154]

Throughout *F. Chopin,* Liszt balances the imperatives to reflect, preserve, and celebrate the 'aristocratic aura' Chopin had cultivated, and to ensure the composer's lasting reputation by giving the reader insight into his life. Immediately following Chopin's death, Liszt expressed an urgent desire to memorialise him in a biography, perhaps feeling with the critic J.W. Davison that Chopin had been 'neither a popular talent nor a popular name'.[155] Liszt's intention was not to preserve Chopin's classical exclusivism, but, as Meirion Hughes writes: 'to ensure that Chopin would not remain intangible, that in death he would meet the public gaze that so repelled him in life by being transformed into a celebrity of the stricken heart'.[156] Yet this transformation ran the risk of making Chopin a mere 'popular name', remembered not for his music but for comparatively unimportant biographical details. Liszt's task involved the transposition of Chopin's private experience (a career largely undertaken within the upper-class salon) into a public medium (the biography). He therefore follows Sand and Sheppard in characterising his subject as reticent, avoiding degrading associations with virtuosity, visual excess, and celebrity – associations which, as he registers, still attached to Liszt himself. He records a comment addressed to him by Chopin:

> I am not suited to give concerts, the public intimidates me, I feel suffocated by its breath, paralysed by looks, and am mute before those anonymous faces. But you, you are destined for it, because when you do not win over the public, you are able to overwhelm it.[157]

Facilitating a comparison between Chopin and himself, Liszt thereby draws attention favourably to Chopin's unwillingness to court celebrity and distaste for 'overwhelming' listeners.

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[153] Gooley, 'Liszt's Aristocratic Airs', 213.
[154] Ibid, 197.
[155] *Musical World,* 10 November 1849; quoted in Hughes, *Liszt's Chopin,* 2.
[156] Hughes, *Liszt's Chopin*, 36.
[157] Ibid, 85.

Yet this characterisation of Chopin does not merely guard the composer against unfavourable celebrity: it also validates Liszt's own project in writing the biography. Liszt recognised that Chopin's avoidance of spectacle in his lifetime might condemn his music to historical oblivion. As Hughes remarks, Liszt 'understood that the semantic ambiguity of music, the wordlessness of many of its forms, needed historical textuality to establish musical meaning'.[158] The biography performs a consecrating function for music. 'We would not now need to detail [Chopin's] success', Liszt writes, 'had he won loud ovations that create shrines wherever people celebrate merit, honour and genius; and had thousands instead of mere hundreds acclaimed him'.[159] Rather than castigating Chopin for not actively seeking adulation, though, Liszt holds him up as an example for others, a 'natural luminary' in Carlyle's sense. He praises Chopin for 'never pettily [seeking] those garlands of which more than one of us boasts', recalling his own complaint to Sand in 1837 that the public was too willing to 'crown the most unimportant brows with laurels'.[160] His use of the first-person plural in referring to the 'garlands' of fame amounts to an admission that he himself has indulged in passing fame as a virtuoso. Through this self-denigration, he urges a collective idolisation of a more posterity-minded aspiration embodied by Chopin: 'Let us learn from him to reject all but the highest ambitions, to concentrate our efforts on making a deeper mark than the fashion of the day!'

In Liszt's hands, the text becomes a mediator which bridges Chopin's reticence with a Carlylean glorification of his works for posterity. When the biography was published in translation in America in 1863, one review noted approvingly how Liszt had struck an ideal balance: 'He has written the inner life of him [Chopin] as well as the outward'.[161] Liszt defends the writing of the inner life: 'A natural curiosity attaches itself to the biographies of those who glorify noble feelings in artworks, efforts that transform them into symbols of nobility and

[158] Ibid, 40.
[159] Ibid, 87.
[160] Ibid.
[161] 'Liszt's Life of Chopin', *Dwight's Journal of Music* 23, no. 2 (18 April 1863): 14.

greatness that shine like brilliant meteors in the eyes of the delighted masses'.[162] He invokes the twofold power of the biography: memorialising its subject as a celestial being, and enlightening the masses like Carlyle's 'luminaries'. In common with other biographies of the period, the text is explicatory and exemplary. Since its subject is a 'symbol of nobility and greatness', the 'public mind' feels 'a need…to see those ideals at work in [his life]'.[163]

Like the *romans à clef* by his contemporaries, Liszt's text assumed a degree of validity because he was known to have been Chopin's friend, but the depiction was as artificial and ideologically motivated as any other. For instance, the weakness Liszt attributes to Chopin, who allegedly declared himself 'suffocated' and 'paralysed' by audiences, is over-emphasised, easily 'refuted by long hours of playing at home and of teaching', as Waters points out.[164] Waters quite rightly notes that the text can hardly be called a biography, but even to view it as merely an 'appreciation' or 'memoir' underplays its purpose as a vehicle of Liszt's ideology.[165] It can convincingly be located within the trend for national biography at mid-century, which formed part of a wider trend I examine in the next chapter. This writing included volumes positioning an individual subject as formative to national identity, and biographical dictionaries which collected the lives of significant national figures and performed the ideological functions of asserting unity and celebrating national achievement.[166] As Hughes describes, Liszt's conception of his text was also undoubtedly shaped by the revolutions of 1848-49 across Europe and the emergence of nationalist movements in Chopin's homeland, Poland, and Liszt's, Hungary.[167]

As well as producing national biographies, another effect of these movements was to facilitate for the first time the idea of a 'national composer', whose music, drawing on the country's folk material, could fulfil the ideal of unification which philosophers such as Herder

[162] Hughes, *Liszt's Chopin,* 94.
[163] Ibid.
[164] Waters, 'Chopin by Liszt', 188.
[165] Ibid, 179-182.
[166] Lee, *Biography: A Very Short Introduction*, 63-65.
[167] Hughes, *Liszt's Chopin,* 11-12.

and Fichte had theorised several decades earlier.[168] Joanne Cormac has explored how Liszt's own national identity was complex and continually re-negotiated throughout his career; but in writing about Chopin, he saw an opportunity to canonise Poland's national composer and explore the possibilities of musical nationalism.[169] The version of Chopin that Liszt presents mimics Carlyle in its blend of avant-gardism – the forward-looking visionary unappreciated in his lifetime – and an essentialist emphasis on the importance of his Polish origins. Whole sections of the biography are devoted to descriptions of the mazurka and polonaise, national dances of Poland. *Dwight's Journal* commented, revealingly, that 'more brilliantly imaginative chapters' than these were 'hardly to be found in any novel'.[170] Certainly, these were genres in which Chopin wrote, but Liszt's lengthy explanations of their national significance recruit the composer to a cause for which his personal enthusiasm was, and has remained, difficult to discern. As Jolanta Pekacz has explored, and as my next chapter discusses in more detail, music's ability to express nationalist rhetoric was contested, and texts such as biographies and novels were important sites for affirming – or imagining – this rhetoric.[171] While it ostensibly grants Chopin posterity, Liszt's biography gives ample space to what were most likely his own views: 'in music, as in the other arts, the influences of country and nation on great masters will increase with the result that the spirit of the people, more complete, will influence its future'.[172] More than an intimation of Chopin's relationship to national identity, this reveals Liszt's interest in the national music of Poland, Hungary, and Germany (the latter had become Liszt's home in 1848, when he became Kapellmeister to the Grand Duke of Weimar).[173] Peckacz has stressed Chopin's status as a voluntary exile from Poland in Paris under the July Monarchy – although

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[168] Johann Gottfried Herder, 'The Origin of Language', in *J. G. Herder on Social and Political Culture*, ed. and trans. F. M. Barnard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969) 87-178; Johann Gottlieb Fichte, 'Thirteenth Address', *Addresses to the German Nation*, trans. R. F. Jones & G. H. Turnbull (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979), 223–24.

[169] Joanne Cormac, 'Liszt, Language, and Identity', *19th-Century Music* 36, no. 3 (Spring 2013): 231-47.

[170] 'Liszt's Life of Chopin', 14.

[171] See Jolanta T. Pekacz, 'The Nation's Property: Chopin's Biography as a Cultural Discourse', in *Musical Biography: Towards New Paradigms,* ed. Pekacz (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 151-236.

[172] Hughes, *Liszt's Chopin,* 113.

[173] See Deaville, 'The New German School', for Liszt's active (though not exclusive) investment in the promotion of German music and in himself as a 'New German'.

Liszt was also resident in this richly cosmopolitan intellectual sphere, he was not an exile and may not have grasped the uniquely ambivalent perception of national identity rendered by such an experience, choosing instead to depict Chopin as devoted to his Polishness.[174] Given Liszt's well-publicised if sporadic devotion to his Hungarian identity, the depiction implies his strategies for national self-fashioning, more than any hints about Chopin's views on the matter.[175]

Speculation on the text's background mitigated its claim to biographical accuracy for some readers. Liszt's partner, the Polish Carolyne von Sayn-Wittgenstein, has been proposed as the actual author of the biography, accounting for its nationalist agenda and (read alongside her extensive overall literary output) its mannered prose.[176] Accusations of the text's obfuscations strike a different note if the imagined author is female. In *Charles Auchester,* Sheppard was said to have 'written herself into her work with all her girlish fancies', due to 'overwhelming enthusiasm' for her subject.[177] For Chorley, reviewing the novel in the *Athenaeum,* Sheppard's inclusion of recognisable figures decreased its literary value, but, since he vehemently denied the associations between Seraphael and Mendelssohn, the novel was not a valuable biographical source either. Sayn-Wittgenstein, who had never met Chopin, invests her biography with 'overwhelming enthusiasm' for the Polish national cause, leading to Huneker's comment some decades later about the 'idolatry of women' causing an inaccurate version of Chopin to be written into history. Yet in the cases of Sayn-Wittgenstein, Sheppard, and Sand (at whom Huneker's comment is mainly directed), a sole focus on the accuracy of their portraits obscures the possible intentions behind them.

Such a focus has engendered a mistrust towards accounts written by women. To understand how representations of the composer are problematised not just by genre, but by gender (a subject to which I return in chapters four and five), we can revisit Huneker's idea

[174] Pekacz, 'The Nation's Property', 192-99.
[175] See Lynn M. Hooker, 'Liszt in Hungary', in *Liszt in Context,* ed. Cormac, 74-82.
[176] Waters and Hughes both ultimately decide that Liszt was responsible for the work, even if Sayn-Wittgenstein was an amanuensis and/or wrote certain chapters in full.
[177] Upton, 'Introduction', 8.

about the 'golden reticence of the music artist'. Huneker's contrast between the 'reticent' composer and the author whose writing is open to 'misunderstandings' seems to suggest that music is an incontrovertible, ineffable expression of its composer's self. In listening to Chopin, one hears the true essence of Chopin, but the experience is not 'mortifying' because music transcends the revelation of the individual's subjectivity and attains universal significance. Yet Huneker's own text works against this understanding, because its description of various textual 'Chopins' (by Sand, Karasowski, Liszt, and Huneker himself) implies that music and the composer *are* open to 'misunderstandings', all the more so if the composer is 'reticent' or not committed to overt self-fashioning – and his depiction of Sand as a 'literary midwife' implies the capacity of texts to assist in fixing meaning. There is therefore a tension at the heart of what the text might do for the composer – whether it compromises his 'reticence', or usefully mitigates it – a tension which is most apparent in the reception of women's writing. The texts by Sand, Stern, Sheppard, and Sayn-Wittgenstein (if we take her as the author of Liszt's *F. Chopin*) all met with a reception that considered the representation of the composer as a betrayal, even a violent act: recalling Huneker's image of the vampiric Sand who sapped Chopin's creative energies. *Nélida, Lucrezia Floriani,* and *F. Chopin* all followed breakdowns in the relationships between author and subject, but only the latter has been read as a conciliatory effort. These examples suggest that women's writing, regardless of form, was more insistently measured against a metric of accuracy and found wanting (and conversely, readers have been swifter to credit male authors with deliberate invention). Women's biographical writing was biased, but their ability to transform biographical reality into fiction was limited. Conflicting Romantic notions of autonomy and 'reticence' produced a double bind which was revealed in responses to women's writing. If the ideal of the composer's 'reticence' meant that his music alone conveyed his true essence, then any textual representation – even an accurate one – was a betrayal. If this 'reticence' meant that the text was a necessary aid to interpretation, then the text should faithfully recreate the composer's essence for the reader, and any perceived bias, ideological intent, or deliberate transformation of reality made the text, similarly, a betrayal.

Although women's depictions of composers were subject to greater scrutiny than those of men, the reception of George Sand's writing, across the nineteenth century, is a reminder that this scrutiny could be complex and inconsistent. Several late-nineteenth-century Anglophone critics (Bennett, Upton, Haweis, and – begrudgingly – Huneker) used *Lucrezia Floriani* as a source for their own writing about Chopin. They construed Sand's text as either accurate – despite her own protestations to the contrary – or, at least, close enough to the truth to shape Chopin's legacy. While these critics use Sand's novel in tandem with a biography by a male author (Liszt's *F. Chopin*) as if to assure a greater degree of veracity, they do so seemingly unaware that Liszt himself drew on Sand's novel. The willingness among writers to validate Sand's version of Chopin suggests a more complex dynamic of gender, textual and musical representations, and reception than I have just outlined – and may relate to perceptions of Sand's masculinity (and, conversely, Chopin's femininity).[178] One reviewer of *Nélida* even suggested that Stern read more Sand, so as to emulate her style.[179] Sand's apparent masculine authority did not convince everyone, however, nor shield her from gendered critique. Frederick Niecks, in 1888, accused Sand of using the *Lucrezia Floriani* affair to enhance her reputation as an author, 'envelop[ing] the whole matter in a mist of beautiful words and sentiments out of which issues…her own saintly self in celestial radiance'. In recommending that Sand should have 'declare[d] that she [would] not condescend to defend herself', Niecks prefers the 'reticence' of the composer who speaks only through his music.[180] Responses to Sand, most of all, reveal intricacies of gender, genre, and propriety at the core of the relationship between the composer and the text.

This chapter has explored this relationship beyond the question of accuracy, to ask how the motivations underlying these texts, and the impacts they had, shed light on the figure of the composer in the nineteenth century. To return finally to *F. Chopin,* taking Sayn-Wittgenstein and

[178] See the epilogue to Belinda Jack, *George Sand: A Woman's Life Writ Large* (London: Vintage Digital, 2010); for Chopin and femininity, see Kallberg, *Chopin at the Boundaries.*
[179] Eisler, *Chopin's Funeral,* 154.
[180] Niecks, *Frederick Chopin,* 1252.

Liszt together as joint authors of the biography, a clear motivation emerges to capitalise on new understandings of composers' national significance. Considering Liszt's documented views and what might be termed his branding strategy, the biography reflects his Saint-Simonian interests and continual negotiation of celebrity and posterity. Liszt envisioned the text as a useful appendage to a musical career, and his turn to focus on composition after retiring from the concert stage in 1847 was accompanied by prose writings which supported his agenda: critical of the passing fame of virtuosi, and intrigued by the possibility of music to support nationalist causes. In claiming posterity for Chopin in the biography, Liszt necessarily did so for himself. Yet these texts are striking for more than just their constructions (and misconstructions) of individual composers. Their focus on memorialisation reflects a new understanding of composers, collectively, as worthy of remembrance, and of the literary text as a monument to musical works. In emphasising historical precedents and the future development of music, these texts testify to the emergence of a canon of musical works, and prove the importance of writing about composers in shaping that canon. Their reception reveals the potential for contention in interactions between music and literature: including, as Liszt's biography best illustrates – and as my next chapter discusses – the relationship of the composer, creator of a wordless art, to national identity.

2. The Composer and National Identity in Britain

> Perhaps it is that they are foreigners. They all are, ain't they? Even those that are born in England become foreigners after a time, don't they? It is so clever of them, and such a compliment to art. Makes it quite cosmopolitan, doesn't it?[1]
>
> Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890)

> [M]any years will not pass away before our College has so popularised music as to place England on a par with those countries on the Continent which have acquired the distinction of being called musical people.[2]
>
> The Prince of Wales, opening of the Royal College of Music (7 May 1883)

This chapter explores responses in British fiction to Romantic constructions of the composer. Early-nineteenth-century notions of music as a universal language made the composer a cosmopolitan figure; but towards the end of the century, theories of music's national significance abounded. British perceptions of the composer were influenced by new, more complex configurations of the Romantic, the classical and the popular, the native and foreign, and a growing interest in the folk. Fiction reflects an increasingly diverse array of relationships between the composer and national identity, compared to critical and journalistic discourses. The chapter first outlines these discourses, before looking at two elements of British fictional representations of the composer. The first is the foreign composer in Britain, from Sheppard's universalist perspective on the composer binding two nations together in *Charles Auchester* to Eliot's and Du Maurier's use of the composer to unsettle national identity in *Daniel Deronda* and *Trilby*. I then turn to two novels featuring British composers: George Bernard Shaw's *Love Among the Artists* (1881) and George Gissing's *The Whirlpool* (1897).

Fiction in the late nineteenth century confirms the place of music at the margins of British national identity, solidifying Britain's 'continental reputation' as, according to music critic F.J. Crowest, 'the Great Unmusical Power of Europe – strong enough in commerce and steam, but devoid of musical talent, invention, and discrimination'.[3] Yet music in fiction also destabilises the boundaries of the nation, while appearing to delineate them. This quality is

[1] Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (London: Penguin, 2003), 46.
[2] 'The Royal College of Music', *The Monthly Musical Record* 13, no. 150 (1 June 1883): 132.
[3] Cited in Nicholas Temperley, 'Xenophilia in British Musical History', in *Nineteenth-Century British Music Studies, Vol. 1,* ed. Peter Horton & Bennett Zon (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 36.

especially pertinent to nineteenth-century Anglophone writing. I have preferred the term 'British', which many contemporary authors used interchangeably with 'English', to suggest the part played by all four nations in musical culture, often overlooked at the time. To take an example, as we will see, Irishmen such as George Bernard Shaw, George Moore, W.B. Yeats, and C.V. Stanford were involved in, and interpolated into, literary-musical cultures often simply called 'English'. Nicholas Temperley notes how the 'illusion' of a lack of native music in this period rested partially on the apparent dearth of *English* folksong, while Scotland, Wales, and Ireland had thriving folk traditions.[4]

The incorporation of music and musical characters also constitutes a gesture beyond, or outside, the novel, a form which, Stefano Evangelista writes, 'seems to resist universality by virtue of its fundamental link with language, which fragments it into pockets of particularity enclosed within national borders'.[5] For the authors in this chapter, music might simulate belonging to 'a community that reaches beyond the geographical, political, and linguistic boundaries of the nation', founded on the Romantic commonplace of identifying music as a 'universal language'.[6] Equally, music has a cosmopolitan capacity to 'place [the subject] at risk of becoming a stranger anywhere', as Evangelista notes, and '[weaken] the social, linguistic, cultural, and affective ties that make individuals 'at home' in a community'.[7] In fiction, music concatenates these multiple possibilities, forming a counter-perspective to contemporary critical discourses. These mainly tended, in the final few decades of the century, to emphasise the threats posed to British culture by the predominance of foreign musicians, and the need for native composers. Fiction emerges as a place of dialogue with the assumption that music and the composer can be easily interpolated into matters of national identity.

[4] Ibid.
[5] Stefano Evangelista, *Literary Cosmopolitanism in the English Fin de Siècle: Citizens of Nowhere* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 20.
[6] Ibid, 1.
[7] Ibid, 4.

The idea of music as a 'universal language' which addressed listeners across borders flourished in the first half of the century and became a mainstay of Victorian liberal thought.[8] Instrumental music embodied this claim: its ineffability, its position beyond the limits of representation, also placed it beyond the limits of language. For some, music was universal because it pre-existed language in human evolution; Rousseau had argued this in his *Essay on the Origin of Languages* (1781), as did Johann Wilhelm Ritter in 1810. Music was the '*universal* language', the '*first* language of humankind', which had '*disintegrated* into languages'.[9] For Schopenhauer, music was 'in the highest degree a universal language' because it expressed the 'quintessence of life and of its events', as opposed to language's analogical relationship to the world.[10] The idea recurs in later, British studies of music, such as John Hullah's lectures on the history of music (1862), the immensely popular *Music and Morals* (1871) by the Reverend H.R. Haweis, and Shaw's *The Perfect Wagnerite* (1898).[11] Its lasting appeal lay in its humanitarian promise of music fostering sympathy and mutual understanding, facilitating shared aesthetic experiences.

A rhetoric of national differentiation did, however, operate in musical discourses. Sarah Collins cautions against too distinctly separating a period of universalist conceptions of music from a succeeding rise of nationalism; more generally, Evangelista points out that the 'romantic particularism' of figures such as Johann Gottfried Herder, with his concept of the *Volk*, initially coexisted unproblematically with an 'Enlightenment model of universalist cosmopolitanism'

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[8] Sarah Collins, 'Aesthetic Liberalism', in *Music and Victorian Liberalism: Composing the Liberal Subject,* ed. Collins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 1.

[9] Johann Wilhelm Ritter, *Fragmente aus dem Nachlasse eines jungen Physikers* (Leipzig: Kiepenhauer, 1984), 272; trans. Andrew Bowie, *Music, Philosophy, and Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 147 (emphases original). Charles Darwin would extend this notion of music's prelinguistic existence by examining the musical capacities of animals; see Bennett Zon, *Evolution and Victorian Musical Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 42-77.

[10] Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, Vol. 1, trans. E.F.J Payne (New York: Dover, 1966), 440.

[11] John Pyke Hullah*, The History of Modern Music, Lectures* (London: Longmans, Green, Reader and Dyer, 1875), 189; Haweis, *Music and Morals*, 129; George Bernard Shaw, *The Perfect Wagnerite* (Champaign, Ill.: Project Gutenberg), 4.

inherited from Kant.[12] Eighteenth-century musical travelogues, such as Charles Burney's accounts of music in France, Germany, and Italy, had fostered ideas of national difference; but these gained renewed pertinence in the second half of the nineteenth century. Evolutionary science and ethnology provided new terms for conceptualising essential differences between nations, while revolutions across Europe in 1848 and the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71 sharpened the political significance of these differences. Richard Wagner, who fled Dresden after his involvement in the 1848 revolution, adapted Romantic philosophy to promote a more exclusionary idea of the *Volk*, wherein the German nation's identity, arts, and culture were rooted in a shared language.[13] While Herder had insinuated the importance of language in national identity in his statement that 'a poet is the creator of the nation around him', Wagner made language central, and insisted – contrary to Rousseau and other precedents – that music arose from languages which were already distinct.[14]

In late-nineteenth-century Britain, music historiographies reveal the intersection of language and music as a site of the formation of national identity. Haweis refers to the French and Italian character of Reformation music, and the 'half French and half German' idiom of Restoration music, all of which makes music in Britain 'exotic'. Even the Renaissance composers did not make English music – they used 'foreign materials'.[15] Hullah, in a similar vein, attributes 'every distinct form of musical composition, instrumental as well as vocal' to the Italians, likening musical forms to a set of nationally distinct languages.[16] Britain's alleged dearth of native music was attributed to the dominance of foreign nations; Italian vocal music, widely

[12] Sarah Collins, 'The National and the Universal', in *Oxford Handbook of Music and Intellectual Culture*, ed. Collins, Watt, and Allis, 369-72; Evangelista, *Literary Cosmopolitanism,* 6.
[13] See Vazsonyi, *Self-Promotion and the Making of a Brand,* 132-33.
[14] Quoted in Richard Bauman and Charles L. Briggs, 'Language Philosophy as Language Ideology: John Locke and Johann Gottfried Herder', in *Regimes of Language: Ideologies, Polities, and Identities,* ed. Paul V. Kroskrity (Oxford: James Currey, 2000), 182.
[15] Haweis, *Music and Morals,* 492.
[16] Hullah, *History of Modern Music,* 148.

patronised by the upper classes in eighteenth-century Britain, was by the mid-nineteenth century superseded by German, mostly instrumental, works in the critical hierarchy.[17]

The predominance of German composers in British canonic repertoires, combined with the recognition that the idea of universalism sprang (like most Romantic ideas about music) from German writing, led to a sense of music as German in essence. Critic Joseph Bennett called the music of France and Italy mere 'dialect[s] of the universal language' of music, 'so powerfully dominated by the various branches of the Teutonic stock'.[18] Oscar Wilde recognised this too: 'The Critic as Artist' (1891) features a 'Baroness Bernstein' who 'insisted on discussing music as if it were actually written in the German language', while Gissing's pretentious composer Felix Dymes, in *The Whirlpool,* embellishes his talk with German phrases when he wants to cut the figure of 'the artist and the expert in music'.[19] Arthur Symons elaborates this idea of music as linguistically German: 'In Beethoven music becomes a universal language, and it does so without ceasing to speak German'.[20] Symons's seeming paradox harks back to the German Romantic Idealists' perception of the particular and the universal functioning in harmony, which they saw embodied in symphonic form.[21] It was little wonder that Symons chose a German composer to illustrate his point: not only was Beethoven one of the nineteenth century's foremost composers of symphonies, but German Romantic writers were predominantly responsible for promulgating the idea that music could sustain both national and universal elements.[22] As Collins remarks, however, 'universalizing tendencies' could mask nationalist, and particularly imperialist, purposes.[23] Following the Franco-Prussian war and the unification of the German states, through the growing military and imperial prowess of Germany, up to the First World

[17] See Deborah Rohr, *The Careers of British Musicians, 1750-1850: A Profession of Artisans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 100-12.
[18] Joseph Bennett, 'English Music in 1884', *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 25, no. 496 (June 1884): 324.
[19] Oscar Wilde, 'The Critic as Artist', in *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde* (London: HarperCollins, 2003), 1109; George Gissing, *The Whirlpool* (London: Lawrence and Bullen, 1897), 70.
[20] Arthur Symons, *Studies in Seven Arts* (London: A. Constable, 1907), 220.
[21] See Bonds, *Music as Thought*, 63.
[22] Celia Applegate, 'How German Is It? Nationalism and the Idea of Serious Music in the Early Nineteenth Century', *19th-Century Music* 21, no. 3 (1 April 1998): 277.
[23] Collins, 'National and Universal', 369.

War, there appeared increasing concerns in British music journalism with Germany as a heavyweight in politics and culture, often expressed in terms which do not distinguish between the two.[24] Critics invoked the 'great German dynasty' stretching from Bach to Beethoven to Brahms, and identified it as the country Britain should aspire to and yet distinguish itself from.[25] Success in Germany legitimised composers such as Stanford and Frederic Cowen whom, Bennett appreciatively observed, had 'gained a footing in the country of Beethoven and Mozart'.[26] In fiction, composers frequently hail from, or are associated with, Germany; Shaw's and Gissing's representations of British composers are almost unique for the period.[27]

The scarcity of British composers in nineteenth-century fiction mirrors the popular view which Crowest summed up in calling Britain 'devoid of musical talent [and] invention'. As a growing imperial power, Britain, particularly London, had long imported musicians as 'showy commodities, which they buy at great price for pride', in Emerson's words (indeed, Haweis proudly notes that '[a] musician of any kind is less likely to starve in England than in any other country'), but the cultivation of native composition was neglected.[28] Joseph Bennett proposed an intriguing link with Britain's imperial pursuits, suggesting that 'the expanding, aggressive stage of a nation's life is not that wherein the arts flourish', and it was only by the last decades of the century that the empire was 'made', which 'has an important bearing upon national culture of the arts'.[29] Bennett's pronouncement, in 1884, that the empire was now 'made' was premature, as was his prediction of a new inward focus which would benefit native composition.[30] In fact, a change in imperial policy – more 'aggressive' attempts to 'make' the

[24] See Meirion Hughes & Robert Stradling, *The English Musical Renaissance, 1840-1940: Constructing a National Music* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 115-63.
[25] Shaw, *Perfect Wagnerite,* 4; Haweis, *Music and Morals,* 61. There was a counter-discourse in contemporary historiographies which uncovered British compositional history, celebrating composers such as Henry Purcell; see Hullah, *The History of Modern Music,* 124.
[26] Bennett, 'English Music in 1884', 326.
[27] See Cœuroy, 'Musical Inspiration'.
[28] Ralph Waldo Emerson, *English Traits* (Boston: Phillips, Sampson, 1856), 251, n1; *Music and Morals,* 495. Pianist Clara Schumann, violinist Ignaz Moscheles, and conductors Charles Hallé and Michael Costa all either performed in Britain annually throughout the mid- to late-nineteenth century, or emigrated permanently.
[29] Bennett, 'English Music in 1884', 326.
[30] Britain's global land share rose to 4 million square miles between 1870 and 1900; <http://www.victorianweb.org/history/empire/ljb2.html>, accessed 10/10/19.

empire – corresponded with a renewed attempt to 'make' musical culture, specifically through native composition. According to Edward Said, British imperial policy before around 1870 was primarily protectionist. An expansionist turn arrived with the perceived necessity to defend against competing imperial powers after 1870 and the emergence of the New Imperialism and the Scramble for Africa, movements which continued into the twentieth century.[31]

Concurrently, a greater, more exclusive emphasis on nationality reigned in British musical culture after 1870, illustrated by two related events: the founding of the Royal College of Music (RCM) to 'enable us to rival the Germans', as founder George Grove declared, and the beginning of the English Musical Renaissance (EMR).[32] Opened in 1883, the RCM was in part Grove's passion project. It coincided with the 'Renaissance', the term first appearing in an 1882 review by Joseph Bennett of Hubert Parry's First Symphony.[33] Chronicled and promoted by the British musical press, the EMR, whose composers included Parry, Stanford, Cowen, and Alexander Mackenzie, went hand-in-hand with the RCM, which employed Parry and Stanford as professors, thus combining the resurgence of native composition with the improvement – much needed, in many commentators' view – of national musical education.[34]

The term 'English Musical Renaissance' and its antithesis 'Land Without Music', popularly supposed to sum up the Continental view of nineteenth-century Britain, continue to dominate critical discussion of the period, if only as points of contention and refutation.[35] As critics have suggested, these terms represent a 'composer-centric perspective' and risk ignoring

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[31] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage Digital, 2014), 263-68. See also Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013).

[32] George Grove's drafted speech for the Duke of Albany, Manchester Free Trade Hall, 12 December 1881; in Hughes & Stradling, *English Musical Renaissance,* 29. The Royal Academy of Music, founded in 1822, had produced no composers who fulfilled Grove's hopes, in part due to financial struggles; see G.W.E. Brightwell, 'In Search of a Nation's Music: The Role of the Society of Arts and the Royal Academy of Music in the Establishment of the Royal College of Music in 1883', in *Nineteenth-Century British Music Studies*, *Vol. 2,* ed. Peter Horton & Bennett Zon (London: Routledge, 2003), 251-72.

[33] J.A. Fuller Maitland, Grove's successor at the *Dictionary*, retrospectively dated the Renaissance to the debut of Parry's *Scenes from Prometheus Unbound* in 1880; J.A. Fuller Maitland, *Music in the XIXth Century* (London: Grant Richards, 1902), 197-99.

[34] See Meirion Hughes, *The English Musical Renaissance and the Press 1850-1914: Watchmen of Music* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002).

[35] Temperley, 'Xenophilia in British Musical History'; Jürgen Schaarwächter, 'Chasing a Myth and a Legend: "The British Musical Renaissance" in a "Land without Music"', *The Musical Times* 149 (1 October 2008): 53-60.

the 'thriving musical culture' predating Grove's intervention, including vast amounts of amateur, domestic, and religious music-making, not to mention the folksong tradition and massively popular music halls.[36] Much of the fiction discussed in this thesis replicates this narrow perspective. Yet fiction's focus on 'composer-centric' classical music foregrounds the profound influence such music, its makers, and its related discourses were felt to wield in identity-making and nation-building.[37] This music's prominence in fiction suggests its cultural cachet. As David Deutsch writes, classical music, despite its democratisation throughout nineteenth-century Europe, was continuously associated with 'distinctive intellectual, philosophical, social, and cultural traditions' deriving from its earlier upper-class affiliations.[38] In fact, composers earlier in the century moved frequently between classical and popular forms, while later in the century, classical composers extensively interpolated folk influences into their compositions.[39] The connotations of the categories 'classical', 'popular', and 'folk' became increasingly blurred in Britain towards the end of the century. Yet fiction centralising classical music reflects a perception, shared by reader and author, that this music *was* distinct, regardless of actual practice. The importance of the composer in representing and modifying national identity is predicated on an understanding of classical music as the nation's most significant area of musical production.

Haweis captures this bias when he makes the sweeping declaration that '*the English are not a Musical People*' (though they must have been, in some capacity, to buy his book in such numbers – it went through twenty editions in Britain before 1906).[40] His claim for British philistinism – 'so few English people know the difference between the good and bad in music' – recruits the argument of Matthew Arnold a few years earlier, in *Culture and Anarchy,* to encourage the 'study of perfection' in musical matters, and underscores that it was in high-

[36] David Wright, *The Royal College of Music and its Contexts: An Artistic and Social History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 12; Hughes & Stradling, *English Musical Renaissance,* 4.
[37] On the novel's part in nation-building, see Said, *Culture and Imperialism,* 259.
[38] Deutsch, *British Literature and Classical Music,* 3.
[39] See Derek B. Scott, 'Music and Social Class in Victorian London', *Urban History* 29, no. 1 (2002): 60-73, on the 'sacralization' of culture at mid-century (64).
[40] Haweis, *Music and Morals*, 125 (emphasis original).

cultural classical music that Britain fell short.[41] Haweis also blames the long-standing preference for foreign performers, which 'keeps down English talent' in favour of 'players and singers from abroad whose chief merits seem to consist in long hair and a very imperfect acquaintance with the English language'.[42] The physical and linguistic differences Haweis aggrandises are conspicuous in many fictional representations, while their 'imperfect acquaintance' with English renders suspect the musician's once-aspirational ability to speak the 'universal language'.

Beyond their long hair, these fictional composers stand out in the British context because of their Romantic qualities. Bennett suggests that foreign and native musicians alike were regarded in early-nineteenth-century Britain as having 'the hallmark of vagabondage'.[43] The Romantic composer, with his Teutonic origins, was not wholly at home in Victorian Britain. One critic castigated Schubert for being 'content to imbed himself' in 'coarse' 'soil', unlike Chopin, 'the only one among the eminent composers who was in the best sense an aristocrat'.[44] Chopin – whose birth Sand heightened to princely status, as we saw in the previous chapter – transcended the status of 'vagabondage', possessing a 'sense of personal dignity and self-respect which made him feel above rather than below his art'.[45] Even while Grove and others were working to legitimise the profession, music was of such low standing that a composer had to be seen to rise above it. This suggests the contentious reception of Continental industry standards, not just aesthetic values. Britain initially favoured a free market model, leaving musicians 'mercilessly exposed to the demands of a competitive...rapidly developing commercial society'.[46] Upper-class British patrons' solicitous attitude towards foreign musicians lay in a somewhat anachronistic desire to emulate the patronage system of late-eighteenth-century Europe, under which composers held a servile position (Eliot's Arrowpoint family in *Daniel Deronda*, for

[41] Ibid, 537; Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy* (Urbana, Illinois: Project Gutenberg, 2003), 14.
[42] Haweis, *Music and Morals,* 73.
[43] Bennett, 'English Music in 1884', 325.
[44] 'Schubert. By Sir George Grove, D. C. L., Director of the Royal College of Music. "Dictionary of Music and Musicians", vol. iii. London: 1882', *The Edinburgh Review* 158, no. 324 (1 October 1883): 481 & 488.
[45] 'Schubert. By Sir George Grove', 498 & 488.
[46] Banfield, 'The Artist and Society', 13.

example, patronises the composer Klesmer). Yet importing European musicians meant importing European values, shaped by Romantic ideology and by revolutions. In Italy, Verdi had become a hero of the Risorgimento, while in Germany, Wagner had taken part in the 1848 revolution and advocated for unity in the arts and German states alike.[47]

The profession in Britain, meanwhile, revised the courtly model Europe had left behind. Colin Eatock points out that Victoria was the first British monarch to knight a musician, eventually knighting twenty.[48] The RCM moved composers away from the marketplace towards a more respectable system of state patronage. Shaw lamented the British conception of the composer as a 'mere musical epicure', pointing out that it was no wonder that, for example, Henry Bishop had not taken part 'in the English Reform agitation of 1832', or 'Sterndale Bennett in the Chartist or Free Trade movements'.[49] Foreign composers like Eliot's Klesmer might see themselves as 'legislators', but this Romantic defence of the artist – with its echo of Shelley's 'Defence of Poetry' – was incongruous in a British context where, according to Shaw, the composer was depoliticised.[50] A utilitarian view of music, such as Haweis promoted in *Music and Morals,* proclaimed Britain's increasing investment in music as evidence, Ruth Solie writes, of 'the emergence of a splendidly unified, like-minded society without serious rifts of class or political interest'.[51] Far from being the product of political disturbance, music brought together, for one commentator, 'the largest gathering of people into conscious and intelligent sympathy'.[52] Much to Shaw's despair, music in Britain was not a force for sociopolitical change but a reflection of the present state of the nation, so that the 'mere musical epicures' spoke of its stability and wealth. Another target of Shaw's critique, as I show later in the chapter, was Felix

[47] See Philip Gossett, 'Giuseppe Verdi and the Italian Risorgimento', *Studia Musicologica* 52, no. 1/4 (December 2011): 241-57; James Garratt, *Music, Culture and Social Reform in the Age of Wagner* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 128-55.
[48] Eatock, *Mendelssohn and Victorian England*, 78; Hughes & Stradling, *English Musical Renaissance,* 18.
[49] Shaw, *Perfect Wagnerite,* 22; for a counter to Shaw, occluded by the writers of the EMR and largely ignored by subsequent commentators on the subject, see Simon McVeigh, 'The Society of British Musicians (1834-1865) and the Campaign for Native Talent', in *Music and British Culture, 1785-1914: Essays in Honour of Cyril Ehrlich*, ed. Christina Bashford & Leanne Langley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 145-68.
[50] Eliot, *Deronda,* 224.
[51] Ruth Solie, 'Music', in *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian Culture,* ed. Francis O'Gorman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 104.
[52] 'Notes on Tennyson's "Queen Mary"', *Macmillan's Magazine* 32, no. 191 (September 1875): 434.

Mendelssohn, whom Shaw felt had set the tone for the EMR's conservatism. Now I turn to *Charles Auchester,* which celebrates the universalist – but, perhaps, simultaneously German – ethos Mendelssohn brought to British musical culture.

The German Composer in Sheppard

Charles Auchester, which describes its protagonist's tutelage at a German school, paints a bleak picture of British musical standards between the 1830s and 1850s – but this was also the period of Mendelssohn's highest popularity in Britain. My previous chapter addressed the novel's hagiographic approach to its thinly veiled Mendelssohn-figure, Seraphael, and much of this veneration was founded on a perception that Mendelssohn had enriched British musical life. He met with support from all corners in the early decades of Victoria's reign. His oratorio *Elijah* was specially commissioned for performance at Birmingham Town Hall, and he was received at Buckingham Palace by the Queen and Prince Albert.[53] The 'critic-patron' Henry Chorley led the press campaign for an 'English Mendelssohn' in the 1850s, an early example of support for native composition.[54] Although Chorley, in his *Athenaeum* review, derided *Charles Auchester*'s 'sustained rhapsodies' about its Mendelssohn figure, Sheppard's descriptions are not far removed from those of the British musical establishment – including Chorley himself.[55] In his account, published the year after *Charles Auchester*, Mendelssohn is 'so simple, so cordial, so considerate', and his face 'one of the most beautiful which has ever been seen'; Hullah praises his 'ripened genius and fascinating character'; Haweis gushes over his 'keen, piercing intellect', 'full, generous heart', 'gentle, unassuming goodness', and more.[56] As Stephen Banfield writes, *Charles Auchester* is a 'valuable...document of middle-class attitudes to art music', reflecting the

[53] See Eatock, *Mendelssohn and Victorian England*, 67-91.
[54] Hughes & Stradling, *English Musical Renaissance,* 10 & 15.
[55] Chorley, 'Charles Auchester: A Memorial', 1352.
[56] Henry Fothergill Chorley, *Modern German Music: Recollections and Criticisms* (London: Smith, Elder, 1854), 14; Hullah, *History of Modern Music*, 186; Haweis, *Music and Morals,* 86.

interpolation of German Romanticism with Victorian ideals under the influence of Mendelssohn.[57]

Using the *Bildungsroman* vantage point of the adult Charles's reminiscences, Sheppard illustrates Britain's awakening musical consciousness under Seraphael's influence. The Auchesters play music domestically – their abilities ascribed to their Jewish background (see chapter three) – but other than this, the only music they encounter is 'a little of the same kind, not quite so good, from various members of families in the neighbourhood *professing* to play or sing'.[58] The adult Charles notes a change between the 1830s and the 1850s: 'twenty years ago there had been no universal deluge of education, as I have lived to see since, and, at least in England, in the midland counties, people were few who could make out the signs of musical genius'.[59] 'The midland counties', taken with Charles's statement, 'I was born in a city of England farthest from the sea', suggests Birmingham as his hometown, an important centre for the democratisation of classical music in nineteenth-century Britain.[60] Its triennial music festival, where Mendelssohn's *Elijah* premiered, features in Sheppard's novel as the pivotal moment of Charles's first sight of Seraphael. Nevertheless, Britain's musical opportunities remained scarce, limited to the education in London – most likely the Royal Academy of Music – which Charles's mother tells him she cannot afford. Instead, he is sent to Germany, 'where higher advantages can be obtained more easily than anywhere in England'.[61]

The novel's Cecilia school is modelled on the Leipzig Conservatory, where Mendelssohn, like Seraphael, was president.[62] Here Charles finds a more accommodating approach to musicians, in contrast to London, where he and his fellow musicians became objects of spectacle through literal segregation from their audience: 'as they looked in we peeped out, though

[57] Banfield, 'The Artist and Society', 22.
[58] Sheppard, *Charles Auchester*, 4 (emphasis added).
[59] Ibid, 94.
[60] Ibid, 2.
[61] Ibid, 115.
[62] The British Mendelssohn Scholarship, founded in 1856, funded its beneficiaries – starting with Arthur Sullivan – to study at the Leipzig Conservatory. The practice lies behind Grove's wish to found 'an independent school of music of our own, and keep our own people away from other schools'; 'Royal College of Music', *The Musical World* 60, no. 28 (15 July 1882): 427.

nobody ventured on our side beyond the doorway'.[63] Although this gives Charles a romantic sense of the musician class as 'shut in and belonging to each other', it also affirms the aetiology of the 'Land Without Music' epithet.[64] Charles's views find a home in Germany, the only country where, according to Aronach (a character based on Mendelssohn's teacher Carl Friedrich Zelter), music is a 'priesthood', 'reverentially regarded as the highest form of life, subserving to the purposes of the soul'.[65] Yet if Aronach's views suggest the exceptionalism of German Romanticism, Charles's narrative enacts the cross-cultural exchange this movement insisted music could foster. Germany's superiority is not, as it would later become, a source of jealousy or competition, but a boon for Britain's own music. Charles's musical apprenticeship in Germany allows him to return with a greater ability to inspire others to musical interest and, coupled with the enchantment cast on the entire country by Seraphael, set Britain on the path to becoming a musical nation; much like the effect of Mendelssohn, who 'cultivated what might be called a philanthropic interest in the country, and actively sought to aid the cause of English music and musicians by transmitting his own artistic values to England'.[66] The 'singular purity of his life…his known devotion to his wife and family, and his general high and unselfish character' noted by Grove as 'most essential to procure him both the esteem and the affection of the English people', are also what set him apart for Julius Benedict.[67] In Sheppard's probable source for her novel, Benedict identifies Mendelssohn's 'unaffected and cheerful manners' and 'unswerving integrity of mind and purpose' as 'endear[ing] him to the English people, who, of all European nations, perhaps, best know how to appreciate a combination of the great and the good *too seldom found in the artist class*'.[68]

Charles Auchester differs from later novels in this entirely positive portrayal of its composer, who transcends the lowly status of composers in early-nineteenth-century Britain to

[63] Sheppard, *Charles Auchester,* 99.
[64] Ibid, 89.
[65] Ibid, 197.
[66] Eatock, *Mendelssohn and Victorian England,* x.
[67] George Grove, *A Dictionary of Music and Musicians, vol. 2* (London: Macmillan and Co, 1880), 293.
[68] Julius Benedict, *A Sketch of the Life and Works of the Late Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy* (London: J. Murray, 1850), 60 (emphasis added).

attain a position of respectability which constitutes a gold standard for the nation. Charles attributes the country's rising musical involvement to a desire to approximate to Seraphael's level:

> All grades of artists – all ranks of critics – the old and calm – the impertinent but impetuous young – bowed as in heart before him. It was so in every city, I believe; but in ours it was peculiar as well as universal. An odour of heavenly altars had swept our temple – we were fitter to receive him than we had been.[69]

This unproblematised coexistence of 'peculiar', or localised, and 'universal' significance is characteristic of the whole novel, in which music becomes 'infinitely at home' somewhere other than the homeland of the composer who has written it.[70] This singularly positive representation is partly a result of Sheppard's view that such a cultural exchange as Charles experiences in Britain and Germany was not damaging, but enriching. Partly, also, it reflects Britain's assimilation of Mendelssohn, like Handel the previous century, as an honorary Briton, though the latter went one step further and became a naturalized citizen. What unites Handel and Mendelssohn is their writing in English: notably, the former's *Messiah* and the latter's *Elijah* (written in German and English but premiered in Birmingham in its English version). The gulf of difference that the 'universal language' could, paradoxically, entrench might be bridged by setting English words. Genre also played a part: *Messiah* and *Elijah* are oratorios, which 'occupied a pre-eminent position in [Britain's] musical culture' for their operatic presentation of scenes from the Bible (though unstaged, due to conventions of religious propriety).[71] Mendelssohn's 'most enthusiastic supporters', writes Eatock, 'declared him to be an honorary Englishman at the time of his death'.[72]

True as this may be of Mendelssohn, however, in *Charles Auchester* Britain's embrace of the foreign composer derives not entirely from his Anglicisation but from the German

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[69] Sheppard, *Charles Auchester,* 409.
[70] Ibid, 401.
[71] Eatock, *Mendelssohn and Victorian England,* 59. The national importance of the oratorio is indicated by the controversy surrounding Beethoven's *The Mount of Olives*, due to the 'objectionable nature of its German libretto' – primarily, its depiction of Christ in a singing role, which was uncommon in Britain. See Barbara Mohn, '"Personifying the Savior?": English Oratorio and the Representation of the Words of Christ', in *Nineteenth-Century British Music Studies, Vol. 1*, ed. Horton & Zon, 227-41.
[72] Eatock, *Mendelssohn and Victorian England,* 142.

background of Charles, through whom the reception of Seraphael is mediated because of the novel's first-person perspective. Sheppard never casts doubt on Seraphael's ability to appeal, through the 'universal language', to two nations separated by spoken language, but the immediate recipient of Seraphael's communication is, anyway, a character who can speak both German and English.[73] The novel predicates German (and Jewish) heritage for musical receptivity, and reinforces an earlier theory of national and cosmopolitan complementarity which had, itself, arisen in Germany. As Bonds explains, early-nineteenth-century writers 'saw no fundamental conflict between the dual beliefs of nationalism and cosmopolitanism: Germany as a nation was to become the cosmopolitan state par excellence, not through its territorial power but through its accomplishments in music, art, philosophy, literature, and the sciences'.[74] Like these Romantics, Sheppard idealises music's universality and its German roots.

'Not strictly English': Composers in Eliot and Du Maurier

Depictions of composers associated with Germany in *Daniel Deronda* and *Trilby* play with, but ultimately complicate, the associations of the 'universal language' affirmed in Sheppard's novel. My next two chapters offer more extensive and distinct readings of Eliot's and Du Maurier's novels, but it is necessary first to touch on these authors' depictions of the composer's foreignness in the British context. This theme has been amply discussed in criticism of *Deronda*. Particularly, Delia da Sousa Correa has explained Klesmer's national significance in several studies.[75] A 'critic of bourgeois British culture' and fictional representative of the virulently Anglophobic Wagner, he 'condemn[s] English society's poor estimation of art and the artist' while 'endorsing the aesthetic hierarchy central to German Romanticism'.[76] *Trilby,* conversely, overturns this aesthetic hierarchy, yet there are numerous parallels between Klesmer and

[73] Like Sheppard herself; see her *DNB* entry.
[74] Bonds, *Music as Thought,* 82.
[75] Delia da Sousa Correa, *George Eliot, Music and Victorian Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 131-38; 'George Eliot and the Germanic "Musical Magus"', in *George Eliot and Europe,* ed. John Rignall (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1997), 98-112; and 'George Eliot, Schubert, and the Cosmopolitan Music of *Daniel Deronda*', in *Edinburgh Companion to Literature and Music,* ed. da Sousa Correa, 437-46.
[76] Da Sousa Correa, *George Eliot, Music and Victorian Culture,* 131-32. On Wagner's disdain for the English, see his story 'A Pilgrimage to Beethoven', in *Pilgrimage to Beethoven and Other Essays*, trans. William Ashton Ellis (London: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 21-45.

Svengali which are worth drawing out here, since both Eliot and Du Maurier use the foreign composer to explore nationality not as an essential category but as a construction in which language and music are active (potentially contradictory) participants. Building on Da Sousa Correa's comprehensive discussions of Klesmer's national ambiguities and challenges, I focalise moments where music casts anxieties over national identity. These moments are key to the British fictional reception of the Romantic and cosmopolitan figure of the composer. Fiction evinces a more imaginative, complex response to Continental Romantic values than the generally condemnatory attitudes found in late-nineteenth-century music journalism.

Both novels invoke the familiar xenophobic caricature of the foreign musician. Haweis's musician with 'long hair and a very imperfect acquaintance with the English language' is an exact description of Svengali, whose 'thick, heavy, languid, lustreless black hair fell down behind his ears on to his shoulders' in a 'musician-like' way, whose national implications Du Maurier specifies as 'so offensive to the normal Englishman'.[77] Similarly, Eliot describes Klesmer's 'mane of hair floating backward in massive inconsistency with the chimney-pot hat', 'his tall thin figure clad in a way which, not being strictly English, was all the worse for its apparent emphasis of intention', and 'trousers which were not what English feeling demanded about the knees'.[78] The 'contrast between Klesmer and the average group of English country people' is, it emerges, not merely physical.[79] The musician's ubiquitous long hair became a visible sign of the foreignness of music itself in Britain (long hair also suggested femininity, which was constantly associated with – and even constituted through – music in Victorian Britain, as chapter four explains). As Da Sousa Correa has shown, unease about British musical philistinism informs the scene in *Deronda* where Klesmer disparages Gwendolen's choice of the Bellini aria – the Italian song providing a correlative for British upper-class taste – as expressing a 'puerile state of culture'.[80] Du Maurier unfavourably compares the 'complicated richness and volume of sounds' Svengali

[77] Du Maurier, *Trilby,* 11.
[78] Eliot, *Deronda,* 93.
[79] Ibid, 91-92.
[80] Ibid, 43.

produces on the piano with the English Little Billee's 'gentle "tink-a-tink"'.[81] In both novels, composer-figures identified with Germany confirm the popular perception of Britain as 'the Great Unmusical Power of Europe'.

Svengali and Klesmer represent the German musical hegemony which preoccupied music writers in the final quarter of the century. While Svengali is never definitively identified as German, he refers to 'we Germans' when disparaging French music.[82] Klesmer is conspicuously aligned with the music of the New German School, a movement including Wagner and Liszt which was hailed as having 'opened up a new world to musical Europe' by progressing beyond the melodic compositions of other nations.[83] In discussions of the New German School, the idea of melody combined with nascent concepts of evolution to provide a surrogate framework for national difference. Italian operas were now associated with atavism, their famous arias – often performed as standalone pieces in drawing-room entertainments or the 'variety' repertoires of the music halls – antithetical to Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk,* a theory which emphasised the indissolubility of all aspects of the work.[84] Wagner's innovation of endless melody, with its continuous, unresolved cadences, worked on the same premise. Klesmer composes in a similar style: his pieces are 'long' and founded on 'melodic ideas', inciting critical speculation that he is based on Wagner or Liszt, the latter of whom Eliot and G.H. Lewes met in Weimar in 1855.[85] Following this, Eliot had written 'Liszt, Wagner, and Weimar', one of the earliest positive British accounts of Wagner's music, which was little-known at the time.[86] Wagner's visit to London in 1855 was met with general hostility in the press, shaped by

[81] Du Maurier, *Trilby,* 21.
[82] Ibid, 91.
[83] John Warrack, 'New German School', in *The Oxford Companion To Music,* ed. Alison Latham (Oxford University Press, 2011); Hullah, *The History of Modern Music,* 141.
[84] See Treadwell, 'The urge to communicate', 177-91.
[85] Eliot, *Deronda,* 41, 43; Gerlinde Röder-Bolton, *George Eliot in Germany, 1845-55: "Cherished Memories"* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 61. See also Gordon S. Haight, 'George Eliot's Klesmer', in *Imagined Worlds: Essays on Some English Novels and Novelists in Honour of John Butt,* eds. Maynard Mack & Ian Gregor (London: Methuen, 1968), 205-14.
[86] See Da Sousa Correa, *George Eliot, Music, and Victorian Culture,* 11.

his publicly demonstrated disdain for the nation's beloved Mendelssohn.[87] His reputation improved with the London Wagner Festival in 1877, though his association with contentious cosmopolitan movements such as Symbolism and decadence continued to excite suspicion for some.[88] When Eliot wrote her novel, Wagner was still largely considered, as for the critic James Davison in 1855, 'leader of a new musical sect which publicly threatens its determination to overrun and convert the whole of Europe', whose music was 'a reckless, wild, extravagant and demagogic cacophony'.[89] Wagner also surfaces in *Trilby* as 'Herr Blagner', another critic of Bellini who asserts German supremacy.[90]

Beyond Wagnerian allusion, Eliot associates her composer with 'Teutonic conquests', as the narrator puts it, invoking the Franco-Prussian war immediately following Klesmer's chastisement of Gwendolen, thus binding German superiority in music and politics.[91] Klesmer's anticipation of a 'fusion of races' (whose significance within the Jewish narrative I discuss in the next chapter) suggests, in the national context, the universalising ideology of German Romanticism.[92] British commentators increasingly perceived the 'universal language' idea in imperial terms, fearing that German musical predominance betokened a larger political threat. While Röder-Bolton considers that Eliot invests Klesmer with the 'imperious magic in his fingers' she had experienced on listening to Liszt, most of Klesmer's listeners remain unmoved.[93] Gwendolen may be 'lifted' by the music 'into a desperate indifference about her own doings', but her shift in perspective is incited less through sympathy than imposition –

[87] Conducting Mendelssohn's 'Hebridean' Overture at the Philharmonic Society, Wagner conspicuously put on white gloves, which was widely taken as a mark of disrespect; see Francis Hueffer, *Half A Century of Music in England, 1837-1887: Essays Towards A History* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1889), 51.
[88] See Emma Sutton, *Aubrey Beardsley and British Wagnerism in the 1890s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). Alex Ross, in *Wagnerism,* traces Wagner's influence on – to name a few – French poets and painters (78-108), the Pre-Raphaelites (120-30), American poets and architects (142-56), and the Celtic Revival (184-90).
[89] James Davison, 'Failure, Shame', *The Musical World* 33, no. 26 (June 30, 1855): 464.
[90] Du Maurier, *Trilby,* 220.
[91] Eliot, *Deronda,* 42.
[92] Ibid, 224.
[93] Ibid, 43; Röder-Bolton, *George Eliot in Germany,* 69.

experiencing the 'imperious' (the word is usefully linked to 'imperial') 'power of this playing'.[94] Indeed, Henry James felt that German hegemony had spread to the level of the text itself, describing the novel's 'tone' as German: a judgement which, given the novel's focus on classical music, might recall the contemporary perception of music as, to return to Wilde's quip, 'written in the German language'.[95]

It is vital to note the irony in Eliot's and Du Maurier's invocation of German musical superiority, however – a point on which they differ from journalistic writing. I will expand in the next chapter on Du Maurier's reference to Herr Blagner, which turns Wagner's anti-Semitic arguments back on himself. Eliot was more equivocal regarding Wagner, but Klesmer's 'Teutonic conquest' is certainly never confirmed. The 'melodic ideas' in his compositions are 'not too grossly evident', an ambiguous phrase which may or may not condone their unmelodic obscurity.[96] In 'Liszt, Wagner, and Weimar', Eliot had admitted to preferring melody even if it is 'only a transitory phase of music' representative of 'tadpole pleasures', or a lower evolutionary stage.[97] Although she recruits German superiority to critique British philistinism, she nonetheless holds to her conviction that melody is 'audible feeling – feeling communicating itself', as she had written in her translation of Ludwig Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity*, anticipating her incorporation of melodious, affective Italian music in *Deronda*.[98] Importantly, the instrumental nature of Klesmer's music restricts its potential for Eliot. While she believed in melody's capacity to awaken feeling, she doubted the Romantic Idealist premise of – to take the title of Bonds's study – 'music as thought', ultimately considering sung music the apotheosis of

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[94] Eliot, *Deronda,* 43.

[95] James, 'Daniel Deronda: A Conversation', 686. *Deronda*'s classical focus is unique among Eliot's oeuvre; C.M. Jackson-Houston suggests Eliot moved away from 'homely village' subjects, and their accompanying musical styles, as her own home life with Lewes grew more comfortable; *Ballads, Songs, and Snatches: The Appropriation of Folk Song and Popular Culture in Nineteenth-Century Realist Prose* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 62-68.

[96] Eliot, *Deronda,* 43.

[97] George Eliot, 'Liszt, Wagner, and Weimar', in *The Complete Works of George Eliot,* vol. 17, ed. Rosemary Ashton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992) 87. See Ruth A. Solie, '"Tadpole Pleasures": *Daniel Deronda* as Music Historiography', in *Music in Other Words: Victorian Conversations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 164-65.

[98] Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity,* trans. Marian Evans (New York: Harper, 1975), 4.

thought and feeling. An ideal combination of vocal music, in Italian and German, is found in Mirah's performances of Rossini, Schubert, Beethoven, and the fictional composer Leo (a German who sets music to Leopardi's 'O patria mia').

These novels affirm music's ability to comprise multiple national identifications. Eliot suggests this through the layered allusiveness of one of Klesmer's compositions, the fantasia *Freudvoll, Leidvoll, Gedankenvoll.* The title refers to words by Goethe, most famously set by Beethoven in *Egmont*, Op. 84 (1810), making the allusion consistent with the 'Teutonic conquest' elements of Klesmer's characterisation. Yet there are three other composers whose settings of the same words might be taken into account, since Klesmer is compared to them within and without the novel: Schubert in 1815, Liszt in 1844 and 1849 (Klesmer is 'not yet a Liszt'), and Anton Rubinstein in 1862 (whom Lewes, in his diary, had called 'Klesmer').[99] Each connotes the cosmopolitan as a 'stranger anywhere', to return to Evangelista's term.[100] Rubinstein, particularly, suggests the basis for Klesmer's mixed background ('a felicitous combination of the German, the Sclave, and the Semite'), which the former expressed as a condition of ethnonational estrangement: 'To the Jews I am a Christian. To the Christians – a Jew. To the Russians I am a German, and to the Germans – a Russian'.[101] It is unsurprising that Lewes saw Rubinstein as a real-life Klesmer; both identify themselves as 'the Wandering Jew'.[102] The affinities between the travelling composer, speaker of the 'universal language', and Jews will be explored in the next chapter – considering Klesmer's 'cosmopolitan ideas' as well as his background and musical practice.[103]

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[99] Eliot, *Deronda,* 220; *The George Eliot Letters*, ed. by Gordon S. Haight, 9 vols (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1954–78), ix, 176-77.

[100] Da Sousa Correa has explored the cosmopolitan associations of Schubert for members of Eliot's milieu; 'Cosmopolitan Music of *Daniel Deronda*', 442-44.

[101] Eliot, *Deronda,* 41; Anton Rubinstein, *Gedankenkorb,* quoted in James Loeffler, *The Most Musical Nation: Jews and Culture in the Late Russian Empire* (London: Yale University Press, 2010), 15. George Henschel, the baritone Da Sousa Correa posits as an inspiration for Deronda, has a similar background – born in Silesia (then Germany, now Poland), with Polish-Jewish parentage; 'Cosmopolitan Music of *Daniel Deronda*', 444.

[102] Eliot, *Deronda,* 224; Loeffler records Rubinstein's description of himself as a '*juif errant*' and 'Slavic Semite' (24). Haight proposes Rubinstein, whom Eliot and Lewes met in 1855 and 1876, as the main inspiration for Klesmer.

[103] Eliot, *Deronda,* 224.

Music's ability to render its practitioners 'stranger[s] anywhere' determines its role in *Trilby.* The novel's Channel-crossing prose mimics the transnational travel of its two protagonists, who tour Europe under the name La Svengali, with Svengali secretly mesmerising Trilby, inducing trances with his gaze and transforming the formerly tone-deaf model into a celebrated diva. The success of this nationally ambiguous pair, performing a nationally diverse repertoire, is echoed by the narrative's heteroglossia, the competing claims of English, French, and German, and prose, poetry, song, and illustration. Like Klesmer's music, La Svengali's repertoire comprises multiple national identifications, eventually eschewing language completely in Chopin's 'Impromptu'. Performed in the Italian *bel canto* style, this music nonetheless transforms Trilby, for her audience, into 'the imagined spectacle of a simple German damsel'.[104] Despite Svengali's association with the 'universal language', it is Trilby's linguistic adaptability which characterises their performance. Her second utterance of the novel is delivered 'in English, with an accent half Scotch and certain French intonations'.[105] She switches between languages easily, while Svengali's 'fluent French' is marked by a 'German accent', constantly reinforced in Du Maurier's transcription of his speech.[106] Trilby's Irishness, too, associates her with music through a popular contemporary stereotype – so it is not only the composer, in this novel, who unsettles national identities through music.[107] As my next chapter notes, both characters are associated with 'wandering' and homelessness – but their performances depend on this transcendence of nationality. Audiences' enjoyment of music, Du Maurier implies, requires the cosmopolitanism which also makes music a 'dangerous outsider force', to use Christine Ferguson's term in discussing late-nineteenth-century invasion novels.[108] As the means of Svengali's attempted invasion, music may threaten the 'territory [and] cultural representatives of a nineteenth-century Britain imagined to be terrified of heterogeneity and

[104] Du Maurier, *Trilby,* 214.
[105] Ibid, 13.
[106] Ibid, 11.
[107] Patrick Brantlinger, *Taming Cannibals: Race and the Victorians* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 142; Edna Lyall's novel *Doreen: The Story of a Singer* (1894) frequently refers to this stereotype.
[108] Christine Ferguson, *Language, Science, and Popular Fiction in the Victorian fin de siècle: The Brutal Tongue* (Routledge, 2017), 418.

change', but it also opens up a space for understanding national identities as transitive and not necessarily coterminous with cultural experience.[109]

The term 'bohemian', in both novels, illustrates this point. In geographic terms, Svengali is Bohemian. References to his 'people in Austria' and association with 'the poisonous East' place his homeland somewhere in the Austro-Hungarian empire, which at the time of *Trilby*'s action – following Czech nationalists' failed bid for autonomy in 1848 – included Bohemia.[110] The term's transitive usage, however, recurs throughout, as in the talk of Parisians 'transferr[ing] their Bohemia to London'.[111] *Deronda* also uses the term's polysemy to differentiate national from cultural identities, mentioning Klesmer's home 'on the outskirts of Bohemia' before referring to 'figurative Bohemia'.[112] 'Figurative' Bohemianism became an artistic correlative for cosmopolitanism in this period, as Du Maurier implies – the 'usual cosmopolitan crew' are also those who inhabit 'dear Bohemia', the group of British, French, Greek, Swiss, and Germanic artists.[113] The designation of composers as Bohemian indicates the placement of music on the outskirts of national identity. Fiction uses this marginal position to both reflect and trouble music's role in nationalist narratives, which assumed a stable relationship between music and national identity. Klesmer's similarities to Liszt are another case in point: Eliot partly deploys the comparison to portray her composer as an imperious representative of the New German School, but Liszt's own national identity was more complicated – Shay Loya describes his 'contested identity' (in admittedly 'reductive' terms) as 'a cosmopolitan-nationalist, French-educated Austro-German-Hungarian Catholic'.[114] Music enabled Liszt, as it does Klesmer, to appropriate multiple national identities which variously came to the fore according to the occasion.

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[109] Ibid.
[110] Du Maurier, *Trilby,* 41 & 282.
[111] Ibid, 95.
[112] Eliot, *Deronda,* 450.
[113] Du Maurier, *Trilby,* 33 & 97; see César Graña & Marigay Graña, eds., *On Bohemia: The Code of the Self-Exiled* (Milton: Taylor & Francis, 2017); and Daniel Cottom, *International Bohemia: Scenes of Nineteenth-Century Life* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).
[114] Shay Loya, 'Liszt's National Identity: What Else is New?', in *Liszt in Context,* ed. Cormac, 154.

Eliot is attuned to music's capacity to de-essentialise national identity. Klesmer triggers moments of anxiety, in which his own musical cosmopolitanism destabilises other characters' Britishness. While Klesmer's English ordinarily has 'little foreignness except his fluency', traces of 'foreign accent' manifest themselves in musical contexts.[115] When he disparages Gwendolen's song choice, he 'suddenly speak[s] in an odious German fashion with staccato endings, quite unobservable in him before, and apparently depending on a change of mood'.[116] Linguistic otherness is likened to a musical effect: 'staccato endings'. This 'change of mood' might, given the ambiguity of Eliot's omniscient narration which shifts between multiple centres of consciousness, be attributed to Gwendolen as much as Klesmer – his nationality obtrudes, becoming 'odious', because she is stung by his criticism. Again, after his clash with Bult, who represents imperial values with his 'general solidity and suffusive pinkness of a healthy Briton' and 'strong opinions concerning the districts of the Niger', Klesmer is seen once more in light of nationality: 'suddenly making a mysterious wind-like rush backwards and forwards on the piano', of which 'Mr Bult felt this buffoonery rather offensive and Polish'.[117] Their argument centres – topically and literally – on music (the 'rush' at the piano). By inserting these judgements from Gwendolen's and Bult's perspectives, Eliot encourages a view of Klesmer's 'wind-like' musical identity as challenging the 'solidity' of Britishness.

The role of culture in destabilising Britishness is, Sarah Gracombe has suggested, a core theme of *Trilby*.[118] As she points out, the novel's '*trois Angliches*' are in fact English, Welsh, and Scottish, while Trilby's Anglicisation by the painters is an important counter-plot to her mesmerism by Svengali, and the terms 'English' and 'British' vacillate in a characteristic late-nineteenth-century manner.[119] Music exposes what Patrick Brantlinger calls 'hybridity' within Britishness. Rather than employing a 'binary-minded' logic in encounters with the other,

[115] Eliot, *Deronda,* 41.
[116] Ibid, 42.
[117] Ibid, 224.
[118] Sarah Gracombe, 'Converting Trilby: Du Maurier on Englishness, Jewishness, and Culture', *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 58, no. 1 (June 2003): 73-108.
[119] Du Maurier, *Trilby,* 69.

hybridity undoes 'essentialism, fixation, and binaries'.[120] While *Trilby*'s narrative is ostensibly concerned with the expulsion of the other, its music participates in an undoing – albeit temporary – of binaries, including but not limited to nationality. The deaths of Svengali and Trilby anticipate the restoration of national boundaries at the novel's end: Taffy and his wife reflect that 'a week in Paris was just enough' after hearing the '*esprit gaulois'* embodied by the singer Madame Cantharidi.[121] Like Du Maurier's own youthful Parisian idyll, music provides only a fleeting transcendence of boundaries. Nonetheless, it is still music (Madame Cantharidi's singing) which measures those boundaries. Rather than reading *Trilby* as an invasion narrative, we might consider how most of its narrative undercuts the nationalism it restores at its close. The foreign composer-figure is a catalyst who, along with the British-Irish-French Trilby, brings to the fore the hybridity of national identity. The Britishness tentatively reinstated at the novel's end is newly constituted by an experience of cultural exchange, which music facilitates most effectively. *Trilby* therefore satirises contemporary fears about music's boundary-crossing, which might be wielded by opportunistic foreign composers. Not only does it suggest the futility of imposing nationalist meanings on music, but it shows how music modifies understandings of the nation and national identity themselves. In this way, Du Maurier's representation of the composer-figure's national significance resembles Eliot's. Both critique British philistinism through representatives of German superiority, but use music itself to nuance the assumption of stable identities at the core of this rivalry. Instead, both show, through the composer, how national identities are shaped by ideas about musical culture, receptivity, and communication.

Of course, there are important differences in Eliot's and Du Maurier's perspectives on the composer. I expand on these in the next two chapters, but a key point of contrast in the context of this chapter is their treatment of imported Romantic ideals. This contrast is especially pertinent to my subsequent discussion of Shaw's and Gissing's novels, since they take up the perspectives of Eliot and Du Maurier, respectively, on this point. In *Deronda,* Klesmer's critique

[120] Brantlinger, *Taming Cannibals,* 17.
[121] Du Maurier, *Trilby,* 301 & 291.

of Britain's anti-Romanticism anticipates Shaw's. Sounding, for some critics, like Liszt, Klesmer responds to Bult branding him a 'mere musician' by insisting musicians 'help to rule the nations and make the age as much as any other public men' and 'count ourselves on level benches with legislators'.[122] Bult, speaker for Britain's dismissive reception of such values, attributes Klesmer's political enthusiasm to his 'being a Pole, or a Czech, or something of that fermenting sort, in a state of political refugeeism which had obliged him to make a profession of his music'.[123] The allusion to 'political refugeeism' recalls Wagner during the mid-century unrest in Europe, and Shaw – an outspoken Wagnerite – would extend this insistence on the necessity of composers' political engagement in *Love Among the Artists*.

Shaw invests his composer with Klesmer's heroism, but takes further the problem Eliot tentatively resolves: that this Romantic heroism is alien in Britain. Klesmer's engagement to Catherine Arrowpoint exposes the precarity of his position. While Mrs Arrowpoint had vainly imagined herself not 'patronising genius' but acknowledging its 'royalty' in employing a 'first-rate musician', her meritocratic pretensions disappear at the prospect of the engagement.[124] Now, Klesmer is 'a gypsy, a Jew, a mere bubble of the earth'.[125] The ephemeral 'bubble of the earth' suggests that antipathy towards musicians was based on their frequently nomadic lifestyles. Land ownership, a fixed address – such as the Arrowpoints and Quetcham – confers respectability, and indeed, Klesmer is eventually legitimised as a 'patron and prince' himself once installed in 'one of the large houses in Grosvenor Place'.[126] Shaw deviates from Eliot's resolution, partly because it relies on Klesmer's capitulation to a market (as chapter three discusses). Also, Eliot alludes to Mendelssohn, whom Shaw disliked, to validate Klesmer's accommodation in Britain. Discussing Klesmer's fitness to marry Catherine, the narrator

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[122] Beryl Gray, *George Eliot and Music* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989), 103; Röder-Bolton, *George Eliot in Germany,* 69; Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years* (London: Faber, 1989), 250, n4; Eliot, *Deronda,* 224.
[123] Eliot, *Deronda,* 223; since Walker speculates that Klesmer's words may be a direct transcription of Liszt's, it is possible Eliot also had Saint-Simonism in mind, a movement which attracted Liszt in the 1830s. See Ralph P. Locke, *Music, Musicians, and the Saint-Simonians* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).
[124] Eliot, *Deronda,* 92 & 39. On the conscious anachronism of British upper-class patronage, see Rohr, *The Careers of British Musicians*, 51.
[125] Ibid*,* 227.
[126] Ibid, 564.

mentions Mendelssohn, and confers on Klesmer the virtues which made Mendelssohn so beloved of Victorian audiences: 'work', 'belief', 'purpose'.[127] For Eliot, the reference is ennobling: in 1870, she had read his letters and admired his 'eminently pure, refined nature' and 'rigorous conscience in art'.[128] The following year, at the close of *Middlemarch,* dignifying Dorothea Brooke's seemingly inconsequential life by musing on the problems 'a new Antigone' might face, Eliot again looked to Mendelssohn – the composer had written choruses for Ludwig Tieck's 1841 staging of *Antigone*.[129] These choruses became, according to George Steiner, a 'staple of family and amateur chorales' across Europe.[130] Yet considering not merely Eliot's personal opinion of Mendelssohn but the broader context of the composer's posthumous reception in Britain, the reference in *Deronda* mitigates the revolutionary potential glimpsed in Klesmer's speech to Bult. As Eatock writes, 'in claiming social equity with his upper-class hosts, [Mendelssohn] offered a model of social status to England's musicians that they emulated with increasing success'.[131] Although *Deronda* discredits the Arrowpoints' patronage as unworthy of the artist, the alternative it offers – a system introduced by Mendelssohn and continued by the British composers who accepted knighthoods and institutional affiliations – sets out distinctly ambivalent terms for the place of Romanticism's more radical values in Britain.

Two decades later, *Trilby* rejects the classical-popular dichotomy which undergirds Romantic values, locating British identity more forcefully in a kind of anti-Romanticism. The gestural, participatory mode of parts of La Svengali's performance, not to mention the variety of the repertoire, is more reminiscent of British music-hall practices than classical tradition. Barry Faulk argues that the late nineteenth century saw the establishment of music-hall criticism (by 'aficionados' from the world of high culture such as Arthur Symons) as an oppositional discourse to classical music criticism, and moreover, that this discourse produced an idea of

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[127] Ibid*,* 222.
[128] Quoted in 'Mendelssohn (-Bartholdy), Felix', in *Oxford Reader's Companion to George Eliot,* ed. John Rignall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).
[129] George Eliot, *Middlemarch,* ed. David Carroll (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 825.
[130] George Steiner, *Antigones* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984), 8-9.
[131] Eatock, *Mendelssohn and Victorian England,* 147.

'Englishness' founded on critique of imported cultural hegemonies.[132] *Trilby* nods to music halls elsewhere, noting Little Billee's irrepressible enjoyment of their camaraderie, and the novel's juxtaposition of popular and classical forms reinforces its challenge to hegemonic national identities.[133] In Gissing's *The Whirlpool,* Britishness is similarly located in challenges to classical hegemony, represented this time by a British composer.

British Composers in Shaw and Gissing

Moving to fictional representations of British composers, we see a continued concern with the reception of Romantic musical values, with Shaw and Gissing focusing on British figures to make different predictions about the direction of travel for the 'Great Unmusical Power of Europe'. In *Music and Morals,* after asserting the essentially foreign idiom of music, Haweis makes an important qualification about the British musical idiom: 'the music of the people was ballads – the music of the people is still ballads'.[134] Haweis bases his judgement of the British people as unmusical solely on the status of *classical* composition, upholding imported Romantic values, and insisting there will be no real musical culture in Britain until classical music is felt, 'as it is felt in Germany, to be a kind of necessity'.[135] His view persists in non-fictional discourses into the twentieth century, motivating the efforts of the EMR and fuelling an agonistic relationship with Germany. Yet in fiction, Haweis's distinctions between national and foreign music, rooted in an aesthetic hierarchy which prized the classical over the popular and folk, became complicated. The figure of the British composer reveals an increasingly diverse musical landscape. George Moore's *Evelyn Innes* (1898), though it lacks a composer, usefully indicates this landscape. Moore, like Du Maurier, spent much of his young adulthood in Paris, and Stoddart Martin describes him as the author who 'appl[ied] Wagner to the novel more

[132] Barry J. Faulk, *Music Hall and Modernity: The Late-Victorian Discovery of Popular Culture* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2004), 27-28.
[133] Du Maurier, *Trilby,* 158-59.
[134] Haweis, *Music and Morals,* 492.
[135] Haweis, *Music and Morals,* 493.

systematically than any other writer in English', an influence derived from French Symbolism.[136] Yet while Evelyn sings Wagnerian roles, her father is a church musician who aims to revive early English music through the use of authentic period instruments.[137] The character of Ulick Dean, a Yeatsian Irish poet, who spurns Wagnerism and supports Innes's revivalist efforts, draws together indigenous music-making with the *fin-de-siècle* interest in the folk.[138] 1898 was the year Parry addressed the inaugural meeting of the Folk Song Society, initiating a turn towards native material – including the balladry Haweis associates with the British – which subsequent British composers followed.[139] This might be considered an adaptation of a Romantic, Herderian precedent; yet in other ways, Romantic values still struck an uneasy note in Britain.[140]

Written in 1881, Shaw's *Love Among the Artists* predates many of these developments. Nonetheless, Shaw was closely involved with the British music world, and in 1881 stood on the cusp of his career as a music critic. This gave him insight into the direction of British composition, especially the nascent EMR, against whose conservatism he reacts in this novel about a Beethovenian-Wagnerian composer. Owen Jack is Welsh, further exemplifying music's place at the margins of British identity. His alienation from society constitutes a sustained critique of Britain's failure to accommodate Romantic ideals. The depiction also attests to Shaw's preference for Wagner over what he called the 'kid glove gentility' of Mendelssohn.[141] Shaw connected the social elevation of the composer with the erosion of revolutionary impetus, decrying the EMR's institutionalisation and emphasis on respectability. In an 1898 critique, he insistently repeats the composers' academic titles:

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[136] Stoddart Martin, *Wagner to "The Waste Land": A Study of the Relationship of Wagner to English Literature* (London: Macmillan, 1982), 100; see Moore's *Confessions of a Young Man* (1888).
[137] Innes was based on Moore's friend Albert Dolmetsch, an early English music revivalist; see Elizabeth Roche, 'George Moore's "Evelyn Innes": A Victorian "Early Music" Novel', *Early Music* 11, no. 1 (January 1983): 71-73.
[138] As Ross points out (*Wagnerism,* 186), this depiction of an 'unmusical' Yeats was a bias of Moore's, and Yeats actually drew on Wagnerism in his works.
[139] Hughes & Stradling, *English Musical Renaissance,* 167.
[140] Collins, 'National and Universal', 376-80.
[141] George Bernard Shaw, *London Music in 1888-1889 as Heard by Corno di Bassetto (Later Known as George Bernard Shaw)* (London: Constable, 1937), 69.

> If you doubt that *Eden* is a masterpiece, ask Dr. [Hubert] Parry and Dr. [Alexander] Mackenzie, and they will applaud it to the skies. Surely Dr. Mackenzie's opinion is conclusive, for is he not the composer of *Veni Creator*, guaranteed as excellent music by Professor [Charles Villiers] Stanford and Dr. Parry? You want to know who Parry is? Why, the composer of *Blest Pair of Sirens*, as to the merits of which you only have to consult Dr. Mackenzie and Dr. Stanford.[142]

By contrast, in *The Perfect Wagnerite,* Shaw compares the *Ring* cycle to Shelley's 'Prometheus Unbound', praising how 'both works set forth the same conflict between humanity and its gods and governments, issuing in the redemption of man from tyranny'.[143] For Shaw, the notion of a tyrannous government had a musical analogue in the EMR itself. However, his early novel evinces an initially more open attitude to native composition.

Owen Jack composes a work called 'Prometheus Unbound', which recalls Klesmer's compositions. He is told: 'audiences will not listen with patience to movements of such length and complication', and they hope to 'hear some melody in the next part, by way of variety'.[144] The seemingly 'inexecutable' work, with its 'strangely' sung duet and 'jubilant clangour of orchestra and chorus', has been read by Donna Beckage and Phyllis Goodman as a reference to the final movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.[145] However, as Phyllis Weliver has pointed out, Hubert Parry is also a significant contextual touchpoint for this composition. While I do not agree that Jack is a 'fictionalisation' of Parry, he might rather be seen as an endorsement of Beethoven and Wagner via the younger composer, in whom Shaw at that time saw promise.[146] Weliver speculates that Shaw may have attended a performance of Parry's own 'Prometheus Unbound' in Cambridge on 17 May 1881, just two days before he began writing *Love Among the Artists*. Parry's work suggested a 'promising anti-establishment figure', who was accused by one reviewer of trying 'to out-Wagner Wagner'.[147] Despite his later derision of the EMR, Shaw never outright rejected the possibility of native composition (as his later championing of Elgar

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[142] George Bernard Shaw, *Music in London 1890–1894,* I (London: Constable, 1932), 260.
[143] Shaw, *Perfect Wagnerite,* 47.
[144] Shaw, *Love Among the Artists,* 319 & 317.
[145] Ibid, 269 & 317; Donna Beckage, 'Beethoven in Western Literature', (PhD diss., University of California, 1977), 114-17; Phyllis Goodman, 'Beethoven as the Prototype of Owen Jack', *The Shaw Review* 8, no. 1 (January 1965): 17-19; as both point out, Beethoven wrote music to Goethe's 'Prometheus'.
[146] Phyllis Weliver, *The Musical Crowd in English Fiction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 132.
[147] Weliver, *Musical Crowd,* 142; 'Festival of the Three Choirs', *The Musical World* 58, 37 (11 September 1880), 576.

attests).[148] Shaw's novel does not extol foreign composition as superior, but reimagines native composition along lines which met his ideals.

Love Among the Artists combines Shaw's hopes for native composition with his conviction that British society was hostile towards the Romantic spirit. Jack has rightly been discussed as Shaw's tribute to Beethoven, interpolating elements of the bio-mythology surrounding the composer by the late nineteenth century. Late in life, Shaw rejected a suggestion that he write a play about Beethoven, explaining, 'I have already dealt with him in *Love Among the Artists*'.[149] As Beckage explores, Jack's ugliness, untidiness, and bad manners recall first-hand accounts of Beethoven, making the novel 'occasionally...more like [an] excerpt from the composer's biography than like [a] fictional creation', but whereas Beethoven was revered in Britain in 1881, Jack is 'a creature without polish or appearance – not even a gentleman'.[150] As Eliot muses on Klesmer's unusual dress: 'it is often better for greatness to be dead, and to have got rid of the man'.[151] The living composer, especially if his work expressed Shelleyan-Promethean striving like Jack's, posed more of a challenge than long-dead composers like Beethoven, the subversive potentialities of whose life and work had been nullified by time. In this way, Shaw's novel recalls chapter one's discussion of posterity, specifically criticising British audiences' preference for memorialising historical composers whilst ignoring present-day ones.

As its title suggests, *Love Among the Artists* juxtaposes members of different artistic professions. The painter Herbert declares: '[Jack] is so far from possessing the temperament of an artist, that his whole character, his way of living, and all his actions, are absolutely destructive of that atmosphere of melancholy grandeur in which great artists find their

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[148] See Harry White, '"Making Symphony Articulate": Bernard Shaw's Sense of Music History', in *British Musical Criticism and Intellectual Thought, 1850-1950,* ed. Jeremy Dibble & Julian Horton (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2018), 102-22.

[149] Hesketh Pearson, *G.B.S, A Postscript* (New York: Harper, 1950), 85; see also Frances Pietch, 'The Relationship Between Music and Literature in the Victorian Period' (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1961), 267.

[150] 'Beethoven in Western Literature', 95; Shaw, *Love Among the Artists,* 101.

[151] Eliot, *Deronda,* 92.

inspiration'.[152] That Jack eventually succeeds as a composer while Herbert's career as a painter falters, however, suggests Shaw's critique of the standards upheld by Herbert (who, incidentally, 'applaud[s] emphatically' a performance of Mendelssohn).[153] By the late nineteenth century, the visual arts, with their longer history of professionalisation and close ties to the establishment, struck some as staid, devoid of revolutionary idealism. *Trilby* includes a brief portrait of the sculptor Cornelys, who 'never stirs out of his house and grounds except to fulfil his duties at the Royal Academy and dine once a year with the Queen'.[154] Writing amidst Grove's much-publicised plans to legitimise and professionalise music, Shaw expresses concerns that musicians, too, might become subject to shallow codes of respectability. Hence Jack's Romantic, revolutionary idealism: he professes anti-commercialist views, and chafes against the opinions of bourgeois society that he ought to be a 'servant' and an 'ornament to [a respectable family's] establishment'.[155] Unlike Klesmer, he cannot benefit from wealthy patrons' preferential treatment towards foreign musicians, nor is he willing to adhere to the institutionalisation by which native musicians made their careers. Only one character, the Polish pianist Aurélie, echoes Jack's views on the dangers of commercialism, uttering the Arnoldian opinion: 'Commerce is the ruin of England. It renders the people quite anti-artistic'.[156] Jack's eventual success does not assuage this conflict but rather accentuates it. 'Prometheus Unbound' impresses not the artist class, but the commercial, like the rich businessman Hoskyn who deems it 'first rate'.[157] In Britain, Shaw suggests, classical music can only become debased, and composers' revolutionary potential diluted.

Gissing's *The Whirlpool* continues this dilution of Romantic ideals, representing the triumph of the commercialism Shaw had diagnosed as the 'ruin of England'. The composer Felix Dymes (whose surname puns on his mercenary motivations for pursuing music, while his

[152] Shaw, *Love Among the Artists,* 204.
[153] Ibid, 322.
[154] Du Maurier, *Trilby,* 163.
[155] Shaw, *Love Among the Artists,* 34 & 36.
[156] Ibid, 320.
[157] Ibid.

forename inverts the mythos around Mendelssohn) is first mentioned as possibly a 'humbug', speculation which his first utterance bears out: 'it's the easiest thing in the world…to compose a song that will be popular. I'll give you the recipe, and charge nothing. You must have a sudden change to the minor, and a waltz refrain—that's all. Oh yes, there's money in it'.[158] He hopes to make 'a few hundreds a year' from his songs, treating their composition as a foolproof 'recipe'.[159] His ability to compose 'very sweet music' despite being 'loud, conceited, [and] vulgar' puzzles the protagonist, the violinist Alma Frothingham – yet she, too, is able to create beautiful music despite having 'no profound love for the art'.[160] The novel frequently draws attention to the disparity between Dymes the man, with his 'coarse vanity' and Svengali-esque propensity for 'self-advertisement', and Dymes's 'tender melody', a disparity which revises the Romantic tendency to identify the composer's personality with his compositions.[161] Seeking this harmony between the person and the music, Alma reflects: 'among the self-styled musical people with whom she associated, were few, if any, in whom conceit did not sound the leading motive. She knew but one true musician, Herr Wilenski'.[162] This latter is a virtuoso and, naturally, foreign.

Although their composers work in different cultural strata, Gissing and Shaw both critique British anti-Romanticism. For all its elevation of music to a subject of 'serious' study, the EMR did not surmount Britain's rejection of Romantic ideals, but merely instituted a new status quo. Parry, despite the accusations of Wagnerism in his 'Prometheus Unbound', is described by Hughes and Stradling as a 'convinced Brahmin', a pun by which they invoke the classicism of Brahms, the figurehead of anti-Wagnerism in late-nineteenth-century Germany.[163] Shaw's initial hopes for Parry were unfulfilled, as his later comments suggest, but this does not detract from his novel's usefulness as evidence of a changing landscape for native composition. Keeping in mind Parry as an influence for Jack's 'Prometheus Unbound', Shaw's novel contemplates the

[158] Gissing, *The Whirlpool,* 42.
[159] Ibid*,* 71.
[160] Ibid, 69 & 245.
[161] Ibid, 193-94.
[162] Ibid, 246.
[163] Hughes & Stradling, *English Musical Renaissance,* 56.

diverging futures of British music. Paul Bertagnolli writes that this period saw two strands of British composition, some composers 'adopting contemporary Continental techniques associated with Wagner, Liszt, and Brahms', others 'cultivating indigenous folksong, renaissance polyphony, and the baroque masque'.[164] This latter mode persisted into the new century and reached an apex with the compositions of Ralph Vaughan Williams and the folksong collections of Cecil Sharp.[165] As Derek B. Scott points out, composers now positioned themselves as national representatives *through* the incorporation of folk material.[166] No longer associated with popular culture, folk music gained authenticity as an expression of national identity, an emanation from the *Volk*, precisely because its original composer was often unknown. Shaw's novel bridges the transition, through its multi-layered allusions in 'Prometheus Unbound', between imported Romantic ideas about the composer's national significance and a new, British understanding of this relationship.

By contrast, *The Whirlpool* offers the popular sphere, with its conscious anti-Romanticism, as more characteristically British than the classical. Gissing had rehearsed these themes four years earlier in 'The Muse of the Halls', a story about a singer and a composer who both 'climb down' from the classical to the popular sphere, submitting less freely than Dymes, in the later novel, to financial imperatives.[167] Dymes, though he describes himself as a 'musical dreamer', constitutes a demystification of the allure concentrated in that earlier Felix (Mendelssohn).[168] He freely admits that he hardly touches musical instruments, asserting: 'You don't imagine that because one is a successful composer he must be a brilliant virtuoso'.[169] His conception of how 'songs get made nowadays' is distinctly anti-Romantic: the tune, its transcription, harmony, and orchestral accompaniment are each handled by different people – a

[164] Paul Bertagnolli, *Prometheus in Music: Representations of the Myth in the Romantic Era* (Routledge, 2017), 676.
[165] See Hughes & Stradling, *English Musical Renaissance,* 164-214.
[166] Scott, 'Music and Social Class in Victorian London', 61.
[167] George Gissing, 'The Muse of the Halls', *The Gissing Journal* 42, no. 3 (July 2006): 1-14. By 1923, music-hall had become so characteristically English that T.S. Eliot lamented the death of singer Marie Lloyd as a national crisis; see Faulk, *Music Hall and Modernity,* 23-24.
[168] Gissing, *The Whirlpool,* 195.
[169] Ibid.

'division of labour in art'.[170] Like *Trilby*'s challenge to the idea of the univocal creator (see chapter four), Gissing's novel represents a new discourse about music in late-nineteenth-century Britain which discarded Romantic idealism in favour of a more prosaic understanding of music as an industry and social practice. This could lead to a sense of disillusionment, as in Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* (1895), where the protagonist's eagerly anticipated meeting with the composer of a moving hymn ends with Jude's admission that he was 'one of the most commonplace men I ever met', particularly because the composer confides his pragmatic intent to pursue a more lucrative career.[171] Notably, *The Whirlpool* echoes *Daniel Deronda* in Alma's assertion – like that of Catherine Arrowpoint about Klesmer – that Dymes 'will be one of our greatest composers'.[172] The comment is ironically counterbalanced by narratorial assertions that Dymes is a hack who has perfected a formula for crafting tunes with a 'sweetness and pathos not easy to resist', but it implies that British culture will soon be best represented by such a figure, displacing idealists like Klesmer.[173] Like Eliot's novel, *The Whirlpool* identifies foreigners as musical and British people as philistine; but with the advancement of two decades, Gissing presents a more complicated picture of national musical culture, in which the popular takes centre stage – distinctly, profitably, and perhaps proudly un-Romantic.

The trends of this chapter – an increasingly fractious reception of Romantic musical constructs in Britain – continued into the twentieth century. Cecil Forsyth, in *Music and Nationalism* (1911), demanded that national composition guard against the German foe.[174] Fiction, meanwhile, continued to debate how far music could be contained within, and enunciate, geopolitical borders. Allusions to composers, real and fictional, constitute a sustained reckoning with values and ideas which were still regarded as foreign. Depictions of British composers, paradoxically, began to revise the nineteenth century's 'composer-centric' focus, dismantling the classical bias which only perpetuated the idea of British musical inferiority against which

[170] Ibid, 195-96.
[171] Thomas Hardy, *Jude the Obscure* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 253.
[172] Gissing, *The Whirlpool,* 254.
[173] Ibid, 192.
[174] See Hughes & Stradling, *English Musical Renaissance,* 119-23.

Forsyth railed. A handful of novels about British composers, by encompassing a broader scope – including church music and music halls – decentred the composer from his nineteenth-century position as key determinant of musical value, and therefore a key figure in national musical culture.[175] This was in contrast to British fiction about music more generally, especially by the modernists who have dominated critical discussion. As Deutsch writes, Continental classical music remained the main reference point for early-twentieth-century authors, even though some had personal connections with British composers.[176] In E.M. Forster's work, we find fiction continuing to affirm and complicate, at the same time, the national possibilities of music, particularly in *Howards End* (1910). In a famous scene, the Schlegel siblings (whose surname suggests a Romantic inheritance) respond, along with other audience members, to Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. After asserting that 'all sorts and conditions are satisfied by it', Forster includes a listener who hears in the symphony confirmation that Beethoven was 'echt Deutsch', harking back to the attitude of early-nineteenth-century German commentators – whose views persisted across the century and across the nations – about music's ability to accommodate particular and universal identifications and sentiments.[177] In the next chapter, I look at a more specific example of this attitude as it developed throughout the century, all the more so as racial science modified understandings of national belonging: representations of the Jewish composer.

[175] See Albert Kinross, *An Opera and Lady Grasmere* (1900), E.F. Benson, *The Challoners* (1904), H.A. Vachell, *The Other Side* (1910), Robert Hichens, *The Way of Ambition* (1913), and Rose Allatini, *Despised and Rejected* (1918).
[176] Deutsch, *British Literature and Classical Music*, 6.
[177] E.M. Forster, *Howards End* (London: Penguin, 2012), 31.

3. Between Universalism and Separatism: The Composer and Jewish Identity

> Almost every great composer, skilled musician, almost every voice that ravishes you with its transporting strains, springs from our tribes.[1]
>
> Benjamin Disraeli, *Coningsby; or, the New Generation* (1844)

Fiction depicting Jewish composers particularises and problematises the complex relationship between music and national identity which was the subject of my previous chapter. The harmonious coexistence of the particular and universal in early Romantic writing about music appealed to some Jewish writers, who heard in music both an affirmation of their specific identities and a proclamation of their global belonging. The Romantic period, which saw new opportunities for composers outside Christian institutions, also held promise for Jewish musicians. Yet the trend towards musical nationalism had a specific impact on representations of the Jewish composer, as did the rise of racial science and essentialist notions of identity. In this chapter, I examine various fictional accounts of a trope which arose concurrently in racial science and literature, of Jewish people's affinity for music. In Sheppard's *Charles Auchester* and Benjamin Disraeli's *Coningsby* (1844), the Jewish aptitude for the 'universal language' is romantically idealised. At mid-century, a narrower conception of music's relationship to national identity had significant consequences for a community whose place in the nation was contested, as I explain by discussing Richard Wagner's incendiary treatise 'Jewishness in Music' (1850). Finally, I examine how Eliot and Du Maurier complicate the tropes of Jewish musicality in *Daniel Deronda* and *Trilby*.

All of the literary depictions of the composer in this study are rooted in ideas about the complementarity and distinctness of music and language, but none more so than those of Jewish composers. The adoption of music by Jewish composers as a form of expression proved, for some, the validity of the 'universal language' ideal – an important prospect, since linguistic difference was consistently used to displace Jewish people in much nineteenth-century discourse. Music offered the possibility of transcending differences. For others, meanwhile,

[1] Benjamin Disraeli, *Coningsby; or, The New Generation*, vol. 2 (London: H. Colburn, 1844), 207.

music was *not* a truly universal language, but had developed along national lines, so that the Jews' historical lack of a nation state (and an accompanying national musical tradition) made them, effectively, foreign speakers in music. Their compositions were not considered to be authentic, but instead derivative copies of others' work. Combined with broader anti-Semitic prejudices, this idea mutated into the claim that Jewish composers appropriated and devalued music purely for financial gain. Within the Jewish community, finally, music's apparent universalism might provide transcendence of what Jewish author Amy Levy called the 'tribal limits', but, perhaps, at the expense of effacing one's identity.[2] The Jewish composer in fiction, then, offers a test case for the Romantic composer figure, exemplifying its development throughout the century to touch on issues of national and cosmopolitan identities, the relationship between music and language, creativity, and commercialism.

Jews figured in nineteenth-century literature as 'the charged site for underlying anxieties informing nationalist discourse'.[3] Late-eighteenth-century Romantic thought about the individual's place in the nation-state coincided with, in France and Germany, the (partial) emancipation of Jewish people, prompting discussions about whether national cohesion could be effected by a shared religion, language, race, or some broader notion of shared culture. In Britain, where Jews had not at least been subject to ghettoization, similar debates followed the admittance of Jews to Parliament in 1858 and the career of Disraeli. Over the course of Disraeli's lifetime, new definitions of nation, race, and culture were shaped by imperialism and ethnology, but his own novels – and Sheppard's *Charles Auchester*, dedicated to Disraeli – evince the 'romantic particularism' which Evangelista attributes to German philosophers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[4] A key figure for Disraeli and Sheppard, both baptized Christians with Jewish heritage, was Moses Mendelssohn, a philosopher who, according to Amanda Anderson, 'sought to reconcile Judaism to the project of universal reason,

[2] Amy Levy, 'The Jew in Fiction', quoted in *The Complete Novels and Selected Writings of Amy Levy, 1861-1889,* ed. Melvyn New (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1993), 17.
[3] Amanda Anderson, *The Powers of Distance: Cosmopolitanism and the Cultivation of Detachment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 129.
[4] Evangelista, *Literary Cosmopolitanism,* 6

yet simultaneously resisted the common Enlightenment view that humanity in general should take precedence over any assertion of Jewish particularism'.[5] Music and literature would both play a part in this project. The play *Nathan der Weise,* written in 1779 by Mendelssohn's friend Gotthold Lessing, was testament to the ideal of social cohesion through *Bildung*, or education and acculturation. Jonathan Freedman explains that Mendelssohn 'dedicated [himself] to the creation of a German nation-state by asserting the linguistic and imaginative – in short, *cultural* – homogeneity of the German people'.[6] In Britain, Moses Mendelssohn was so popular that his grandson Felix was invariably known just by the surname Mendelssohn, as opposed to much of Continental Europe where his Christian surname, Bartholdy, was used.[7] The philosopher's vision of a nation of Christians and Jews sharing a common culture appealed to the liberal-minded in Britain, who took a view of the country (despite persistent anti-Semitic stereotyping in fiction and on stage) as comparatively accommodating towards Jewish people.

As Romantic ideas spread, music became part of this common culture. David Conway remarks that the early-nineteenth-century democratisation of music – including composers' liberation from Christian patrons, and the institution of a musical market based around public concerts and the purchase of sheet music – created new opportunities for Jewish musicians, ones for which they might even be uniquely qualified. Traditionally, the Jewish trader was used to 'travel[ling] widely, and to accommodat[ing] himself amongst the different societies he encountered', like the touring musician.[8] Yet the Jewish composer represented Romanticism's contradictions, as well as its wide prospects. The apparent incompatibility of financial success and authentic artistic production coalesced with longstanding anti-Semitic tropes, most infamously in Wagner's article. His primary targets, Felix Mendelssohn and Giacomo Meyerbeer, were both from prosperous backgrounds, which fuelled Wagner's critique of their

[5] Anderson, *Powers of Distance,* 125.
[6] Jonathan Freedman, *The Temple of Culture: Assimilation and Anti-Semitism in Literary Anglo-America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 30.
[7] David Conway*, Jewry in Music: Entry to the Profession from the Enlightenment to Richard Wagner* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 103; incidentally, Moses Mendelssohn was brought to the attention of British readers by Isaac D'Israeli, father of Benjamin.
[8] Conway, *Jewry in Music*, 35.

inauthenticity. Meanwhile, the composer's frequently itinerant lifestyle could be associated, as we have already seen in the previous chapter's discussion of Klesmer, with the legend of the Wandering Jew and its connotations of rootlessness. *Daniel Deronda* and *Trilby* both engage with the Jewish composer's unique position in relation to inherited Romantic ideals.

By the time Eliot and Du Maurier wrote their novels, the musically talented Jew was a stereotype propounded in both fiction and science. This putative association was particularly marked in Britain, where Mendelssohn was celebrated for reviving the national musical culture, and Jewish people were widely involved in musical life. The Anglo-Jewish singer John Braham was eulogised in 1856 as 'one of the many instances of that aptitude of the Jewish race for music which can scarcely have escaped the notice of any observer of the present age', while Conway credits Braham, Felix Mendelssohn, and Ignaz Moscheles as instrumental in upholding a positive image of Jewish musicians in Britain.[9] However, in Britain as much as anywhere else, Jews were 'the steady objects of economic anti-Semitism'; from accusations of petty theft to wider conspiracies about banking and merchantry, Jews were stereotyped as figures of 'economic self-interest', embodied in Charles Dickens's Fagin, in *Oliver Twist* (1838).[10] The Reform Bills of 1832 and 1867 brought industrial modernisation and the empowerment of the bourgeoisie which, for conservative commentators such as Anthony Trollope, could be understood through the figure of the Jew. In Trollope's *The Eustace Diamonds* (1871) and *The Way We Live Now* (1875), fears about British society's direction of travel are embodied in figures of implied, but difficult to ascertain, Jewishness, who infiltrate society 'not through religious proselytism, but through the corruption of the traditional system of values defined as English'.[11]

Notably, Trollope's fiction lacks the association of Jews and music which, according to Braham's obituary, 'can scarcely have escaped the notice of any observer of the present age'. Trollope's closest approximation to the figure of the Jewish composer is the preacher Emilius in

[9] Cited in Conway, *Jewry in Music,* 226.
[10] Deborah Epstein Nord, 'Dickens's "Jewish Question": Pariah Capitalism and the Way Out', *Victorian Literature and Culture* 39, no. 1 (2011): 28.
[11] Michael Ragussis, *Figures of Conversion: "The Jewish question" & English National Identity* (London: Duke University Press, 1995), 240; see also Freedman, *Temple of Culture,* 55-88.

The Eustace Diamonds, an antecedent of Svengali whose quasi-musical eloquence leads to his apparent conversion of the heroine, Lizzie.[12] In *The Way We Live Now,* Trollope focuses on language as the mode which might reveal hidden Jewish identity, as a scandal economy and a failure of political speech lead to the downfall of the suspicious Melmotte.[13] Even his daughter Marie speaks English 'well, but as a foreigner'.[14] The 'ideas of imposture and theatricality' which Michael Ragussis has identified in much nineteenth-century discourse about Jews are, for Trollope, best conveyed through language rather than music; but his interest prefigures Eliot's own exploration of Jewish identity through language *and* music.[15] Eliot had already touched on the musical possibilities of speech in *Adam Bede* (1859) with her own preacher figure, Dinah Morris, and in *Daniel Deronda*'s Mordecai she revises Trollope's warnings against Jewish eloquence. The question Trollope raises and Eliot takes up – how identities might be constructed and expressed through language and music – goes to the heart of my study of the composer in fiction.

It is worth noting the relationships between Jewish identity, musicality, language, and inauthenticity in Trollope's writing, because his association of these ideas was not at all unique for the period. Representations of the Jewish composer are noteworthy because, through them, authors question the very foundations of the Romantic claim about music: that it was a superior form because of its ineffable resistance to linguistic explanation. Under the new understanding, at mid-century, of music's origins in differentiated languages, Jewish composers were derided as foreign speakers of the 'universal language', its seeming universalism now indicative of the Jewish people's historical lack of a homeland and alienation from national affiliations. Of course, the Jewish composers Wagner attacked, Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer, were native German speakers as much as Wagner himself, but the latter's invocation of racial theory served him in

[12] Emilius's 'studied' speech prefigures Svengali's hyper-fixation on mastering the voice, while both characters are likened to an 'incubus'; Anthony Trollope, *The Eustace Diamonds* (London: Penguin Classics, 2004), 890; Anthony Trollope, *Phineas Redux* (London: Ward, Lock, and Co., 1859), 538; Du Maurier, *Trilby,* 93.
[13] See Ragussis, *Figures of Conversion,* 234-35, for Eliot reading *The Way We Live Now* in installments from February 1874; on scandal, see William A. Cohen, 'Trollope's Trollop', *Novel* 28, no. 3 (Spring 1995): 250.
[14] Anthony Trollope, *The Way We Live Now* (London: Penguin Classics, 1994), 51.
[15] Ragussis, *Figures of Conversion,* 236.

asserting that these composers were not true German speakers, and therefore not true German composers either. Alienated from national musical cultures, they must either mimic other composers or pander to audiences' base appetite for spectacle: either way, Wagner associates them with the creation of derivative, valueless copies, in a manner which both Eliot and Du Maurier revise. First, however, I touch on fiction written before this turn away from Romantic notions of the 'universal language'.

'The sweet singers of Israel': Disraeli and Sheppard

> The Aryan and the Semite are of the same blood and origin, but when they quitted their central land they were ordained to follow opposite courses.[16]

In a brief passage in *Coningsby*, Disraeli – through his Jewish character, Sidonia – celebrates the 'great poets', 'great orators', 'great writers', and finally, the 'exclusive privilege of Music' among Jewish people.[17] Situated within a novel concerned with the political development of Britain, this passage's emphasis on the Jewishness of all music is no incongruous diversion. The strong racial emphasis underlying the idea that 'almost every great composer' is Jewish is also politically charged. Michael Ragussis calls *Coningsby* 'the first example of a novel conceiving history as the record of Jewish racial superiority', and music is central to this argument.[18] Anticipating Klesmer's defence of the composer, Sidonia discusses the 'passionate and creative genius' of Jewish music, which has 'governed senates by its burning eloquence' and 'stirred the hearts of nations by its inspired sympathy'.[19] Jewish identity, for which innate musical ability is metonymic, stands to enrich the stagnating British culture which is Disraeli's concern in *Coningsby*. Unlike the notion of the foreign composer merely indicting Britain's philistinism, the Jewish composer would achieve a balance of the particular and universal since he was, for Disraeli, 'of the same blood and origin' as his Aryan audience. This idealism was indebted to Moses Mendelssohn and his conviction that *Bildung* could foster sympathy between races, and

[16] Benjamin Disraeli, *Lothair* (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1870), 412.
[17] Disraeli, *Coningsby,* 206-07.
[18] Ragussis, *Figures of Conversion,* 185.
[19] Disraeli, *Coningsby,* 206.

the notion was taken up by Sheppard in her Disraeli-inspired novel celebrating Moses's grandson.[20]

My previous chapter showed Sheppard's indebtedness to Romantic theories of coexistent nationalism and cosmopolitanism, in which the 'universal language' of music enabled communication between Britain and Germany. In the same way, Sheppard portrays music as best suited to Moses Mendelssohn's ideal of Jewish integration. Music's hermeneutic flexibility becomes analogous to the mobility, both definitional and geopolitical, by which Freedman describes the figure of the Jew in literature: 'a figure of bounded boundlessness, one who can imagine the very possibility of existing within a social or a national or an ethnic identity without being completely subsumed by it'.[21] Sheppard's particular emphasis on music reflects the qualifications Felix Mendelssohn made to his grandfather's philosophy. According to Leon Botstein, the composer 'sought to counter the failures of a strategy of assimilation among Jews that relied entirely on language and philosophical argument'.[22] Elsewhere, Botstein has examined Felix's interest in contemporary Protestant theology, especially that of Friedrich Schleiermacher, its notion of 'submerg[ing] the subjective into the objective, fusing fragments into an organic entity' holding evident promise for a *Neuchrist* (convert) who was also related to one of Judaism's most well-known philosophers.[23] Felix, a composer of *Lieder ohne Worte,* shared Schleiermacher's belief in 'a music among saints that becomes speech without words, the most definite, most understandable expression of what is innermost'.[24] The Romantic belief in music's capacity for more definite expression than language took on unifying potential for Felix, who asserted: 'the same word never means the same thing to different people. Only

[20] *Charles Auchester* is dedicated to 'the author of "Contarini Fleming", whose perfect genius suggested this imperfect history'.
[21] Freedman, *Temple of Culture,* 45.
[22] Leon Botstein, 'The Aesthetics of Assimilation and Affirmation: Reconstructing the Career of Felix Mendelssohn', in *Mendelssohn and his World,* ed. R. Larry Todd (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 36. Interpretations of Mendelssohn's life and works in light of his racial background continue to provoke debate; see Jeffrey Sposato, *The Price of Assimilation: Felix Mendelssohn and the Nineteenth-Century Anti-Semitic Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
[23] Leon Botstein, 'The Philosophical Composer', in *Rethinking Mendelssohn,* ed. Benedict Taylor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 306.
[24] Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, ed. Richard Crouter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 75.

melody can say the same thing, can arouse the same feelings in one person as in another'.[25] His view reappears in *Charles Auchester*, when Seraphael claims Jews 'can have no real language' but can make themselves 'think in all' through music, 'so that, amidst the floating fragments, as in the strange mixture we call an *orchestra*, some accent may be expressed from the many voices of the language of our unknown home'.[26] The orchestra metaphorically denotes the meeting of various languages – the 'strange mixture' of different-sounding instruments – in one universally intelligible expression.

Understanding Felix Mendelssohn's conception of the unifying power of melody indicates why Sheppard was drawn to him as a model for Seraphael, and furthermore, why Disraeli was profuse in his praise of *Charles Auchester*: 'No greater book will ever be written upon music, and one day it will be recognised as the imaginative classic of that divine art'.[27] For both writers, music appeared uniquely fitted to preserve Jewish separatism and testify to the superiority of the race whilst simultaneously conveying a message of universal humanity, and the presence of the composer in the novel – even Disraeli's brief allusions in *Coningsby* – brings together these two potentially contradictory impulses. Eliot felt similarly around this time: we have seen how, in her 1854 translation of Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity,* she emphasised melody's capacity to incite collective feeling, and in 1858 she wrote that music 'stirs all one's devout emotions, blends everything into harmony – makes one feel part of one whole…loving the sense of a separate self'.[28] Nearly twenty years later, *Daniel Deronda* would probe just how far music might communicate that 'whole' while allowing the individual to retain that 'sense of a separate self'. The changes in conceptions of race and nation which shaped Eliot's very different perspective were still on the horizon when Sheppard was writing her novel, and in the 1830s, when the novel is based, 'the irresistible conception of the power of race, had scarcely then

[25] Letter of 15 October 1842, *Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy Briefe*, vol. 2, ed. Elvers, 337-38.
[26] Sheppard, *Charles Auchester,* 161.
[27] Cited in 'Introduction', *Charles Auchester,* vii.
[28] Journal entry, 14 April 1858; quoted in Gordon S. Haight, *George Eliot: A Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 256.

received a remote encouragement'.[29] What Disraeli calls the 'exclusive privilege of Music' among Jews does, nonetheless, appear in his and Sheppard's writing as a stereotype. Charles Auchester's 'chief glory lies' in his father's Jewish origins; he recognises that his mentor Lenhart Davy 'came from a Jew, like us', that the violinist Santonio is a Jew who 'did not appear to prize his lineage, as I did the half of mine', and that Seraphael 'was of unperverted Hebrew ancestry'.[30] Even the Gentile Miss Lawrence strikes Charles as 'very Jewish' when displaying musical talent.[31]

The innate quality of Jewish musical ability in *Charles Auchester* supports the novel's Romantic ethos. When Charles writes, 'I can never recollect a time when I did not sing. I believe I sang before I spoke', Jewish childhood is figured as a recapitulation of Darwin's theory that music preceded language.[32] In other words, Jews' pre-linguistic musicality proves that music pre-existed language in human evolution, making it a 'universal language' with the capacity to bring cohesion. Eliot would echo this in her representation of Mirah's childhood musical associations: Mirah's strongest memory of her mother is the 'little hymn' which 'seemed childish lisping to her audience'.[33] A literal mother tongue, this music is racially derived, with particular meaning for other Jews (for Daniel, as yet unaware of his identity, 'the lisped syllables are very full of meaning'), but universally affecting: the Meyricks detect the 'sweeter, more cooing tenderness than was heard in her other songs'.[34] These multiple understandings of music occur almost entirely without tension in *Charles Auchester.* Only once does Sheppard problematise the Jewish musical exceptionalism she presents. After Charles tells him, 'you are certainly a Jew if you say 'Jehovah'; I was quite sure of it before, and I am so pleased', Seraphael responds: 'I cannot contradict thee, but I am almost sorry thou knowest there are even such people as

[29] Sheppard, *Charles Auchester,* 318.
[30] Ibid, 3, 17, 132, 318.
[31] Ibid, 103.
[32] Ibid, 4.
[33] Eliot, *Deronda,* 309.
[34] Ibid.

Jews'.[35] He then gestures obscurely to 'the mystery of their very name', but understanding Mendelssohn's equivocal relationship to his Jewish heritage, and the context for Jewish musicians in Germany, illuminates this note of doubt. Theodor Uhlig's article series, 'Timely Meditations', which significantly shaped Wagner's thought on 'Hebraic art-taste', appeared in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* (*NZM*) throughout 1850.[36] In an environment ever more hostile to perceived Jewish influences, one which disbelieved the central proposition of Sheppard's novel – that, through music, one could be Jewish *and* British or German – the younger Mendelssohn cultivated what Conway describes as 'a conscious strategy to avoid reflection on his ambiguous status as a leading German artist and the bearer of a famous Jewish name'.[37] As my last chapter suggested, this included composing oratorios on Old Testament subjects such as *Elijah* – subjects central to both Jewish and Christian theology. It also involved using the Christian surname 'Bartholdy'. Sheppard's lone moment of anxiety around Jewish identity in *Charles Auchester* underlines the charged possibilities of language in Mendelssohn's strategy, isolating the significance of the name 'Jehovah' and the 'mystery' of Jewish naming.

Representations of Jewish composers after mid-century were shaped by the changing definitions of nationalism and cosmopolitanism I outlined in the previous chapter, but also by the rise of racial science.[38] Ragussis writes: 'Under the influence of the developing ideologies of nationalism, imperialism, and colonialism, the discourse about the Anglo-Saxons…more and more became based not simply on cultural institutions, but on race'.[39] On one side, Darwin popularised monogenesis, which held that all races derived from a common species – the 'same blood and origin' Disraeli attributes to Aryan and Semite. On the other, scientists such as Robert Knox propagated theories of polygenesis, in which the races had always been distinct – and hierarchised. Knox held that Jews were fundamentally differently constituted to the European

[35] Sheppard, *Charles Auchester,* 157.
[36] See Vazsonyi, *Self-Promotion and the Making of a Brand*, 93.
[37] Conway, *Jewry in Music*, 157.
[38] As Eatock explores in chapter 7 of *Mendelssohn and Victorian England*, these factors influenced the posthumous reception of Mendelssohn, whose Jewishness had been the subject of little comment in Britain in his lifetime.
[39] Ragussis, *Figures of Conversion,* 211.

races, and furthermore, their development had been stunted by centuries of endogamy, an argument that would recur in the writing of Wagner and subsequent commentators on Mendelssohn. In *The Races of Men* (1850), Knox specifically rebuts Disraeli, writing: 'The real Jew has no ear for music as a race, no love of science or literature…the theory of 'Coningsby' is not merely a fable as applied to the real and undoubted Jew, but is absolutely refuted by all history'.[40] Knox's emphasis on the 'real' Jew reveals his dialogue with a philo-Semitic counter-discourse, based in claims such as Disraeli's, which gained empirical basis later in the century. For instance, Disraeli names Rossini, Meyerbeer, and Mendelssohn as the most prominent Jewish composers.[41] Rossini's Jewishness was merely rumoured, and Mendelssohn was a convert; Knox insists on the 'real and undoubted Jew' in order to rule out these musicians who might disprove his argument.

Philo-Semitic discourses, conversely, included converts, musicians with just one Jewish parent, and even some musicians who are not known to have been Jewish at all, to put forward a theory of Jewish identity as essentially musical. The Italian-Jewish Cesare Lombroso's study *The Man of Genius* (published 1888, translated into English 1891) drew on the work of the Anglo-Jewish Joseph Jacobs, specifically 'The Comparative Distribution of Jewish Ability' (1886). Both scientists compiled lists of the most eminent figures in various fields to identify where Jews out-performed other Europeans, finding that Jews formed a higher proportion among actors, merchants, philologists, physicians, poets, and musicians. As a proportion per thousand celebrities, they found 71 Jewish musicians to 11 Europeans.[42] Contemporary musicians supported these claims. Lombroso lists Mendelssohn, Meyerbeer, Moscheles, Jacques Offenbach, Joseph Joachim, Fromental Halévy, Anton Rubinstein, 'Gutzkow', Karl Goldmark, and three

[40] Robert Knox, *The Races of Men: A Fragment* (London: Renshaw, 1850), 131-32.
[41] Disraeli, *Coningsby,* 208.
[42] Neither scientist pays great attention to differences among Jews, such as between Sephardim and Ashkenazim, although they do note the influence of country of origin (for instance, Russian Jews are particularly impacted by persecution so feature less prominently in the studies).

British composers: Julius Benedict, Frederic Cowen (*née* Cohen), and Arthur Sullivan.[43] This list is derived from Jacobs, who writes that 'English music, to say the least, would be non-existent without these Jewish names'.[44] Jacobs's study includes a remnant of Disraeli's and Sheppard's hope for racial cohesion through music, as he claims Anton Rubinstein 'has gained the world's ear by the cosmopolitan art of music'.[45] Yet this 'cosmopolitan art', the 'universal language', had long been subject to discourses which threatened to displace Jewish musicians. To preface Eliot's and Du Maurier's depictions of Jewish composers, it is necessary to discuss Wagner's diatribe 'Jewishness in Music', which brought to prominence several tropes about Jewish identity and music to which these authors responded.

Wagner's 'Jewishness in Music'

In 1850, Wagner published an article in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* (*NZM*) under the pseudonym 'K. Freigedank' ('free thought'), entitled '*Das Judentum in der Musik*'. The article purports to address the influence of Jewish composers on contemporary musical life, although it amounts to a condemnation of the era's two most prominent Jewish-born composers: Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer. Conway draws out the nuances of Wagner's use of the term *Judentum* (rather than *Judaismus*, which refers to the religion): by 'Jewishness', Wagner invoked 'the associations, current throughout the later Romantic period and increasing during the revolutionary period leading up to the events of 1848-9, of Jews with money and without an inborn cultural affiliation to Germany, and of the downgrading of culture through commercialisation'.[46] Like Britain, Germany's musical culture was indebted to Jewish involvement: Mendelssohn, Moscheles, Meyerbeer, Joachim, Offenbach, and the pianists Sigismond Thalberg and Henri Herz all hailed from German-speaking countries. Yet for

[43] Cesare Lombroso, *The Man of Genius* (London: Walter Scott, 1891), 133. 'Gutzkow' may refer to Karl Gutzkow (1811-1878), a German writer whose play *Uriel Acosta* advocated for the emancipation of Jews. Possibly, his name has been confused with Josef Gusikov (1806-1837), a klezmer musician. I have not been able to trace the claim of Sullivan's Jewishness.

[44] Joseph Jacobs, 'The Comparative Distribution of Jewish Ability', *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 15 (1 January 1886): 364.

[45] 'Comparative Distribution of Jewish Ability', 357.

[46] Conway, *Jewry in Music,* 51; like Conway, I translate Wagner's title as 'Jewishness in Music' rather than 'Judaism in Music', as in the original English translation by William Ashton Ellis.

philosophers such as Fichte and Hegel, early influences on Wagner's thought, the Jew 'always was and remained a foreigner' in Germany.[47] As Freedman explains, Jewish people's 'intimate relation to but ultimate transcendence of' race and nation challenged the grounds on which commentators throughout the German states argued for a unified German nation, so that 'the nature of the Jew and that of a putative German national culture were defined by each other'.[48] Wagner's pseudonymous article fed into this live debate, and has since provoked the most comment of all the composer's writings, especially retrospective interpretation in light of the Nazis' pronouncements on Jewish influence in the arts.

Despite this, Conway suggests the article was initially little read. The contemporary readership of the *NZM* was little more than a couple of thousand, and the article was primarily 'the petulant rant of a man' who has 'forfeited his position of small influence' (having left Dresden and his role as court conductor in 1848) and is 'unable to find a market for his own product'.[49] Wagner had personal qualms against both composers he attacked in the article, turning against Meyerbeer after the latter's assistance in the Paris opera world appeared to come to nothing, and envying Mendelssohn's position on his death as, in Botstein's phrase, 'cultural leader of the nation' for many in Germany.[50] Yet Sander Gilman explains the article's pernicious afterlife, noting that Wagner publicly acknowledged it in 1869 by re-publishing and expanding it under his name, and this form was widely reprinted later in the century, including the English translation by William Ashton Ellis in 1894 (though it is possible that Eliot, at least, read it in German in 1869, or even in its 1850 *NZM* publication).[51] Moreover, as Nicholas Vazsonyi demonstrates, there are correspondences between the composer's aesthetic arguments in 'Jewishness in Music' and in his contemporaneous writing such as *Oper und Drama*,

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[47] G.W.F. Hegel*, Early Theological Writings*, trans. T. M. Knox (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1948), 186. See Stewart Spencer, 'The "Romantic operas" and the turn to myth', in *Cambridge Companion to Wagner,* ed. Grey, 72.
[48] Freedman, *Temple of Culture,* 39.
[49] Conway, *Jewry in Music,* 232-3.
[50] Botstein, 'The Aesthetics of Assimilation and Affirmation', 11.
[51] Sander Gilman, 'Are Jews Musical? Historical Notes on the Question of Jewish Musical Modernism and Nationalism', *Modern Judaism* 28, no. 3 (October 2008): 240. See 'Music', *Oxford Reader's Companion to George Eliot,* ed. Rignall, for Eliot translating, in 1854, a Liszt article which had appeared in the *NZM.*

suggesting that criticisms of Jewish involvement in the music world were a component of 'the marketing initiative he undertook at this time'.[52] Wagner's promotion of himself as the saviour of German music was contingent on the denial of Jewish music, while his pronouncements about music and language can be read as a grappling for ownership of the 'universal language'. Finally, Wagner combines the suspicions of his friend Uhlig, in 'Timely Meditations', not only with personal antipathy for two Jewish composers but with racial discourse reminiscent of Knox (whose *Races of Men* was published the same year as Wagner's article), including pseudo-rationalist terminology about 'unconscious feeling', 'rooted dislike', and 'instinctive repugnance', making the article representative of the general direction of European anti-Semitism.[53]

Rendering irrelevant the changing discourse, from Moses to Felix Mendelssohn, about which art might best promote universalism whilst preserving Jewish separatism, Wagner disqualifies Jews from ownership over either language *or* music. While he never mentions Moses Mendelssohn by name, much of his argument engages with the philosopher's ideas. His opening comments implicitly criticise Mendelssohn's project for its naïve assumption of commonality between Jews and non-Jews: sympathy for 'emancipation of the Jews' was only an 'abstract principle' by which pre-1848 revolutionaries 'went for freedom of the Folk without knowledge of that Folk itself'.[54] This principle is flawed, for Wagner, because it fails to recognise that, no matter which country Jews live in, they possess 'something disagreeably foreign to that nationality'.[55] The Jews are 'the universal other' in Wagner's essay, Vazsonyi writes, picking up on his use of the generic personal pronoun 'us' against the Jewish 'them'.[56] In a question of rhetoric which would later concern Eliot, Wagner is not especially concerned with Jewish

[52] Vazsonyi, *Self-Promotion and the Making of a Brand*, 91.
[53] Richard Wagner, 'Judaism in Music', in *Richard Wagner's Prose Works, Vol. III: The Theatre*, trans. William Ashton Ellis (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1894), 80, 82.
[54] Ibid, 80.
[55] Ibid, 83.
[56] Vazsonyi, *Self-Promotion and the Making of a Brand,* 92.

difference in terms of religion or traditions but speech, which is 'the essential point at which to sound the Jewish influence upon Music'.[57]

Wagner inverts the ordering of music and language which gave music its transcendental qualities for Disraeli and Sheppard. Music appealed to them because it spoke a language that was not limited by nationality. For Wagner, music springs from national languages, and Jews '[talk] the modern European languages merely as learnt, and not as mother tongues'.[58] Reversing the naturalistic implications of Jews' possession of music as a 'mother tongue' in Sheppard's novel (and, later, in Eliot's), Wagner denaturalises Jews by insisting that language preceded music in human development. Similar to the evolutionary formulation Herbert Spencer would propose in 1857 ('All music is originally vocal'), Wagner writes: 'Song is just Talk aroused to highest passion'.[59] Meanwhile, Hebrew 'has been preserved…merely as a thing defunct': alienated from all modern languages, Jews have no recourse to their historical language. The lack of a language in which the Jew can 'expres[s] himself idiomatically, independently, and conformably to his nature' makes it impossible for Jews to be, in Wagner's view, legitimately involved with *Bildung* as envisioned by Moses Mendelssohn.

The claim of an 'entire want of purely-human expression' in Jewish speech serves Wagner's purpose of displacing Jews on both linguistic and musical grounds.[60] His own artistic stance was developing around 'the willing subjugation of music to the formative power of words', making language the organising factor of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* and validating his conception of his own music as expressing an essential Germanness.[61] The 'creaking, squeaking, buzzing snuffle' he attributes to Jewish speech inflects the music Jews produce, which Uhlig had a few months earlier termed 'a yiddling or gibberish' which is 'as little attractive or bearable as

[57] Wagner, 'Judaism in Music', 84.
[58] Ibid, 86.
[59] Herbert Spencer, 'The Origin and Function of Music', in *The Routledge Reader on the Sociology of Music*, ed. John Shepherd & Kyle Devine (New York: Routledge, 2015), 27; Wagner, 'Judaism in Music', 86.
[60] Wagner, 'Judaism in Music', 85.
[61] Thomas S. Grey, *Wagner's Musical Prose: Texts and Contexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 136.

its analogous speech-style'.[62] Noting that in listening to Jewish speech, 'our attention dwells involuntarily on its repulsive *how,* rather than on any meaning of its intrinsic *what*', Wagner reveals the aesthetic preoccupation of his argument.[63] Differentiating between form ('how') and content ('what'), Wagner proposes that Jews may familiarise themselves with artistic forms, but that they lack anything to express (prefiguring the themes of acting and ventriloquism at *Trilby*'s core). Like the Hebrew language, synagogue music is antiquated, 'an expression whose content has long-since ceased to be the breath of Feeling'.[64] In music, as in language, Jews are deemed either anti-modern – if they limit themselves to traditional Jewish forms – or inauthentic – if they adopt non-Jewish forms.

The discourse of Jewish anti-modernity was prevalent in contemporary Britain and Germany, although Bryan Cheyette writes that British discourses constructed the Jew '*both* as the embodiment of liberal progress *and* as the vestiges of an outdated medievalism'.[65] In Disraeli's novel, Sidonia tells Coningsby that the Jews are 'essentially Tories', and Sheppard construes this conservatism as a form of continuity: Charles refers to the 'golden link' of his genealogy which 'connects it with eternity and with all that in my faith is glorious'.[66] Seraphael reverences Bach, mirroring Mendelssohn's connection to music history.[67] Sara Itzig, Felix's great-aunt, was taught by W.F. Bach, probably commissioned C.P.E. Bach's final concerto for piano and harpsichord, and bequeathed to Felix the manuscript of J.S. Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, which he revived in 1829.[68] Such a close alliance of the prominent Jewish Itzig and Mendelssohn families with the legacy of the Bachs seemed to exclude outsiders – such as Wagner conceived of himself at mid-century – from the core of German tradition. While reverence for past composers was hardly conservative in itself (Wagner wrote about his

[62] Wagner, 'Judaism in Music', 85; Conway, *Jewry in Music,* 228. The elision of Jewish speech and music as equally unattractive was common, having been suggested by the musicologist Forkel earlier in the century.
[63] Ibid, 85.
[64] Ibid, 88.
[65] Bryan Cheyette*, Constructions of "the Jew" in English Literature and Society: Racial Representations, 1875-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 9.
[66] Disraeli, *Coningsby,* 200; Sheppard, *Charles Auchester,* 3.
[67] Sheppard, *Charles Auchester,* 216.
[68] See Conway, *Jewry in Music,* 131-33.

worship of Beethoven all through his life), Wagner appropriates the trope of Jewish backwardness in order to re-position himself centrally in this tradition. When he comes to discuss Mendelssohn, he emphasises the latter's 'mimicking' of 'Bach's language'.[69] Admitting that Bach was a 'genius', Wagner nonetheless associates this musical language with atavism, by an evolutionary comparison: 'The speech of Bach stands toward that of Mozart, and finally of Beethoven, in the relation of the Egyptian Sphinx to the Greek statue of a Man'.[70] Thus Wagner applies a more general argument – that Jews were inherently conservative, mired in outdated tradition, therefore not dedicated to the future of the nation – to the musical sphere.

The incorporation of Mendelssohn, not just Meyerbeer, the sole target of Uhlig's earlier attack, made Wagner's article a sweeping attack on all Jewish music, despite the vast disparities most commentators noted between the composer of oratorios on Christian themes and the composer of popular Paris operas.[71] As Botstein explains: 'By framing the critique in terms of a racial and social theory, Wagner could at once praise Mendelssohn as the greatest of the Jews, undercut his influence as a celebrated and widely played composer of Protestant music in the nineteenth century, and depersonalise his attack on Mendelssohn'.[72] Reverting to his distinction between the 'repulsive *how*' and 'intrinsic *what*' in Jewish speech, Wagner claims Mendelssohn has appropriated Bach's form and stripped it of its content: 'the Formal has still therein the upper hand, and the purely human Expression is not as yet a factor so definitely preponderant'.[73] Directly opposing Mendelssohn's views on the matter, Wagner repositions language as the foundation of music, and in so doing, re-appropriates Bach and the German heritage he represents. He consigns universalism to the earlier evolutionary period in which Bach worked, 'when Music's universal tongue was still striving for the faculty of more individual,

[69] Wagner, 'Judaism in Music', 95.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Robert Schumann, for instance, kept his reservations about Mendelssohn's Jewishness private, but publicly lambasted Meyerbeer in a review of *Les Huguenots* in 1837, claiming the opera lacked 'Christian sentiment'; see Conway, *Jewry in Music,* 179-80. That Meyerbeer was one of the only prominent nineteenth-century musicians of Jewish heritage not to convert to Christianity may account for the comparative severity of critiques such as Schumann's and Wagner's.
[72] Botstein, 'The Aesthetics of Assimilation and Affirmation', 14.
[73] Wagner, 'Judaism in Music', 95.

more unequivocal Expression', whereas in the modern period, music is sufficiently developed to express nationality.[74] Prevented by his race from such expression, Mendelssohn's music is characterised by 'powerlessness' and 'a soft and mournful resignation' when it is not merely copying Bach.[75]

These accusations of anti-progressivism and inauthentic expression are important points on which Eliot and Du Maurier enter into dialogue with Wagner. The latter charge is perhaps the more important, bringing together his critiques of Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer. When the composer has nothing to express and no valid language in which to do so, only spectacle remains (much derided in Romantic discourse, as chapter one showed). Mendelssohn's Bach appropriations are 'vague, fantastic shadow-forms' whose 'indefinite shimmer' arouses our 'freakish fancy', but without fulfilling 'our purely-human yearning for distinct artistic sight'.[76] When it comes to Meyerbeer, the famous visual spectacle of his operas proves that he knows 'completely how to dupe'.[77] Wagner charges Meyerbeer not with mimicry but 'deception' – 'palming' off on audiences works which are mere 'sips of Art'. Where Mendelssohn is at least credited with the talent to mimic Bach, Meyerbeer 'would like to turn out artworks, and yet is well aware he cannot'.[78] Facing disenfranchisement from the framework on which music is based, both composers adapt (and here Wagner draws on common stereotypes about acting): Mendelssohn adapts to the anachronistic 'language' of Bach, and Meyerbeer to the demands of the public.[79] There is also a link to stereotypes of economic anti-Semitism. Although Meyerbeer is never named explicitly, he was widely identified as the subject of Wagner's statement that 'the public Art-taste of our time' has been brought 'between

[74] Ibid, 94.
[75] Ibid, 96.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid, 97.
[78] Ibid.
[79] The necessity of Jews to 'act' as Christians during the Inquisition was one root of this stereotype, which nineteenth-century audiences saw embodied in Jewish actresses such as Rachel Félix and, later, Sarah Bernhardt. Disraeli, meanwhile, was attacked as 'an actor that never took off his wig or rouge or robes', notably when he was perceived to be favouring his Jewish heritage over British interests in foreign policy decisions; see T.P. O'Connor's *Lord Beaconsfield*, quoted in Ragussis, *Figures of Conversion,* 203.

the busy fingers of the Jew'.[80] Conway suggests that 'Jewishness' served as shorthand for undemocratic market forces against which Wagner inveighed in writings such as 'A Pilgrimage to Beethoven', especially British and French capitalism; but these are inseparable from his anti-Semitism – France's emancipation of the Jews in the Napoleonic era was bound up for him with the commercialised French music world, and Wagner's concerns about both met in the figure of Meyerbeer.[81]

Meyerbeer, for Wagner, both speculates and creates spectacle: '[he] has addressed himself and [his] products to a section of our public whose total confusion of musical taste was less to be first caused by him, than worked out to his profit'.[82] 'Products' and 'profit', rather than art, motivate Meyerbeer to 'writ[e] operas for Paris…the surest means, to-day, of earning oneself an art-renown albeit not an artist'.[83] Wagner's personal antipathy for Paris, as a composer struggling to make his mark there, surely drives this argument, recalling Conway's point that 'old-fashioned Jew-hatred' masks the article's main thrust, its 'observations on commercialism in art'.[84] Meyerbeer unquestionably made a lot of money from his operas (as Wagner well knew, having profited from Meyerbeer's generosity). Yet as Vazsonyi writes, Wagner's critique 'sidesteps the substantive aesthetic issues' and 'leaves no recourse for remediation', grounding the claim that Meyerbeer embodied 'a morally corrupt and aesthetically sterile genre' precisely in his Jewishness, and making Jews answerable for commercialism.[85] Sander Gilman writes of later racial scientists that 'any seeming genius shown by the Jew was a mark of his degeneracy', and Wagner's comments suggest how this degeneracy was seen to spread, perpetuating a 'total confusion of musical taste' in the public (I return to

[80] Wagner, 'Judaism in Music', 82.
[81] See Alex Ross, *Wagnerism,* 234-35, on how Karl Marx's 1843 'On the Jewish Question' prefigured Wagner's connection between Jews and capitalism; it was also not uncommon for nineteenth-century composers to use anti-Semitic terminology and the medieval conceit of the 'noise libel' to express frustration with the new workings of the musical market – see Jeffrey Kallberg, 'Chopin and Jews', in *Chopin and His World*, ed. Jonathan D. Bellman & Halina Goldberg (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 123-44.
[82] Wagner, 'Judaism in Music', 96.
[83] Ibid, 97.
[84] Conway, *Jewry in Music,* 233.
[85] Vazsonyi, *Self-Promotion and the Making of a Brand*, 91.

this question of musical pathology in chapter six).[86] Gilman continues: 'It was the superficiality of the Jew, the Jew's mimicry of a world which he could never truly enter, which produced works which were felt to be creative but, in fact, were mere copies of the products of truly creative individuals'.[87] Wagner's entire critique in 'Jewishness in Music' revolves around 'copies': Mendelssohn's mimicry of Bach creates copies, as do Meyerbeer's capitalist excesses. In *Trilby,* as we will see, this association between Jewishness and the creation of surplus, devalued products comes to the fore.

The legacy of Wagner's essay manifested in a preoccupation with degeneracy, a danger that spread from composer to audiences, but the idea of a fixed racial source for this danger was altered as the century progressed. By the *fin de siècle,* degeneracy was linked not just to heredity but environment and circumstance, and racial descriptors gained a similar elasticity. Wagner's successors, while absorbing his concern about the 'be-Jewing of modern art', perversely charged him with this pernicious influence. For Friedrich Nietzsche, Du Maurier, and later, the conflicted Christian convert Otto Weininger, 'Jewishness' denotes less a fixed racial identity than inauthenticity and danger to the impressionable public. I will expand on Du Maurier's revisionary presentation of Jewishness, but it is also worth briefly noting Nietzsche's and Weininger's responses to Wagner. While Nietzsche's 1876 *Untimely Meditations* had suggested some affinity with Uhlig's 'Timely Meditations', the philosopher later turned against these views, renouncing his former *Meister* in *The Case of Wagner* and 'Nietzsche *contra* Wagner' in 1888.[88] As the 'great corrupter of music', Wagner is 'the master of hypnotic trickery' who, like Meyerbeer before him, corrupts public taste for his own profit: 'our big theatres live on Wagner'.[89] While Wagner had associated his own music with the 'regenerative work of

[86] Sander Gilman, *The Jew's Body* (London: Routledge, 1991)*,* 129.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Uhlig's title is sometimes translated as 'Contemporary Reflections' rather than 'Timely Meditations', but the original German title – *Zeitgemässe Betrachtungen* – suggests the parallel with Nietzsche's *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen.*
[89] Friedrich Nietzsche, 'The Case of Wagner', in *The Case of Wagner, Nietzsche Contra Wagner, and Selected Aphorisms*, trans. Anthony M. Ludovici (London: T.N. Foulis, 1911), 14.

deliverance', Nietzsche reverses his argument, as Gregory Moore observes, identifying Wagner's music as degenerative and the music of a Jewish composer (Offenbach) as regenerative.[90]

This is not to say that Nietzsche did not also associate Jewishness with inauthenticity and theatricality, only that these associations were now used in a sense which disregarded racial determinism. Likewise, in *Sex and Character* (1903), Otto Weininger thought of Jewishness as '*a cast of mind, a psychic constitution, which is a* ***possibility*** *for* ***all*** *human beings*'.[91] The 'flashiness, loudness, and brashness' Weininger identifies in Wagner's music now become symptoms of this 'psychic constitution'.[92] In contrast to Nietzsche, Weininger retains Wagner's association between Jewishness and artistic sterility. Among his set of propositions about Jewish mutability, theatricality, acquisitiveness, femininity, and pathology, he emphasises the 'deficiency in that being-in-and-for-itself which alone can give rise to the highest form of creativity'.[93] Like Wagner fifty-three years earlier, Weininger seeks to reinstitute the 'sovereign subject of Enlightenment thinking' in a 'hypertrophied form, in the guise of the male, Aryan "genius"'.[94] Regardless of the size of the initial readership of 'Jewishness in Music', its ideas permeated European culture. Ironically, Conway remarks that Wagner's article 'stands witness to the notable contribution that Jews had made in his lifetime to the development of western musical culture'.[95] It is likely that Eliot read the article, while Du Maurier's novel is at least an indirect response. Turning to these two authors, I want to suggest how they revise the characterisations of Jewish composers offered by Wagner.

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[90] Wagner, 'Judaism in Music', 99-100; Gregory Moore, 'Hysteria and Histrionics: Nietzsche, Wagner and the Pathology of Genius', *Nietzsche-Studien* 30 (2001): 256-58.
[91] Otto Weininger, *Sex and Character: An Investigation of Fundamental Principles*, ed. Ladislaus Löb, Daniel Steuer, and Laura Marcus (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 274 (emphases original).
[92] Ibid, 275.
[93] Ibid, 293.
[94] Christine Achinger, 'Allegories of Destruction: "Woman" and "the Jew" in Otto Weininger's *Sex and Character*', *The Germanic Review: Literature, Culture, Theory* 88, no. 2 (2013): 125.
[95] Conway, *Jewry in Music,* 33.

Beyond the Tribal Limits: Daniel Deronda

Introduced as a 'combination of the German, the Sclave, and the Semite', Klesmer – whose surname refers to the music of itinerant Jewish folk musicians – is immediately identified with a destabilised Jewish identity which contrasts the novel's other Jewish characters. A music teacher and composer, Klesmer begins as a would-be mentor for Gwendolen and suitor for Catherine Arrowpoint, and later guides Mirah Lapidoth, Daniel's eventual wife, into British musical life. His function in *Daniel Deronda* is to indicate that the categories of 'race' and 'nation' are as mutable as the music he plays, while others view race as a biological certainty either justifying the founding of a homogeneous state (Daniel and Mirah's brother Mordecai) or, conversely, constraining one's mobility (Daniel's mother Alcharisi). A cosmopolitan whose profession enables him to communicate and move across cultures, and who 'looks forward to a fusion of races', Klesmer unsettles not just a British sense of self – as I explored in the previous chapter – but also the novel's Jewish themes. Through the composer, Eliot imagines the possibilities of both language and music for expressing Jewish identity, revising the stereotypes propagated in Wagner's writing. However, Klesmer ultimately cuts an ambiguous figure. Counterbalancing the novel's final projection of a unified Jewish nation-state, his connections to the onset of cosmopolitanism and capitalism reveal unanticipated correspondences between Eliot's novel and parts of Wagner's argument.

Daniel Deronda anticipates the essentialist research of Lombroso and Jacobs: as in *Charles Auchester*, musicality rarely features distinctly from Jewishness.[96] By this time, the association between Jews and music epitomised the representational ambivalence critics such as Cheyette, Ragussis, and Freedman have identified in writing about Jews. For the poet Amy Levy, for instance, the stereotype captured Jews' double consciousness of their identity. In her works, music speaks – as it does for Eliot – for inner depths of feeling, but at the same time, it

[96] Jacobs was inspired to enter the field of Jewish studies after reading *Daniel Deronda*, and his article 'Mordecai: A Protest Against the Critics by a Jew', *Macmillan's Magazine* 36 (1 May 1877) was, along with David Kauffmann's 1877 *George Eliot and Judaism* and the Chief Rabbi's letter of praise to Eliot, one of the novel's most prominent contemporary appraisals by a Jewish reader.

connotes the homogenising, and highly circumscribed, world of high culture. Levy frequently refers to Heinrich Heine when musing on this problem, a poet who had allegedly described conversion as an 'entry-ticket to European culture'.[97] Heine was also a key figure in nineteenth-century European music and, according to Conway, the poet whose verse has been most frequently set to music.[98] Wagner – who had adapted Heine himself in *The Flying Dutchman* – registered the poet's musical influence dismissively in 'Jewishness in Music', writing: 'he duped himself into a poet, and was rewarded by his versified lies being set to music by our own composers'.[99] For Levy, however, and for Eliot, Heine provided a musico-literary example of a Jewish artist navigating constructions of Jewish identity. When Klesmer plays a brief excerpt of his setting of Heine's 'Ich hab' dich geliebet und liebe dich noch', the piece bespeaks interiority – his feelings for Catherine Arrowpoint – and exteriority – reminding the reader, through Heine, of the complexities of Jewish representation.[100]

Although Eliot's association of music with Jewishness perpetuates the essentialist stereotype which Disraeli brought to prominence in *Coningsby,* her portrait of Klesmer departs from this precedent whilst also revising Wagner's negative presentation of the Jewish musician. As Ruth Solie points out, Klesmer is ironically Wagnerian himself: 'By adding a Semitic strain to Klesmer's mix, [Eliot] claims modernist musical practice for Jewish composers'.[101] Klesmer's music – such as his fantasia *Freudvoll, Leidvoll, Gedankenvoll* – accommodates the Jewish, German, and cosmopolitan aspects of his identity (my previous chapter compared him to Anton Rubinstein on this point). Not only does Eliot make her fictional Jewish composer Wagnerian, but she significantly displaces Wagner's critique of a real Jewish composer. Klesmer pronounces

[97] See discussions of the violinist Leopold Leuniger in Levy's stories 'Leopold Leuniger: A Study' and 'Cohen of Trinity' and the novel *Reuben Sachs,* in Linda Hunt Beckman, *Amy Levy: Her Life and Letters* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2000); for the Heine quotation, widely reproduced without a source in nineteenth-century writing, see Conway, *Jewry in Music,* 45.
[98] Conway, *Jewry in Music,* 54.
[99] Wagner, 'Judaism in Music', 100.
[100] Eliot, *Deronda,* 225.
[101] Solie, '"Tadpole Pleasures"', 169; see Ross, *Wagnerism*, 252-65, on Jewish Wagnerites – including Gustav Mahler.

Lush 'too fond of the mechanical-dramatic' for his enjoyment of Meyerbeer.[102] Through Lush, Meyerbeer is associated with Grandcourt, moral bankruptcy, and degeneracy. Eliot thus retains Wagner's characterisation of Meyerbeer, but diverts it onto the British upper class, while her Jewish characters represent the hopes for regeneration Wagner had invested in himself. According to William Baker, Eliot's notes for *Daniel Deronda* included references to Beethoven's 'Heiligenstadt Testament' of 1802, in which the composer 'movingly uphold[s] the dignity of the artist'.[103] Beethoven's document inspired Klesmer's defence of the artist to Bult. As I suggested in chapter two, his speech provocatively binds art and politics, and it is notable that a Jewish artist does so, in a novel published at the beginning of Disraeli's second term as Prime Minister. Additionally, Klesmer's rebuttal of music as entertainment ('We are not mere puppets') and his claim to '[speak] effectively through music' can be read against Wagner's description of the Jewish composer as drawn to merely entertaining visual effects because he lacks anything to express.

There are hints in *Daniel Deronda* of the Romantic blend of universal and particular, idealised in music, notably Mirah's singing. Indeed, it is Mirah who actually sings works by Beethoven, suggesting Eliot conferred on her, and not merely Klesmer, the heroic devotion to art she found in the 'Heiligenstadt Testament'. Chapter four expands on the question of whether Eliot identifies the singer as more powerful than the composer, but it is noteworthy in this context, too, that Mirah's vocal music – and not Klesmer's instrumental music – appears able to preserve the particularity of Jewish identity within a universal mode. Klesmer's instrumental music initiates the awakening of Gwendolen's consciousness, and her subsequent moral journey. Thanks to this awakening, Gwendolen comes to voice an all-effacing universalism which pays no heed to the potentially fulfilling nature of racial identification: when Daniel tells her he is a Jew, she responds, 'What difference need that have made?'.[104] As we saw in chapter two, music is

[102] Eliot, *Deronda,* 105.
[103] William Baker, *George Eliot and Judaism* (Salzburg: Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur, Universität Salzburg, 1975), 230-31.
[104] Eliot, *Deronda*, 746.

associated with moments of anxiety around nationality, so that Klesmer appears sometimes German, sometimes Polish, according to his British interlocutor's negative feeling towards him. This unstable quality makes music an ambivalent prospect in the novel's Zionist narrative. For Allan Arkush, Klesmer's 'supra-national' identity, complemented by his alignment with the 'universal language', makes him 'neither a direct threat to the novel's Jewish nationalism nor a minor deviation from it but an ideal against which it may ultimately be measured. Klesmer's 'supra-nationalism' is, for George Eliot, an attainable ideal, one that can be reached even today by exceptional individuals'.[105] Yet there are limits to this ideal, which reveal the limits of Jewish nationalism – as my next chapter notes, for instance, Jewish women are unable to attain Klesmer's 'supra-nationalism'. According to Cheyette, Klesmer 'embodies the Arnoldian ideal of 'culture' which disrupts fatally Eliot's nationalist construction of 'Jewish' idealism'.[106] In other words, music – too bound up with acculturation and the double consciousness which would later preoccupy Amy Levy – fails to speak for Jewish identity. As Daniel's study of Hebrew with Mordecai implies, the Zionist state will be ultimately founded on a shared language, rather than music.

Returning briefly to Eliot's allusion to Heine, we can see that music, while it permits layers of meaning, remains too indeterminate to validate Jewish identity. Klesmer plays his setting of 'Ich hab' dich geliebet und liebe dich noch' with 'the delicacy of an echo in the far distance', encapsulating the precarity of the allusion – the reader only grasps the connection to Heine (and the appropriateness of the lyric to Klesmer's feelings for Catherine) because the narrative tells them so.[107] Therefore, the piece's intricate connection to the problems of Jewish selfhood and representation are also muted by the fact that it is instrumental music which requires a text to activate these layers of meaning. I have been suggesting that Eliot, though she strongly advocated a Feuerbachian analogy between melody and feeling, doubted the Romantic

[105] Allan Arkush, 'Relativizing Nationalism: The Role of Klesmer in George Eliot's "Daniel Deronda"', *Jewish Social Studies* 3, no. 3 (Spring 1997): 62-63.
[106] Cheyette, *Constructions of "the Jew",* 51.
[107] Eliot, *Deronda,* 225.

Idealist premise of music as thought, particularly instrumental music. Da Sousa Correa shows that Eliot shared with her friend Spencer – and therefore, with Wagner – a conception of music as originally vocal, locating its power not in the sounds themselves but in music's development out of speech as an 'idealized language of emotion'.[108] Only vocal music, for Eliot, combined the stirring power of melody with the communicative possibilities of language.

For some contemporary readers, the question of whether Jewish separatism was best served through language or music was irrelevant since, as Wagner had argued, Jewish speech and music were equally unintelligible outside what Levy would call the 'tribal limits'. Mordecai, while not a musician, possesses the musical vocality which, across Eliot's work, signals communicative power. When Daniel and Mordecai meet on Blackfriars' Bridge, Mordecai's eloquence admits of 'no barrier to a complete understanding between him and Deronda'.[109] Yet one review noted: '[Mordecai] talks in a very high-flown way about Jews and things Jewish, and apparently is desirous to impart something or other – what it is impossible to say – to the unfortunate hero of the book', while Henry James employed an overtly musical metaphor: 'I don't understand more than half of Mordecai's rhapsodies'.[110] James invokes rhapsodic form to suggest a series of unconnected parts, rather than Eliot's ideal view of music which 'makes one feel part of one whole' while 'loving the sense of a separate self'. Rather than the prophetic voice which heralds the novel's conclusion, Mordecai remained for these readers as he was during the meeting at the Hand and Banner: 'like a poet among people of a strange speech, who may have a poetry of their own, but have no ear for his cadence, no answering thrill to his discovery of the latent virtues in his mother tongue'.[111] Readers had 'no ear' for Mordecai's 'cadence' because of the persistent belief that there was, in Wagner's phrase, 'something disagreeably foreign' in Jewish speech. This judgment underlies James's characterisation of *Daniel Deronda* as German

[108] Herbert Spencer, *Essays: Scientific, Political, and Speculative,* Vol. 1 (London: Longman, 1858), 376; Da Sousa Correa, *George Eliot, Music, and Victorian Culture,* 12-28.
[109] Eliot, *Deronda,* 460.
[110] Quoted in Dawn Coleman, 'Daniel Deronda and the Limits of Sermonic Voice', *Studies in the Novel* 40, no. 4 (Winter 2008): 414; James, 'Daniel Deronda: A Conversation', 688.
[111] Eliot, *Deronda,* 491.

in 'tone'. James implies the novel's Jewish and musical themes, together, render the novel foreign to the Anglophone reader (a different reading, which associates the novel's Jewish themes with Italian music and culture, has been offered by Andrew Thompson).[112]

In her final publication, *Impressions of Theophrastus Such* (1879), Eliot expanded on *Daniel Deronda'*s exploration of language and nation. The final essay, 'The Modern Hep! Hep! Hep!', is an ambiguous evocation of xenophobia, which Eliot displaces and perhaps critiques by using a cantankerous narrator, Theophrastus, but which nonetheless complements aspects of *Daniel Deronda*'s political outlook. The essay ostensibly endorses English nationalism against the encroaching threat of cosmopolitanism, yet its vision of a community founded on a shared language has parallels in Mordecai's and Daniel's Jewish separatism. Rather than an assumed sameness (which is the principle of music's universalism), Theophrastus upholds a recognition of difference. Lamenting the 'cosmopolitan indifference equivalent to cynicism' observable in Anglo-Jewish communities, he urges that Jews should attain 'the consciousness of having a native country': only then can they feel 'that sense of special belonging which is the root of human virtues'.[113] Similarly, Mordecai urges that 'the effect of our separateness will not be completed…unless our race takes on again the character of a nationality'.[114] In novel and essay alike, the boundary-crossing powers embodied by Klesmer are conducive to alienation. Native consciousness cannot survive assimilation, conversion, or interracial marriage, as Theophrastus suggests in an alarmingly xenophobic comparison: 'it is a calamity to the English, as to any other great historic people, to undergo a premature fusion with immigrants of alien blood'.[115] Theophrastus particularly desires 'to keep our rich and harmonious English undefiled by

[112] Thompson writes that Eliot 'mediates' the novel's unfamiliar Jewish aspects by associating Jewish characters – even, at one point, Klesmer – with Italy, appealing to the general British sympathy for the recently unified Italian nation. See Andrew Thompson, *George Eliot and Italy: Literary, Cultural and Political Influences from Dante to the Risorgimento* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), 171-81.
[113] George Eliot, 'The Modern Hep! Hep! Hep!', in *Impressions of Theophrastus Such,* ed. Nancy Henry (London: Pickering, 1994), 155-56.
[114] Eliot, *Deronda,* 496.
[115] Eliot, 'Modern Hep', 158.

foreign accent'.[116] Klesmer's belief in the 'fusion of races' and use of the 'universal language' constitute, together, a dilution of Jewish racial identity as much as they threaten British identity.

The Jewish composer in *Daniel Deronda* is, ultimately, a figure whose ambiguities encourage discussions beyond the question of how positively or negatively Eliot depicts Zionism. As one of the novel's most portentous figures of cosmopolitanism and capitalism, Klesmer's assimilatory ending not only counterbalances the proto-Zionist plot, but expands the question of 'separateness and communication' to encompass the British Jewish context. Susan Meyer writes that the novel 'moves toward a conclusion in which alien races are removed from England: it symbolically enacts racial and nationalistic separation, sending the Jews, who are the novel's 'dark race', out of England into Palestine', yet this fails to take account of the first Cohen family Daniel encounters, and of Klesmer, whom, contrary to existing criticism, I read as settling in Britain.[117] Hans Meyrick comments, in a letter to Daniel, that 'the Klesmers on the eve of departure have behaved magnificently', but given the associations between *klezmer* music and itinerancy, and the detail about his house in Grosvenor Place, this departure may be merely temporary.[118] To a degree, Klesmer's settlement positively enacts the cross-cultural exchange through which Disraeli and Sheppard had imagined the salvation of British culture. Reina Lewis, like Arkush, suggests Klesmer possesses this mobility because he is 'a sensitive, Jewish musician outside the industrial order'.[119] Although deviation from a traditional 'industrial order' certainly informs his characterisation, to place Klesmer entirely outside an industrial order ignores the industry that grew up around music, particularly later in the century. As my first chapter proposed, constructions of the Romantic composer involved an uneasy tension between disavowal of market influences and recognition of the liberating opportunities the market presented. In the post-Romantic context of 1876, the composer was no longer separable from

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[116] Ibid.
[117] Susan Meyer, *Imperialism at Home: Race and Victorian Women's Fiction* (London: Cornell University Press, 1996), 195.
[118] Eliot, *Deronda,* 601.
[119] Reina Lewis*, Gendering Orientalism: Race, Femininity, and Representation* (New York: Routledge, 1996)*,* 222.

commercial concerns, even if, like Klesmer, he employed Romantic invective to disown them. Klesmer settles as a music teacher, a distinctly professionalised post, connecting him with the mercantilism of the Cohens. Last mentioned in the novel as recommending Mirah to a 'charitable morning concert in a *wealthy* house', living in Belgravia, and sending Daniel and Mirah 'a perfect watch' as a wedding gift (perhaps obtained from the Cohen family, who deal in watch repairs), Klesmer assimilates through industry.[120]

Klesmer himself presages the terms of his settlement in Britain earlier in the novel, lamenting 'the lack of idealism in English politics, which left all mutuality between distant races to be determined simply by the need of a market'.[121] It is not shared culture that facilitates interracial exchange, but rather shared commercialist gain. Eliot's novel – the only one of her novels set in her present – bears affinities with Trollope's *The Way We Live Now*. Taking the themes of the onset of capitalism and cosmopolitanism from Trollope's novel, and reconfiguring Wagner's presentation of the Jewish composer's relationship to these themes, Eliot makes Klesmer an ambiguous portent of the future. His settlement proposes a coexistence of Jews and non-Jews which can only be fostered under the auspices of capitalism, summed up in Gideon's maxim, 'A man's country is where he's well off'.[122] Given the strong participation of Jews in British musical culture, along with Britain's reputation for paying foreign musicians well, it is unsurprising that Eliot uses a musician to explore this question. At the Hand and Banner, Gideon declares the 'order of the day in point of progress' is that Jews 'melt gradually into the populations we live among' – a view which Levy, incidentally, would give to a musical character in her response to *Daniel Deronda, Reuben Sachs* (1888).[123] Klesmer, too, stands as much for this social progress as for the musical progress of Wagnerism. Assimilation is linked through Klesmer to modern music, whose movement beyond melody – as I noted in my previous chapter – was construed in evolutionary terms. His developmentally advanced compositions therefore

[120] Eliot, *Deronda,* 685, 753 (emphasis added).
[121] Ibid, 223.
[122] Ibid, 489.
[123] Ibid.

represent an alternative direction to the separatism of Daniel, Mirah, and Mordecai – an alternative which is by no means dismissed by the novel's ending.

As Theophrastus concedes towards the end of 'The Modern Hep! Hep! Hep!', it is 'impossible to arrest' the tendency of cosmopolitanism, but he only wishes to 'hinder it from degrading the moral status of societies by a too rapid effacement of those national traditions and customs which are the language of the national genius'.[124] Eliot's overall preoccupation in *Daniel Deronda* is not with the merits of separatism or universalism but the rapidity of the changes wrought by modern global communication. Specifically, she is concerned with the effect that this will have on races whose national identity has never been fully enshrined, such as Jews. Eliot chooses a composer to emblematise the onset of globalising, potentially effacing, forces: a purveyor of instrumental music, whose relationship to what Theophrastus calls 'national traditions and customs' was heavily debated. Allusions to real composers in relation to Klesmer have a distinct focus on futurity: he '*will* rank with Schubert and Mendelssohn', and is 'not *yet* a Liszt'.[125] As Da Sousa Correa demonstrates in a detailed reading of the novel's references to Schubert, these allusions position composers as 'those whose destiny it is to shape the future', a future with (as these specific composers connote) a distinctly cosmopolitan flavour.[126] In contrast to Meyer's reading, that the novel's conclusion 'removes' 'alien races' from Britain, looking at Klesmer reveals that Eliot was engaged with not merely a visionary – and exclusionary – Zionist ideal, but the reality of modern Jewish life. Certainly, it is an ambiguous reality: Jewish people are integrated into British society on capitalist grounds, while the ability of culture to enable communication is highly circumscribed. Eliot's depiction of the Jewish composer is ultimately an unresolved combination of scepticism about music's capacity to express Jewish identity (which she shared with Wagner, although she rejected his anti-Semitism), and attempts to affirm the Jewish relationship to music as authentic, genuine, and even heroic.

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[124] Eliot, 'Modern Hep', 160.
[125] Eliot, *Deronda,* 224 & 220 (emphasis added).
[126] Da Sousa Correa, 'Cosmopolitan Music of *Daniel Deronda*', 442.

Heavenly Hosts and Capitalist Cheats: Trilby

Trilby's Jewish composer figure is more overtly mired in contemporary anti-Semitism than that of *Daniel Deronda,* though both novels relate this figure to the opportunities and pitfalls of modernity, specifically cosmopolitanism and commercialism. Critics such as Freedman, Jonathan Taylor, and Daniel Pick have amply explored the anti-Semitic stereotypes at work in Du Maurier's characterisation of Svengali. As Freedman writes: 'looking back to George Eliot's Klesmer or Disraeli's hymns to the power of Jewish music in *Coningsby* and forward to the complicated associations between art, power, and perversity that run through anti-Semitic discourses of the twentieth century, the mania that focused on *Trilby* is a benign reminder of the kinds of sometimes not-so-benign work that got done through the figure of the Jew'.[127] Taylor and Pick both discuss Svengali's connections to 'not-so-benign' discourses about Disraeli, especially notions of infiltrating the British establishment and enforcing democratisation via mesmerism.[128] Taylor also usefully refers to the novel's 'post-Romantic' discourse, in which the 'cosmic' qualities of music in Romanticism meet a 'suspicion of the power this pseudo-religious idealization attributes to the musical practitioner'.[129] I want to suggest how, in Du Maurier's novel, this ambivalent 'post-Romantic' perception of music combines with the 'extreme ambivalence' which, according to Cheyette, was 'projected onto Jews' in late-Victorian Britain.[130] Particularly, *Trilby*'s ostensible perpetuation of Wagner's image of the inauthentic, profiteering Jewish composer becomes, if we consider the novel's subversive re-hierarchization of musical value, a satire on Wagner's aesthetics and politics which, ultimately, celebrates the modes of production nebulously and nefariously associated with Jewishness.

Trilby exemplifies Wagner's construction of the Jewish composer as detached from his homeland and obliged to '[walk] up and down the earth seeking whom he might cheat, betray,

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[127] Freedman, *Temple of Culture,* 90-91.
[128] Jonathan Taylor, 'The Music Master and "the Jew" in Victorian Writing: Thomas Carlyle, Richard Wagner, George Eliot and George Du Maurier', in *Idea of Music in Victorian Fiction*, ed. Fuller & Losseff, 225-44; Daniel Pick, *Svengali's Web: The Alien Enchanter in Modern Culture* (London: Yale University Press, 2000), 73 & 131.
[129] Taylor, 'The music master and "the Jew"', 229.
[130] Cheyette, *Constructions of "the Jew",* 53.

exploit, borrow money from'.[131] While itinerancy is not solely associated with Jewish characters (Trilby is twice described as 'wandering'), in Svengali it combines with profiteering.[132] His appropriation of Trilby, to create La Svengali, extends this dialogue with anti-Semitic precedents. By mesmerising her, Svengali attempts to replicate himself – making the audience '*think of nothing but Svengali, Svengali, Svengali*' – which Ragussis notes as key in conversion narratives: 'the Jewish suitor who courts, consumes, and converts the Christian woman…threatens the annihilation of Christianity and the Judaization of England'.[133] As Gilman describes, the Jewish suitor, 'in the act of seduction', 'transforms the innocence of the female into a copy of himself, just as Dracula's victims become vampires'.[134] Trilby is even renamed La Svengali. As I suggested in the previous chapter, it is Trilby, not Svengali, who lends their performances the requisite linguistic mastery to enchant audiences with pieces in English, French, German, and indeed no language at all (the Chopin Impromptu). Svengali's deficient speech is another continuity with Wagner's argument. His 'very thin and mean and harsh' voice, and accent which the narrator initially transcribes via corrupted orthography before giving up the practice of turning 'a pretty language into an ugly one', recall Wagner's description of the 'intolerably jumbled blabber' of Jewish speech.[135] Lacking this crucial linguistic basis for the production of music, 'with the forlorn hope of evolving from some inner recess a voice to sing with', Svengali turns to the voice of another, just as Wagner describes Mendelssohn taking up Bach's language, 'as special pattern for his inexpressive modern tongue to copy'.[136] Copies, devolved from their original context, proliferate in La Svengali's performance, as they bring together a diverse, 'incongruous' range of music.[137] Svengali has the most dubious claim to the title of 'composer' of any fictional musician in this study – his particular talent, Du Maurier stresses, is 'lend[ing] a quite peculiar individual charm of his own to any music he played'

[131] Du Maurier, *Trilby,* 42.
[132] Ibid, 261, 272.
[133] Ragussis, *Figures of Conversion,* 253.
[134] Gilman, *The Jew's Body,* 107.
[135] Du Maurier, *Trilby,* 11 & 23; Wagner, 'Judaism in Music', 85.
[136] Du Maurier, *Trilby,* 42; Wagner, 'Judaism in Music', 94.
[137] Du Maurier, *Trilby,* 208.

(though he, unlike Mendelssohn, will not touch Bach, deeming him too great a master to be plundered).[138] The incongruity of La Svengali's repertoire threatens the classical composer's hegemony, placing nursery rhyme and folk song alongside pieces by Schumann and Chopin. As Wagner complained, the Jewish composer degrades public taste in the pursuit of commercial gain.

Advertising his performances on the 'most fantastically decorated' placards, Svengali lacks Klesmer's Romantic idealism. His willingness to court publicity resembles that of Du Maurier's friend Felix Moscheles, who was, according to Daphne du Maurier's account of her grandfather: 'too much the charlatan, too violent in his self-publicity', 'his painting, music and money-making…deemed crude, altogether too "unenglish"'.[139] Moscheles – who was named after Felix Mendelssohn – was born and raised in England, but his 'unenglish' airs came from qualities inextricably associated with his Jewish background. His father Ignaz, according to Conway, also resorted to self-publicity, even though this was at odds with his 'high artistic ideals', because he lacked the familial wealth of Mendelssohn or Meyerbeer.[140] Ignaz's background was Bohemian: like Svengali, he had moved from Austro-Hungary to Germany, though unlike Svengali, he successfully settled in Britain. Svengali's characterisation draws on the opportunism of Moscheles (junior and senior) and of the more well-off Meyerbeer – after all, Svengali's poverty is more affected bohemianism than an actual fact.

An 1835 Czech account of Meyerbeer resembles Svengali: 'a man of small stature with shiny black hair' who 'guards his harmonies with greater jealousy than his immense wealth', 'the most celebrated composers bow before him', and 'Rossini himself…gazes on him with an envious eye. The eyes of all musicians in the orchestra turn on him…his lips move, his eyes sparkle, and many adherents to the Old Testament, standing everywhere in the parterre,

[138] Ibid, 42.
[139] Daphne du Maurier, *The Young George du Maurier: A Selection of his Letters, 1860-67* (London: Peter Davies, 1951), 150.
[140] Conway, *Jewry in Music,* 100.

whisper aloud: Our brother is transported!'[141] Svengali is similarly identified by his dark hair, his greed, his lionisation by fellow composers such as 'Kreutzer', and 'his bold, black, beady Jew's eyes'.[142] The emphasis in the Czech account on looking – Rossini at Meyerbeer, the musicians at Meyerbeer, and vice versa – brings together, like Wagner's critique in 'Jewishness in Music', the Jewish composer and the increasingly specular economy of music, particularly opera. Pick has discussed *Trilby*'s engagement of the 'evil eye' legend, noting other examples in nineteenth-century writing which associated ocular control with Jewishness.[143] *Trilby*'s focus on the eye represents an important shift from the mid-century image of the Jew's 'busy fingers' amassing value.[144] Value now accrues through spectatorship: Svengali both speculates and creates spectacle, centred on Trilby's body. Her appearance on stage is even likened to contemporary advertising: 'those ladies in hair-dressers' shops who sit with their backs to the plate-glass windows to advertise the merits of some particular hair-wash'.[145] By displacing the Jew's mode of profiteering from his fingers to his eyes, Du Maurier implies Svengali's detachment from the actual production of value – or in other words, his parasitism, a trope he redoubles by drawing Svengali as a spider and describing him as an 'incubus'. Unable, as Wagner would argue, to authentically express himself in music, Svengali seeks the best way to profit from others.

Alternatively, the focus on Svengali's eyes registers the power now attributed to the increasingly visible figure of the conductor. Associations between the evil eye, mesmeric control, and Jewishness are thereby linked to contemporary ideas about the conductor as a demagogue, enforcing democratic agreement among gathered masses – recalling Taylor's suggestion of Disraeli's relevance to the construction of Svengali. However, among the conductors who conjured up these associations in the late-nineteenth-century imagination, perhaps the most

[141] Marta Ottlová, 'The First Portrait of Meyerbeer in the Czech Language', in *Robert Ďabe,* theatre programme (Prague: Státní Opera Praha, 1999); cited and translated by Conway, *Jewry in Music,* 221-22.
[142] Du Maurier, *Trilby,* 44.
[143] Pick, *Svengali's Web,* 171-72.
[144] See, also, Dickens's focus on Fagin's fingers as he counts his money.
[145] Du Maurier, *Trilby,* 209.

prominent was Wagner himself.[146] Du Maurier's invocations of Jewish stereotypes frequently work on these multiple levels. Considering the novel's representation of Jewishness beyond the characterisation of Svengali, a complex picture emerges, which can be further nuanced by considering how Du Maurier's re-hierarchization of musical values challenges the grounds on which commentators such as Wagner denigrated Jewish composers.

Firstly, *Trilby's* array of Jewish musicians – although it might seem to support the essentialism and stereotypes found in *Charles Auchester, Daniel Deronda,* and the research of Jacobs and Lombroso – in fact gestures to a continuum of race. Du Maurier's more mutable conception of Jewishness owes in part to the capaciousness of the term in late-nineteenth-century discourse (as writing by Nietzsche, and later Weininger, showed), and in part to the recognition of variation among Jews prompted by the influx of Eastern European, Ashkenazi Jews into Britain from the late 1880s onwards. As Sander Gilman describes, these communities were poorer, more wedded to unfamiliar traditions, and more subject to discrimination than the established Sephardic communities.[147] By incorporating Sephardic and Ashkenazi characters in *Trilby,* Du Maurier draws on the intersection of race and class to undercut the essentialism which produced not just the well-intentioned philo-Semitism of scientists like Jacobs but the racism of Knox and Wagner. La Svengali's performance is prefigured by two vastly different, but both Jewish, singers. Its sublimity has a forerunner in a performance by the tenor Glorioli, 'the biggest, handsomest, and most distinguished-looking Jew that ever was'.[148] In a punning comparison, Glorioli is 'one of the Sephardim (one of the Seraphim!)', recalling an earlier reference to Svengali as one of the 'heavenly hosts'.[149] Conversely, the mesmerism in La Svengali's performance has its forerunner in Mimi la Salope, whom Svengali transforms into the

[146] See Alison Winter, *Mesmerized: Powers of Mind in Victorian Britain* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 339-41.
[147] See Gilman, *The Jew's Body,* 117, on the spurious identification of East End Ashkenazi Jews as 'Jack the Ripper' in 1888.
[148] Du Maurier, *Trilby,* 168.
[149] Ibid.

singer 'la [p]etite Honorine'.[150] Both the enjoyable and deplorable elements of La Svengali are prefigured by Jewish musicians, whose names connote glory and licentiousness (*salope* is French for 'whore'). Despite their differences, however, all these musicians are validated through Darwinian allusion. Glorioli is a 'rossignol', Mimi a '[J]erusalem skylark', and La Svengali a 'nightingale and bird of paradise in one'.[151] Birdsong was, for Darwin, evidence of music's pre-linguistic existence, so that Du Maurier's Jewish singers are as innately adept in their musical mother tongues as the Jewish musicians in the earlier fiction in this chapter.[152] At the same time as he undercuts racial essentialism, Du Maurier reconfigures the racial grounds of Jewish musicians' exclusion.

Embodying this entire continuum of Jewishness – both 'one of the heavenly host' and 'as bad as they make 'em' – Svengali gains social and geographic mobility through music. Thanks to the globalising impacts of cosmopolitanism and commercialism, Svengali's home is 'where he's well off', as Gideon in *Daniel Deronda* had predicted. Yet Du Maurier's updated version of the Wandering Jew legend does not straightforwardly condemn rootlessness – after all, my previous chapter suggested he uses music to imply the instability of categories, such as nationality, which traditionally confer rootedness. Svengali's wish for social mobility, captured in his dream of seducing 'Prinzessen, Comtessen, Serene English Altessen', is anticipated by the 'beautiful ladies, ambassadresses, female celebrities of all kinds' who 'fluttered up to [Glorioli] and cajoled and fawned'.[153] The high society Glorioli attracts is thus a possibility for Svengali – which is actualised when La Svengali's Paris debut attracts 'great musical celebrities' and 'the English ambassador and his family'.[154] This is a far cry from Svengali's early description as 'tawdry and dirty', and 'more greasily, mattedly unkempt than even a really successful pianist has any right

[150] Ibid, 46.
[151] Ibid, 168, 44, 297.
[152] Du Maurier was an early enthusiast of Darwin's theories; see Michèle Mendelssohn, 'Beautiful Souls Mixed Up With Hooked Noses: Art, Degeneration, and Anti-Semitism in *The Master* and *Trilby*', *Victorian Literature and Culture* 40, no. 1 (2012): 180; see, also, Mendelssohn's discussion of Jewishness as a 'homeopathic dose' in *Trilby,* so that a 'tinge' of Jewish blood accounts for Little Billee's artistic talents.
[153] Du Maurier, *Trilby,* 74, 165.
[154] Ibid, 208.

to be, even in the best society'.[155] From beginnings as a victim of the city (Gilman describes the *fin-de-siècle* Jew as 'the city dweller par excellence as well as the most evident victim of the city'), Svengali makes a successful if short-lived entrance into the 'best society', indicating music's power to disrupt social hierarchies.[156]

Du Maurier's disruption of aesthetic hierarchies, meanwhile, complicates the superficial anti-Semitism in Svengali's characterisation. It is not only that Svengali can make 'unheard heavenly melody of the cheapest, trivialest tunes' on his 'little flexible flageolet', suggesting his innate talent.[157] Rather, Du Maurier's emphasis on the pleasures to be gained from listening to repeat performances of musical works, works placed in 'incongruous' contexts and severed from the hieratic aura of their original composer, challenges the grounds of Wagner's critique. I will expand in the next chapter on Du Maurier's privileging of performance over composition, but it is important in this context to note the novel's celebration of the copy. 'Ben Bolt', performed multiple times throughout the narrative, only increases in affective impact on its listener Little Billee – from laughing at Trilby's rendition, to experiencing a 'cosmic vision' when Svengali and Gecko play it, which returns during La Svengali's performance of the song, but now with a 'tenfold clearness'.[158] The second performance is described with an unlikely hoard of musical terms:

> They turned and twisted it, and went from one key to another, playing into each other's hands, Svengali taking the lead; and fugued and canoned and counterpointed and battledored and shuttlecocked it, high and low, soft and loud, in minor, in pizzicato, and in sordino – adagio, andante, allegretto, scherzo – and exhausted all its possibilities of beauty; till their susceptible audience of three was all but crazed with delight and wonder…[159]

This hyperbole renders Svengali's and Gecko's performance akin to a process of mass production, but this music perversely increases in value, creating more 'delight and wonder', the more it is multiplied. By the time we encounter La Svengali's 'incongruous' repertoire, which

[155] Ibid, 41.
[156] Gilman, *The Jew's Body,* 49.
[157] Du Maurier, *Trilby,* 42.
[158] Ibid, 24 & 214.
[159] Ibid, 21.

juxtaposes classical works with nursery rhymes and ballads, classical hierarchies – in which works accrue value because of their compositional origins – are rendered invalid. Instead, the music La Svengali performs accrues value because the audience enjoys it so rapturously.

Trilby by no means wholly recommends this means of reproduction: this 'post-Romantic', dangerous music not only makes Billee sick, but eventually leads to the deaths of Trilby and Svengali from nervous exhaustion. Yet the novel valorises this performative, repetitive model beyond any other it presents. For example, Clara Schumann and Joseph Joachim appear earlier in the novel, giving a rendition of Bach which deviates as little as possible from the original. Their ability to 'never let you forget that it was Sebastian Bach they were playing' is an effort to obscure the distinctions between the musical original and its copy, that is, its reproduction in performance.[160] Their audience is comparatively uninterested, however, getting up and walking around or otherwise feigning attention. La Svengali's performance, 'the apotheosis of voice and virtuosity', holds its audience's attention with music that declares: 'what does the composer count for?'[161] The novel celebrates the re-interpretative capacities of not only the singer but the conductor, increasingly regarded as a performer himself.[162]

It is possible that Du Maurier read Wagner's 'Jewishness in Music' in Ellis's translation, published in 1894. It is more likely that he had some knowledge of the composer's anti-Semitism simply by reputation. In *Trilby,* he responds to 'Jewishness in Music' by explicitly satirising Wagner's aesthetics, and implicitly challenging the politics which were founded on these aesthetics. La Svengali's performance receives one negative review: the 'intemperate diatribe' by 'Herr Blagner'.[163] Blagner's complaint centres on the predominance of the *prima donna* over the composer, but this critique is significant in the Jewish context too. His charge that La Svengali's music levels established hierarchies – placing Blagner's music on a par with

[160] Ibid, 164.
[161] Ibid, 213.
[162] See Theodore Ziolkowski, 'Literary Conductors: From Kapellmeister to Maestro', *Modern Language Review* 113, no. 3 (2018): 455-80.
[163] Du Maurier, *Trilby,* 220-21.

'Italian tune-tinkler[s]' and 'ballad-monger[s]' – relates to this music's infectiously reproducible quality. Making any music, regardless of original compositional context, come alive in performance, La Svengali's process celebrates the copy. Not imitative or derivative, copies in *Trilby* become new, more valuable products than their originals. This is an overt challenge to Wagner's Romantic ideal of authentic composition, but given that this ideal was the grounds for his argument in 'Jewishness in Music' about Jewish inauthenticity, it is also a challenge to Wagner's anti-Semitism.

Overall, Du Maurier's representation of the Jewish composer illustrates Pick's claim that 'the Jew often represents not so much an opposite as the breakdown of a logic of opposition and hierarchy'.[164] Deploying a wealth of available stereotypes about Jewish musicality, Du Maurier simultaneously breaks down the oppositions and hierarchies by which earlier commentators had derided Jewish musicians. Du Maurier does not merely use the figure of the Jewish musician to express disdain for mass culture and its globalising, cheapening effects; he is also interested in the allure of such processes. As Freedman writes: '[Svengali] is at once, and by the very same logic, a representative of the cultural ideal and the cultural abject'.[165] The Jew and woman who make up La Svengali represent, in the wider culture into which *Trilby* entered, the cultural abject. The arguments which excluded Jewish composers, in late-nineteenth century musical discourses, equally excluded women. This is why Du Maurier's depiction of La Svengali, for all its superficial acquiescence with contemporary prejudices, is also subversive, celebrating cultural productions by figures who were elsewhere deemed derivative, making them a 'cultural ideal'. *Trilby* therefore aptly demonstrates the role of Jewish composers across the texts I have looked at in this chapter. By igniting discourses of authenticity, national and racial identity, and the problems of commercialism, they force recognition of the tensions, even the contradictions, in Romantic musical writing.

[164] Pick, *Svengali's Web,* 211.
[165] Freedman, *Temple of Culture,* 106.

4. Reproductive Genius: The Female Singer and the Male Composer

> [W]e may allow that the fair sex possess *reproductive* genius, just as we unconditionally deny that they possess *productive* genius.[1]
>
> Hans von Bülow (1880)

The most important legacy of Romantic imaginings of the composer was to identify and idealise a figure with 'productive genius', one who created original musical works. The critiques of Jewish composers explored in the previous chapter rested on a hierarchised distinction between the acts of composition and performance, in which the former required greater originality. In this chapter and the following, I show that gender is the most important axis on which tensions between composition and performance were pronounced and intensified in literary texts. Firstly, I consider the female singer in conjunction with the male composer, contending that the latter's legitimacy as authoritative originator of works is denoted through contrast with the former's ability to destabilise, adjust, and renew artistic values through performance. In the next chapter, I look at representations of female composers, whose associations with performance mitigated their fulfilment of Romantic ideals.

As composers claimed the right to be considered artists, the materiality of their work (like the painter's canvas or the poet's manuscript) became more important, producing an emphasis on the *Werktreue,* or the score's authority as the definitive version of a musical work. Yet music invites performance: this is what lends music its aspirational quality, for many nineteenth-century writers, as well as simply making it enjoyable. Music's distinct relationship to the ideal of originality is concentrated in the figure of the performer, who continually produces new versions of works whose ephemerality cannot be captured in the text. Here, I revisit *Daniel Deronda* and *Trilby*, two novels which, among the numerous fictional representations of the female singer in the nineteenth century, offer the most sustained comparisons between this figure and a male composer figure. I complement these readings with

[1] Quoted in Paula Gillett, *Musical Women in England, 1870-1914: "encroaching on all men's privileges"* (London: Macmillan, 2000), 22.

a brief discussion of George Gissing's story 'The Muse of the Halls' (1893), which stages in miniature the dynamic relationship on which I focus in the two better-known texts. In returning to *Daniel Deronda*, I do not only address Eliot's exploration of music's social function as an opportunity and a dangerous path for women (which has been amply addressed in relation to much of her oeuvre).[2] Rather, I consider Klesmer as a moral guide, chastising authority, and ultimately a lens for re-envisioning the female characters, especially bringing out additional constraints on female Jewish musicians.[3] I also discuss Eliot's poem 'Armgart' (1871), considering the development of her thinking about female performance in relation to male authority. In returning to *Trilby,* I suggest that Du Maurier transforms Eliot's worries about scopophilia, or the sexualisation of the female performer, to propose subversively the mutual dependency of singer and composer. Trilby may be ventriloquized by Svengali, implying her innate lack of musicality, but throughout the novel's representation of music, performance supersedes originality. Contravening the Romantic hegemony of the composer's authority, Du Maurier insists that music relies on performance, and in this way his novel exemplifies crucial developments in the relationship between composers and singers – especially *prime donne* – towards the end of the century. It is first necessary, then, to understand this changing context for representations of the female singer, including aesthetic, social, and biomedical discourses.

Nineteenth-century writers on music feared that the spectacle of performance might trammel music's communication of meaning and thus devalue it. The literary mythologies surrounding Liszt, seen in chapter one, illustrate increasing unease about music's visual-audible potency when performed (disdain for the visual similarly motivates Wagner's critique of Meyerbeer in 'Jewishness in Music'). Balzac's *Béatrix,* Stern's *Nélida*, and Liszt's own *F. Chopin* all

[2] See Gillian Beer, *George Eliot* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986); Rosemarie Bodenheimer, 'Ambition and its Audiences: George Eliot's Performing Figures', *Victorian Studies* 34, no. 1 (Autumn 1990): 7-33; Alison Byerly, '"The Language of the Soul": George Eliot and Music', *Nineteenth-Century Literature,* 44, no. 1 (June 1989): 1-17; Alisa Clapp-Itnyre, *Angelic Airs, Subversive Songs: Music as Social Discourse in the Victorian Novel* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2002); Phyllis Weliver, *Women Musicians in Victorian Fiction, 1860-1900: Representations of Music, Science and Gender in the Leisured Home* (London: Routledge, 2016).

[3] The tradition of composers chastising singers continues in Agnes & Egerton Castle, *The Composer* (1911) and Willa Cather, *The Song of the Lark* (1915).

chart Liszt's transition from virtuoso performer to serious composer, suggesting a mutual incompatibility between these roles. The performer's unsettling allure and apparent lack of artistic authenticity inform representations of performers, whether male or female, as feminised. Nowhere are these qualities more apparent than in the figure of the singer. My primary consideration in this chapter is the professional singer, one of the only professional musical roles allotted to women until the very end of the century. Even in the domestic sphere, however, women's participation was circumscribed as medical scientists and physiologists warned about the dangers of sexualised musical affect and the greater susceptibility of women to soundwaves. Such theories, whose basis in contemporary medicine I outline below, existed in tension with the idea that musical performance was women's proper sphere, and the rising cult of the *prima donna.*

Throughout the century, the roles of composer and singer were in conflict. The tendency of *prime donne* to take liberties with the composer's score, 'showing little of the respect that has since been accorded to the printed page', as Derek Hyde writes, was a notable point, and a common accusation against the soprano (and composer in her own right) Pauline Viardot.[4] Grace Kehler remarks, moreover, that critics 'increasingly evaluated the female performer in the same terms as the male composer, by calling attention to her versatility, originality, cultivation, and consummate artistry—indeed, to her status as a genius': a development reflected in fiction, with examples of formidably artistic, not imitative, singer heroines in George Moore's *Evelyn Innes* (1898), Willa Cather's *The Song of the Lark* (1915), and James Huneker's *Painted Veils* (1920).[5] The qualities Kehler cites were already, by 1807, associated with a fictional character who inaugurated a tradition of writing about female artistry: the poet and improviser Corinne,

[4] Derek Hyde, *New-found Voices: Women in Nineteenth-century English Music* (Routledge, 2018), 47; Gillett, *Musical Women,* 154.

[5] Grace Kehler, 'Artistic Experiment and the Reevaluation of the Prima Donna in George Moore's *Evelyn Innes*', in *The Arts of the Prima Donna in the Long Nineteenth Century,* ed. Rachel Cowgill and Hilary Poriss (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 149. David Kennerley has shown that a discourse about the professional female singer as an artist, using similar terms to discussions of male musicians, emerged in the British press as early as 1820, but fiction does not register this perception until much later in the century; 'Debating Female Musical Professionalism and Artistry in the British Press, c.1820-1850', *The Historical Journal* 58, no. 4 (2015): 987-1008.

in Germaine de Staël's novel of the same name.[6] I elaborate on *Corinne* in the next chapter, since she composes her own music, but she is worth noting here: not only because she sings, but because her improvisations complicate the gendered dichotomy of composition/performance I am discussing. At the very beginning of the century, Staël's popular literary figure embodied a dynamic which increasingly interested subsequent authors. Changing perceptions of female singers challenged the Romantic construction of the composer, putting forth an alternative – and prominent – image of musicality.

Singing was one area of musical activity (along with playing the piano and, later in the century, the violin) in which women were encouraged.[7] Critics have widely discussed music's place among middle-class girls' accomplishments, which were generally intended to confer decorum rather than inspire passion.[8] In providing women with a pursuit which both occupied their long leisure hours and made them desirable to men, piano-playing sustained heteropatriarchal domesticity, as Lawrence Kramer observes: 'The piano was the audio system of the comfortable nineteenth-century household…its means of reproducing music included a human body, observation of which was basic to the experience of music in the home'.[9] 'Reproduction' gains a double meaning in this context, uniting women's ability to bear children with their ability to imitate the works of male composers. Gentlemen's primary function, in domestic music-making, was to enjoy rather than partake – indeed, it was considered a woman's duty to alleviate the daily cares of her husband or father with her playing, as the distinctly accomplished Dora does for David Copperfield in Dickens's novel.

Although I am concerned in this chapter with the singer, the example of the piano usefully indicates the role played by gender in demarcating public and private spheres of musical activity, as well as dynamics of performance and composition. The image of the young

[6] Linda M. Lewis, in *Germaine de Staël, George Sand, and the Victorian Woman Artist* (London: University of Missouri Press, 2003), shows how Staël's artist provided subsequent female authors, such as George Sand and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, with a specifically female figure of the artist.
[7] Gillett explores the apportioning of certain instruments to women, especially the increasing allowance of the violin, throughout *Musical Women in England.*
[8] See Ruth A. Solie, '"Girling" at the Parlor Piano', in *Music in Other Words,* 85-117; Leppert, *Sight of Sound.*
[9] Kramer, *Musical Meaning*, 34.

woman at the piano may have been a literary, satirical, and even medical commonplace by the end of the century, but it had developed in tandem with ideas about public performance over several decades, as both piano ownership and concert attendance became more accessible.[10] An anonymous article of 1847 called 'The Pianoforte Mania' reveals how the entrance of women onto the concert stage corresponded with the valorisation of the private sphere of composition. Clara Schumann, who had enjoyed widespread success as a concert pianist since the 1830s, may have been in this author's mind as they expressed a desire to 'dispossess the masculine gender of an instrument so little adapted to manly bearing'.[11] Because of women's association with the piano, male pianists are akin to 'a male embroiderer' or 'a captain in the army that passed all his time in knitting'.[12]

Yet this writer's concern is not actually the gendering of piano-playing so much as the rift between performance and composition, for which gender provided a matrix. For this writer, a focus on performance excellence by Liszt, Chopin, Thalberg, Moscheles, and other piano virtuosi meant their compositions suffered as a result. To lack 'manliness', then, means to lack compositional excellence, and to trigger unease about visual excess. Only Chopin's compositions are reputable for the writer of 'The Pianoforte Mania', since Chopin was not prone to public display. This author praises, as composers, Beethoven, Weber, Meyerbeer, and Mendelssohn. This surprising list (all four were child prodigies on the piano) should be taken as a measure of how far these composers were seen to have transcended the showiness of performance by their excellence in composing and conducting. Where 'productive genius' and 'reproductive genius' (to take up Bülow's terms) existed in the same person, the superiority of composition was reinforced by a gendered dichotomy. The article also hints at the decline of improvisation: while the practice had been a mark of prestige for virtuosi in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, a sharper delineation of distinctions between performative and compositional

[10] For satire on young female pianists, see Mary Burgan, 'Heroines at the Piano: Women and Music in Nineteenth-Century Fiction', *Victorian Studies* 30, no. 1 (1986): 58.
[11] 'The Pianoforte Mania', *The Fine Arts Journal* 1, no. 12 (January 23, 1847): 188.
[12] Ibid.

prowess brought improvisation into a problematic conjunction with these gender dynamics, as my next chapter discusses.

Women were most prominent on the musical stage as singers. Professional singing became more accessible for women in the nineteenth century than ever before. One reason for this is closely linked to the structural changes which freed the composer from dependence on church and aristocracy: as a more democratic marketplace for music developed, women were able to take on singing roles which had been either expressly banned or (as Paula Gillett notes of opera in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) occupied by castrati.[13] Now, the highest fame – and the highest pay – attached to the female singer, predominantly in opera, with many attaining the status of household names.[14] Eliot and Du Maurier both include this context in their novels. Trilby is one in a succession of world-famous divas: 'it was Alboni, till la petite Adelina Patti came out a year or two ago; and now it is *La Svengali*', and *Daniel Deronda*'s singers are compared to Lind, Grisi, and Catalani.[15] The previous censure of women's singing on religious grounds indicates a concern with the moral dimensions of public singing. Gillett and Phyllis Weliver have outlined concepts of the angel and demon, polarities whose coexistence in representations of the female singer suggests the paradoxical strictures that obliged women to participate in music but negated their creative authority.[16] As Gillett records, the Homeric 'Muse/Siren dichotomy' problematized women's vocal performances: unlike piano-playing, there was no intermediary between the performer's body and the audience.[17] Singers were more open to scopophilia, since the desirability of their bodies both motivated their success and prompted gazing from their audience. This specular anxiety reaches its apogee in *Trilby*. The

[13] Gillett, *Musical Women,* 153; papal interdiction prevented women singing on stage in Rome until 1798 (see Beth Glixon & Jonathan Glixon, *Inventing the Business of Opera: The Impresario and His World in Seventeenth Century Venice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 174). Hector Berlioz complained in 1852 that 'the clergy...prevent my singing the praise of God in their churches by forbidding women to take part in my most serious work'; *Evenings with the Orchestra,* ed. and trans. Jacques Barzun (London: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 124.
[14] On earnings, see Rink, 'The Profession of Music', 69; and Gillett, *Musical Women*, 142.
[15] Du Maurier, *Trilby,* 169; Eliot, *Deronda,* 41 & 408.
[16] Weliver, *Women Musicians,* 29; Weliver's 'angel/demon' dichotomy is drawn from Nina Auerbach, *Woman and the Demon: The Life of a Victorian Myth* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1982).
[17] Gillett, *Musical Women*, 142.

novel's pathological dimensions – Trilby's susceptibility to Svengali as a result of her neuralgia, and the fatal results of her mesmerised singing – draw on contemporary worries about how music might differently affect women. *Trilby*'s focus on a woman's body represents the focus of the discourses I am tracing here, with judgements about the propriety of women's music-making all rooted in notions about their bodies.

Medical discourses throughout the century posited musical performance as dangerous to women. In 'Treatise on the Nervous Diseases of Women' (1840), Thomas Laycock writes: 'The anxiety to render a young lady accomplished, at all hazards, has originated a system of forced mental training, which greatly increases the irritability of the brain'.[18] Physician James Johnson, whom Laycock cites, was similarly concerned about the health risks of accomplishments, especially music. I touch in chapter six on Johnson's notion that musicians are susceptible to madness, their nerves 'unstrung by perpetual vibration', but it is notable that Johnson's passage on the dangers of music moves seamlessly into one on female diseases, implying women's particular vulnerability. He writes: '[their] delicate organization[s] are excited, stimulated, electrified almost constantly by music for several years in succession', and recommends that time spent at the piano could be better employed in bodily exercise.[19] Over a decade later, Edward Tilt similarly advised moderation in music, singling out young women. Passionate music, such as opera, should be avoided because it 'leads to derangements in the monthly function, to hysteria, or to other nervous disorders'.[20] Elsewhere, Tilt affirms this connection between menstruation and music, suggesting that some mothers attempt to hasten the onset of puberty by 'forbid[ding] their daughters the required amount of exercise' and 'exciting their nervous susceptibility by music and novel-reading'.[21] Nineteenth-century medicine drew a direct link between the menstrual and the mental: Kate Flint illustrates, in *The Woman Reader*,

[18] Appendix A, Weliver, *Women* Musicians, 824.
[19] James Johnson, *The Economy of Health, or the Stream of Human Life from the Cradle to the Grave, with Reflections Moral, Physical and Philosophical on the Successive Phases of Human Existence* (London: S. Highley, 1837), 48.
[20] Edward John Tilt, *Elements of Health, and Principles of Female Hygiene* (Philadelphia: Lindsay and Blakiston, 1853), 211.
[21] Tilt, *Elements of Health*, 179.

the increasing importance which 'the reproductive organs had come to assume in the assessment of the anatomy and functions of the brain and nerves', and Tilt literalises the notion of women's '*reproductive* genius' by making their childbearing capacity the onus in their engagement with music.[22] For Tilt, 'undue stimulation' of the senses, particularly the eyes and the ears, or 'the mysterious portals at which mind and emotion enter the material structure', could in turn affect the internal organs.[23] Female bodies were more affected by audible and visual stimuli, which coalesce in musical performances.

Women were said to be particularly enraptured by virtuosi, hence the depreciation of the latter in articles such as 'The Pianoforte Mania'. An 1886 caricature of Liszt in *La Vie Parisienne* depicts a large sabre protruding from one of the pianist's eight hands, dominating the foreground of the image, a symbol of sex and danger. Another contemporary cartoon jokingly implied that the virtuoso Ignaz Paderewski required police protection because of the 'antics' of his 'devotees', who 'rush at, try to embrace, and deck [him] with roses'.[24] Despite the whimsical exaggeration of masculinity in the Liszt cartoon, these images actually suggest that performers were feminised regardless of gender; as the author of 'The Pianoforte Mania' implies, making a spectacle of the body through 'the charm of her person, the graces of her manner, [and] the elegance of her costume', was a woman's job.[25] This display, however, could exceed the bounds of 'charm', 'grace', and 'elegance', drawing too great attention to the sexuality of the woman's body at the expense of her music.

In performance, the woman's body was acted upon by music while also producing it, making playing an even more injurious prospect than listening. Dynamics of spectacle coalesced with pseudoscientific concerns in writing about female performers. Richard Leppert writes about the 'supercharged' sexuality of the 'musical gaze', whose synesthetic combination of the

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[22] Kate Flint, *The Woman Reader, 1837-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 57.
[23] Tilt, *Elements of Health*, 212.
[24] For both cartoons, see Burgan, 'Heroines at the Piano', 67-68. The Paderewski cartoon is undated, but probably from the late 1880s or 1890s: he made his concert debut in 1887, and first appeared in London in 1890.
[25] 'The Pianoforte Mania', 188.

senses Tilt identifies as particularly vulnerable to 'undue stimulation' produced 'pleasure and anxiety' for performer and viewer.[26] Concerns about the impact of the 'musical gaze' nullified women's agency and focused on their bodies as susceptible instruments. This focus had a literary precedent: writers correlating the strings of an instrument and the 'strings' of the body – the vocal cords, the rods of Corti in the ear, or the nerves – had long figured the female body as an instrument. For instance, Coleridge's poem 'The Aeolian Harp' (1796) likens the harp to 'some coy maid *half* yielding to her lover', and the wind to a 'wrong' which produces ambivalent 'sweet upbraiding' and 'delicious surges'.[27] In E.T.A. Hoffmann's 'Rat Krespel' (1818), the singer Antonia is buried with a violin owned by her father Krespel, after the exertions of her extraordinary singing lead to an early death (anticipating Eliot's Armgart and Alcharisi, and Du Maurier's Trilby). In *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), Maggie Tulliver feels 'the inexorable power of sound...quivering through her whole frame' after her duet with Stephen Guest.[28] Underlining the inextricability of this sonic-sexual sensation from the gaze, Maggie is 'conscious of having been looked at a great deal...with a glance that seemed somehow to have caught the vibratory influence of the voice'.[29] In Dickens's *Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870), the music master Jasper, accompanying Rosa on the piano, 'follow[s] her lips most attentively, with his eyes as well as his hands'. This double fixation acts so powerfully that Rosa is reduced to tears: 'I can't bear this! I am frightened! Take me away!'[30] The act of joint music-making is imbued by Eliot and Dickens with a sexual pressure that is concerned with the female body as both a spectacle and the locus of dangerous vibrations.

For singers, the sexual possibilities latent in music worked both ways. As Da Sousa Correa points out, there are just as many instances in nineteenth-century fiction of *male*

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[26] Leppert, *Sight of Sound,* 64.
[27] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'The Aeolian Harp', in *The Complete Poems*, ed. William Keach (London: Penguin, 1997), 12-19 (emphasis added).
[28] George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss,* ed. Gordon S. Haight (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 366. See Delia da Sousa Correa, '*The Mill on the Floss:* "A Mind Susceptible to Music"', in *George Eliot, Music, and Victorian Culture,* 102-29.
[29] Eliot, *Mill on the Floss,* 337-38.
[30] Charles Dickens, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (London: Wordsworth Editions, 2005), 55-56.

listeners being affected by women's music as vice versa, complicating the prevalent association between women and musical susceptibility.[31] Equally, however, male musicians' interactions with this force were often manifested in fiction as predatory behaviour, resting on theories of susceptibility and aggrandised by suspicions about the national (and perhaps racial) difference of musicians. *Trilby* is the apex of an entire tradition of stories in which music is a prelude to predation: Dickens's Jasper in *Edwin Drood,* Collins's Fosco in *The Woman in White* (1860), the music master in George Meredith's *Sandra Belloni* (1864), Shaw's Jack in *Love Among the Artists,* and later, Gissing's Dymes in *The Whirlpool* all come under suspicion for a combination of their music and their attitude towards women. The female singer's eroticism had preoccupied Hoffmann at the beginning of the century (in the short story 'Die Automate', 1814) and, earlier, Wilhelm Heinse, whose novel *Hildegard von Hohenthal* (1795-96) anticipates *Trilby's* pursuit of a female singer by her male teacher. All of this literature shares an understanding of scopophilia as an inevitable quality of the female singer's performance, and one which distinguishes her from the composer by insistently drawing attention to the role of the body in the creation of music.

Placing the female singer in relation to the composer, in the context of my broader study, we can understand the oft-noted contradictions governing her fictional representation in relation not merely to matters of gender, but also music's representational challenges. In the following analyses, I address the critical commonplace that descriptions of female singers typically engage in a 'privileging of visual perception', to the detriment of the woman's art.[32] Certainly, Eliot's and Du Maurier's singers are polarised 'angels' and 'demons' whose representation via the eyes of the male composer-figure mitigates their own agency. Yet fiction's tendency to focus on the female singer's looks, rather than the sound of her voice, also relates to the impossibility of capturing sound on the page (as David Kennerley remarks, music critics drew on thorough technical explanations of singers' vocal abilities to advance their

[31] Da Sousa Correa, *George Eliot, Music, and Victorian Culture,* 97.
[32] Regula Hohl Trillini, *The Gaze of the Listener: English Representations of Domestic Music-Making* (Amsterdam: Brill, 2008), 7.

professionalism, but authors of fiction tended to avoid such terminology as generally unfamiliar).[33] Regula Hohl Trillini writes: 'music is silenced by visual perception and silences the woman player'.[34] True as this is of the following novels, the reverse is also true: visual perception, or visual description, compensates for music's silence within the text. In the case of women, fiction's necessary reversion to physical descriptors participates in ambivalent typecasting whilst simultaneously pointing to the sheer uncapturable power of the music being produced. Contrasting the singer with the composer in Eliot's and Du Maurier's novels, we see the former emerge as a uniquely authoritative, and unstable, figure because of this power invested in the voice.

Seeing the Singer in Daniel Deronda

Singers feature frequently in Eliot's fiction, most prominently in *Daniel Deronda*; but the first time the singer features alongside the composer is in the poem 'Armgart' (1871). Contemporary with *Middlemarch* and its contrast between Rosamond's mechanical trilling and Dorothea's 'voice of deep-souled womanhood', 'Armgart' rehearses several themes on which Eliot expanded in *Deronda* five years later, particularly the successful *prima donna* who loses her voice after choosing her career over a family.[35] The choice of poetic form for this subject registers correspondences between the poet and singer. As Daniel Karlin discusses in *The Figure of the Singer*, the trope of the poet as singer was popularised by Staël's *Corinne,* a novel interspersed with verse declaimed by its title-figure.[36] Although Eliot's poem indirectly alludes to this precedent, it differs crucially from *Corinne:* none of its verses consists of actual words sung by its protagonist. In consigning Armgart's singing to the text's margins, Eliot prefigures the loss of voice she will eventually suffer, and introduces a problem which would mark the representation of singers in *Deronda* too, wherein singing is powerful, even aspirational, but

[33] Kennerley, 'Debating Female Musical Professionalism', 1003-07.
[34] Trillini, *Gaze of the Listener,* 151.
[35] Eliot, *Middlemarch,* 579.
[36] Daniel Karlin, *The Figure of the Singer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 41-58.

dangerous. The figure of the composer serves as a reminder of forces which constrain the singer, as well as representing standards against which to measure her artistry.

The depiction of Armgart, whom Gillett suggests may be modelled on Pauline Viardot, includes a key point of distinction between the singer and the composer: the tendency of the former to 'engage in flights of ornamentation that were technically brilliant and musically revelatory'.[37] Armgart's first appearance in the poem shows the opera singer arguing with a composer, Leo, about her improvised 'burlesque bravuras'.[38] Though Armgart insists her alterations were made instinctively ('At nature's prompting, like the nightingales'), Leo rebukes her for 'that trill you made | In spite of me and reason'.[39] The composer is aligned with rationality and faithfulness to the original work; the singer, with instinct and deviation. Gender's part in marking these distinctions is emphasised when Leo compares Armgart's 'melodic impudence' to a 'tavern wench's grace', before telling her, 'I thought you meant | To be an artist', a position implicitly incompatible with femininity.[40] Overlooking the scene are busts of Gluck and Beethoven, symbols of the posterity and materiality which Armgart's performance contravenes by demonstrating that music is not, like its composers, set in stone. Beethoven's inclusion is perhaps self-evident, but Gluck is especially pertinent to the poem. Eliot had seen a production of the eighteenth-century composer's *Armide* in 1869, and she may have been struck by the unadorned singing for which his operas are known. In the preface to his opera *Alceste,* Gluck (or his librettist, Calzabigi) included the 'misplaced vanity of singers' among his targets for reform, citing the 'abuses against which good sense and reason have for some time cried out in vain' – his emphasis on 'reason' is echoed by Leo in 'Armgart'.[41] The inclusion of Gluck brings

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[37] Gillett, *Musical Women*, 154; according to Rebecca A. Pope, Eliot and Viardot had met at least by 1871, if not before the composition of 'Armgart' in 1870; 'The Diva Doesn't Die: George Eliot's "Armgart"', *Criticism* 32, no. 4 (Fall 1990): 473. See also Susan J. Leonardi & Rebecca A. Pope, *The Diva's Mouth: Body, Voice, Prima Donna Politics* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1996), 74-82.

[38] George Eliot, 'Armgart', in *The Complete Works of George Eliot, vol. 35*, ed. Antonie Gerard van den Broek, (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2005), l. 82.

[39] Ibid, 94 & 73-74.

[40] Ibid, 81, 83, 85-86.

[41] Bruce Allan Brown & Julian Rushton, 'Gluck, Christoph Willibold, Ritter von', *Grove Music Online,* 2001 <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-000001130>, accessed 26/09/22.

the question of singers and their deviance from composers' scores to the forefront of the poem; Armgart has been performing Gluck when she first appears, and opines that 'every linkèd note | Was [Gluck's] immortal pulse that stirred in mine', so that the composer becomes an active part in the performance: 'He sang, not listened'.[42] While Armgart crowns the bust of Gluck in celebration of their joint achievement, Leo disagrees – her ornamentation 'was not part of [Gluck]'.[43] The composer, who has 'reason' on his side, reaffirms the precedence of the score and undermines the singer's claim to have faithfully rendered the composer's intentions.

The busts of Gluck and Beethoven call attention to the omnipresence of men in music, in spite of the ostensible centrality of women – Armgart's titular predominance, taking centre stage of the poem, echoes that of real *prime donne* who commanded great attention (and great fees) but nevertheless negotiated an industry regulated by men. Double standards surrounding sexuality, ambition, and idealism are all introduced here, specifically the qualities of 'self-absorption and unsociability [which] were deemed necessary to a great male artist', as Alisa Clapp-Itnyre writes.[44] These qualities, in the singer, imply her greed rather than her artistry. Many Romantic composers, as my first chapter noted, disavowed financial aspirations in favour of artistic glory. Armgart prizes the latter, seeking 'proof that I myself have part | In what I worship', that is, validation that she is a worthy musician.[45] She is indifferent but pragmatic about the high fees commanded by *prime donne*, likening them to the harvest produced by the sun's rays on corn. Leo, on the other hand, insists that the *prima donna* lusts after 'the bouquet from the royal box', the 'jewel-case', and the 'star of brilliants', contrasting Armgart's naturalistic metaphor by deeming her an 'earthly star, | Valued by thalers'.[46] An article on *prime donne* two decades later, similarly, made a neat pun on the singer's unequal regard for 'bank notes' and

[42] Eliot, 'Armgart', 69-70; Armgart plays Orpheus in *Orfeo ed Euridice*, the role for which Viardot was feted; see Pope, 'The Diva Doesn't Die', 472.
[43] Ibid, 73.
[44] Clapp-Itnyre, *Angelic Airs,* 136.
[45] Eliot, 'Armgart', 174-75.
[46] Eliot, 188-91.

'musical notes'.[47] Yet Eliot underlines the essentially different perspective of men and women on the opportunities of a musical career. Armgart insists she cannot 'pretend to seek obscurity – to sing | In hope of disregard' merely because financial reward is a by-product of fame, and instead transforms the charge of the *prima donna*'s greed into an awareness of the 'sublime necessity of good', asserting a benevolent function, like the sun and stars to which she compares herself.[48] When Leo reminds Armgart of the judgement of her 'public', she scoffs about 'gossips' who 'rate the price' of the singer 'in the social mart' – a comment directed in part at Leo, given his subsequent rebuke that she has misconstrued his words, or 'smothered o'er' his opinions 'with sauce of paraphrase'.[49] Adopting a more apt metaphor, he accuses her of making 'my sober tune…bass to rambling trebles, showering down | In endless demi-semi-quavers'.[50] Their disagreement is played out through the lament of the composer about the singer's embellishments. Eliot uses this dynamic to insinuate the distinct perspectives of singer and composer on the prospect of display.

Armgart's silencing through illness represents the ultimate foreclosure of agency. The poem, whose central conflict emerges in her suitor's 'claim to be | More than husband' while he is unable to 'rejoice | That [Armgart] were more than wife', dramatises the irreconcilability of the public role of professional musician with the private role of 'wife' and reproduction.[51] Musical creation and procreation are, as ever, problematised in the female body. In this late poem and in her final novel, Eliot places the singer alongside the composer to create a more nuanced study of a figure she had hitherto generally associated with sympathy and sincerity.[52] Now, the singer reveals the ambiguities of Eliot's feelings on music and on professional women. Rosemarie Bodenheimer suggests she was troubled by the ideas of 'self-display, working for money, and prostitution' connoted by any artistic career, including writing, ultimately fearing

[47] 'The Prima Donna', *Cornhill Magazine* 24, no. 139 (Jan 1895): 80.
[48] Eliot, 'Armgart', 222-23, 185.
[49] Ibid, 106, 115-16, 119-20.
[50] Ibid, 120-22.
[51] Ibid, 421-23.
[52] Byerly, '"The Language of the Soul"', 13-17.

'the Victorian stigma of "the public woman"'.[53] Yet Eliot was drawn to, and enjoyed, the position of 'public woman'; Nina Auerbach refers to 'the compulsive amalgam of secrecy and exhibitionism that defined both Mary Ann Evans and her grand persona'.[54] This amalgam colours Eliot's depiction of female singers in *Daniel Deronda.*

Having considered, in 'Armgart', the conflict between the composer and singer, ultimately subsuming the latter's performance-centric artistry to the former's authority, Eliot again juxtaposed the roles in *Daniel Deronda.* The greater breadth afforded by the novel's form allows a multitude of perspectives on the singer, and that of the composer is essential. Eliot uses this perspective to enforce judgement of the singer's abilities while implying the double standards governing these different musical roles. Klesmer, like his precursor Leo, is an arbiter of musical quality, embodying Romantic idealism and disdaining physical display and financial gain. He contrasts both the opportunism of Gwendolen and Alcharisi and the naturalistic, instinctive music-making of Mirah. His only female counterpart is Catherine Arrowpoint, who is not a singer but a pianist (and occasional composer) – suggesting that the role of singer is fundamentally incompatible with the standards promoted by the composer. Klesmer's interactions with Gwendolen and Mirah (upon which the later entry of Alcharisi into the narrative sheds further light) reveal women's lack of professional agency and identity, especially Jewish women. Particularly intriguing about Eliot's representations of these singers is how far their failures are attributed to external or internal faults. Klesmer is the most successful musician within the narrative (since Alcharisi's successes are now behind her), but this fact might owe as much to the inequalities of the patriarchal music industry he represents, as to the singers' inherent lack of qualities which he, by contrast, possesses in abundance.

As Leo represents a standard from which Armgart deviates, Klesmer overtly brings standards to bear on Gwendolen's performance. Critics such as Byerly, Clapp-Itnyre, and da

[53] Bodenheimer, 'Ambition and its Audiences', 8-9; Catherine Gallagher explores Eliot's preoccupation with artistic creation as a form of prostitution in 'George Eliot and *Daniel Deronda*: The Prostitute and the Jewish Question', in *Sex, Politics, and Science in the Nineteenth-Century Novel*, ed. Ruth Bernard Yeazell (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 39-62.

[54] Nina Auerbach, 'The Waning George Eliot', *Victorian Literature and Culture* 25, no. 2 (1997): 357.

Sousa Correa have all remarked on the composer's 'humiliating criticism' of Gwendolen's Bellini aria.[55] While my second chapter examined the national dimensions of Klesmer's critique, there are also gender dimensions, wherein the female is metonymic for the nation: Gwendolen's admission of 'having no talent – only liking for music' recalls the critique of Britain as a 'Land Without Music', lacking 'productive genius' while its 'reproductive' accommodation of foreign musicians was famed.[56] The early scene privileges Klesmer's perspective: as the only musical professional, and distinguished from the philistine British audience, he is able to identify her choice of music as representative of, in Beryl Gray's terms, her 'futile vanity and hollow ambition'. [57] Importantly, when Klesmer suggests Gwendolen has been badly taught (constituting Eliot's argument against perfunctory musical accomplishments), he initiates her on the educational journey which constitutes her narrative arc.[58] Much attention has been paid to Daniel's role as mentor to Gwendolen, less to Klesmer as the original mentor he supplants.[59] Facing Klesmer, Gwendolen 'had never before in her life felt so inwardly dependent, so consciously in need of another person's opinion'; she later senses 'the voice of an uneasy longing to be judged by Deronda with unmixed admiration'.[60] 'Unmixed admiration' marks a departure from the physical admiration she had initially tried to elicit from Klesmer – and it is Klesmer's treatment of her, 'on some other ground than that of her social rank and her beauty', which effects this change.[61] It is also triggered by his music, which 'lift[s] her for the moment into a desperate indifference about her own doings', penetrating her 'wounded egotism'. [62] Gwendolen's educative discussion with Daniel in chapter thirty-five begins with her avowal not to pursue music, further interlinking the musical education she receives from Klesmer and the

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[55] Da Sousa Correa, *George Eliot, Music, and Victorian Culture,* 144.
[56] Eliot, *Deronda,* 42.
[57] Gray, *George Eliot and Music*, 100; see also Burgan, 'Heroines at the Piano', 74.
[58] See Philip M. Weinstein, 'George Eliot and the Idolatries of the Superego', in *Changing Models of Identity from Dickens to Joyce* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 93-103; Albert R. Cirillo, 'Salvation in *Daniel Deronda:* The Unfortunate Overthrow of Gwendolen Harleth', in *Literary Monographs,* ed. Eric Rothstein and Thomas K. Dunseath (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967), 201-43.
[59] Shirley Frank Levenson, 'The Artist and the Woman in George Eliot's Novels' (PhD diss., Brandeis University, 1975), 317-22.
[60] Eliot, *Deronda,* 233 & 304.
[61] Ibid, 238.
[62] Ibid, 43.

personal education she seeks from Daniel. That the latter supersedes the composer suggests Eliot doubted the efficacy of professional musicians as agents of social change; but she nonetheless uses the composer as a vantage point to present Gwendolen as both an ill-educated victim of her milieu and an opportunistic siren.

Watching Gwendolen, Klesmer apparently sees through her superficial engagement with music: but his perspective is not impartial. As she sings Bellini, we learn: '[his] mode of looking at Gwendolen was more conspicuously admiring than was quite consistent with good taste'.[63] According to the siren trope, Eliot attributes this effect partly to Gwendolen's intentions. She considers as paramount her 'rare advantage of looking almost prettier when she was singing than at other times', and finds it 'not disagreeable' to have Klesmer in view.[64] Yet, although Klesmer disparagingly tells her, 'it is always acceptable to *see* you sing', he is not immune from exhibitionism himself.[65] Clapp-Itnyre notes his eroticised presentation, in the repeated focus on his fingers, which she compares to *La Vie Parisienne*'s 1886 caricature of a many-fingered Liszt; and Klesmer's 'acceptance' of the singer's exhibitionism may be taken as uncritical compliance with gendered double standards.[66] Although Klesmer's idealism provides a measurement for Gwendolen's lack of artistry, Eliot does suggest the limitations of his view. Noting Klesmer's 'compassion for poor Gwendolen's ignorant eagerness' to become a singer, the narrator queries: 'Klesmer doubtless had magnificent ideas about helping artists; but how could he know the feelings of ladies in such matters?'[67] The distinction between 'artists' and 'ladies' in this question is collapsed when Eliot transfers the same problem to a woman who *has* succeeded as an artist, as Daniel attempts to sympathise with his mother and is rebuffed: 'No...You are not a woman'.[68] Taken together, the scenes critique the lenses Eliot offers for viewing these female singers as

[63] Ibid, 42.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid (emphasis added).
[66] Clapp-Itnyre, *Angelic Airs,* 124.
[67] Eliot, *Deronda,* 239 & 244-45.
[68] Ibid, 588.

insufficient, indicating men's failure to imagine the distinct relationships women might have to the prospect of a musical career.

In Mirah, musical talent is not under question. She 'has no notion of being anybody but herself', and her musical choices reflect a genuineness lacking in Gwendolen: 'O patria mia', the Jewish lullaby, and the excerpt of 'Nessun maggior dolore', from Rossini's *Otello*, all have personal significance.[69] She is absolved from the charge of being a siren through her hatred of being on display, so that Daniel 'cover[s] his eyes with his hand' as he listens, 'wanting to seclude the melody in darkness'.[70] Able to withstand being 'secluded', not reliant on visual excess, Mirah's music accords with the ideals represented by Klesmer, and he assures her: 'You are a musician'.[71] However, Mirah is, like Gwendolen, positioned within view of Klesmer when she first sings for him – the only difference being, it is Mrs Meyrick, not Mirah herself, who surmises, with a worldlier sense than Daniel of the profitability of display: 'He will like her singing better if he sees her'.[72] The narrator deictically urges the reader to 'imagine her', her 'bodily loveliness', and 'the perfect cameo her profile makes' (as a 'cameo', Mirah is rendered two-dimensional, 'hardly more than shadows', as Henry James felt).[73] Distinctions between the categories of the morally pure singer and tempting siren are complicated by the similar positioning of Mirah and Gwendolen under the male gaze; the angelic and demonic are alike offered up for evaluation by the composer, whose superiority derives from his gender as well as his genius, and whose own flouting of conventions of appearance (as I discussed in chapter two) suggests the relative unimportance of physical display for him.

Eliot's intimation of Mirah's legitimate musicality is mitigated by constant references to her naturalism and the restriction of her talents to the domestic sphere. The idea of natural musicality was complex, given that the model of genius elaborated by Schopenhauer, for

[69] Ibid, 197.
[70] Ibid, 344 ; Phyllis Weliver suggests that Mirah and Daniel's meeting on the river rewrites the 'singing woman, drowning man' formula of the traditional siren narrative, making Daniel's voice Mirah's salvation. See 'George Eliot and the Prima Donna's "Script"', *The Yearbook of English Studies* 40, no. ½ (2010): 114.
[71] Eliot, *Deronda,* 452.
[72] Ibid, 451.
[73] Ibid, 343-44; James, 'Daniel Deronda: A Conversation', 687.

instance, prized the individual's innate receptivity to inspiration, but this assumed that the individual was male.[74] Instinctively musical women, on the other hand, lacked men's mastery over music. Mirah is repeatedly likened to birds, Darwin's case study for the innateness of music in nature, but the comparison – like the characterisation of actual singers as songbirds, such as Jenny Lind, the 'Swedish Nightingale' – undermines her capacity to control her music. Eliot's narrative reiterates Mirah's 'bird-notes' in spite of Klesmer telling her, 'We are no skylarks', while urging her to cultivate her talent more actively.[75] The novel's circumscription of Mirah reveals Eliot's anxieties about professional musicianship. Naturalness and unconsciousness exempt the singer from charges of virtuosity and greed, while the pursuit of professionalisation suggests conscious intent. Although Eliot offers justifications for Mirah's restriction in the exploitation and objectification she has experienced – specifically her subjection to a scopophiliac gaze or 'faces I did not like to look at' – the novel simultaneously condemns Alcharisi for attempting to counter this exploitation and objectification.[76]

The only professional female musician in *Daniel Deronda,* Alcharisi is also the only singer not seen through the eyes, half discerning and half desiring, of the composer. She constitutes a more isolated examination of women's musical potential, and more than her precedents, rivals the composer as a figure of musicianship. Her story inverts Mirah's and reimagines that of Gwendolen. Self-fashioning like Gwendolen, but with the added benefit of vocal ability, she sets out to profit from the audience expectations foisted upon Jewish female performers by Christian audiences.[77] She takes full advantage of display as a 'chance of escaping from bondage'. Her speech to Daniel, punctuated by the words 'rule', 'bondage', 'laws', but also 'consent', 'rights', and 'choices', illustrates the constraints Gwendolen had desired to escape

[74] For Schopenhauer, genius was 'inspiration', 'the action of a superhuman being different from the individual himself, which takes possession of him only periodically'; *World as Will and Representation*, 328.
[75] Eliot, *Deronda,* 542 & 452.
[76] Ibid, 196. Da Sousa Correa suggests that the domestic space reserved for Mirah, which readers from James onwards have 'tended to mock, or squirm with discomfort', was not as private or insignificant as we might think, resembling the elite musical gatherings Eliot herself attended; 'Cosmopolitan Music of *Daniel Deronda*', 441.
[77] See Nadia Valman, *The Jewess in Nineteenth-Century British Literary Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 144-54.

through a career in music, which are heightened for Alcharisi under Jewish patriarchy.[78] She tells Daniel: 'you can never imagine what it is to have a man's force of genius in you, and yet to suffer the slavery of being a girl'.[79] This is somewhat equivocal as an affirmation of women's 'genius' (attributed to a 'man's force'), but juxtaposed with the 'slavery' of womanhood, the allure of a career playing many roles – instead of being defined by just one – becomes clear. Most provocative about Alcharisi's artistry is its vindication of performativity as a means to success. Like Moore's Evelyn Innes a couple of decades later, she makes little distinction between onstage roles and offstage life: 'she acted her own emotions'.[80] Her meetings with Daniel are not, like Gwendolen's, marked by 'an uneasy longing to be judged' but are, for Bodenheimer, pieces of 'confessional coloratura' insisting on her rights.[81] Unlike the composer, whose authority is staked on his ability to create original works, the singer claims her authority by reinventing herself through existing works and roles. *Trilby* would revisit this question, also the crux of Armgart's argument with Leo, of whether the musical work is infinitely renewable or exists as a sacrosanct original.

Importantly, though, as Jennifer Diann Jones notes, Alcharisi is the only one of Eliot's musicians, across her works, for whom 'not even a memory of one of [her] performances is narrated'.[82] Though she retains a 'low melodious voice', her conversation with Daniel is a perversion of the vocality Eliot associated with sincerity in earlier novels such as *Adam Bede* and *Middlemarch*.[83] Eliot's final novel complicates our sense that she shared entirely her friend Herbert Spencer's notion of vocal music as idealised, and therefore emotionally sincere, speech. It offers no clear-cut alignment of sincerity with the voice and artificiality with instruments. Klesmer's music is instrumental, but it is mostly composed by him and expressive of his

[78] Eliot, *Deronda,* 584.
[79] Ibid, 588.
[80] Ibid, 586.
[81] Rosemarie Bodenheimer, *The Real Life of Mary Ann Evans: George Eliot, Her Letters, and Fiction* (London: Cornell University Press, 1994), 185.
[82] Jennifer Diann Jones, '"[S]he acted her own emotions": George Eliot's Ambivalence Towards the Professional Female Artist in *Daniel Deronda*', *Victoriographies* 9, no. 2 (2019): 113.
[83] Eliot, *Deronda,* 583.

character (see chapter three on his Heine setting). Alcharisi, after a long career performing music written by others, is left with little to say for herself other than the 'suppressed continuation of speech' Daniel perceives in her face.[84] We do not even know how well Alcharisi sang, aside from her own statements, nor do we have any idea of the roles she played (in contrast to, for example, Evelyn Innes). Her first mention in the novel, in a roll-call of feted *prime donne,* hardly intimates her musical abilities so much as her notoriety in the eyes of gossiping men. The woman who declares 'I was never willingly subject to any man' makes herself the subject of licentious gossip: freeing herself from the bondage of patriarchy by going onstage, directly opposite to Mirah's journey of freeing herself from a patriarchally-enforced career, results nonetheless in an unwitting return to the patriarchal fold.[85]

Alcharisi's return suggests that race circumscribes the singer more insistently than it does the composer. As Amanda Anderson writes, 'femininity in its ideal form enacts and transmits the affective bounds of the community', and the voice is a means to manifest affective ties to identity.[86] After Alcharisi's career prevents Daniel from knowing his Jewish heritage, his connection to his racial community is restored by Mirah and her own singing. The rupture caused by Alcharisi can never be final. Her name emphasises the ineffaceability of her race: William Baker records that Eliot's copy of Franz Delitzsch's work (on which she drew for Mordecai's speeches) contains pencilled notes referring to 'the thirteenth-century composer of songs of return, Judah Alcharizi'.[87] When this name appears in the novel, it is attached to a character who uses songs to attempt to escape from the familial ties which have given her this name. Anderson reads Alcharisi as 'a hypermodern subject' who 'aligns herself with the transnational force of art and seeks to divorce herself entirely from the stifling confinement of a tradition-bound cultural heritage', yet this could be equally applied to Klesmer, whom my last

[84] Ibid, 584.
[85] Ibid, 621.
[86] Anderson, *Powers of Distance,* 139.
[87] Baker, *George Eliot and Judaism,* 151.

chapter proposed as another 'hypermodern subject'.[88] The 'transnational force of art' benefits him, but leaves Alcharisi voiceless, detached, and literally static. It is not just her speech which is suppressed, but her movement – her stasis puts her in marked contrast to the busy port of Genoa where Daniel meets her. Compared with Klesmer, who is introduced into the novel with a comment which obscures his origins, the *female* Jewish musician lacks a route to self-determination, even if Alcharisi insists this is what she has achieved.

Alcharisi is not self-determined because her vocality is not – as for other Eliot heroines – connected to her vocation. Da Sousa Correa suggests Eliot 'frequently merges literal and metaphorical forms of vocation', with 'particular significance in relation to the female characters'.[89] In Alcharisi, two forms of vocation contradict each other: her role as Daniel's mother remains unfulfilled throughout her career, and it is only when her singing voice fails that she plays the role allotted to her within the narrative, by revealing her son's racial identity. Eliot thus reserves a 'redemptive teaching role' for her female singers.[90] Vocal power, for both Mirah and Alcharisi, is effective insofar as it grants Daniel revelation and redemption. His self-discovery is bookended by singers: from Mirah's plaint by the river, to the remembered hymn of her mother's, to his own mother's confession. Beyond this, however, these women are silenced. Alcharisi, like Armgart, loses her voice, while Mirah has seemingly stopped indulging in music for her own sake by the end of the novel. Eliot's misgivings about professional musicianship inform this result – Klesmer ends the novel primarily a teacher (like Armgart), suggesting Eliot's preference for education over exhibitionism, and for those who – as she writes at the end of *Middlemarch* – live 'a hidden life' and 'rest in unvisited tombs'.[91] Yet Eliot's treatment of the female singer is more distinctly equivocal.

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[88] Anderson, *Powers of Distance,* 139-40. It is worth recalling that the character Amy Levy devises to explore music's capacities for the development of Jewish identity (see chapter three) is male. See Beckman, *Amy Levy: Her Life and Letters,* 163-87.
[89] Da Sousa Correa, *George Eliot, Music, and Victorian Culture,* 144-45.
[90] Ibid, 154.
[91] Eliot, *Middlemarch*, 825.

The figure of the composer enables a complex representation of female musicianship: his authoritative gaze upon the singer both enacts a restrictive control and focalises the positions in which women were left by such control. Klesmer's authority is only occasionally questioned, leaving little room for the alternative types of musicianship represented by contemporary female singers (and indeed by Armgart, in Eliot's earlier narrative). When this authority is questioned, however – as when Eliot implies the limits of Klesmer's sympathy towards Gwendolen – a critique of double standards emerges. Keeping the composer in view allows us to re-evaluate the paradoxes of Eliot's representation of the female singer, which seems to incorporate both a failure to imagine successful female musicianship and an exposition of the barriers women faced. Klesmer's comparatively successful position at the end of *Daniel Deronda* might represent the superiority of the male composer, which Eliot condones and critiques by turns. Alternatively, he can continue to make his music because of its comparative impotence: as I have argued previously, it is little understood by listeners – partly because of its protomodern style, partly because he is a Germanic Jew in Britain, and partly because it is instrumental rather than vocal, a paramount distinction within *Daniel Deronda*'s valorisation of language (especially within the Zionist project). If language and the voice are the sources of social change, the singer is a more important – and more potentially volatile – figure than the composer, putting Eliot's novel in line with the contemporary shift towards recognising the singer as a legitimate musical authority. Eliot's comparatively restrictive treatment of the singer arises from a mixture of this conviction about the singer's potency and her misgivings about its application in social conditions wherein the singer was objectified.

Interlude: 'The Muse of the Halls'

Gissing's little-read story 'The Muse of the Halls', published in 1893, is a compact study of the singer-composer dynamic which brings together Eliot's exposure of double standards with Du Maurier's disruption of hierarchies. The story arose from Gissing's reading of John Davidson's poetry collection *In A Music-Hall* (1891), as well as his own experiences of the music halls and

interest in the singer, already explored in *Thyrza* (1887).[92] I noted in chapter two that 'The Muse of the Halls' rehearses *The Whirlpool*'s identification of popular music as a more lucrative sphere than the classical. Specifically, however, the story explores this theme through a gendered dynamic which might have been suggested to him by the first poem in Davidson's collection, 'Mary-Jane Macpherson'. The speaker, whose lover insists he can provide for them both, defends her choice to sing in the halls as 'only the sale of [her] voice'.[93] The implication – that the music-hall singer sells her body too – appears in 'The Muse of the Halls', as the protagonist Hilda defends the halls as 'quite as respectable' as the 'concert-rooms' she has just abandoned.[94] Her fiancé, Denis, is at work on a cantata, and decries her decision to '*climb down*' from the sphere of 'Art' because, as she says: 'Above all I want money'.[95] As the story progresses, however, it becomes clear that Denis's judgements about exhibitionism mask his own anxieties about reconciling art and money. After watching Hilda on the music-hall stage, he unwittingly gains a taste for the melodies and secretly decides to 'climb down' himself – to 'woo' the 'muse of the halls' by composing a music-hall tune.[96] In the midst of his success, he retains an idealistic fantasy of writing for the popular sphere and for a 'serious public' which, Gissing would claim in *The Whirlpool,* does not exist in Britain.[97] When Hilda discovers he has written for the halls, she is enraged: not because he has 'climbed down', but because he gave the song to another singer, and did not make her his 'muse'. The story ends with Denis offering Hilda an ultimatum – he will stop writing for the halls if she stops performing at them – which she refuses. Their relationship is sacrificed not so much to the halls themselves as to an idea of 'Art' which makes Denis view them as inferior.

'The Muse of the Halls' draws its irony from the same double standard governing the relationship between male composer and female singer in *Deronda*: the former refuses to

[92] Gissing, 'Muse of the Halls', 1.
[93] John Davidson, *In A Music-Hall: and Other Poems* (London: Ward and Downey, 1891), 2.
[94] Gissing, 'Muse of the Halls', 2.
[95] Ibid, 3.
[96] Ibid, 8.
[97] Ibid, 11.

countenance the latter's concessions to financial need, because to do so would involve admitting the financial ramifications of his own work. The feminisation of performance – also the area of music-making most associated with money – served the composer in positioning himself as unconcerned with money. Gissing is more emphatic than Eliot in representing the pragmatism at the core of women's pursuit of lucrative musical opportunities. Hilda reminds Denis he is 'not a Berlioz or a Wagner' – the two composers against whom Felix Dymes, in *The Whirlpool,* defines himself.[98] The story and the later portrait suggest Gissing's conviction that, eventually, the male composer would follow the female singer in prioritising money over art, even if, as 'The Muse of the Halls' suggests, he masked his intentions through a rhetoric of gendered critique. *Trilby,* a few years later, abandons the gendered double standards in Eliot's and Gissing's texts by deconstructing the concept of 'Art' which produced them – especially that concept's emphasis on the sanctity of the original.

Privileging Performance in Trilby

In *Trilby*, the composer's gaze on the singer – largely a matter of perspective in *Deronda* – becomes dangerous, enacting both personal desire for her and the wider specular pressures bearing on the professional woman. Du Maurier takes up the Romantic precedent of the composer as ultimate authority in music-making, and consequently of the performer as a vessel for his intentions, and literalises them in the spectacle of Svengali mesmerising Trilby. His novel was the most overt figuring of a theme which preoccupied several novelists. If women were believed to have only 'reproductive genius', then their performances must be at root activated by male control, which recursively subjects the performer to predation. The female musician must display herself, but in doing so, she loses her artistic and sexual agency. The shrewd Dymes, in *The Whirlpool*, recognises that singers are particularly vulnerable, and therefore valuable, in this regard, telling the protagonist Alma she has a 'poor chance' as a professional violinist, and urging her – with an interest she suspects is not entirely musical – to sing instead:

[98] Ibid, 3.

'You have the face and the – you know – the refinement'.[99] He may, his self-correction hints, have initially meant to refer to her face and her body. In Shaw's *Love Among the Artists,* the composer has a 'keen scrutiny' which he directs at women, including the pianist Aurélie, at whom he gazes 'so openly' that 'she turned away displeased, and a little embarrassed'.[100] In another scene, Jack's gaze at the heroine Mary combines with his mistreatment of a piano belonging to her. Metonymic substitution of women and pianos was, Jodi Lustig suggests, common in fiction and even journalism about male pianists, while Trilby infamously becomes the instrument on which Svengali plays.[101] I want to suggest, however, the importance of Trilby gazing back at Svengali while he mesmerises her – a fact which is essential to the production of La Svengali's sublime music. Du Maurier complicates the attribution of creativity, and in doing so, proposes a reordered hierarchy of original composition and performed version.

The central spectacle of La Svengali's Paris debut is an inversion of the artist-muse model. Traditionally, the male artist produces work through a scopophiliac gaze on his female muse. Here, music comes about through a mutual gazing of the male artist and the woman, though it is her body which ultimately produces the sound. Also, given Svengali's occluded position in the box, only Trilby's body is on display. The performance subsumes the dangers of ventriloquism in the spectacle of voyeurism. Throughout the novel, as Weliver points out, Du Maurier draws on various forms of late-nineteenth-century voyeurism: Trilby is an artists' model, and other moments allude to the public fascination in Britain and France with phenomena such as 'Madame Tussaud's wax model of the 'breathing' sleeping beauty, [Jean-Martin] Charcot's demonstrations of hypnotized hysterics, [and] medical museums that portrayed Anatomical Venuses'.[102] Du Maurier's time in Paris coincided with early public presentations by Charcot of his experimental, proto-psychoanalytic research into the causes of

[99] Gissing, *The Whirlpool,* 77.
[100] Shaw, *Love Among the Artists,* 169.
[101] Jodi Lustig, 'The Piano's Progress: The Piano in Play in the Victorian Novel', in *Idea of Music in Victorian Fiction,* ed. Fuller & Losseff, 280.
[102] Weliver, *Women Musicians,* 252.

hysteria, which frequently involved placing young women under hypnosis.[103] *Trilby* reflects a hyperfixation on women's bodies in contemporary science, in which music also figured. Popular demonstrations of hypnosis used music to induce trances, or featured women singing in a trance, as Weliver records. Svengali's comparable intentions in taking possession of Trilby are evident, as he anatomises 'the roof of [her] mouth...like the dome of the Panthéon', her 'beautiful big chest [where] the lungs are made of leather', and most overtly, 'the bridge of [her] nose...like the belly of a Stradivarius'.[104] When she appears on stage as La Svengali, he 'conduct[s] her...just as if she had been an orchestra herself'.[105] Trilby's unconscious singing takes to an extreme the stereotype represented by naturalistic singers such as Eliot's Mirah and Gissing's Thyrza: for these women, their unconsciousness of their abilities acts to justify their circumscription in the domestic sphere. Mirah is discouraged from consciously choosing to become a professional, while Gissing resolves Thyrza's impossible dream of professionalisation through her illness and death. Du Maurier, much as his novel replicates the image of the unconscious female singer, responds to the trope with typical irony: Trilby is quite happy to sing domestically, never dreaming of professionalisation, and only takes this step *un*consciously.

Trilby encodes danger into the process of musical creation. Daniel Pick has written about the 'stern command' of ocular control Svengali exerts as alluding to the mythology of the evil eye, while Alison Winter has remarked on the similarities between the characterisation of Svengali and accounts of demagogues manipulating crowds.[106] Pick proposes that Du Maurier drew on contemporary perceptions of Anton Rubinstein, whose virtuoso pianism was sometimes described in terms of gendered violence.[107] A 1910 New York review of one of Rubinstein's performances paints a vivid picture of abuse: 'he just went for that ole pianner. He slapped her face, he boxed her jaws, he pulled her nose...He knockt her down and he stampt on her shameful. She bellowed, she bleated like a calf, she howled like a hound, she squealed like a

[103] See Weliver, *Women Musicians,* 258-63.
[104] Du Maurier, *Trilby,* 50-51.
[105] Ibid, 210.
[106] Pick, *Svengali's Web*, 171-72; Winter, *Mesmerized,* 339-41.
[107] Pick, *Svengali's Web,* 115-16.

pig, she shrieked like a rat – and then he wouldn't let her up'.[108] Recalling the article 'The Pianoforte Mania', half a century earlier, which represented piano-playing as a feminine activity, the violence of some male players seems in direct response to this perception. This account of Rubinstein's playing resembles that of Jack in *Love Among the Artists*, whose mistreatment of pianos is, for Donna Beckage, one of his Beethovenian qualities – though Rubinstein may have influenced Shaw too, since the Russian was compared to Beethoven for both his appearance and his pianistic style.[109]

In *Trilby,* violence is not merely inflicted on a feminised instrument, nor implied towards a woman *via* the instrument (as in Shaw's novel), but it is concentrated directly on the woman's body, and this performance dynamic undermines what musical ability Trilby displays. As Bruce Wyse remarks, Svengali is a singer *manqué* with a fatal obsession with the sound of the singing voice, who 'ardently wishe[s] to sing' but possesses merely a 'harsh, hoarse, weak raven's croak'.[110] Trilby becomes a cipher for this wish. Svengali recognises not just the 'voice of velvet' with which she speaks, but the capacity of her mouth and lungs, and is enamoured with her beauty, spotting an opportunity to capitalise on the audio-visual appeal of the female singer (as chapter three suggested, his ability to *speculate* and create *spectacle* are related).[111] The male source for female musicality is implied in a metaphor akin to the distinction between 'productive' and 'reproductive' genius: Svengali 'weigh[s]' on Trilby 'like an incubus' (a demon with sexual connotations), using her 'singularly impressionable nature' and 'quick and ready susceptibility' to advance his own artistry.[112] This dynamic – one of sexual and financial appropriation – was increasingly recognisable in the popular imagination as marking the relationship between diva and impresario, and the term 'Svengali' entered the English lexicon as shorthand for it. The worry that any musical ability on a woman's part would be attributed to

[108] 'How "Ruby" Played', *Life* 55, no. 1437 (May 12, 1910): 887.
[109] See Harold C. Schonberg, *The Great Pianists* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963), 253, for comparisons by Liszt and Moscheles.
[110] Bruce Wyse, 'Double Voice and Extimate Singing in *Trilby*', in *Sound Effects: the Object Voice in Fiction*, ed. Jorge Sacido-Romero & Sylvia Mieszkowski (Amsterdam: Brill, 2015), 105; Du Maurier, *Trilby,* 42.
[111] Du Maurier, *Trilby,* 261.
[112] Ibid, 93 & 53.

male involvement plagues Evelyn Innes, in Moore's novel: 'Her voice would always be Evelyn Innes – Owen Asher's mistress'.[113] In Marie Corelli's *A Romance of Two Worlds* (1886), which I discuss more fully in the next chapter, the female protagonist's best music is produced as a result of curative electric treatments which resemble mesmerism. Corelli's novel, like Du Maurier's, discomfortingly contemplates women's subjection as necessary for their artistic expression.

Yet Trilby's own agency in her performance should not be underestimated. Nina Auerbach has argued that mesmerism brings out the 'seemingly boundless capacity for mutability' already present in the conscious Trilby, noting that Du Maurier takes account of both her angelic and her siren-like qualities before her appearance onstage as both 'touchingly simple and sweet' and a 'magnificent and seductive apparition'.[114] For Weliver, it is not merely that, as Auerbach writes, Trilby's 'power of metamorphosis defines her character', and therefore she 'does not need Svengali to incite her to new incarnations'; instead, the mesmeric relationship is one of mutual need and influence.[115] Drawing on the terminology of Victorian scientists such as William Carpenter, Weliver writes: 'Trilby provides the 'expectancy' and the vocal casing, and Svengali supplies the 'suggestions' or the external stimuli…In 'La Svengali', therefore, a superior being to either mesmerizer or subject is created'.[116] Trilby's returned gaze (her 'expectancy' as mesmeric subject) is essential to the music she and Svengali create. Winter suggests that the late-nineteenth-century interest in the power of the gaze centred on 'the relations of influence operating between the person looking and the thing being looked at', and there was an awareness that audiences who went to performances of mesmerism – and, likewise, musical performances – were being acted upon themselves.[117]

Trilby's irrepressibility acts on both her mesmeriser and her audience, aggrandising – literally – the importance of the singer. In a chapter on *Trilby*'s revision of gendered

[113] George Moore, *Evelyn Innes* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1898), 451.
[114] Auerbach, *Woman and the Demon,* 18; Du Maurier, *Trilby,* 209.
[115] Auerbach, *Woman and the Demon,* 18.
[116] Weliver, *Women Musicians,* 266.
[117] Winter, *Mesmerized,* 31.

characteristics, Denis Denisoff highlights Trilby's size, and Auerbach points out that even the mesmerised and apparently subjected Trilby towers over Svengali in Du Maurier's illustrations.[118] (Svengali's eventual heart attack might even be attributed to Trilby's strength during these trances – since he has performed mesmerism before, on Mimi la Salope, with no similar consequences.) This denotes a degree of authority absent from Eliot's depictions of the singer: whereas Armgart is flanked by busts reminding us of the historical dominance of male composers, and Alcharisi's name appears in a roll-call of female singers about whom men gossip, Trilby occupies centre stage, ostensibly excluding male involvement. Her size also suggests the novel's unlikely correspondence with a Wagnerian literary trend (given Du Maurier's generally dismissive feeling towards Wagner). As Alex Ross traces, authors in the late nineteenth century, and increasingly into the twentieth, drew on Wagner's heroines – especially the traditionally large Brünnhilde – in creating their own heroines, singers or otherwise: Gertrude Atherton's *The Tower of Ivory* (1910) is a notably comprehensive example.[119] In *Trilby* and elsewhere, including contemporary accounts of real singers which accorded them a level of artistic authority hitherto reserved for composers, this sense of largeness signifies a break with the control exerted by men, whether composers, impresarios, or suitors. All the principal male characters in *Trilby* attempt to control its heroine in some way, but as Weliver writes: 'By not recognizing that Trilby may become extraordinary when mesmerised and not crediting her own powers of creativity, the British painters construct her as a passive victim. This view of her attempts to manage her power and sexuality, just as they sought to contain it by making her responsible for her modelling and fallen status'.[120] The result is a multiplicity of projected notions of Trilby, as Gecko registers towards the novel's end. He insists, '*There were two Trilbys*', but reveals even more – 'your Trilby', 'my Trilby too', 'the Trilby that loved your brother [Little

[118] Denis Denisoff, '"Men of My Own Sex": Genius, Sexuality, and George du Maurier's Artists', in *Victorian Sexual Dissidence,* ed. Richard Dellamora (London: University of Chicago Press, 1999); see especially 160, for an exploration of the homoerotic – or 'homovocal', in a term Denisoff borrows from Terry Castle – appeal of the contralto, who, after a decline in the number of castrati, frequently played male operatic roles in drag; Nina Auerbach, 'Magi and Maidens: The Romance of the Victorian Freud', *Critical Inquiry* 8 (Winter 1981): 284-89.
[119] Ross, *Wagnerism,* 284-85; and Ross's chapter 'Brünnhilde's Rock: Willa Cather and the Singer-Novel', 322-54.
[120] Weliver, *Women Musicians,* 262.

Billee]', 'an unconscious Trilby of marble', 'the Trilby he [Svengali] taught to sing', recalling the several guises in which La Svengali appears to her audience.[121] This, even more than the 'sincere actress' Alcharisi, is the 'shape-shifting egotist without a center of self' which Bodenheimer suggests preoccupied Eliot; but for Du Maurier, this changeability defines her character and makes her a success.[122]

Variability is a mark of musical success in *Trilby* because, whether we credit Trilby or Svengali for La Svengali's music, its key quality is its capacity to grow more pleasurable with repeat performances. Before La Svengali's Paris debut, the narrator remarks that the proposed programme is an 'incongruous bill of fare', consisting of a lullaby, a drawing-room ballad, a military march, a Schumann *Lied,* and a Chopin piece originally written for solo piano.[123] This incongruity challenges the hierarchy of classical and popular music, in which the former's value rests on recognition of its origins, particularly its composer. La Svengali's amalgamation of classical and popular music succeeds, however, because her performance overwhelms its listeners, proposing: 'what does the composer count for?…The 'Nussbaum' is neither better nor worse than 'Mon ami Pierrot' when I am the singer'.[124] Du Maurier makes clear the challenge represented by La Svengali's performance by juxtaposing it, earlier in the narrative, with the one by Clara Schumann and Joseph Joachim. As I discussed in the previous chapter, these bastions of classicism 'never let you forget that it was Sebastian Bach they were playing', but the audience cares little for their rendering of the *Werktreue* ideal. Although the narrator praises their manner – playing 'in absolute forgetfulness of themselves' – La Svengali follows, and succeeds, with a manner the narrator had earlier deplored: 'virtuosi who play so charmingly that they make their listeners forget the master who invented the music in the lesser master who interprets it'.[125] La Svengali's performance reverses the ordering of 'master' and 'lesser master'. Gecko's later comment about Joachim reinforces the precedence of performance, as he

[121] Du Maurier, *Trilby,* 298-99.
[122] Bodenheimer, 'Ambition and its Audiences', 11.
[123] Du Maurier, *Trilby,* 208.
[124] Ibid, 213.
[125] Ibid, 164.

asks: 'Herr Joachim's fiddle…what does it know of Sebastian Bach?' Similarly, he says, Trilby knew 'nothing at all' of Schumann and Chopin, but became the perfect instrument for performance of their works.[126]

Trilby emphasises not just the adaptational ability of its performers, Trilby and Svengali, but the pleasure their adaptations give listeners. Auerbach notes Trilby's 'ability under hypnosis to ring endless variations upon familiar tunes', which is 'the power of her character to transform itself endlessly', and it is these variations which give music its affectivity in *Trilby.*[127] The multiple appearances of 'Ben Bolt' in the novel subversively reveal the value of repeat performances, as I explained in chapter three. There, I suggested the significance of this subversion as a response to tropes about the Jewish musician's unoriginality; it is also significant in revising the hierarchy of singer and composer. The salient feature of Svengali's and Gecko's performance is its unrelenting adaptation of the tune.[128] Du Maurier's exhaustive (and somewhat improbable) list of musical terms highlights the malleability of the original 'Ben Bolt', from which these iterations are so far removed that they attain a 'splendour quite undreamed of by whoever wrote the words and music of that unsophisticated little song'.[129] When La Svengali sings 'Ben Bolt' in Paris, and the audience envisions Trilby in several guises, it responds yet more rapturously than the earlier 'susceptible audience of three', suggesting that 'Ben Bolt' grows more irresistible with each performance. Du Maurier is interested in the ability of the performer to render works more enjoyable by creating new versions, recognisably similar to the original, but with essential improvements related to affectivity and performativity which cannot be enshrined in a material score. The original song's lack of sophistication is not important in this context, as it might be in Gissing's 'Muse of the Halls' – when performance is paramount, distinctions between high and low art which might discredit the female singer are erased.

[126] Ibid, 299.
[127] Auerbach, *Woman and the Demon,* 20.
[128] Du Maurier, *Trilby,* 21.
[129] Ibid.

Indeed, this accounts for Svengali's position as less a composer than a performer himself. I group him with composer figures because, figuratively, he is representative of the composer's masculine hegemony over the production of music; but practically, he participates in La Svengali's performance and contributes to its revision of Romantic hierarchies. He is never shown composing (though the orchestral overture to La Svengali's performance may be his own composition – an adaptation of Hungarian gypsy dances). His primary musical skill is adaptation. With the exception of certain apparently untouchable composers (Handel, Bach, and Beethoven), Svengali's music – with and without Trilby's involvement – proclaims the superiority of performance, no matter what the original work: even the 'cheapest, trivialest tunes'.[130] This fact adds complexity to the otherwise familiar tale of sexual appropriation and exploitation *Trilby* tells. Like other novels of the period, Du Maurier's novel poses a provocative question about women's agency in music-making. Its heroine can seemingly only claim affective power and agency within a framework of male manipulation – suggesting that Du Maurier is as pragmatic as Eliot about the structures in which singers could exercise their power. Yet Svengali's centrality to the music in *Trilby* constitutes, paradoxically, a decentralising of the composer-figure. By complicating the attribution of creativity to Trilby or Svengali, Du Maurier maintains two contradictory positions which, after decades of discussion by musicians and critics about the relationship of composers to singers, still held sway. For some, the prominence of female singers proved that they could, like composers, be called original musical artists; for others, there would always be a male figure somewhere (even invisibly) behind this performance, providing the 'suggestion'. Literary texts increasingly registered the authority of the female singer, but necessarily encountered problems in rendering this authority – their reversion to physical descriptions, in lieu of an ability to convey sound, perpetuated the scopophiliac focus which made the singer, for many, a lesser artist than the composer. Yet these texts also, in their silence, gestured to an uncapturable artistry at least equal to that of the composer. I now turn to

[130] Ibid, 42.

a figure who frustrates the binary of male production and female reproduction: the female composer.

5. Productive Genius: The Female Composer

[T]here has not been nor ever can be a female Beethoven or Wagner.[1]

Edith Brower, 'Is the Musical Idea Masculine?' (1894)

The gendered dichotomy which structured concepts of performance and composition by mid-century, as my previous chapter explored, problematised the very concept of the female composer. Edith Brower's suggestion, in the epigraph to this chapter, that there could never be a 'female Beethoven or Wagner' registers the host of barriers, from the aesthetic to the socioeconomic, facing female composers, but most of all, it implies a fundamental incompatibility between women and the Romantic standards which characterised figures such as Beethoven and Wagner. The first section of this chapter examines those gendered standards and late-nineteenth-century debates about women's obscurity in composition. The second section discusses two novels which depict female composers: Mona Caird's *The Daughters of Danaus* (1894) and Marie Corelli's *A Romance of Two Worlds* (1886). In these novels, the female composer acts as a figure of aspiration, but also differentiation, for the female author.

The struggle faced by Caird's and Corelli's protagonists – that music offers women a validating form of self-expression, but not a fulfilling career – has evident parallels with that faced by the female author. I will focus on publication as a point which makes the composer a compelling model for these two authors. Before outlining the context for the putative suppression of women's composition on grounds of aesthetic and social propriety, I want to suggest the significance (though it was little commented on at the time) of the new status of the printed score. Composers had begun, earlier in the century, to think of the score as a lasting testament to their genius, as chapter one explored. However, that chapter also identified the anxiety many composers felt about the commodification of that very object. The gendered distinctions between performance and composition allowed composers to distance themselves from financial interests: the performer (not always a woman, but usually feminised) propagated the musical work, rendering it a product. Women were pejoratively associated with music as a

[1] Edith Brower, 'Is the Musical Idea Masculine?', *The Atlantic Monthly* 73 (March 1894): 337.

commercial enterprise, from charges of ambition to the notion of performance as debasement. In economic terms, the reproduction of music represented a devalued form of production. Taking up the female composer as a character, though, Caird and Corelli reconfigure these dynamics and propose that women might yearn to see their compositions not only published, but converted into products which could yield renown, fortune, and independence.[2] While Caird's Hadria Fullerton is shown deliberating over the scores she has composed, Corelli's protagonist is an improviser, whose desire to convert her musical labour into the materiality of a score is discouraged. For both authors, the battle to take ownership of the printed text was all too familiar. I centralise this theme in my readings, whilst also suggesting how Caird and Corelli handled, in different ways, the problems of bodily susceptibility, *Künstlerroman* and marriage plot conventions, and patriarchal dominance in their representations of female composers.

As Sophie Fuller remarks in a study of the handful of nineteenth-century novels in which women compose, of all the ways in which women participated in music, the role of composer provoked the fiercest debate. Stakes were highest in this area because 'by the nineteenth century composition had become firmly established as the pinnacle of achievement and ambition in Western art music, with the composer a distinct and powerful figure'.[3] Along with the novels I discuss here, Fuller's survey ranges from Sheppard's *Charles Auchester* and its successor *Counterparts* (1854) to E.F. Benson's *Dodo: A Detail of the Day* (1893).[4] In *Charles Auchester,* Maria Cerinthia's foray into composition leads to her death from over-exertion after the first performance of her work. These events recur in a novel Fuller does not include: Stanley Makower's *The Mirror of Music* (1895), discussed at length in my next chapter. Both novels

[2] Paula Gillett surveys a handful of women who actively navigated the musical marketplace in this way; 'Entrepreneurial Women Musicians in Britain: From the 1790s to the Early 1900s', in *The Musician as Entrepreneur, 1700-1914: Managers, Charlatans, and Idealists,* ed. William Weber (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004), 198-220.

[3] Sophie Fuller, '"Cribbed, cabin'd, and confined": Female musical creativity in Victorian fiction', in *Idea of Music in Victorian Fiction*, ed. Fuller & Losseff, 29.

[4] Fuller, '"Cribbed, cabin'd, and confined"', 27-55. Benson's novel stands out for presenting its composer, Edith Staines, as comparatively successful and uninhibited in her professional career, reflecting perhaps Benson's hopes for his friend Ethel Smyth, on whom he based Staines. Smyth would later succeed in areas of composition – such as opera and chamber music – dominated by men.

reveal to what extent the body governs women's engagement with music, even in the apparently more cerebral role of composer. The centrality of the woman's body motivates the frequent characterisation of her composing as unwilled, or, in the case of *Daniel Deronda*'s Catherine Arrowpoint, merely another domestic accomplishment. Catherine, the novel's only female musician who does not sing, composes an operetta, but her claim to generative artistry is precluded when Klesmer tells her: 'Even you can't understand the wrath of the artist: he is of another caste for you'.[5] While the modifier 'even' suggests Catherine is the closest the novel comes to vindicating women's musical creativity (making her an ideal wife for Klesmer), she is set apart from the composer as a separate 'caste'. Catherine is emblematic of many women who composed in this period: her work is domestic, amateur, and demarcated in a separate sphere to that of men, giving her no claim to the title of 'artist'.

Before turning to the representations of female composers by Caird and Corelli, we need to understand the interactions between gender and musical creativity across the nineteenth century, following changes in musical theory and practice which ostensibly presented new opportunities for women. Women's composition had been confined to the amateur sphere as long as the patriarchal structures of church and aristocracy provided the only avenues for professional composition. Similarly, women had been considered inferior artists under predominating aesthetic theories which privileged rationality, because of their supposed emotionalism and connection to nature. Romantic aesthetics, as James Rovira has recently demonstrated, overturned this system. Schopenhauer's *World as Will and Representation* privileged the will, 'which has never been denied women', while asserting that 'reason and concepts exist only within material nature'.[6] Furthermore, given Schopenhauer's emphasis on music as embodied will, Rovira draws a parallel between music and women's place in Western philosophy: both are 'suppressed in the previous regime but privileged in the relationship to

[5] Eliot, *Deronda,* 225.
[6] James Rovira, 'Are Women in Rock also Women in Romanticism?', in *Women in Rock, Women in Romanticism: The Emancipation of Female Will,* ed. Rovira (Abingdon: Routledge, 2023), 88.

Romanticism'.[7] Yet Romanticism, it transpired, created a role for femininity, not for women. Part of elevating the composer to the status of other artists involved the repudiation of women's claim to the profession. Stephen Stratton, who lectured in 1883 on 'Woman in Relation to Musical Art', opined that among 'the chief hindrances to woman's progress as a composer' were 'the former position of music itself, and also of the musician'.[8] The grounds on which composers asserted their new status excluded women: the composer must be godlike or priest-like, and therefore male, to write quasi-divine, transcendent music. The feminine form of the titles attaching to the Romantic composer – *Maestro, Kapellmeister,* music-master – is nowhere in evidence. Christina Battersby explains Romanticism's 'logic of exclusion': 'the figure of the genius was used to distinguish between the work of Art (appreciated by an élite group of critics) and works produced for popular consumption by the masses'.[9] Gender marked this distinction. As we will see, women were constrained to compose in popular and domestic forms, their ability to compose 'works of Art' called into question.

Composition was understood figuratively in bi-gendered terms, even as an act of procreation requiring masculine and feminine input. As Lawrence Kramer observes, the composer's traditional 'achievement of virile mastery' over art was combined in the nineteenth century with 'a volatility of emotion and a responsiveness to sensation that were markedly feminine in character'.[10] This combination allowed him to compose in various forms, which were also encoded in gendered terms: masculine and sublime (the symphony) or feminine and beautiful (songs and miniatures). Robert Schumann joked in 1838 that, in order to compose the miniatures, or 'cute little things', comprising his *Kinderszenen,* he had 'put on [a] frilly dress'.[11] By this logic, a female composer, too, could produce masculine and feminine compositions, if she

[7] Rovira, 'Are Women in Rock also Women in Romanticism?', 117.
[8] Stephen S. Stratton, 'Woman in Relation to Musical Art', *Proceedings of the Musical Association* 9, no. 1 (1883): 130.
[9] Christine Battersby, *Gender and Genius: Towards A Feminist Aesthetics* (London: Women's Press, 1989), 6.
[10] Lawrence Kramer, '*Carnaval,* Cross-Dressing, and the Woman in the Mirror', in *Musicology and Difference,* ed. Ruth A. Solie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 307.
[11] Peter Ostwald, *Schumann: The Inner Voices of a Musical Genius* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1985), 140.

could only emulate Schumann's musical cross-dressing. Yet, ostensibly, only male composers were able to combine gendered attributes in this way, while female composers found that judgements of their music were clouded by considerations of their femininity.[12] My previous chapter suggested that the influx of women into the professional musical sphere throughout the period reconfigured the gendered dichotomy of 'productive' and 'reproductive', or compositional and performative, genius. This influx reconfigured concepts of genius in other ways. The 'possessor' and 'possessed' models of musical genius outlined by Peter Kivy (and embodied in, respectively, Beethoven and Mozart) were ways of conceptualising the composer's mental faculties.[13] 'Possessed' genius might suggest a feminine passivity, resembling the Schopenhauerian idea of genius which 'takes possession' of the receptive individual, as I noted in chapter four; but these traits could apply relatively unproblematically to the male musical genius so long as prominent female musicians were few and far between. Yet as these became more common, accounts frequently highlighted their instinctive or 'possessed' musical ability: female singers were often characterised as songbirds with limited control over their music-making. This characterisation was based less on the woman's mental faculties than on an essentialist theory of biological sexual difference. Female musicians were constantly reduced to their bodies, but this reduction called attention to the inevitable role of affect in music, making it impossible any longer to think about genius in solely cerebral terms. This led, as chapter six explores, to widespread anxieties about emasculation and pathology in the male musical genius in the *fin de siècle.*

Despite widespread discussions about the impossibility or inadvisability of women composing, many women did so throughout the century, yet they have largely remained obscure. Much musicological scholarship over the last three decades has been dedicated to restoring these female composers to history. Among the reasons Derek Hyde and Marcia Citron

[12] Ethel Smyth tried to circumvent this tendency by presenting her works under the name E.M. Smyth. See Eugene Gates, 'Damned If You Do and Damned If You Don't: Sexual Aesthetics and the Music of Dame Ethel Smyth', *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 31, no. 1 (1997): 63-71.

[13] Peter Kivy, *The Possessor and Possessed: Handel, Mozart, Beethoven, and the Idea of Musical Genius* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

cite for female composers' obscurity (including the exclusionary standards of the canon, which prized masculine forms, and the restriction of women's composition to amateur exercises like those of Catherine Arrowpoint) is an important point about publication.[14] If women did publish their music, it was generally in the popular – and more ephemeral – forms of drawing-room songs and ballads. Access to publishers was harder for women, let alone the full orchestras required to rehearse and stage a large-scale chamber work. As Nancy B. Reich explains: 'men held the important posts in music education and publishing, formed the committees making decisions for concert organizations and festivals, conducted the orchestras, hired the players, and determined the fees'.[15] Famously, the composer Fanny Mendelssohn's aspirations to publish were opposed by her father and brother (the latter's Opus Eight and Nine contained songs in fact composed by Fanny). While Marion Wilson Kimber cautions against interpreting this as evidence that Felix did not support his sister's composing at all, she stresses that it was specifically the question of publication which was contentious. As an upper-class woman, Fanny did not need to make a living by music, and it would compromise her to 'undertake a 'descent' into the arena of publishing', as a *Musical Times* retrospective put it.[16]

Publication was an implicit point of contention in late-nineteenth-century debates about the female composer. With the exception of Stratton, who compiled a list of female composers throughout history, the dominant note in these debates was about female composers' obscurity, and whether this obscurity implies incapability. One *Musical Times* article wondered at the paradox of women's biological reproductivity versus their 'musical barrenness'.[17] George Upton, author of *Woman in Music* (1899), divided his subject into two areas, neither of which encompassed composition: 'the influence of woman in encouraging the great composers to

[14] Hyde, *New-found Voices*; Marcia Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).
[15] Nancy B. Reich, 'Women as Musicians: A Question of Class', in *Musicology and Difference*, ed. Solie, 130.
[16] Marion Wilson Kimber, 'The "Suppression" of Fanny Mendelssohn: Rethinking Feminist Biography', *19th-Century Music* 26, no. 2 (Fall 2002): 118.
[17] 'The Feminine in Music', *Musical Times* 23, no. 476 (1 October 1882): 521.

labor' and 'the relations of woman to the performance of vocal and instrumental music'.[18] Upton noted women's inability to 'treat emotions as if they were mathematics' and follow the 'rigid laws of harmony and counterpoint', while Edith Brower, writer of the popular article 'Is the Musical Idea Masculine?' in 1894, took the opposite view.[19] Women could master counterpoint, she argued, but lacked emotional depth. 'Much of what passes in women for true emotion is mere nervous excitability', Brower writes, whereas men, though they are taught to repress their emotions, have a deeper well to draw from and can better synthesise what they find into 'abstract emotion', which is the subject-matter of music, a non-representational art.[20] Women, who deal with 'the concrete life of every-day beings', are less fitted for these flights into the abstract.[21]

Yet Brower does not analyse the strictures placed on women so much as uphold them. Her incredulous tone throughout, as she wonders why there are more female authors than composers even though 'the lute was put into [woman's] hands many centuries before the pen', is somewhat disingenuously affected given that, as the work of Hyde, Citron, and many others has shown, there were plenty of women who composed professionally.[22] Brower concedes that 'a few song-writers, like Virginia Gabriel, have won a well-merited fame', but her preference for symphonies and operas reinscribes the generic hierarchy which prevented women from entering the annals of famous composers.[23] Upton, similarly, writes: 'That there is a natural aptitude among musical women for the writing of songs and ballads is unquestionable; but they are mostly short-lived, and are rarely woven into the *fabric of national life'.*[24] Although Brower and Upton profess to be discussing the general aptitude of women for composing, what is in fact

[18] Upton, *Woman in Music*, 16. Prosopographies took a great interest in whether women were a help or hindrance as muses for 'the great [male] composers'; see Rowbotham, *The Private Life of the Great Composers*, and Gustav Kobbé, *The Loves of Great Composers* (New York: Crowell, 1905).
[19] Upton, *Woman in Music,* 24; Anna Peak states that Brower's article was reprinted repeatedly on both sides of the Atlantic, in 'Music and New Woman Aesthetics in Mona Caird's "The Daughters of Danaus"', *Victorian Review* 40, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 135.
[20] Brower, 'Is The Musical Idea Masculine?', 335 & 338.
[21] Ibid, 338.
[22] Ibid, 333.
[23] Ibid; she might also have mentioned Maude Valérie White or Caroline Norton, whose 'Juanita' went into 50 editions – see Hyde, *New-found Voices*, 34.
[24] Upton, *Woman in Music,* 21 (emphasis added).

at stake is the newly recognised significance of the composer in national culture, from which women were excluded (at least as active participants). In contrast, Fanny Raymond Ritter had argued in 1877 that women most likely predominated as the original, now forgotten, composers of 'national and peasant folk-songs', since these were overwhelmingly performed by women.[25] Ritter's argument, interestingly, affirms the gendered and generic distinctions discussed by Upton and Brower by categorising female composers outside the classical sphere, but contradicts them by positing the folk as a 'national' category. The folk was increasingly re-evaluated as a national genre in late-nineteenth-century Britain (see chapter two), but Ritter's study was unique in placing women at the centre of this tradition. On the whole, discussions of female composers focused on their absence from the upper echelons of classical music.

Debates about women's composition, then, disclose the hierarchies of classical and popular forms on which Romantic composers staked their claim to be considered artists. Popular music connoted entertainment, domesticity, amateurism, and commercialism, not high-minded transcendence; and in popular and domestic genres, the identity of the composer was less paramount in determining value than in classical music, making women's involvement perhaps more palatable. Upton reiterates his arguments by calling on a novel, Edward Bulwer Lytton's *The Parisians* (1872), in which a maestro advises a would-be female composer that she 'will set pretty music to pretty words, and will be sung in drawing-rooms with the fame…that generally attends the compositions of female amateurs'.[26] Brower rightly writes that there cannot be 'a female Beethoven or Wagner', but neglects to suggest that this is because the very standards by which these male composers achieved their fame did not accommodate women.

When thinking about women's access to publication and the strong association between femininity and performance, the improviser is an intriguing intermediate figure. The early nineteenth century marked the first time that extemporization, or improvisation, 'was seen to stand in strict opposition to composition "proper"', according to Lydia Goehr, who cites H.G.

[25] Fanny Raymond Ritter, *Woman as a Musician: An Art-Historical Study* (London: W. Reeves, 1877), 4.
[26] Edward Bulwer Lytton, *The Parisians: The Pilgrims of the Rhine* (London: Routledge, 1872), 32-33.

Colles's comment in *Grove's Dictionary* that 'the whole history of composed music…may be described as the process of making the composer's defences sure against the incursions of the extemporizer'.[27] Published at the very moment Goehr identifies as pivotal to this process, Germaine de Staël's *Corinne* (1807) claims creative musical ability for women in the same androgynous sense identified by Kramer as requisite for the male composer, but does so in the moment of improvisation.[28] Staël validates performance as artistic labour: several characters declare Corinne a genius after witnessing her musical-poetic improvisations.[29] Gayle Levy's claim that 'we do not see Corinne's intellectual brilliance in action, the individual labouring at her art' is therefore dubious: she suggests that we see, rather, 'the result, the physical evidence of her gifts and the finished product'.[30] For Staël, there is no distinction between labour and the 'finished product', which both occur during improvisation; but these terms, and their connotations, diverged as the decades passed.

The entrance of women onto the concert stage redefined 'intellectual [compositional] brilliance' as a private act undertaken by men, and the 'finished product' as a score for which performers then provided 'physical evidence'. Like other performers, improvisers were rarely acclaimed as creative, despite the fact that they composed on the spot, because they did not write and publish scores.[31] George Meredith's *Sandra Belloni* problematises the eponymous improviser's yearning for publication, with her German music-master literally destroying her efforts.[32] Remaining in the intermediate category of improviser, Sandra Belloni cannot circumvent the dynamics of physical display which ultimately dictate her narrative. She catches the attention of a man, finds 'her love had given her a consciousness of infidelity to her Art', and

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[27] Goehr, *Imaginary* Museum, 234.
[28] See Gayle A. Levy, 'A Genius for the Modern Era: Madame de Staël's *Corinne*', *Nineteenth-Century French Studies* 30, no. ¾ (Spring-Summer 2002): 242, on Corinne as masculine and feminine.
[29] Madame de Staël, *Corinne, or Italy,* trans. Sylvia Raphael (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2008), 21-27.
[30] Levy, 'A Genius for the Modern Era', 247.
[31] Liszt provides an interesting exemplar, and complication, of this trajectory. His move from virtuoso improviser to composer charts the declining fortunes of the former, but he always defended improvisation as a legitimately creative act in his writings. See Reginald Gerig, *Famous Pianists and their Technique* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1976).
[32] George Meredith, *Sandra Belloni* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1892), 32.

ends regretfully: 'My voice is like a dead serpent in my throat'.[33] Corelli, who wrote *A Romance of Two Worlds* shortly after abandoning her own career as an improviser, was intrigued and troubled by Staël's and Meredith's precedents. She uses the female improviser (and would-be composer) to reaffirm her own preference for a literary career, distinguishing her from Caird, for whom the female composer represents women's aspirations and frustrations.

Composers in Caird and Corelli

Mona Caird's *The Daughters of Danaus* juxtaposes the conventions of the *Künstlerroman*, or artist's coming-of-age narrative, with the marriage plot in the story of Hadria Fullerton, whose composing career is thwarted by her domestic duties, first as a daughter, then as a wife. Hadria is first and foremost a composer, who only performs occasionally, almost always playing her own works: this underscores Caird's interest in avoiding the exhibitionism associated with performance and reconfiguring women's relationship to music outside the conventions of middle-class courtship. Her emphasis on composition, specifically the production of scores, shows Caird exploring the role of the composer, firstly, in comparison to the author, and secondly, as a potential means to fulfil the terms she had outlined in her 1888 article 'Marriage': 'the economical independence of woman is the first condition of free marriage'.[34] If music succeeds in the first instance – providing a more liberating mode of expression than literature – it fails in the second. As Fuller and Anna Peak have both explored, Caird presents a uniquely comprehensive account of women's failure to succeed as composers. The score, I suggest, is at the heart of this account.

Caird's 'relentless and clear-sighted analysis of exactly why it is impossible for Hadria to become a great composer' mirrors Edith Brower's article 'Is the Musical Idea Masculine?', published the same year, similarly asking: 'where were the women-composers?'.[35] Like Brower, Hadria muses on the assumption that women are better placed to become composers: 'the

[33] Meredith, *Sandra Belloni,* 325 & 382.
[34] Mona Caird, 'Marriage', *The Westminster Review* 130 (July 1888): 198.
[35] Fuller, '"Cribbed, cabin'd, and confined"', 49; Mona Caird, *The Daughters of Danaus* (London: Bliss, Sands, & Foster, 1894), 372.

domestic life was arranged, one might almost say, with a special view to promoting musical talent in the mistress of the household'.[36] The 'domestic life' and 'household' prove, however, to be obstacles. The 'harassing little difficulties' and 'the peculiar claims that are made…on a woman's time and strength' mean that, as an unmarried daughter in a large family, she can only compose at night.[37] Once married, she can only devote herself to her work by escaping to Paris. Even in that city's comparative freedom, where Hadria takes composition lessons from a male composer who advocates for her, she nonetheless 'long[s] for the privilege that every man enjoys, of quietly pursuing his work', without being obliged to follow the social niceties governing women's behaviour.[38] The elective outcast status of the male Romantic composer becomes for the female composer something to be envied, as more conducive to 'complete dedication to her art'.[39]

Social conventions are not Hadria's only obstruction. As Peak argues, the novel responds comprehensively to commentators like Brower, including their essentialist arguments that female composers were disadvantaged by bodily susceptibility.[40] Hadria's advocate, Jouffroy, laments having seen women of 'great talent' become '*mère[s] tout simplement'.* Although he finds women to have 'fine intuitions and astonishing ability', he 'regard[s] the maternal instinct as the scourge of genius'.[41] He is not alone in casting women in a reproductive role and thus mitigating their musical productivity. When Hadria describes music 'still in [her] veins' and 'this wretched unstringing', both bodily responses refer simultaneously to music and to the suitor who will soon become her husband, Hubert Temperley.[42] Caird's correlation of the strings of an instrument and the nerves distils the conflict between music and sexuality which results in Hadria's abandonment of composition after marriage. While for men, composing involves a 'quiet pursuit' of work, no such cerebral detachment is granted the female composer. Like

[36] Ibid.
[37] Caird, *Daughters of Danaus,* 44 & 322.
[38] Ibid, 322.
[39] Ibid, 318.
[40] Peak, 'Music and New Woman Aesthetics', 136.
[41] Caird, *Daughters of Danaus,* 318-19.
[42] Ibid, 88 & 110.

female performers in other novels, she must renounce music when she marries in order to effectively re-channel its sensual excitement in a more appropriate direction.[43] Performed music offers no possibility of deviation from these tropes; but written music, Caird proposes, might yet circumvent the essentialist associations between women and musical susceptibility, and provide instead a possibility of economic independence and fulfilment.

Peak suggests Caird validates Hadria as a composer by omitting references to canonical works by male composers. Recognising the canon's exclusionary standards as a cause of women's obscurity, Caird 'refuses to recreate or even acknowledge a patriarchal history and canon, creating instead a new, if fictional, canon that consists entirely of a woman and her compositions'.[44] Yet *The Daughters of Danaus* does allude to male composers, if sparingly, and Caird does not create a new canon so much as critique the existing one, relating its patriarchal strictures to Hadria's failure to ever publish a work which might represent this new woman's canon.[45] After all, Hadria has, according to her sister, 'real musical genius of the first order', but it is 'going to waste'.[46] Caird insinuates this genius by reconfiguring masculine tradition, rather than elevating the forms in which women generally composed. While travelling to Paris, Hadria's imagination is seized by the landscape, which combines with 'the rattle and roar' of the train to plant the seeds of a symphony in her mind.[47] The symphony is a traditionally masculine form, and Hadria's preference for instrumental music further undercuts the association between women and setting 'pretty music to pretty words', as Bulwer Lytton wrote. As 'images of the Past joined hands with visions of the Future' in Hadria's mind, Caird invokes the phraseology of Wagner's *Zukunftsmusik.*[48] Like the music of that movement's male proponents, Hadria's music is 'a new language to casual listeners...rebel music, offensive to the orthodox'.[49]

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[43] See Gillett's survey of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century novels about female violinists, which all end with the woman renouncing music; *Musical Women,* 108-40.
[44] Peak, 'Music and New Woman Aesthetics', 142.
[45] See references to Grieg, Chopin, and Beethoven; Caird, *Daughters of Danaus,* 378 & 88.
[46] Ibid, 267.
[47] Ibid, 295.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid, 321.

Rather than rejecting existing musical standards, Caird appropriates them to prove her protagonist's worth. Hadria's adoption of an 'unorthodox', future-oriented idiom chimes with Caird's own adoption of the musical *Künstlerroman*. Like much New Woman literature, her novel attempts to remedy the previous failure of literature fully to represent women's lives; George Egerton felt that 'in literature…there was only one small plot [for the female author] to tell: the *terra incognita* of herself, as she knew herself to be, not as man liked to imagine her'.[50] Hadria herself is 'oppressed by a sense of the discrepancy between the world that books disclose to me, and the world that I myself inhabit'.[51] Music offered women the possibility of 'express[ing] in music what I could not express in words', as the heroine of Bulwer Lytton's *The Parisians* describes.[52] Thus Caird creates a musical protagonist. One character tells Hadria: 'One would suppose you had lived several lives: you seem to *know* things in such a subtle, intimate fashion!'[53] The composer's ability to enter into multiple perspectives has clear affinities with that of the novelist, but music, with its Romantic associations with the ineffable, suggests 'a new language' (like Hadria's modern style). Other New Woman writers looked to music with similar intentions: Egerton's musically named short story collections, *Keynotes, Discords, Symphonies,* and *Fantasias* (1893-97), included musical notation (often simply a chord shown on a stave) to set their mood, and Sarah Grand's *The Heavenly Twins* (1893) incorporated music in its plot and in the form of notation.[54] Egerton so closely aligned music and literature that a recent reprint of *Symphonies* mistook her not only for a man, but for 'a composer, arranger, and orchestrator'.[55]

Caird also compares the female composer and author – one more able to express women's inner lives, the other more able to realise her works as objects which represented independence and financial reward. Hadria's interactions with musical manuscripts dramatize

[50] Quoted in Sally Ledger, *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the* fin de siècle (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 187.
[51] Caird, *Daughters of Danaus,* 112.
[52] Bulwer Lytton, *The Parisians*, 32.
[53] Caird, *Daughters of Danaus,* 58.
[54] Maura Dunst, '"Melopoetic Composition": Reading Music in Sarah Grand's *The Heavenly Twins* and George Egerton's *Keynotes* and *Discords*', *Nineteenth-Century Gender Studies,* 10, no. 3 (Winter 2014): 1-37.
[55] See George Egerton, *Symphonies* (Leopold Classic Library, 2016).

women's alienation from this form of production. Her tellingly entitled *Futility* is a 'mournful composition' with a 'strange modern character…suggestions of striving and confusion and pain, [which] expressed as only music could express, the yearning and the sadness that burden so many a woman's heart to-day'.[56] As Hadria turns it over in her hands, the score takes on a weight of metaphorical allusion: a testament to one woman's labour in its very materiality, it contains notes which, if performed, would convey the 'striving' and 'yearning' of its creator and of 'many a woman's heart'. Yet the score is a formula for a performance which never takes place. The work's potential value as a product is contingent on its audience – buyers of the sheet music and/or a listening audience – who accord it that value. In both Caird's novel and Corelli's, this audience is lacking. Both protagonists face restrictions in which an explicit argument about propriety masked an implicit argument about property.

Following the Married Women's Property Act in 1882, married women gained rights to their own property. Professional artists, too, had recently obtained greater property rights, under the Berne Convention of 1886. Hadria's *Futility,* if published, could be copyrighted and provide her with the financial independence Caird had advocated in 'Marriage'. The close association of this composition and Hadria's marriage are suggested when, in her turmoil over whether to marry Temperley, she nearly throws *Futility*, 'the once precious offspring of her brain', into the fire.[57] The moment is cast as 'a fit of spite against destiny', where the denotation of 'destiny' is ambiguous – it could refer to the music in her hand, or the contemplated marriage.[58] Yet Caird does not fulfil the *Künstlerroman*'s requirement of the artist's triumph over adversity. *Futility*'s title becomes all too appropriate, as neither Hadria's position as a daughter nor as a wife gives her the freedom she needs, not just to write music, but to sell it and have it performed. Later in the novel, now married, she retrieves the score of *Futility*: 'The sharpness of longing for her lost art cut through her. She half turned from the piano and then

[56] Caird, *Daughters of Danaus,* 467.
[57] Ibid, 113.
[58] Ibid.

went back, as a moth to the flame'.[59] Caird's reinvocation of the 'flame' that nearly consumed the score in the earlier scene reemphasises the impossibility of a material dimension to Hadria's music-making. Her turn to and from the piano makes overt the two poles between which she is caught, the role of composer and of wife.

In Hadria's half-turn away from the piano, holding her work in its material form, we see the central problem of the novel. Peak ascribes it a revisionist intent, suggesting Caird 'implicitly defines music as pure form and sound, largely divorced from culture and time categories'.[60] That *Futility* is never published suggests that the practice of publishing music is among the 'gendered sub-categories with culturally specific histories' which, according to Peak, Caird rejects.[61] Instead, Caird reclaims the affective, embodied experience of music associated with female performers and the piano. Yet the novel does not definitively renounce 'gendered sub-categories'; the idea of *Zukunftsmusik*, for instance, provides the framework for Hadria's innovative music. Similarly, the opportunities of publication are not rejected altogether. Caird's novel, like *Futility,* articulates women's attempts to navigate their own relationship to production. Early in the novel, Hadria laments that women of great ability make a 'scanty living,' while men of mediocre ability are lauded.[62] Her unpublished score represents not commodification, but the hope of more than a 'scanty living': *Futility* arises from 'let[ting] her imagination dwell upon the lives of women, of whatever class', suggesting its socioeconomic poignancy.[63] Penny Boumelha has suggested that New Woman writing deviated from 'one of the central tropes of the male-authored *Künstlerroman*', in which 'the lonely male artist pits himself in adversarial opposition to the inauthentic and commercialized culture of modernity, represented by the masses, the publisher and the banker'.[64] Caird's and Corelli's protagonists see no conflict between artistic integrity and money-making (although, like Eliot's Armgart, they

[59] Ibid, 467.
[60] Peak, 'Music and New Woman Aesthetics', 138.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Caird, *Daughters of Danaus,* 71.
[63] Ibid, 466-67.
[64] Penny Boumelha, 'The Woman of Genius and the Woman of Grub Street: Figures of the Female Writer in British Fin-de-Siècle Fiction', *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920* 40, no. 2 (January 1997): 177.

are absolved from greed by figuring the latter in philanthropic terms). Caird recasts the composer as one in whom genius and commercial success might coexist. Yet as Boumelha comments, the challenging modernity of Hadria's music makes her unlikely to secure performances or publication of her work, and she turns to journalism with the express purpose of making money.[65] Despite Caird's interest in the possibilities of musical expression, the novel upholds prose publication – especially journalism, which Sally Ledger notes was strongly associated with New Women – as more remunerative.[66] For Caird, depicting the failure of the female composer was a way of critiquing women's confinement to less fulfilling artistic roles; for Corelli, depicting this failure strengthened her own resolve in turning from music to literature.

Two years before publishing *A Romance of Two Worlds* under the pseudonym Marie Corelli, Mary Mackay, who had played the piano since youth (encouraged at one time by her neighbour George Meredith), presented herself onstage as 'Signorina Marie Corelli', who 'would perform an Improvisazione – fifteen original pieces of music that were composed as they were played'.[67] Yet she was disappointed with the audience's response, for two reasons linked to wider anxieties about improvisers and 'physical evidence'. According to Alisha Siebers, the *Theatre* critic's review suggested 'some would suspect that Corelli had planned her pieces before her performance', or that there must be physical evidence of this music somewhere.[68] Physically presenting her body in performance, meanwhile, deterred Corelli, and she soon turned to literature instead, citing the 'rush and fatigue of the musical profession'.[69] As the novel she subsequently wrote suggests, her apparent concern with the nervous strain of performing overlaid a deeper preoccupation with conflicting forms of physical evidence of music – the score and the body. *A Romance* shows Corelli not only musing on the cusp of musical and literary

[65] Boumelha, 'The Woman of Genius', 164.
[66] Ledger, *The New Woman*, 181.
[67] Quoted in Siebers, 'Marie Corelli's Magnetic Revitalizing Power', 189.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid.

forms of publication, but on the cusp of her own mass popularity as an author, revealing the composer as a figure against which she formed her artistic identity.

The protagonist of *A Romance* remains unnamed throughout the novel. Corelli was especially attuned to the importance of naming, having presented herself onstage under a pseudonym which claimed a hereditary connection to the seventeenth-century composer Arcangelo Corelli, a pseudonym she retained after turning to literature. Names, she recognised, could confer prestige and were integral to ownership and copyright. Yet within the theosophical ideology of her novel, all such claims over artistic production are invalid. The protagonist, whose career as an improvising pianist is taking a toll on her health, meets a painter and fellow neurasthenic called Cellini, who recommends a course of therapy with the healer Heliobas, who uses 'electric science' to induce trances.[70] These grant the protagonist an elevated ability to improvise. Yet despite the creativity exhibited in her improvisations, she is consistently denied authority over them. After improvising under Heliobas's influence, the protagonist laments: 'It is lovely, all that music; but it is not mine...Oh, if it were only mine – my very own composition', to which Heliobas responds: 'It is as much yours as anything belongs to anyone...it is a bad sign of poet, painter, or musician, who is arrogant enough to call his work his own'.[71] He tells her she has been 'led astray' by the 'conflicting and vain opinions of mankind', in a 'land where favouritism and backstair influence win the day over even the merits of a Schubert'.[72] The allusion seems apt: in the years immediately following his death in 1828, Schubert was indeed somewhat obscure, the manuscripts of many of his symphonic works still unknown and unlocated. His known works, moreover, were in forms associated with women – songs and short piano compositions. Through the efforts of Liszt from the 1830s, Schubert gradually became better known, with the Hungarian pianist transcribing and improvising upon many of the Viennese composer's works. The message to the protagonist is clear: Schubert was a worthy composer because he did not seek fame, only found it posthumously through the intervention of

[70] Marie Corelli, *A Romance of Two Worlds* (New York: H.M. Caldwell & Co., 1896), 251.
[71] Ibid, 138.
[72] Ibid, 132-33.

others. Heliobas reaffirms a Romantic preference for sacralised composition, disdaining the work's afterlife, and echoes the composer Leo, in Eliot's 'Armgart', who declares approvingly that 'Schubert wrote for silence'.[73]

The parallel with Schubert is, however, misleading, not least because the composer could hardly be considered independently of his publication context by 1886. In 1867, George Grove and Arthur Sullivan unearthed the manuscript of Schubert's incidental music to the play *Rosamunde*, as well as six symphonies. By 1884, publishers Breitkopf & Härtel had begun issuing a complete edition of his works. Most of all, *A Romance* itself mentions a Schubert score, in the room Heliobas has fitted out for the protagonist.[74] In spite of the ostensible similarities between Schubert's position and that of the protagonist – which Heliobas invokes to discourage her hankering after materiality – the presence of the Schubert score makes plain the dissimilarity of their positions. The 'mighty youth' now enjoyed by Schubert, according to Eliot's Leo, came about not because, as he suggests, 'summers came | That warmed the grass above him', but through the deliberate actions of a network of male figures (Liszt, Grove, Sullivan) who collectively secured Schubert's place in music history.[75] Meanwhile, Julie C. Dunbar writes of two of the most accomplished female composers of the nineteenth century: 'Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel and Clara Wieck Schumann rose to surprising levels of fame during their lifetimes, only to diminish on the pages of recorded history thereafter'.[76] The feminist turn of late-twentieth-century musicology began with the rediscovery of scores by these two composers, who had remained in the public consciousness partly through their connections to well-known male composers. Female composers who had no such links and had not been able to publish their works – historical equivalents of the protagonists of Caird's and Corelli's novels – have had to wait longer to be recognised, if at all.

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[73] Eliot, 'Armgart', 842.
[74] Corelli, *A Romance,* 124.
[75] Eliot, 'Armgart', 843-44. Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Brahms were also integral in this process; see Scott Messing, *Schubert in the European Imagination,* 2 vols (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2006).
[76] Julie C. Dunbar, *Women, Music, Culture: An Introduction* (Routledge, 2020), 400.

Another allusion to a male composer in *A Romance* reinforces the patriarchal double standards by which its protagonist is discouraged. Her room also features scores by Wagner, who is held up by Heliobas and his sister Zara as an ideal of ascetic transcendence.[77] As I suggested in chapter one, Wagner's prose rhetoric occluded his shrewd commercialist moves, or the 'branding' identified by recent critics such as Nicholas Vazsonyi. Indeed, Zara figures Wagner as an immortal who 'ha[s] partly forgotten that [he was] ever imprisoned in such a narrow gaol as this world'.[78] Music, following his example, is the 'heaven-born spirit of pure sound', whose immortality the protagonist should not compromise by 'grasp[ing] ashes and drink[ing] wormwood'.[79] Her crushing of the protagonist's ambition is of a piece with the novel's repression of female curiosity, as Siebers argues, referring to Heliobas's method of 'sequestration and containment' and pointing to a reference in the novel to the Bluebeard myth.[80] Siebers notes the mesmeric undertones of Heliobas's practices: he provides the 'suggestion' and generates the protagonist's music in a similar way to Svengali and Trilby. Considering the false parallels he invokes with male composers, Heliobas's appropriation also works to preserve the distinction between men as musical producers and women as reproducers, while obscuring the difficult question of remuneration.

The protagonist takes a pragmatic view of the coexistence of commercial gain and cultural acclaim when she voices her desire to become a composer:

> I have longed, and do long for fame, for wealth, for the world's applause, for all the things which you seem to think so petty and mean. How can I help it? Is not fame power? Is not money a double power, strong to assist one's self and those one loves? Is not the world's favor a necessary means to gain these things?[81]

Corelli's protagonist sounds like a New Woman, overtly craving financial independence and, like Caird's Hadria, dreaming of helping others who strive as she does. Heliobas emphatically denies

[77] Fuller notes that Zara is drastically punished – struck dead by lightning – for her aspirations as a sculptor ('"Cribbed, cabin'd, and confined"', 46, n. 48); Zara's punishment might be apportioned to her desire to present herself as an artist whose medium necessarily foregrounds the body.
[78] Corelli, *A Romance,* 130.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Siebers, 'Marie Corelli's Magnetic Revitalizing Power', 194; Corelli, *A Romance,* 128.
[81] Corelli, *A Romance,* 130.

this craving, however: 'when a work, any work, is completed, it passes out of the labourer's hands'.[82] By reducing the protagonist to 'labourer's hands', he reinforces the inseparability of women and their bodies in the musical context, simultaneously condoning their confinement to commercialist enterprise, rather than exalted creation. Considering the equation of the body and the product in improvisers' performances, Corelli's protagonist's longing to produce a score can be read as a longing for an exchange which does *not* implicate the body. Her yearning is not just for 'fame' and the 'world's applause' but specifically artistic ownership ('that it were only mine…my very own composition'). Yet Heliobas reaffirms the part played by the body even in composing and publishing, telling the protagonist: 'I think the time will come when you will feel that music is almost too sacred a thing to be given away for money to a careless and promiscuous public'.[83] Heliobas's description of the public acts like a transferred epithet: it is not just the public which would be 'careless and promiscuous' should the protagonist publish her works, but the protagonist herself. She ends the novel playing only for her own pleasure, lacking the audience which might confer value on her work.

Siebers speculates that 'Corelli wrote [*A Romance*] in a therapeutic attempt to ennoble her own exhausting and failing efforts to become an inspired musician'.[84] *A Romance*'s protagonist, conscious of the pressures of exhibiting one's body in performance, looks to writing scores instead, but Corelli moved in a different direction. Authors underwent the process of creation privately, and could publish without being exposed to public view. Corelli did not allow photographs of herself to be published – and only then in doctored form – until 1906.[85] She remained interested in female artistry, but her artists were predominantly authors, as in *The Sorrows of Satan* (1895), which cemented her status as a bestselling author. Conscious that listeners to her improvisations doubted their veracity – the suspicion that her pieces were 'planned before her performance', after all, might even invite speculation that they were not by

[82] Ibid, 139.
[83] Ibid, 301.
[84] Siebers, 'Marie Corelli's Magnetic Revitalizing Power', 189.
[85] Brian Masters, *Now Barabbas Was A Rotter: The Extraordinary Life of Marie Corelli* (London: H. Hamilton, 1978), 3-4.

her at all – she viewed literature as an art in which women could more definitively claim authorship, whilst remaining uncompromised by the moral taint of performing. Her subsequent career reveals the fragility of this belief, however. The short story 'Delicia' (1907) is about an author whose husband takes credit for her novels – just as Corelli's brother, Eric, had taken credit for some of hers. Corelli continued to struggle, even after turning away from music, with the question of providing evidence for artistic authority without compromising morality. After Delicia expresses her wish for recognition, Corelli rescues her from the possible charge of vanity or ambition by stressing that she is more attractive, both morally and physically, than her husband. Siebers suggests that Corelli resolved the problem of her own engagement with the marketplace through a 'spiritual withdrawal from worldly interests: the inspiration of her novels, after all, proves her spirituality'.[86]

A question remains about why Corelli upholds an understanding of women's musical production as necessitating exhibition of the body, even though composition was an option (if not, as Caird would suggest the following decade, the most fulfilling one). *A Romance* was her first novel, arising directly from her thwarted career as an improviser. As she cultivated her understanding of what it meant to be a woman selling an artistic product, Corelli reaffirmed a preference for the character of the female author, who combined her aspirations for female artistry and her moral values. *A Romance* was the starting point of concerns which accompanied Corelli throughout her literary career, and the female composer was a figure against which she worked out these concerns. Corelli's novel, by focusing on an improviser who wants to produce scores but is barred from doing so, maintains an equation between the female body and the score as material evidence of the musical product. For Corelli, it is impossible for the woman's body *not* to be implicated in the production of music. In this conviction, she was joined by many of her contemporaries (including Caird, despite her more aspirational outlook on the composer). My next chapter suggests that the gendered distinctions between cerebral mastery over music and susceptibility to its enervating effects began to break down towards the *fin de siècle.* By the

[86] Siebers, 'Marie Corelli's Revitalizing Power', 202.

late nineteenth century, male composers, too, came under suspicion of pathology – their musical abilities making them prone to the twin conditions of madness and genius. To bring together these ideas about pathology with the themes of this chapter, however, I must briefly introduce one final novel about a female composer: Stanley Makower's *Mirror of Music.*

Like Corelli and Sheppard before him, Makower implies that the female composer can only be physically harmed by staging her works. The protagonist of *The Mirror of Music,* Sarah Kaftal, has a nervous breakdown after the debut of her opera, even though she has avoided exhibitionism by taking the unusual step of hiding the orchestra, and herself, behind a curtain. Sarah's relationship to music is intensely naturalistic: she compares Schumann's and Chopin's music to the sound of flowing streams, and cannot 'look at anything without imagining that it was existent only in relation to a musical standard'.[87] As in Caird's novel, innate musicality does not so much vindicate the female composer's abilities as spell danger. (Here my argument deviates from that of Akemi Yoshida, one of the few critics to discuss the novel. Yoshida reads Sarah's innate musicality along Schopenhauerian lines, suggesting Makower's subversive valorisation of female genius. As my next chapter elaborates, I find Makower's presentation of Sarah's genius far more ambivalent – especially because the earlier Schopenhauerian model was now inflected with associations of feminine pathology).[88] Makower draws on contemporary associations between music, water, and unbridled female sexuality, which Lawrence Kramer has explored, suggesting the importance of Wagner's endless melody in inaugurating a new, fluid model for desire.[89] Sarah herself denigrates Wagner's musical theories, but Makower's narrative

[87] Stanley V. Makower, *The Mirror of Music* (London: John Lane, 1895), 88.
[88] Akemi Yoshida, 'Stanley Makower's Contribution to the "Woman Composer Question": A Reading of The Mirror of Music (1895)', *New Directions* 33 (2015): 33-58.
[89] Lawrence Kramer, 'Musical Form and Fin-de-Siècle Sexuality', in *Music as Cultural Practice, 1800-1900* (Oxford: University of California Press, 1990), 135-75. See also Suzanne F. Cooper, 'The Liquefaction of Desire: Music, Water, and Femininity in Victorian Aestheticism', *Women: A Cultural Review* 20, no. 2 (2009): 186-201.

ultimately turns a Wagnerian trope on her, making her intense bodily engagement with music her downfall.[90]

The Mirror of Music is curiously split between giving voice to the female composer – most of the narrative is comprised of her diary – and silencing, then punishing, her.[91] Makower includes musical notation in his text more extensively than his contemporaries Egerton and Grand, and probably more than any nineteenth-century author. Yet none of this notation shows the music Sarah composes, only the works of Beethoven, Schumann, and Chopin. Sarah's struggle therefore resembles that of Caird's and Corelli's protagonists: even in a novel full of her voice, her music has no textual form. Like her fellow female composers, her *Künstlerroman* narrative is complicated by the romantic plot. Isolated by her immersion in music, Sarah can only form a bond with the violinist Severine, who helps her to complete the opera whose debut causes her breakdown. After Sarah's death in an asylum, Severine obtains her diary and presents it to his club companions, forming the novel's framing narrative. As I argue in the next chapter, this frame confines female musical creativity within acceptable limits – these acceptable limits being, I have suggested here, artistic failure. The novel's punitive treatment of its musical mad genius suggests a need for the literary text to contain music's destabilising potential, all the more so as discourses of degeneracy and pathology encroached upon the musical sphere.

[90] William Blissett suggests the novel's 'Wagnerian shorthand' prefigures that of many twentieth-century novels, in 'Wagnerian Fiction in English', *Criticism* 5, no. 3 (Summer 1963), n.10; but a closer look at the novel reveals that Sarah makes important qualifications to Wagner's theories.

[91] The unusual representation of a female protagonist by a male author recurred in Makower's next novel, *Cecilia* (1897).

6. *Fin-de-siècle* Representations of the Composer as Mad Genius

Is Wagner a man at all? Is he not rather a disease?[1]

Friedrich Nietzsche, 'The Case of Wagner' (1888)

Literature at the end of the nineteenth century revived and transformed the Romantic figure of the composer as both a genius and mentally ill or mad. Where the association between madness and musical brilliance had been used by authors earlier in the century to explore the limits of originality, the imagination, and expression, by the end of the century, authors took a pathological view informed by developments across various sciences. The long-standing ambiguity of music as both medicine and malady gained renewed significance in the context of degeneration, as the personal health or illness of the composer was linked with the potential of their works to induce health or illness in listeners. This chapter focuses on Vernon Lee's short story, 'A Wicked Voice' (1890), and Stanley Makower's novel, *The Mirror of Music* (1895), in which composer protagonists are both creator and victim of dangerous music. After introducing the paradigm of the composer as a mad genius in Romantic literature, I discuss the changes wrought to this figure at the *fin de siècle,* noting the entrance of discourses of degeneration and decadence into writing about music.

Nietzsche's characterisation of Wagner as not a 'man' but a 'disease' exemplifies the late nineteenth century's revision of the figure of the mad genius composer through the lens of new understandings of the genius's social responsibilities. The Romantic composer's madness had been emblematic of his exemption, as a genius, from the laws of society. Such privileges were tempered as discourses at the intersection of popular science and biography bolstered the idea that genius and insanity were two sides of the same coin. Evolutionary science promoted theories of developmentalism, highlighting the necessity of state intervention into the health (physical, moral, cultural) of the populace. The need for the composer, as producer of an ever more accessible and popular art, to be themselves 'healthy' therefore altered perceptions of the previously exalted mad genius.

[1] Nietzsche, 'Case of Wagner', 11.

'A Wicked Voice' and *The Mirror of Music* were both published by John Lane, best known for *The Yellow Book* and his *Keynotes* series, which provided platforms for several writers identified with decadence. Little is known about Makower, but Oscar Wilde read his novel and praised it as 'a most subtle analysis of the relations between music and a soul', even writing: 'I know of nothing else in literature where this motif is treated with anything like your skill of analysis and power of presentation'.[2] This suggests *The Mirror of Music's* correspondence with a decadent perspective on music, which I outline in this introduction. Yet the relationship of Makower and Lee to decadence is equivocal. Both condemn decadence by representing the genius composer as pathologized and music as fatally affective, and offer apparently healthy alternatives in unified, ordered form. Yet the figure of the mad genius is ultimately decadent in its effects, triggering questions about the artwork's temporal, moral, and interpretive dimensions. Post-Romantic developments in pathology, physiology, acoustics, and aesthetics inform these texts' presentation of the power of music to harm not only its listeners but its creators, and finally to destabilise the literary text itself.

The resumption of the literary figure of the 'mad genius' composer suggests renewed interest in the Romantic composer's more extreme manifestations. Psychologist James Sully remarked in 1885 that 'we meet in modern literature with an unmistakable tendency to maintain the old association of ideas' between genius and madness, even though 'the modern mind has ceased to see in insanity a supernatural agency'.[3] Themes from earlier accounts of musical madness recur, particularly a challenge to the limits of signification. The mad musician, John Hamilton suggests, connotes 'nonrepresentability', destabilising the artwork's traditional mimetic function. He writes: 'as metaphors of nonrepresentability, music and madness could introduce into a text the nonrepresentability of the self. They could open up, within

[2] *The Complete Letters of Oscar Wilde,* ed. Merlin Holland & Rupert Hart-Davis (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2001), 946.
[3] James Sully, 'Genius and Insanity', *Nineteenth Century* 17, no. 100 (June 1885): 951.

representational language, a new dimension that exceeds or eludes representation'.[4] He continues: 'Considered romantically as spheres that challenge the norms of denotation and signification, music and madness may be said to define the upper and lower limits of language, respectively'.[5] Before looking at decadence's recapitulation of themes of music and madness to challenge norms in this way, it is worth first pausing on earlier representations of the mad genius composer.

The mad genius was the archetypal Romantic artist, with his originality, irrationality, emotional extremes, and divine or supernatural inspiration. French and German Romantic writing in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries continually linked genius and madness; in Britain, too, De Quincey and Coleridge figured the genius as, Francesca Brittan writes, 'a dreamer whose art evolved from the fantastic visions generated by a mind reaching beyond the rational language of the sensible world'.[6] The composer, whose work involved communion with the divine, untrammelled by earthly considerations such as subject or material form, was a particularly elevated example. In Hoffmann's 'epoch-making statement of Romantic theory', his 1810 review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, genius is constituted by 'originality' and 'authority', key qualities ensuring that the composer 'bears the romanticism of music' in his work.[7] Beethoven himself became a quasi-mythological figure, his works providing evidence of his supernatural being.[8] Bettina Brentano wrote to Goethe that Beethoven's music displayed 'a divine magic that is an element of spiritual nature…all he could tell you about is pure magic'.[9] Madness was an apparently inevitable offshoot of this genius. An inability to live in the world as 'ordinary' people do was evidence of communion with the otherworldly. Brittan, exploring

[4] John Hamilton, *Music, Madness, and the Unworking of Language* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 6.
[5] Hamilton, *Music, Madness, and the Unworking of Language,* 5.
[6] Francesca Brittan, 'Berlioz and the Pathological Fantastic: Melancholy, Monomania, and Romantic Autobiography', *19th-Century Music* 29, no. 3 (Spring 2006): 229.
[7] Charlton, *E.T.A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings,* 236; Hoffmann, 'Beethoven's Fifth Symphony', 239.
[8] See Knittel, ;The Construction of Beethoven;, in *Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music,* ed. Samson, 118-50, and my discussion in chapter one of Barthes's term 'bio-mythology'.
[9] Letter to Goethe, 10 May 1810, in *Movements, Currents, Trends: Aspects of European Thought in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Eugen Weber (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath, 1922), 127.

Hector Berlioz's use of the *idée fixe* as both musical device and signifier of pathology, argues that he presents 'the profile of the creative genius as it emerged in popular and medical discourse in the early decades of the nineteenth century – a solipsistic, delusional, and potentially dangerous persona whose artistic prowess was linked ever more clearly with pathology, and often with the fixations and violent emotions of the monomaniac'.[10]

Yet at the height of Romanticism, literature celebrated the mad genius composer as the ideal artist. In Wackenroder's 'Remarkable Life of the Tone-Poet Joseph Berglinger' (1796, in *Outpourings of an Art-Loving Friar*), Berglinger displays several attributes which became integral to the Romantic composer: vocational devotion even to the detriment of health, societal opposition, and 'possession' by inspiration. Though he eventually dies of nervous exhaustion – a fate which hangs over Lee's and Makower's fictional composers – Wackenroder insists that he is a genius (inspired spontaneously, not through 'mechanical scientific reasoning'), and, moreover, 'God had set him on the earth to become a musical genius'.[11] Similar attributes characterise Hoffmann's Kreisler, who so significantly shaped later imaginings of the composer. Tormented by restlessness and ostracization, Kreisler figures 'the spirit of music' as his salvation, 'at whose mighty voice all the pains of earthly tribulations die away', striking the other characters by turns as 'a charmingly strange, musical phantom' and a 'weird madman'.[12] Both marked by madness in themselves, and otherworldly and uncanny in their effects, Berglinger and Kreisler betoken Romantic authors' use of the figure of the composer to gesture beyond the limits of linguistic signification while plumbing the mysterious depths of music's impact.

Kreisler is an important precedent for *Daniel Deronda*'s Klesmer, whom da Sousa Correa calls 'chimingly named' in honour of Hoffmann's composer. 'A strange, somewhat disturbing figure', who recalls 'the uncanny elements in German Romantic literature', Klesmer wears 'magic spectacles' and is present when Gwendolen impersonates Hermione and a panel flies

[10] Brittan, 'Berlioz and the Pathological Fantastic', 238.
[11] W.F. Wackenroder, *Outpourings of an Art-Loving Friar* (New York: Ungar, 1975), 110-11, 116.
[12] Hoffmann, *Tomcat Murr*, 132 & 135.

open, seemingly inexplicably.[13] Like his Romantic precursors, Klesmer is a mix of the saintly and demonic, striking Mab Meyrick as a 'dreadfully divining personage – evidently Satan in grey trousers', but equally behaving with a 'keen and thoroughly kind sensibility'.[14] *Daniel Deronda* also features the commonplace Romantic view that genius is not '*en règle*' but 'comes into the world to make new rules'.[15] Yet this exceptionalism had already undergone considerable revision by the time Eliot was writing (indeed, Klesmer himself espouses a rather more prosaic idea of genius as 'little more than a great capacity for receiving discipline').[16] Eliot's representation sits at the cusp of the *fin-de-siècle* return to the mad genius composer. As Hamilton describes, Kreisler's 'problem' consisted of being caught 'between madness as heightened consciousness and as utter dementia', making him characteristic of 'an age assured of music's power but uncertain where it might lead'.[17] By the end of the century, armed with advanced empirical understandings of music's physiological effects, writers had a better idea of music's potential – including its impact on the literary text.

The function of the composer as both mad and a genius in the following literary texts is intimately connected with decadence. Decadent writing generally evinces, according to Matei Călinescu, 'a style that has done away with traditional authoritarian requirements such as unity, hierarchy, objectivity, etc.'.[18] Music suggestively facilitated this style, and its two key qualities for the decadent author were already recognised in Romanticism: its abstraction and its encapsulation of fugitive aesthetic experience. In previous chapters, I have suggested Du Maurier's *Trilby* re-evaluates the qualities Călinescu mentions. Like Wilde's ideal critic, *Trilby* offers an approach to art which 'make[s] all interpretations true, and no interpretation final', proposing to the listener: 'See! what does the composer count for?'[19] Displacing the magical,

[13] Da Sousa Correa, *George Eliot, Music, and Victorian Culture,* 177-79.
[14] Eliot, *Deronda,* 453 & 450.
[15] Ibid, 94.
[16] Ibid, 238.
[17] Hamilton, *Music, Madness, and the Unworking of Language*, 1.
[18] Matei Călinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1987), 171.
[19] Wilde, 'The Critic as Artist', 1129; Du Maurier, *Trilby,* 213.

supernatural, or divine source for the genius's inspiration, Du Maurier situates musical value in a web of interconnected and intertextual processes, making disturbingly visible the idea of influence at the heart of every work. In presenting possession as a tenet of musical experience and a metaphor for problematising authorship, as well as suggesting music's pathological potential, *Trilby* resembles the two texts in this chapter; but Lee and Makower warrant separate study for their more ambivalent engagement with decadence. Ultimately, their focus on music's impact on its creators (rather than listeners or performers) is unique, and foregrounds their concerns with the origins of the text itself. Like the other authors in this study, in representing the musical genius, these authors reflect on and problematise their own creative work.

In contrast to their contemporaries, Lee and Makower attempt to reimpose order on music. For instance, George Egerton's epigraph to *Keynotes* (1893) described her musically inspired collection as 'fancies', suggesting: 'to write them down is to destroy them'.[20] Egerton shifts the literary text towards a musical quality – the fleeting experience of performance – recalling Pater's infamous claim that '*all art constantly aspires towards the condition of music*'.[21] Lee's and Makower's texts place faith in writing things down. Literary form and the lasting object of the written text appear as ways of combating the newly pathologized experience of listening to music. Framing the composer against contexts of degeneration, these two authors emphasised the potential for breakdown as a result of Romantic excess. Madness is not only a theme with which these writers engage, but an aesthetic effect produced by the disturbance of the relationship between creator, work, and spectator.

The end of the century saw a wave of discussions about aesthetic breakdown, and also the first recorded usage of the term 'nervous breakdown'.[22] Diagnostic terms suffixed with 'mania' proliferated, including 'melomania' or musical madness (giving James Huneker the title

[20] George Egerton, *Keynotes* (London: Elkin Mathews and John Lane, 1894), n.p.
[21] Pater, *Renaissance,* 140.
[22] According to the *OED*, 'breakdown' is first preceded by the adjective 'nervous' – indicating a specifically mental affliction – in 1884.

for his 1902 story collection *Melomaniacs*).[23] The discourses I survey below, around genius, madness, and the composer, culminated with a writer who enumerated various manias, and the composer to whom he applied them: Max Nordau, author of the bestselling *Degeneration* (*Entartung,* 1892), and Richard Wagner. Nordau devotes an entire chapter of *Degeneration* to demonstrating that Wagner is 'in himself alone charged with a greater abundance of degeneration than all the degenerates put together with whom we have hitherto become acquainted'.[24] For Nordau, Wagner's use of endless melody was a manifestation of his pathology, and he notes 'corresponding mental processes among [the] different groups of degenerate subjects' he had observed under the tutelage of the neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot.[25] Throughout *Degeneration*'s case studies of prominent *fin-de-siècle* cultural figures, Nordau renders negligible the differences between these artists and the criminals whom his other mentor, Cesare Lombroso, studied, thus imposing broad social and moral imperatives on the arts. An important mania with which Nordau diagnosed Wagner was 'graphomania', due to his copious writings.[26] The composer as compulsive writer is an essential image for both texts in this chapter: experiencing melomania, or the adverse physical and mental effects of performed music, the protagonists turn to writing, putting pen to paper both to create notated scores and to narrate their experiences in prose. Yet the prominent association of composers with graphomania, encapsulated in Nordau's writing on Wagner, inverts the function of writing in Lee's and Makower's texts. Their compulsive writing becomes a further testament to madness.

New conceptions of music's physiological effects made melomania a tangible possibility, not just a literary fantasy. Romantic writing had promoted music as transcendent, spiritual, and resistant to scientific explanation, yet mid-century research (for example, Helmholtz's work on the *Sensations of Tone,* 1863) validated long-standing connections between music and the body. Neurology, then positioned at the intersection of physical and mental health, provided a

[23] See Vernon Lee, *Studies of the Eighteenth Century in Italy* (London: W. Satchell & Co., 1880), 115.
[24] Max Nordau, *Degeneration* (London: William Heinemann, 1898), 171.
[25] Ibid, 199.
[26] Ibid, 171.

framework for understanding how music might have physical consequences beyond the nerves – as in scientific tracts which claimed excessive exposure to music could threaten women's childbearing capacities. In discussions about its physical and mental harmfulness, music was drawn into the ambit of a concept which increasingly influenced how European writers across the cultural, political, and medical spheres thought about subversions of normativity: degeneration.

Most importantly to the texts in this chapter, degenerationist discourse posited a common source for genius and madness. Bénédict Morel's foundational study, *Traité des dégénérescences physiques, intellectuelles, et morales* (1857), conceived of degeneration as a societal ill, both an environmental defect and an inheritable condition. The definition and symptoms of degeneration varied from writer to writer. Lombroso's taxonomy, in *The Man of Genius* (1888), includes apathy, melancholy, paranoia, vanity, sensitivity to sound and colour, left-handedness, and 'excessive originality'.[27] Celebrated by Hoffmann as a facet of Beethoven's genius, originality, in the post-Romantic context, now indicated the proximity of genius to madness. In 1859, Jacques-Joseph Moreau de Tours wrote of geniuses that 'the originality of their thoughts and their ideas' had its source 'in the same organic conditions as the various moral maladies, of which madness and idiocy are the most complete expression'.[28]

Fears that geniuses were tainted became so widespread that Francis Galton, whose 1869 *Hereditary Genius* incited interest in genius as a scientific category, reissued the work in 1892 with a preface asserting that genius was *not* inherently degenerate. Yet popular scientific studies, such as N.K. Royse's *A Study of Genius* and J.F. Nisbet's *The Insanity of Genius* (both 1891), continued to speculate on the madness of prominent geniuses. If genius was, as Kathleen Slaugh-Sanford writes, 'a manifestation of degenerate behaviours', then, scientists claimed, 'geniuses were engendering the regression of superior races both biologically and culturally…as

[27] Lombroso, *Man of Genius,* 5-6.
[28] Jacques-Joseph Moreau de Tours*, La Psychologie morbide dans ses rapports avec la philosophie de l'histoire de l'influence des névropathes sur la dynamisme intellectuel* (Paris: Victor Masson, 1859), foreword.

their bodies and minds were sites of disease and disorder, their art was viewed as a contagion that infected the public'.[29] What had previously been a moral question – as those suffering from mental illness were pitied or feared – was newly given socio-political emphasis. Morel's protégé Magnan argued in 1895: 'degeneracy is more than an individual disease, it is a social menace: it is important to combat it with a rigorous form of social hygiene'.[30]

In this context, music writers tried to assert the positive impact of music, and its genius composers, on society. C.H.H. Parry's *Studies of Great Composers* (1887) created a narrative of continuous progress redolent of the Great Chain of Being notion current in evolutionary theory, making the individual biographies of composers ontogenically representative of the phylogenic development of music history: 'after preliminary difficulties had been overcome by men whose names have for the most part passed out of remembrance, the great heroes of the art came upon the scene, and with strenuous vigour made sure of one new province of art after another'.[31] The individual genius 'helps to raise others towards his level', Parry writes of Brahms, praising the 'picture of a noble mind…presented in his work'.[32] This elision of the composer and his work derives from Romantic models of subjectivity, but Parry's conscious employment of a scientific mode of discourse, and promotion of 'noble' and sane genius, are anti-Romantic.

However, much writing about composers asserted the indissolubility of life and works to argue for composers' negative impact. Towards the end of the century, the genre of pathography was born.[33] A form of biography focused on pathology, pathographies became important in relation to composers because, by using a composer's life to identify degenerate characteristics in their work, these texts offered a way of interpreting music amidst encroaching fears about its dangerous effects. As 'the most subjective manifestation of [their] thought',

[29] Kathleen Slaugh-Sanford, 'Declaring Genius: Literary and Scientific Claims of Artistic Genius in late-Victorian Britain' (PhD diss., University of Delaware, 2012), 136.
[30] Valentin Magnan & Paul Legrain, *Les dégénérés* (Paris: Rueff, 1895), 235.
[31] C.H.H. Parry, *Studies of Great Composers* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1889), 289; see Bennett Zon, *Evolution and Victorian Musical Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).
[32] Parry, *Studies of Great Composers,* 365.
[33] James Kennaway, 'Musical Pathology in the Nineteenth Century: Richard Wagner and Degeneration' (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2004), 49.

according to Lombroso, a composer's music might be symptomatic of illness, and like the symptoms of physical illness, it could be contagious.[34] Pathographies of composers ranged from Dr. Theodor Puschmann's *Richard Wagner: eine psychiatrische Studie* (1872) to Paul Julius Möbius's *Über Robert Schumanns Krankheit* (1906), reaching a fever pitch with Oswald Feis's claim in *Studien über die Genealogie der Psychologie der Musiker* (1910) that an 'extraordinary number' of composers had been mentally ill.[35] Lombroso lists several 'morbid men of genius in music', including Mozart, Beethoven, Schumann, Donizetti, Handel, Hoffmann, and Gluck.[36] Composers' pathology now became essential, not incidental: Sand's neurotic version of Chopin in *Lucrezia Floriani* had been incidental, merely reflecting Chopin's actual ill health, whereas later depictions imply an essential link between musicians and ill health. These views were not limited to the Continent. In the hugely popular *Music and Morals*, Haweis suggests a work's morality is entirely determined by that of its creator, since music itself is a 'perfectly un-moral' drug, 'given one day as a poison and another day as a medicine': 'The morality lies in…the agent who administers it'.[37]

Frequently, and only more so after his death in 1883, Wagner appeared at the centre of these discourses. Indeed, Lee's Wagner-infused story of haunting by a disembodied voice analogises his posthumous persistence as a figure through whom writers projected, rejected, and rebuilt notions about the ethical importance of the composer. In writing about Wagner, a more broadly significant debate played out: if a composer falls out of the confines of normativity – through genius and/or madness – should their work be revered or feared? Nietzsche's summation is characteristic: not only is Wagner's art 'diseased', but he '*has made music sick*', prompting the speculation, 'Is Wagner a man at all? Is he not rather a disease?'[38] ('Nietzsche *contra* Wagner' was subtitled 'Out of the Files of a Psychologist'.) By 1906, Daniel Spitzer

[34] Lombroso, *Man of Genius,* 208.
[35] Quoted in Kennaway, 'Musical Pathology', 48.
[36] Lombroso, *Man of Genius,* 208.
[37] Haweis, *Music and Morals,* 45.
[38] Nietzsche, 'Case of Wagner', 13 & 11 (emphasis original); Wagner to some degree encouraged this speculation, as Romantic madness was part of his model of the ideal composer. The motto over his house in Bayreuth, Wahnfried, read, 'Here…my delusions find peace'.

referred to 'the writings of Lombroso, [Richard] Krafft-Ebing and Nordau' as foundational, to claim pathography's value in 'helping us understand the relationship between the physical nature of man and his mental creations, binding them together in an indissoluble unity' (Spitzer's own book collated letters between Wagner and his silk supplier to prove the composer's effeminacy).[39] Parry's evolutionist account placed Wagner at the pinnacle of musical development, while Nordau argued that 'what [Wagner] takes for evolution is retrogression, and a return to a primeval human, nay, to a pre-human stage'.[40] These contrasting notions of music's progressive or atavistic associations, and therefore the degenerative or regenerative capacities of the composer, reappear in Lee's and Makower's writing. As someone who modelled himself on the Romantic genius composer, but was transfigured into a prime representative of late-nineteenth-century degeneracy, Wagner embodies the shift in representations of musical genius and madness.[41]

In the following texts, music's affective and interpretative challenges are concentrated on the composer, so that both texts re-evaluate Romantic genius. Firstly, the composer's assumed rational mastery over music is undermined by narratives which collapse the boundaries between composer and listener, proving music's potent impact on the mind and body of both parties. As my previous chapter found, depictions of female composers made music inextricable from bodily affect: although the composer stood at one remove from the more directly affective process of performance, she was still vulnerable to physical consequences. Although these ideas were mainly worked out in relation to the female composer, by the late nineteenth century they were widely applied to male composers too, as the pathographies I mention above imply. Moreover, the fictional texts I discuss reconfigure the inherited concept of music as a highly subjective expression of the composer's psyche, as these

[39] Daniel Spitzer, *Briefe Richard Wagners an eine Putzmacherin* (Vienna: n. p., 1906), x-xi.
[40] Nordau, *Degeneration,* 176; for Parry on Wagner, see Bennett Zon, 'From Great Man to Fittest Survivor: Reputation, recapitulation, and survival in Victorian concepts of Wagner's genius', *Musicae Scientiae* 13, no. 2 (September 2009): 415-45.
[41] Much has been written about Wagner's idolisation of Beethoven, including a full-length study by Klaus Kropfinger, *Wagner and Beethoven: Richard Wagner's Reception of Beethoven* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

fictional composers are alienated from a sense of authority over their work. The endlessly suggestive dichotomy between music as a written object and as a performed experience is essential to these texts. Both look to written modes to stabilise meaning, yet ultimately privilege understandings of musical meaning as contingent on performance, not just the score, and shaped by the listener. In *The Renaissance*, Pater places music at the forefront of his theory of a spectator-centred approach to art, which asks: 'What is this song or picture…*to me?* What effect does it really produce on me?'[42] David Weir notes this challenge to 'the classical notion of art as representation' as typical of decadent style: 'the novel in the hands of the decadent writer…places less value on the conventional devices of realism and naturalism than on the effects of language itself'.[43] Depictions of musical madness centre on alienation, rather than the mimetic function associated with healthy aesthetic experience. Decadence recouped Romanticism's interest in the limits of representation and the push towards abstraction, and therefore in music. Wilde calls music 'the perfect type of art' because it 'can never reveal its ultimate secret'.[44] Much as mid-century scientific advances threatened to reveal the secrets which Romantic writing had cultivated, writers continued to imbue music with inexplicable abilities and significance. Music's abstractions are alluring for Lee and Makower, as for their decadent contemporaries, yet their focus on pathology underscores their belief that to break down the artwork and its meaning is dangerous. Blending melomania and graphomania, their texts themselves become attempts at recuperation, asking how far music can be contained by the text's rational framework.

Genius Possessed: 'A Wicked Voice'

> by a phenomenon well known to psychologists, the music and the hearer seem to exchange place and function. You seem to be living *in the music.*[45]

[42] Pater, *Renaissance*, x (emphasis original).
[43] Weir, *Decadence and the Making of Modernism,* 14-15.
[44] Wilde, 'The Critic as Artist', 1129.
[45] Vernon Lee, 'The Religious and Moral Status of Wagner', *Fortnightly Review* 89, no. 533 (May 1911): 882 (emphasis original).

Published in the collection *Hauntings* in 1890, Vernon Lee's short story 'A Wicked Voice' deals, like the other stories, with the uncanny properties of an artwork, but uniquely among them, it takes music as its form of haunting. While staying in Venice, Magnus, a Nordic composer at work on a music-drama called *Ogier the Dane*, is intrigued and repelled by the tale he hears from a Count Alvise, about the harmful, then curative, then finally fatal effect of the eighteenth-century castrato Zaffirino's singing on his 'great-grand-aunt, the Procuratessa Vendramin'.[46] The story's setting and the Procuratessa's surname both evoke Wagner, who stayed at the Palazzo Vendramin on visits to Venice, dying there in 1883, and Carlo Caballero reads Magnus as a representation of Wagner, noting the resonances of the 'gn' sound in both names, and the inversion of the initial 'W' as 'M'.[47] Magnus becomes increasingly fixated on the voice, dreaming that he hears it, then actually hearing it, until he, like the Procuratessa, succumbs to illness. By the end, Magnus's creative abilities are inhibited by this obsession, which now compels him to compose not in the modern, Wagnerian idiom he intends, but in the style of eighteenth-century *opera seria*.

Juxtaposing eighteenth-century music with the Wagnerian Magnus, the tale evinces a characteristic *fin-de-siècle* concern with the incursion of the past into the present. Existing readings of the tale as Lee's agonistic grappling with Wagner can be nuanced by considering how Lee engages music's aesthetic properties, and ideas about the composer, to enter into a critical dialogue with decadence. Incorporating music as a form of haunting, the story affirms Stefano Evangelista's recent description of Lee's use of the supernatural as a 'subtle category of perception that uncovers forgotten histories'.[48] Because of its reliance on performance, music takes on a singular ability to transplant these histories into the present day. The tale promotes eighteenth-century vocal music as a salve for modern ills, but the very ephemerality of that music – its refusal to be captured by textual form – renders it unstable. Much as it wishes to

[46] Vernon Lee, 'A Wicked Voice', in *Hauntings: Fantastic Stories* (London: John Lane, 1896), 202.
[47] Carlo Caballero, '"A Wicked Voice": On Vernon Lee, Wagner, and the Effects of Music', *Victorian Studies* 35, no. 4 (Summer 1992): 401; Emma Sutton offers a similar reading in *Aubrey Beardsley and British Wagnerism*, 65-68.
[48] Evangelista, *Literary Cosmopolitanism,* 98.

implement music as an artefact of a bygone era, the story shows music to be ripe for decontextualization, defamiliarization, and heightened physiological intensity. Intrigued by the sense that music 'is our own creation, yet it is foreign to ourselves', Lee deliberately fuses and confuses the creation and reception of music: the victimised listener is also a composer himself.[49] This was an implicit revision of Romantic models. Lee's musing on music's 'foreignness' even to its creators occurred in an essay on Hoffmann's Kreisler in *Belcaro* (1881), in which she claimed – with some trepidation – that 'the crazy musician of Hoffmann is but the older brother of all our modern composers'.[50] 'A Wicked Voice' sets this Romantic precedent against the decadent present, uncovering shared concerns in both eras with extremes of representation and interpretation, distilled in the figure of the mad genius composer.

This story, centred on music as an 'execrable power that forces' the listener into involuntary attention, echoes Nietzsche's characterisation of Wagner as a 'disease' and bears interpretation alongside Lee's later writing, in which Wagner persistently appears as an archetypal 'genius' and 'wizard'.[51] Rather than celebrating the genius's wizardry (as in Brentano's description of Beethoven's 'divine magic'), post-Romantic texts treat magic as an insidious effect. As music became a metaphor for the loss of self-possession, Wagner assumed central importance, in discussions across the arts, as a figure of the artist as overbearing dictator.[52] For many *fin-de-siècle* commentators, Wagner's music overwhelmed formalist strategies, put forward in works like Hanslick's *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen* (1854) and Edmund Gurney's *The Power of Sound* (1880), for listening to music actively, uninfluenced by its creator's 'magic'. For Hanslick, listeners are always in danger of falling into 'passive receptivity' because of music's 'inscrutable affinities of a physiological order'. They risk becoming not 'observant' but 'pathological', 'in a state of waking dreaminess and lost in a sounding nullity; their minds are

[49] Vernon Lee, *Belcaro: Being Essays on Sundry Aesthetical Questions* (London: W. Satchell & Co., 1881), 106.
[50] Lee, *Belcaro,* 113.
[51] Lee, 'A Wicked Voice', 197; Lee, 'Religious and Moral Status of Wagner', 879.
[52] See Pick, *Svengali's Web,* on music not only as a metaphor for challenges to the individual's self-possession, but as an active ingredient in performances of mesmerism and hypnotism throughout the century.

constantly on the rack of suspense and expectancy'.[53] Hanslick recommended cultivating the 'exclusive activity of the intellect', warning that 'a predominant action of the feelings' – too great a concession to music's affective dimensions – can result only in 'a *pathological* relation'.[54] Nordau contended that Wagner's music made active listening impossible, its endless melody keeping the listener on this 'rack of suspense'.[55] Hanslick had appended a preface to a reissue of *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen* in 1885 referring to Wagner's 'doctrine of the 'infinite melody', i.e., formlessness exalted into a principle – the intoxicating effect of opium manifested both in vocal and instrumental music'. [56]

Making similar references to hypnotism and intoxication, Lee concurred. Presenting a scientifically informed perspective on music that was, Shafquat Towheed points out, almost unique among her literary peers, Lee warns about music's physiological effects: 'the vast majority will always receive it not actively through the intellect, but passively through the nerves…meanwhile, the soul is being made into a sop'.[57] When Lee claims that music conveys the suggestions 'of emotion itself, of the expression thereof in our bodily feelings and movements', she draws on the etymological derivation of the word 'emotion' as connoting an actual motor response.[58] Music which simulates the emotion of sadness produces a complementary, but inorganic, reaction: 'We weep, but know not why'.[59] It is important, therefore, to be an active listener, as Lee stated in agreement with Gurney (whose *Power of Sound* she read multiple times).[60] She elaborated on her long-held distinction between 'hearers' and 'listeners' in the later study *Music and its Lovers* (1930), sorting the musically literate, such

[53] Hanslick, *Beautiful in Music*, 89-90.
[54] Ibid, 12.
[55] Nordau, *Degeneration,* 199-205.
[56] Hanslick, *Beautiful in Music,* 6.
[57] Shafquat Towheed, 'The Science of Musical Memory: Vernon Lee and the Remembrance of Sounds Past', in *Words and Notes in the Long Nineteenth Century,* ed. Weliver & Ellis, 73; Vernon Lee, 'Beauty and Sanity', *Fortnightly Review* 58, 344 (August 1895), 262.
[58] Lee, 'Beauty and Sanity', 266; see *OED* etymology of 'emotion' as combining the 'ex-' prefix and 'movere'.
[59] Lee, 'Beauty and Sanity', 261.
[60] Towheed, 'Science of Musical Memory', 75.

as composers and performers, into the latter category.[61] They are more likely to recognise that 'music has a logic of its own', so 'the effect on the nerves is overlooked, neutralised, in the activity of the intellect'.[62]

The expectation of the composer's intellectual relationship to music (especially a composer with 'some few grains of genius') lends 'A Wicked Voice' the 'folly' and 'ridiculous' quality on which its protagonist remarks, that he should be so possessed by music that he ends up 'wasted by a strange and deadly disease'.[63] Magnus insists that he is 'but half-bewitched, since I am conscious of the spell that binds me', yet it is this half-conscious attention that Lee warns against in later writing about Wagner.[64] Through the *leitmotif,* the hearer is tricked into believing they are paying attention, when in fact they are 'worn out by reiteration and lack of rhythm, harassed by anticlimaxes and false starts…safely imprisoned by the recurrence, the familiarity of those obvious and unforgettable little tunes'.[65] Magnus evidently falls under such a category of hearers, 'imprisoned in that Wagner performance as in the dark auditorium' – his subjection to Zaffirino's voice takes place in an obscure location resembling 'a dark box in a half-lighted theatre'.[66] Far from embodying Lee's musically enlightened listener, Magnus is repeatedly subject to physiological attacks. The erotic nature of this affect has motivated various queer readings, and critics have suggested Lee is not wholly censorious towards the wicked voice, but rather interested in its dual capacity for producing pleasure and pain.[67] The attacks also suggest Lee's revision of Romantic precedents. Magnus records how Count Alvise's tale is 'sending the blood to my brain and making me mad'; that, on hearing the voice, 'my arteries throbbed', 'my hair was clammy, my knees sank beneath me, an enervating heat spread

[61] Vernon Lee, *Music and its Lovers* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1933), 149.
[62] Lee, 'Beauty and Sanity', 262.
[63] Lee, 'A Wicked Voice', 237.
[64] Ibid, 196.
[65] Lee, 'Religious and Moral Status of Wagner', 878-79.
[66] Ibid, 877; Lee, 'A Wicked Voice', 232.
[67] See Caballero, 'On Vernon Lee, Wagner, and the Effects of Music', n69; Sylvia Mieszkowski's chapter in *Resonant Alterities: Sound, Desire, and Anxiety in Non-Realist Fiction* (Bielefeld: transcript-Verlag, 2014), 41-114; Catherine Maxwell, 'Sappho, Mary Wakefield, and Vernon Lee's "A Wicked Voice"', *The Modern Language Review* 102, no. 4 (October 2007): 960-74; Grace Kehler, 'Occult Charm and Social Ills: Vernon Lee's "A Wicked Voice" and George du Maurier's Castrated Texts', *Romanticism on the Net* 34-35 (May 2004): 1-23.

through my body'; and at the story's climax, a stark loss of self-control: 'I felt my body melt even as wax in the sunshine, and it seemed to me that I too was turning fluid and vaporous, in order to mingle with these sounds as the moonbeams mingle with the dew'.[68] Romantic writing praised the fusion of the composer and music as the culmination of the valorisation of subjectivity: in Wackenroder's text, Berglinger's 'inner life became the *purest* music'.[69] Crucially, however, in Lee's text the composer fuses with music which is not really his.

At the crux of Lee's theory of passive listening is the effacement of the listener's subjectivity. It was not a huge step from the idea of affect (that listeners' responses are triggered by some quality in a work) to the metaphor of possession (that composers imposed their own emotions onto listeners). Wilde hints at this shift in 'The Critic as Artist': 'after playing Chopin, I feel as if I had been weeping over sins that I had never committed, and mourning over tragedies that were not my own'.[70] Depictions of composers as mesmerists and ventriloquists – as in Lee's comparison of Wagner's music to 'the nature of a hypnotiser's suggestions', or Du Maurier's Svengali – spoke more directly, and insidiously, to these concerns.[71] Not only does Wagner's music 'enervate' listeners by over-taxing their nerves, but it induces them to share in emotions they do not actually feel.[72] Like the Wagner audiences Lee likens to hypnotised subjects at the Salpêtrière Hospital, Magnus exists 'in a state verging on that *misère psychologique* which [psychologist] M. Pierre Janet regards as the preparation for all hypnotic suggestibility'.[73] Magnus's madness hinges on his suggestibility following Count Alvise's tale. Performances of hypnotism in the late nineteenth century – studied by Charcot, Pierre Janet, and William James – relied upon the patient's suggestibility, an active submission to the hypnotist's suggestions, rather than being entirely enthralled.[74] Phyllis Weliver explores the figure of 'La Svengali' as a

[68] Lee, 'A Wicked Voice', 207, 219, 225, 234.
[69] Wackenroder, *Outpourings,* 105 (emphasis added).
[70] Wilde, 'The Critic as Artist', 1110.
[71] Lee, 'Religious and Moral Status of Wagner', 881-82.
[72] Ibid, 876.
[73] Ibid, 881.
[74] Lee references James in 'Beauty and Sanity' (256) and Janet in 'The Religious and Moral Status of Wagner' (881).

composite of 'expectancy' in Trilby and 'suggestion' in Svengali.[75] Similarly, Magnus and Zaffirino's voice become a composite, leading to the intentionally confusing syntax when Magnus describes writing 'music which is certainly by me, *since* I have never heard it before, *but* which still is not my own'.[76] The conjunction 'since' is jarring – 'I have never heard it before' is dubious proof of his having necessarily composed it – and suggests Magnus now anticipates his defamiliarization from music which is 'certainly' by him. Yet the second conjunction, 'but', conveys his inability to definitively take ownership of this music. Ventriloquism allegorises Lee's concern with shifting boundaries of originality, considered through the composer-performer dichotomy I explored in chapter four. Magnus's struggle for authorship, for Sylvia Mieszkowski, is founded on Wagner's injunction that the singer must be 'the *organ of the Composer's aim*': 'Zaffirino's organ destabilises Magnus's sense of artistic and sexual identity'.[77] As in *Trilby,* the conflict between singer and composer is both erotic and artistic, but where Du Maurier's novel celebrates the performer's ability to 'make listeners forget the master who invented the music in the lesser master who interprets it', Lee's story is more concerned with the composer's struggle to re-possess himself.[78] 'A Wicked Voice' goes to the source of musical originality, the inspiration myth, suggesting that the composer's traditional possession had pathological implications.

Magnus is not just a listener driven mad by music, but a composer whose creativity is stymied by the possession through which composers were supposed to derive their inspiration. He writes: 'no sooner did I make an effort to work at my opera than my head was full of scraps of forgotten eighteenth century airs, of frivolous or languishing little phrases'.[79] On trying to compose, he finds that 'the heroic harmonies of my Scandinavian legend were strangely interwoven with voluptuous phrases and florid cadences in which I seemed to hear again that

[75] Weliver, *Women* Musicians, 266.
[76] Lee, 'A Wicked Voice', 237 (emphasis added).
[77] Richard Wagner, *Opera and Drama,* trans. William Ashton Ellis (London: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 26-27; Mieszkowski, *Resonant Alterities,* 76.
[78] Du Maurier, *Trilby,* 42 & 164.
[79] Lee, 'A Wicked Voice', 221.

same accursed voice'.[80] He is held in stasis between the antinomies of nineteenth-century concepts of genius which Peter Kivy outlines in *The Possessor and Possessed*. Although Schopenhauer's theory of receptive genius privileged the 'possessed' model, I have suggested that this model was altered by the prominence of female musicians who were identified with naturalistic, instinctive musicality. Male composers, ideally, should combine their natural impulse to compose with a Beethovenian mastery over their art: the 'heroic harmonies' counterbalancing the 'voluptuous phrases'. The negative feminine associations of the 'possessed' model inform both texts in this chapter: Makower's genius is a woman, while Lee's genius is emasculated – even, Kehler suggests, castrated – by possession.[81]

Lee's story effaces the distinctions between Magnus, Zaffirino, and their music to revise Romantic paradigms of creation, ultimately implying that music's meaning is determined by factors beyond the creator's intentions. The 'high degree of invention' and 'absolute authority' extolled in Hoffmann's review of Beethoven's Fifth are re-examined, and replaced with a sinister process of unwilled inspiration.[82] Magnus laments, at the tale's opening, that he is praised as 'the only composer of our days – of these days of deafening orchestral effects and poetical quackery – who has despised the new-fangled nonsense of Wagner, and returned boldly to the traditions of Handel and Gluck and the divine Mozart'.[83] By the end of the story, we know that Magnus composes in this tradition not through choice but compulsion. This narrative of transferred possession (as Magnus impresses upon audiences music which is 'not [his] own') presages parts of Lee's later description of the self-annihilating effects of listening to Wagner, but by subversively concentrating these effects on a composer, Lee complicates the idea that only the creator determines the meaning of the work. Instead, as she later suggested, 'the work of art is the junction between the activities of the artist and those of the beholder or hearer'.[84] In its capacity to break loose from its creator's intentions, render its true origins unclear, and take

[80] Ibid, 216.
[81] Kehler, 'Occult Charm and Social Ills', 14.
[82] Hoffmann, 'Beethoven's Fifth Symphony', 238.
[83] Lee, 'A Wicked Voice', 195.
[84] Lee, *Music and its Lovers,* 23.

on new life in new contexts, music becomes representative of all the artworks in Lee's tales in *Hauntings,* invoking the ghostly instability of art.

The prime quality of music's instability in Lee's tale is temporal. 'A Wicked Voice' transplants eighteenth-century Italian music into a present which Lee, like Nietzsche, identified as decadent – primarily because of the prevalence of Wagner's music. While Nietzsche sought an antidote in Georges Bizet, Lee consistently praised Italian music of the previous century, from her first published work, *Studies of the Eighteenth Century in Italy* (1880), to her last, *Music and its Lovers,* in which it is 'Apollinian [*sic*]' or 'calm, lucid[,] serene, [and] bracing' in contrast to the 'intoxication' of 'Dionysiac' music.[85] Underlying Lee's contrast of eighteenth-century opera and *fin-de-siècle* music is the same degenerationist concern with modernity that motivates Nietzsche and Nordau: Wagner's music is dangerous because he is 'the *modern artist par excellence*'.[86] Conversely, the 'traditions of Handel and Gluck and the divine Mozart' were produced in a healthier period. As Caballero explains, 'the dynamic activity of classic music, with its patterns ever directed toward clear and finite goals, prevents the subject from being totally absorbed into its affective rhythms…The dynamic aesthetic of classicism effectively abets a clear separation of listening subject from musical object'.[87] Inhabiting an era of apparent health and order, the eighteenth-century composer was less likely to impose a pathological taint on their works, and moreover, their capacity to hypnotise the listener was obviated because eighteenth-century music was not assumed to evoke the composer's own emotions (as my introduction noted, writers such as Hoffmann made Beethoven representative of this shift in the attribution of subjectivity).

Yet Lee's transposition of earlier music into the present, with near-fatal results, is in fact a decadent act, disrupting histories of music such as Parry's *Studies of the Great Composers*. Lee's story illustrates the impossibility of absorbing music into a progressive teleology, instead

[85] Nietzsche, 'Case of Wagner', 2; Lee, *Music and its Lovers,* 235. Lee's idiosyncratic terminology seems to be her own translation of Nietzsche in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), in which he refers to the 'Apollinischen' and 'Dionysischen' (translated as 'Apollonian' and 'Dionysian' in William Hausmann's 1910 edition).
[86] Nietzsche, 'Case of Wagner', 14.
[87] Caballero, 'On Vernon Lee, Wagner, and the Effects of Music', 398-99.

highlighting its capacity for temporal disembodiment. Critics have noted the voice's eroticism, 'swelling, swelling, rending asunder that downy veil which wrapped it', which pierces Magnus 'like the sharp and glittering blade of a knife' and ends in 'a long shake, acute, brilliant, triumphant'.[88] Moreover, the voice is delicate, 'cleaving, checkering, and fretting the silence with a lacework of sound'.[89] In its ephemerality – which only heightens Magnus's desire to recapture it – and its eroticism, the voice denotes a body which no longer exists.[90] Its disembodiment analogises the historical dislocation between the music Magnus wishes to compose and the music he is enthralled by. Music's uncanny effect also relies on its dual instantiations as text and performance. Lee was deeply preoccupied with this quality, unique to music. In *Studies of the Eighteenth Century in Italy,* she lamented 'genius squandered in the most evanescent performance' because the singer's ornamentations were not 'transmitted to paper'.[91] Prefiguring 'A Wicked Voice', she writes: 'the vague figures of those we have never heard, and never can hear, will almost haunt us'.[92] In her essay on Kreisler in *Belcaro*, Lee outlined her cynicism towards Romanticism's glorification of music as 'the embodiment of the intangible'.[93] Lee yearns for the materiality of notated scores, as a tangible – but, crucially, not embodied – way of experiencing music, that is, encountering it on the page without subjecting one's body to affect. Yet she rejects the 'leaves of memoirs and music-books' as yielding only 'an undefinable sense of dissatisfaction'.[94] These earlier writings set up a dynamic between the written and the performed which underlies her later story: writing is an essential form of preservation, but Lee betrays concerns that writing cannot quite capture the totality of the listening experience.

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[88] Lee, 'A Wicked Voice', 235; one might detect a suggestion of the ephemeral '*zefiro*', or zephyr, in the name Zaffirino, although, for Catherine Maxwell ('Sappho, Mary Wakefield, and Vernon Lee's "A Wicked Voice"'), its actual meaning of 'little sapphire' discloses the Sapphic undertones of the text.

[89] Ibid, 213.

[90] Lee wrote this tale at the advent of recording technology (the phonograph was invented in 1877), when the uncanny prospect of hearing disembodied voices was becoming ever more realistic. Lee's tale captures a sense of disembodiment would become a prominent feature of the modern musical experience; see Jennifer Fleeger, *Mismatched Women: The Siren's Song and the Machine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[91] Lee, *Studies of the Eighteenth Century in Italy*, 120.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Lee, *Belcaro,* 107.

[94] Lee, *Studies of the Eighteenth Century in Italy,* 120.

The singer in 'A Wicked Voice' therefore occupies the same role as the singers in chapter four: an embodiment of music's ephemerality, a check to the composer's pursuit of materiality. As a castrato, Zaffirino connotes absence, yet is unrelentingly present in his voice and its impact.[95] Magnus repeatedly tries to combat immateriality by transmitting his own music to paper, but his work becomes 'daily more difficult', thwarted by the transitory potency of the voice, and he ends the story lamenting: 'thou hast withered my life and withered my genius'.[96] What Magnus omits – that his body too is 'withered' – reveals a repression which continually reasserts itself in the text. As I have suggested, the composer's genius relied on discourses which suppressed music's bodily affect, frequently in terms which rendered rational self-control masculine, and affect and susceptibility feminine. Lee, in her reverence for eighteenth-century vocal music, was all too aware that its impressiveness derived exclusively from the body, yet the body is also, notably in her writing about Wagner, the locus of music's danger. The composer participates in this central tension, with his claims to authority founded on gendered understandings of affect and its relation to creativity.

Music's temporal instability also derives from its capacity to shed its historical associations and be recontextualized. For Magnus, pursued by *opera seria*, this music becomes 'savage' rather than a civilized alternative to decadent modern composition.[97] In his reading, Caballero suggests Lee '[turns] the haunting power of the old vocal art she so treasured against the insolent German composer who aimed to obviate it' – the Wagnerian composer, musical pursuer, becomes the musically pursued.[98] My reading, however, has suggested how Lee's application of eighteenth-century music as a corrective to present-day decadence only produces further decadent effects. Caballero writes that '[music], in Wagner's hands, acts supernaturally

[95] Kehler's reading emphasises the importance of the castrato, whose body foregrounds absence, emblematising a now-lost musical era, but also has the power to induce feminised affect ('Occult Charm and Social Ills', 4); Mieszkowski reads Lee's tale alongside Balzac's 'Sarrasine', another tale in which the castrato is a source of erotic and creative anxiety (*Resonant Alterities,* 47-52).
[96] Lee, 'A Wicked Voice', 237; ironically inverting the plot of Magnus's music-drama *Ogier the Dane,* in which the eponymous character is captured and freed by the gift of song.
[97] Ibid, 213.
[98] Caballero, 'On Vernon Lee, Wagner, and the Effects of Music', 401.

for Vernon Lee', but 'A Wicked Voice' finally exposes the capacity of *all* music to act supernaturally.[99] Reliant on fixed connotations of *opera seria,* with its compositional origins in a historical context deemed 'healthy', the story nonetheless reveals music's ability to engender intense, degenerative affect in the present. It implies that the work's meaning depends on the context of its encounter, not solely of its creation, and that meaning may be modified by juxtaposition with other media. Count Alvise's tale, which prompts 'this ridiculous beating of my heart and disgusting cold perspiration', and the portrait of Zaffirino are intermedial frames for Magnus's reception of the voice.[100] He is prepared to be profoundly physically affected because he has heard, in Alvise's narrative, of its fatal power, and to be erotically fixated because he has noticed, in the portrait, that Zaffirino is 'almost beautiful, with an odd smile, brazen and cruel'.[101] Because music is also reconfigured through performance (Magnus hears Zaffirino's singing in a new location each time), Lee undermines the idea that the artwork possesses inherent meaning. However, the fact that Magnus goes mad indicates her conviction that to deconstruct, or make uncanny, the artwork is fundamentally harmful. Even the 'Apollinian' music of the eighteenth century becomes 'Dionysiac' in its effects. Like many decadent texts, Lee's story idealises a distant past, but using music's singular capacity to transplant the past into the present, Lee dramatizes the atavism at the core of this decadent project, inverting the healthy potential of older art.

From an aesthetic perspective (whose music does Magnus hear? whose music does Magnus attempt to compose? how, and by whom, is this music's meaning constructed?) and an ethical perspective (is Zaffirino, or his music, responsible for driving Magnus mad?), Lee renegotiates the relationship between artist and audience. The collapse of distinctions between creator and spectator, while typical of *fin-de-siècle* writing about art, is fundamentally dangerous for Lee, jeopardising the delineation of distinct subjectivities and aesthetic responses. In her essay on Kreisler, she had critiqued Romantic works in which 'the artist breaks violently

[99] Ibid, 400.
[100] Lee, 'A Wicked Voice', 205.
[101] Ibid, 206.

against the restraint of form, thinking to attain the unattainable beyond its limits, and sinks down baffled and impotent amidst ruin'.[102] In 'A Wicked Voice', too, the artist 'sinks down baffled and impotent', implying the failure of the Romantic investment in music to 'attain the unattainable'. Yet the story reduplicates this investment, with an updated decadent focus, plumbing the ideas of music's abstractions and fugitivity to re-evaluate relationships between artwork, creator, and beholder. By confusing and pathologizing these relationships, Lee's tale contradicts her later classification of composers as healthier listeners, and of certain eras of music as *de facto* healthy. Lee focuses on her protagonist's susceptibility, even as she ironizes this focus through his framing of his mania as 'ridiculous'. Nestled within the story is a tacit admission that the text cannot contain music's instabilities. For Lee and Makower, the figure of the mad genius composer provided an avenue into these questions. The composer's life, repeatedly exposed to potentially enervating sound or, as physician James Johnson put it earlier in the century, 'unstrung by perpetual vibration', is intensified into a tale of haunting.[103] Composers' mastery over music was no *fait accompli*: in these texts, alienating exposure to their own art literalizes the danger Lee identifies in listening to Wagner: 'you seem to be living *in the music*'.

Living in the Notes: The Mirror of Music

> At times the houses and the people and the sky lose their meaning for me. I gaze helplessly at them. They seem to express something, but I cannot find out what. So, too, my music expresses something which I cannot fix in my mind. And I cannot stop thinking till my head is ready to burst.[104]

Published in 1895 as the fifteenth number in Lane's *Keynotes* series, Stanley Makower's novel, like the first number in the series, Egerton's *Keynotes,* incorporates musical notation in its text. Egerton's collection, along with her *Discords* the following year, may have inspired Makower to weave music even more fully into his own novel. Where Egerton's stories are often prefaced by a stave showing a scene-setting (dis)chord, similar to Sarah Grand's usage of a musical motif in

[102] Lee, *Belcaro,* 114.
[103] Johnson, *Economy of Health,* 48.
[104] Makower, *Mirror of Music,* 151.

The Heavenly Twins (1893), Makower incorporated notation in a novel whose ambivalent presentation of women's relationship to music departs from these precedents. Through the diary entries of the protagonist, composer Sarah Kaftal, we witness the disordered thought processes and worsening mental illness of a woman whose experience of reality is mediated through music. Over the novel's short course, Sarah tells of her isolation from society and absorption in playing and composing. Stirred by her creative partnership with the violinist Severine, she composes a wordless opera, to be performed by an orchestra behind an opaque curtain. At the performance, she accidentally confronts the audience, an encounter which precipitates her nervous breakdown. Sarah enters a hospital, and her diary entries describe her musical hallucinations, ending with her death. The novel continually contrasts sense and sensation, correlating the physicality of Sarah's responses to music with her detachment from the normative limits of 'making sense'. As in 'A Wicked Voice', music produces an uncanny temporal disturbance, exerting degenerative effects and inverting Romantic paradigms of genius. A framing device reveals Makower's critical engagement with the decadent narrative he presents, and he – surprisingly – offers Wagner's aesthetic theories as a counterbalance; yet ultimately, the mad genius composer, as in Lee's story, deconstructs the unity of the text.

This little-known novel features a cover illustration by Aubrey Beardsley, of a woman (possibly an angel) holding a stringed instrument.[105] Women's musicality was often attributed, in this period, to a Svengali-like hidden figure (see chapters four and five). *The Mirror of Music* invokes this 'possessed' model of genius, as Sarah describes music 'pursuing her', and 'it seems to have possessed me', yet in contrast to Lee's story, Sarah identifies this music as definitively hers.[106] Like Wackenroder's Berglinger, music constitutes her '*inner* life', but Makower takes this musical immersion a step further. Music is the only thing Sarah experiences with any certainty: she has 'only a dim consciousness of the people and things around [her]', but 'music is

[105] Sutton discusses the novel's Beardsley cover (*Aubrey Beardsley and British Wagnerism,* 78); William Blissett cites it as a precursor of twentieth-century 'Wagnerian shorthand' (see chapter five). As that chapter also noted, Akemi Yoshida has given an extensive reading of the novel.
[106] Makower, *Mirror of Music,* 151 & 89.

not a phantom'.[107] Sarah is sensitive to sound and colour in the manner Lombroso identifies as typical of the degenerate genius. Makower makes clear the pathology in her ability to detect music in every stimulus: 'Now I can hear the rattle of the wheels again, and I am trying to fix the note in my head. And then I begin wondering what gives the note its peculiar meaning for me. But my head aches. No more for to-day'.[108] The sentence ordering here creates an association between sound perception, attempts at interpretation, and malady, which characterises Sarah's entire narrative. Wackenroder's aspirational tone in reporting that Berglinger's 'inner life became the purest music' makes way for a preoccupation with the hazards of music's 'peculiar meaning'. The Romantic conflation of the composer's psyche and musical sensation is no longer 'pure' but conducive to illness, misapprehension, and decadent solipsism. The derivation of Sarah's affect – 'the rattle of the wheels' – implies the corrosive environment of the urban soundscape, in keeping with the contemporary theory Sander Gilman has explored, that city dwellers were particularly prone to degeneration.[109] A pathologized relationship to music is uniquely modern, a symptom of the *fin-de-siècle ennui* with which commentators such as Nordau were preoccupied.

Although he represents female creativity as innate, Makower retains contemporary concerns about the female listener, and especially the female musician. The 'complete degeneration of the feeling for rhythm, *chaos* in the place of rhythm' which Nietzsche identifies in Wagner had particular implications for female listeners, because of their apparently stronger tendency to neurasthenia – Nietzsche designates Wagner's success as 'success with nerves, and therefore with women'.[110] Kennaway considers that this period 'put self-control at the heart of

[107] Ibid, 16-17.
[108] Ibid, 49-50.
[109] Gilman's emphasis on the association of urban degeneration with Jewish people (see *The Jew's Body,* 49) is relevant here; Kaftal is a Jewish surname of Eastern European origin, and Makower himself had German Jewish parents. See Troy J. Bassett, 'Author: Stanley Victor Makower', *At the Circulating Library: A Database of Victorian Fiction, 1837–1901* <https://www.victorianresearch.org/atcl/show_author.php?aid=2617>, accessed 06/12/22.
[110] Friedrich Nietzsche, 'Nietzsche *Contra* Wagner', in *The Case Of Wagner, Nietzsche Contra Wagner, and Selected Aphorisms*, 62; Nietzsche, 'Case of Wagner', 14.

its notions of subjectivity and masculinity'.[111] The male listener was more capable (much as Wagner's formless music threatened the process) of sublimating his affective responses to music, as writers like Hanslick and Lee advised. Sarah's musical genius, moreover, only heightens music's degenerative effect. Like Lee's text, the novel implies that musicians are most at risk because of constant exposure: 'I went to bed and slept badly, waking frequently with the *Appassionata* ringing in my ears'.[112] Sarah's use of music as a cure (after this remark, she decides she will play 'a nocturne of Chopin, op. 62, no. 2') only aggravates her condition, so that the novel bears out Nisbet's assessment, in *The Insanity of Genius,* that '[p]athologically speaking, music is as fatal a gift to its possessor as the faculty for poetry or letters'.[113]

The Mirror of Music alludes to the life and works of Robert Schumann as precedents for Sarah's pathologized relationship with music. In *The Insanity of Genius*, which appeared four years before Makower's novel, Nisbet relates how, in the asylum at Endenich, Schumann repeatedly heard the note A, and hallucinated that he had been sent themes by Mendelssohn and Schubert (from beyond the grave) on which to compose variations.[114] Given that no English-language biography of Schumann existed in 1895, and contemporary group biographies of composers treated his illness in vague terms, it seems likely that Nisbet's study was Makower's source; Sarah's mental deterioration, also taking place in an asylum, resembles this account. Initially, she writes: 'the tone of this note is constant' – at which point a score on the page presents a D flat – 'the other sounds all cluster round it and melt into it…No melody, no melody: only this one note'.[115] As the novel moves towards its conclusion, the note changes. The reader eventually learns that these notes, combined and put in reverse order, form part of the bass line in Beethoven's *Appassionata* Sonata. This explanation occurs in a brief note at the end of the novel by Severine, who edits Sarah's diary, identifying the 'phrase quoted from Beethoven, op.

[111] Kennaway, 'Musical Pathology', 94.
[112] Makower, *Mirror of Music,* 13.
[113] J.F. Nisbet, *The Insanity of Genius and the General Inequality of Human Faculty Physiologically Considered* (London: Ward & Downey, 1891), 163.
[114] Nisbet, *Insanity of Genius,* 287.
[115] Makower, *Mirror of Music,* 165.

57'.[116] For Sarah, 'together the phrase does not explain itself…it is a minor chord, and I hear no solution to it'.[117] Sarah's experience of these notes, resembling Schumann's repeated A, indicates her defamiliarization even from music which has previously been well-known to her. Where Beethoven's music (the *Pathétique* Sonata) previously struck her as 'the world forming itself out of chaos', now, in her illness, form is abandoned and the *Appassionata* appears in fragments which remain unresolved until Severine's interposition.[118] The *Pathétique*, an early work of Beethoven's, accords with Sarah's stable – if melancholy – earlier diary entries, while the later, famously challenging, tempestuous *Appassionata* charts her breakdown.

Like Lee, Makower inverts narratives of musical progress, making the genius a figure of degeneracy. Beethoven, the originating figure of Romantic stereotypes, punctuates the narrative, his music a symptom of Sarah's worsening illness. Throughout, celebrated traits of genius are reassessed through alignment with madness, consistent with contemporary scientific speculation about the complementary nature of these conditions. More persistent even than Beethoven's music, as an irrepressible, distorted reminder of the Romantic past, is that of Schumann. One of the events precipitating Sarah's illness is her performance of 'Aveu' (from *Carnaval,* a piece constructed out of miniatures, or distinct yet interrelated character sketches) in front of her father, arousing 'some painful reminiscence'.[119] This reminiscence, Sarah eventually learns, is connected with her grandmother, who was driven mad by music. Schumann's piece becomes leitmotivic in its poignant recurrences, as when Sarah discovers her father's diary entries about his lost mother:

> She sang the melody of 'Aveu' whilst she played with her delicate sensitive touch. Suddenly she burst into loud hysterical laughter, and then fainted away. They carried her upstairs. She had lost her reason and never recovered…One morning they found her dead in her bed, and on the floor was a crumpled bit of paper with the first few notes of 'Aveu', written in pencil.[120]

[116] Ibid, 179.
[117] Ibid, 171-72.
[118] Ibid, 54.
[119] Ibid, 60.
[120] Ibid, 99.

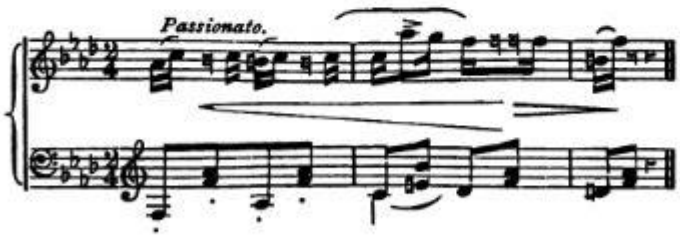
The graphomaniac compulsion which makes Sarah's grandmother copy out the musical notes is redoubled when 'Aveu' haunts Sarah. She too has written down these notes (*see Fig. 1*), and the discovery of her grandmother's fate immediately prompts her to reflect: 'Perhaps I am mad already. Certainly, many people would call me mad, but I am not, no – I know that I am not'.[121] Whereas in Lee's text music from the past was made uncanny by detachment from its original associations, here the Schumann piece gains its effect by emphatically retaining its former associations. For Sarah, as for her grandmother, it motivates a loss of reason accompanied by a compulsion to mimic composition – that is, by writing down Schumann's piece in an echo of the act of composing one's own music. Sarah's desperate reassurance that she is *not* mad signals her awareness of the potentially pathological ramifications of this episode.

A palimpsestic genealogy of pathology emerges: Sarah and her grandmother are affected by 'Aveu', and Sarah and her father record this in their diaries. Both *Carnaval* and the diary are fragmentary in form. The fragment, which foregrounds its own incompletion, brought together the themes of madness and aesthetic breakdown for the Romantics. For A.W. Schlegel, for instance, the fragment accorded with his definition of the beautiful as 'a symbolic representation of the infinite'.[122] Berglinger and Kreisler both appear within fragmentary works, Hoffmann's *Katers Murr* being a notably playful example. Sarah's diary, following her breakdown, pathologizes

[121] Ibid, 99.
[122] August Wilhelm Schlegel, *Kritische Schriften und Briefe*, vol. 6, 81-82, trans. Lilian R. Furst, *European Romanticism: Self-Definition: An Anthology* (London: Methuen, 1980), 94.

practising to myself. Then I played the 'Carnaval.' When I came to 'Aveu' the room was absolutely quiet. My relations were evidently impressed with the ability of my performance, for they paid great attention, although they could hope for little understanding. The room was lighted with lamps under soft pink shades.

At a small table, on which one of these was placed, my father sat with his eyes on a book as if heedless of the music that he heard. 'Aveu' is the most exquisite part of the whole 'Carnaval.' I played it without once looking at the piano, for I could feel every note perfectly.



When I had played as far as this, my father's eyes rose from the book and fell on me with such a look of horror that my fingers almost froze, and it was with the greatest difficulty

Fig. 1: Stanley Makower, *The Mirror of Music* (London: John Lane, 1895), 59.

the graphomania which had been a comic element of Hoffmann's novel. Henceforth, the diary manifests Sarah's attempts to reassert control, as she laments – in my epigraph to this section – that music suggests something she cannot 'fix in [her] mind'. *The Mirror of Music* and 'A Wicked Voice' both weave this writerly compulsion into the origins of the texts themselves. Magnus insists that 'perhaps the spell may be broken' if he writes down 'the tale of [his] miseries'. Writing the manuscript which becomes 'A Wicked Voice' provides Magnus's 'only relief', and he fantasises about the expunging potentialities of this writing. Even if he later burns the manuscript, he 'may possess once more…[his] vanished genius'.[123] The impulse to write is imbricated with a loss of authority, a perversion of genius.

Although Sarah momentarily regains enough authority to compose her wordless opera, its performance proves as dangerous as the performed music in Lee's story. At the rehearsal, Sarah records: 'All the performers look on me as a deified genius. There is a regular worship at the altar of my work'.[124] Yet Sarah's notion of the 'deified genius' – the Romantic ideal of the remote creator, hidden behind the curtain, who writes works to be revered by posterity, and far removed from the work's performance – collapses at the performance. Sarah's vow to be a spectator of her audience is part overweening curiosity, part Svengali-esque hubris: 'I shall watch them as the performance goes on. I will creep round amongst the audience and listen, to hear if they are restless or so absorbed that they do not move a muscle'.[125] Yet the physiological control she wishes to enact is redoubled on her. Accidentally looking out from behind the curtain, she reacts in horror at seeing the audience embodied as 'one huge immovable face which filled all the theatre': 'suddenly a corruption began to seize the flesh, and every particle began to move and twist about. I felt as if my brain was giving way'.[126] 'The flesh' is ambiguous: is it the flesh of the audience, blended into this 'immovable face', or Sarah's own flesh, impersonally referred to as if it does not belong to her? Met with the enormity of the audience's

[123] Lee, 'A Wicked Voice', 197.
[124] Makower, *Mirror of Music,* 136.
[125] Ibid, 141-42.
[126] Ibid, 147.

power of reception, Sarah is plunged into a self-alienating breakdown. While she previously hoped they would be 'absorbed' in listening to her work, the audience's immobility now figures the specular economy to which Sarah has submitted herself as an insurmountable barrier. In a further ironic twist, Sarah is haunted by her work at the point of its performance: 'What is the good of such a triumph? The remembrance of that face will never leave me'.[127] This face is the only remnant of Sarah's music-drama: her diary, although replete with scores by Beethoven and Schumann, testifies to her own compositions only anecdotally.

Anticipating modernist interests in defamiliarization, this moment also offers a typically decadent revision of realist literary tropes, specifically that of the mirror. The scene recalls paintings such as *The Music Hall or The P.S. Wings in the O.P. Mirror* (1888-89) and *Minnie Cunningham at the Old Bedford* (1892) by Walter Sickert, whom it is very likely Makower knew.[128] These paintings use mirrored perspectives and darkness to reconfigure the spatial relationship between audience and performer in music halls. Makower transplants this effect to a classical musical context in *The Mirror of Music* (though, incidentally, the novel was dedicated to the cabaret singer Yvette Guilbert). The mirror, according to Lawrence Kramer's discussion of gendered themes and mirror-image effects in Schumann's *Carnaval*, connoted in realist works a space where 'a woman can enjoy, explore, and to some degree construct her own identity'.[129] In Charlotte Brontë's *Villette* and Eliot's *Middlemarch*, mirrors grant female characters these identity-constructing moments; Eliot famously uses the image of a candle and a mirror in the opening of chapter 27 to explain the function of realism. *The Mirror of Music* inverts the mirror's function to thwart the woman's self-knowledge, not only in the several moments where Sarah literally looks into a mirror and wonders at her reflection: *Carnaval* reveals to Sarah the

[127] Ibid, 150.
[128] Makower's first novel, *The Passing of a Mood* (1893), was pseudonymously co-authored with his Cambridge classmate, Walter's brother Oswald. See Bassett, 'Author: Stanley Victor Makower'.
[129] Kramer, '*Carnaval*, Cross-Dressing', 315.

doubled reflection of her grandmother as another 'music-mad' woman, and the performance of her opera reflects a terrifying face which alienates Sarah from her own composition.[130]

The performance's dramatization of the meeting of artist and audience recalls Tennyson's 'The Lady of Shalott', an intertext for the novel as a whole: both centralise isolated female artists, and their fatal endings discourage a public dimension to female creativity. Sarah, like the Lady whom the 'silent isle imbowers', 'live[s] alone – quite alone' because her passion and ambition for music are not shared by her peers, who merely propound the common association of music with feminine domesticity: '[they] said it must be so pleasant to be able to play when one was tired and wanted relaxation'.[131] The 'shadows of the world' the Lady sees in the mirror are reproduced in Sarah's 'dim consciousness' of the people and things around her, music providing the extent of her reality.[132] Like Penelope, the 'paradigmatic female artist…articulating, in her own terms, the plot of the *Odyssey*', the Lady weaves in order to constitute her world, but this act is cataclysmically challenged by the recognition of another reality, enacted in both poem and novel by an exchange of glances.[133] The third part of Tennyson's poem, in which the appearance of Sir Lancelot causes the Lady to look towards Camelot and thus succumb to the curse, resembles the precipitate danger of the performance of Sarah's composition. The doubled reflection of Lancelot – 'From the bank and from the river | He flashed into the crystal mirror' – recalls the doubled spectatorship in *The Mirror of Music,* the audience accidentally glimpsing Sarah as she glimpses them.[134] For Sarah and the Lady, this moment of recognition (for Sarah, this is also 'recognition' in the sense of career success) triggers the abandonment of her work, leaving it in fragmentary form, and her eventual death. For both, then, it is not just genius that is dangerous, but publicity, so that the Romantic trope of *elective* isolation becomes the female artist's obligation and curse.

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[130] Makower, *Mirror of Music,* 88.
[131] Alfred, Lord Tennyson, 'The Lady of Shalott', in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature,* vol. E, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (London: W.W. Norton & Co., 2012), l. 17; *Mirror of Music,* 26 & 18.
[132] Tennyson, 'Lady of Shalott', 48.
[133] Kramer, '*Carnaval,* Cross-Dressing', 308.
[134] Tennyson, 'Lady of Shalott', 105-06.

Keeping in mind the Lady as a precedent for Makower's solipsistic protagonist, we can understand the novel's dialogue with contemporary decadent works. Kristin Mahoney writes of 'the cold and withdrawn figure at the centre of the decadent novel, unable to feel or connect, obsessively insisting upon their own distinctness', and this certainly applies to Sarah, but by mimicking Tennyson's poem, *The Mirror of Music* encourages the reader to view this figure through an ordered framework.[135] The Lady's voice appears in Tennyson's poem just once, as she cries, 'The curse is come upon me', and we are told that she sings her own death-song; otherwise, the poem encourages objective spectatorship of this figure known only by an eponym, most overtly in the final lines, when Lancelot muses: 'She has a lovely face; | God in his mercy lend her grace, | The Lady of Shalott'.[136] Although *The Mirror of Music* allows greater insight into its protagonist through its diary form, it is similarly framed by male spectatorship and judgement: the novel opens with clubmen discussing the appearance of their ideal women, at which point Severine alludes to Sarah, and allows his companions to read her diary. The end of the novel restores clarity by identifying that Sarah, in her final days, heard the notes of the *Appassionata*. By including these male spectators, both Tennyson and Makower reinforce the healthiness of non-artistic men such as Lancelot and the clubmen, vociferously reiterating the late-nineteenth-century connection between the categories of masculinity and health against fears of widespread degeneration. Though Sarah's very existence seems to contradict contemporary thought on the gendering of genius, this representation of a female genius is by no means affirmatory, as the events of the novel reveal an underlying, interlinked pathology in femininity and musical genius.

The novel makes unlikely use of Wagner's music as an exemplar of order and unity. While Mahoney writes that the decadent novel refuses to 'generate solutions or alternatives' to the ills it lays bare, *The Mirror of Music* implicitly offers the Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk* as an

[135] Kristin Mahoney, 'The Decadent Novel', in *The Oxford Handbook of Decadence,* ed. Jane Desmarais & David Weir (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 289.
[136] Tennyson, 'Lady of Shalott', 116 & 169-71.

ideal.[137] Sarah's suggestion that, compared to music, '[w]ords, action, and scenery are like restless shadows of humanity' develops into an overt critique of Wagner's theory, as she explains Wagner's 'mistake': 'he is never a poet and never a painter, though he thinks he is both; but he is always a musician, and I cannot think of any musician who was either poet or painter'.[138] Her belief that 'music illustrates its ideal more clearly' informs her composition of a wordless opera with no visual element.[139] Yet the fatal development of the narrative undermines Sarah's aesthetic theories, pointing to the discredited Wagnerian theory as preferable to her solely musical comprehension. In its cautionary tale of an anti-Wagnerian protagonist, the novel upholds Wagner's promotion of the 'United Artwork of the Future', in which 'no individual artistic skill, honed to the height of its powers, will remain unused'.[140]

The narrative critiques Sarah for leaving 'unused' all but her musical faculties, attempting to understand the world solely through music. The novel's concern with perception is suggested by the mirror in its title. Sarah's musical perception – 'I could not look at anything without imagining that it was existent only in relation to a musical standard' – gives the apparently implausible title (how can a mirror be made 'of music'?) metaphorical significance.[141] This implausibility itself is revealing: where Tennyson suggests the Lady's mirror and loom constitute her only experience of the world, Makower goes further in making music, which is intangible, Sarah's only 'mirror' of reality. Alternatively, we might construe the title as 'the *reflection* of music', so that Sarah's life mirrors music – but this too is technically impossible, since music cannot be seen in a mirror. Whether 'music' refers to the mirror itself or what is reflected in the mirror, the end result implies Sarah's disconnection from reality. The novel implies the futility of music alone as an interpretive aid: 'Most music does not suggest any image to me because it gives me new sensations'.[142] Sarah's failure to progress from mere

[137] Mahoney, 'Decadent Novel', 289.
[138] Makower, *Mirror of Music,* 31-32.
[139] Ibid, 31.
[140] Richard Wagner, 'The Artwork of the Future', trans. Emma Warner (London: The Wagner Journal, 2013), 75.
[141] Makower, *Mirror of Music,* 88.
[142] Ibid, 24.

'sensation' to the interpretive level of an 'image' inheres in her madness – if madness connotes nonrepresentability, Sarah is unable to represent, or make sense of, one thing (music) in terms of another (image). In her insistence that words and scenery are 'shadows of humanity', the Lady of Shalott's 'shadows of the world' are transmuted: the shadows – what the mirror cannot clearly reflect – are words, the means by which texts make sense.

The novel's final passages are most indicative of this connection between musical madness and a breakdown in signification. Sarah's dreams in the asylum are allegories of the struggle to create: as well as hearing music, she witnesses builders creating a tower (another 'Lady of Shalott' parallel and Babel allusion). The melody – later revealed as the *Appassionata* – disintegrates into individual notes, which Sarah records in confusion: 'the meaning of these sounds is hidden from me'.[143] Shades of evolutionist language connect this mental state to degeneration, as Sarah writes: 'The sounds descend at each picture that I see and the melody from the Tower has never returned. The world is being unfolded to me from the supremacy of man back to…Who can tell? And the music follows'.[144] Melody, in the late-nineteenth-century critical context, was analogous to 'the supremacy of man': Hanslick and Nordau decried the shift away from melody, heralded primarily by Wagner, as degenerate, and Magnus, in 'A Wicked Voice', is praised for restoring 'the supremacy of melody' by upholding eighteenth-century compositional practices. The 'descending' breakdown of the *Appassionata* into individual notes signifies atavistic regression. Both the breakdown of the melody, and the intrusion of musical notes into the text of Sarah's diary, might be considered decadent effects, as identified by Paul Bourget in 1881. Bourget's theory applied organicist sociology to literary style:

> the unity of the book breaks down to make place for the independence of the page…the page breaks down to make place for the independence of the sentence and…the sentence breaks down to make place for the independence of the word.[145]

[143] Ibid, 171.
[144] Ibid, 169.
[145] Paul Bourget, *Essais de psychologie contemporaine* (Paris: Lemerre, 1893), 24 (trans. Călinescu, in *Five Faces of the Avant-Garde,* 168).

Fragmentation in Makower's novel evokes Sarah's inability to 'make sense' or attain unity of expression in writing, hindering recognition for the reader. While the musical passages are usually made recognisable by Sarah attributing them to their composers, the notes of the *Appassionata* are unexplained until Severine's concluding comments.

A contemporary reviewer in *The Speaker* perhaps had these passages in mind when criticising Makower for effecting an interpretive breakdown for the novel's readers. Though this reader congratulates Makower for creating 'a very striking study of the phenomena of mental disease', they conclude: 'the book is too morbid to be enjoyed, and there are some passages in it which suggest that the author has lost his grip of his gruesome theme'.[146] This was a far cry from Wilde's praise of Makower's 'powers of presentation', and the disjunction suggests contrasting perceptions of music's function within the text. Wilde, who had a passing interest in Wagnerism and proclaimed that '[f]rom the point of view of form, the type of all the arts is the art of the musician', may have recognised Makower's interpolation of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* as a formal model.[147] Schumann's 'Aveu' and Beethoven's *Appassionata* appear as leitmotivs, and notated scores sit alongside prose, enclosed within Beardsley's cover, to create a unified artwork. Yet for the *Speaker* reviewer, Wagnerian aesthetics suggested not order but – as for many commentators in this chapter – chaos. The disconnection from signification which has been the novel's theme becomes one of its qualities, as the unity of the book breaks down in the face of its own representation of musical madness. Makower's incorporation of nonrepresentability into his artwork effects its own defamiliarization, with dangerous implications (hence the reviewer's labels: 'morbid' and 'gruesome'). The intensified yet fraught engagement with representability which Makower explores through the metaphors of music and madness, and appears to condemn, ultimately permeates his text.

[146] 'Fiction', *The Speaker: The Liberal Review* 12 (August 1895): 190.
[147] Wilde, *Dorian Gray,* 4. See Nikolai Endres, 'Wilde Wagner: *Tannhäuser* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*', *The Wildean* 48 (January 2016): 67-85.

Postlude: the fin-de-siècle return of the mad genius

Notwithstanding my introductory examples about musical pathology, especially the prevalent associations between Wagner, decadence, and degeneration, the trend in literature for representing composers as mad geniuses does not necessarily reflect reality. Of course, there were plenty who were for the most part physically and mentally sound and whose music seemed to pose little threat to audiences. Yet *fin-de-siècle* authors returned to the mad genius figure, whose Romantic connotations foregrounded originality, authority, and elevated or obscure signification. Now, the figure was explicitly pathologized: not only because it was better recognised how music could harm its listeners, but also because, when incorporated into a text alongside the ideas of madness and genius, music effected a representational breakdown which disturbed the healthy function of art. Romantic exaltation of the mad genius composer was modified into, firstly, a concern about the ethical significance of this figure, and secondly, a conviction that the unity of the work – its communication of fixed meaning to the spectator – might be disrupted by the presence of such a figure.

While their decadent contemporaries embraced music for its non-representational qualities, Lee and Makower more tentatively speculated that non-representability induces aesthetic breakdown, intimately connected to a breakdown in the health of creator and spectator. These speculations are manifest in both authors' scrutiny of Romantic genius. Individualism makes way for ideas of ventriloquism and possession. While observers suggest Magnus is merely inspired by eighteenth-century opera, Lee's first-person narrative displays an anxiety of origins. For an artist to become possessed is to surrender their consciousness of their own creativity – it even calls into question creativity as something original to the artist. Yet the writing on Wagner which Lee published subsequently to 'A Wicked Voice' makes clear her opinion that certain types of music implicated the listener in a fraud by which they are made to enact the composer's emotions and not their own. Because she considers passive listening a loss of self-consciousness and self-control, Lee endorses the listener's agency, even as this triggers anxieties about the composer's own alienation. As she privileges the moment of aesthetic

experience over the moment of composition, we see the ambivalent core of Lee's fascination with eighteenth-century vocal music: she yearned for written testimonies to this art, but recognised that its allure lay in its fugitivity. Hence pleasure and pain commingle in 'A Wicked Voice', as critics have explained. Vineta Colby, in her biography of Lee, identifies this ambivalence as a keynote of Lee's work: 'The struggle to be an Apollonian when by instinct one is drawn toward the Dionysiac is a metaphor for Vernon Lee's lifelong struggle for the health of the soul'.[148]

Lee's story shares with *Trilby* an emphasis on musical works' acquisition of meaning through performance, destabilising the authority of the written work (none of *Trilby*'s music is original in the Romantic sense: Svengali is never even shown in the act of composition). Yet whereas *Trilby* celebrates the deposition of composers in favour of a splintered relationship between composer, performer, and audience, 'A Wicked Voice' evinces a stronger desire to reimpose the authority of the composer. Lee and Makower invest in the written, against the transient affectivity of performed music. In 'A Wicked Voice', this is shown by Magnus's attempts to record his compositions, and conviction that narrating his experiences will counteract his illness. The story proposes, on the level of diegesis, to subsume the debilitating effects of music into the rational framework of the narrated tale. Yet narration seems only to testify further to pathology: in the tale-within-the-tale, when Count Alvise first warns of the potency of Zaffirino's voice, these effects are transferred to Magnus, whose own attempts to narrate are indicative of his own loss of control. In *The Mirror of Music,* Sarah's diary – a fragmentary attempt at control – is reordered by Severine's editorial intervention. This intervention foregrounds its own intentionality to negate the graphomaniac involuntariness of the diary's original composition. Yet the framing narrative hardly restores order so much as points toward the disorder within.

[148] Vineta Colby, *Vernon Lee: A Literary Biography* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003), 216.

There are differences in Lee's and Makower's applications of music from the past to haunt their mad genius composers in the present. Lee's eighteenth-century operatic music belongs to a distinct era, while Makower makes use of Romantic music – by Beethoven, Chopin, and Schumann – which shares certain thematic concerns with decadence, such as fragmentariness, interiority, and obscurity. That Makower resorts to Wagner's music as a model of order constitutes his most significant divergence from Lee. Yet in both representing the figure of the mad genius composer, Lee and Makower equally achieve, in spite of themselves, a decadent engagement with music. Makower reveals continuities between Romantic and decadent aesthetics, while Lee exposes the capacity of *all* music, regardless of compositional context, to act uncannily. Both texts, therefore, are essential to my conclusion to this thesis, illustrating that the Romantic mode of writing about music was transhistorical, as well as timebound. These *fin-de-siècle* representations retain their Romantic precursors' interest in that which cannot be expressed by language, metonymically suggested by the composer and aggrandised by the qualities of genius and madness. Yet this figure is newly recognised as producing an uncanny effect, which dangerously calls into question the artwork's construction of meaning and its purpose. Raising the spectre of decadence, the mad genius composer imposes decadence onto the text. The resultant texts reveal tensions in the *fin de siècle* regarding the connection between art's representational qualities and the health of artist and audience: tensions in which the figure of the composer plays a fundamental role.

Conclusion: Romantic Remnants

> The musicalization of fiction. Not in the symbolist way, by subordinating sense to sound….But on a large scale, in the construction. Meditate on Beethoven.[1]
>
> Aldous Huxley, *Point Counter Point* (1928)

As the nineteenth century turned into the twentieth, writers on music continued to look back to Romanticism, none more comprehensively than the American critic and author James Huneker. Huneker's work is in many ways the culmination of the themes of this thesis: no one else wrote so extensively about composers, real and fictional, returning constantly to the Romantic figure which his predecessors had constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed. Like George Du Maurier and George Moore, Huneker spent formative years in Paris, absorbed in its musical and artistic culture, and his work springs from the richly cosmopolitan context of *fin de siècle* Europe. Yet Huneker was also credited with importing, "almost singlehanded[ly]", the "new currents of European art and thought to America and [making] them fashionable": his writing bridges literatures in English on either side of the Atlantic, expanding the reach of Romanticism's transnational circulation and revealing the allure of a Romantic mode of writing about music and musicians for readers in America.[2] In 1913, *Old Fogy: His Musical Opinions and Grotesques* was published, a collection of essays purportedly written by 'Old Fogy', edited and introduced by Huneker. Almost exactly a century previously, E.T.A. Hoffmann had made similar use of a fictional mouthpiece to present fictionalised music criticism in 'Kreisleriana'*. Old Fogy*'s lingering Romanticism reflects the trajectory I have traced across this study. In its overt debt to Hoffmann, one of the founding fathers of Romantic writing about music – which Huneker acknowledges in his introduction – it suggests little had changed over the century.[3] In adopting the character '*Old* Fogy', however, Huneker signals the belatedness of his subjects: Old Fogy rails against the continuing vogue for Wagnerism, preferring the mid-century Romantics, especially Chopin, and laments the disappearance of styles of composition and pianism from that era.

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[1] Aldous Huxley, *Point Counter Point* (London: Vintage, 2004), 384.
[2] Alfred Kazin, 'American Fin-de-Siècle', *The Saturday Review* 21, no. 15 (3 February 1940), 11.
[3] James Huneker, *Old Fogy: His Musical Opinions and Grotesques* (Pennsylvania: Theodore Presser Co., 1913), 7.

Where Kreisler embodied the inaugural spirit of a movement on the cusp of elevating music to an ideal, Old Fogy speaks for the untimely, lingering vestiges of Romanticism.

Huneker's fiction about composers explores Romanticism's ghostly afterlife, like the texts by Lee and Makower in chapter six. Several stories in Huneker's *Melomaniacs* (1902) and *Visionaries* (1905) hinge on doubts about characters' apparent connections to the last century's Romantic composers. Huneker studied the piano with musicians who had known Chopin and Liszt: Georges Mathias in 1870s Paris, and Rafael Joseffy in 1880s New York.[4] His stories extend this sense of his – and, perhaps, America's – second-hand relationship to a European Romantic legacy. We find a character who has been brought up believing he is Liszt's son, only to find he is the son of Liszt's piano tuner; one who deceives himself that the beautiful piano-playing he can hear is by a young woman falsely claiming that Constantia Gladowska (Chopin's one-time fiancée) was her grandmother; and one who becomes obsessed by the belief that his valet, by some 'queer prank', inherited Chopin's piano skills because his father was present at the Polish composer's deathbed.[5] We find a pianist deemed either 'Paderewski or his ghost', who must surely be German, Hungarian, Bohemian, or Polish, but who disillusions his eager journalist companions with a yarn about being a down-and-out Englishman – only for his wife to tell them he is, in fact, just an alcoholic from Boston who affects 'the manner of the Polish virtuoso'.[6] We find the poet Minkiewicz (echoes of Adam Mickiewicz) telling his gathered disciples that he was the real composer of much of Chopin's music, working hard while the composer 'moon[ed] away at the piano'.[7] Here Huneker encapsulates the push and pull of Romanticism in the early twentieth century. Minkiewicz, while revising the claim to authorship on which Chopin's place in music history is predicated, invokes in 'mooning at the piano' a central image of Romanticism (recalling Beethoven's 'Moonlight' Sonata), combined with an etymological link to lunacy, now

[4] Sherrill V. Martin, 'Huneker, James Gibbons', *American National Biography* https://www.anb.org/view/10.1093/anb/9780198606697.001.0001/anb-9780198606697-e-1800609, accessed 19/03/23.
[5] James Huneker, *Melomaniacs* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1902), 244.
[6] Ibid, 160.
[7] Ibid, 23.

inseparable from the figure of the Romantic composer.[8] In each story, the spell cast by an imagined Romantic heritage is vestigial, but powerful: the disillusionment at the end of each narrative never quite outbalances a willingness to believe that Romantic composers still, through music, inhabit the earth. 'A Son of Chopin', the story about the valet dubbed Daniel Chopin, ends on the prospect that 'at last the miracle had taken place', that the 'dead idol was reincarnated'.[9] In 'The Chopin of the Gutter', Minkiewicz muses: 'It is difficult to make the world acknowledge that you are not an idiot; very difficult to shake its belief that Chopin was not a god. Alas! there are no more gods'.[10] These are stories torn between a modern cynicism about setting up composers as 'gods' and, in spite of this, a desire to retain a musical mystique, or the belief in music's ineffability which I have suggested fiction across the nineteenth century, and into the twentieth, perpetuates.

Similarly, Huneker's stories about fictional composers contradict the proto-modernist proclamation of 'no more gods'. In 'The Piper of Dreams', set in 1930, Huneker predicts the descent of Romanticism into demagoguery, as the Russian composer Illowski applies his Schopenhauerian-Nietzschean anarchist convictions to compositions which prove only the more dangerous the more they fulfil the Romantic dream of universal communication. An 'arch-enemy to mankind' and 'a hypnotist' who 'conducted his orchestra through extraordinary and malevolent forests of tone', Illowski recalls not only late-nineteenth-century accounts of Wagner, but literary precedents such as Svengali and even Klesmer.[11] Avant-garde in his adaptation of electrical and chemical theories to transform music into 'the science of dangerous sounds', Illowski represents the culmination of Romantic thought, as signalled in the name of his most decadent work, 'Nietzsche'.[12] That philosopher himself had written that the early nineteenth century's revalorisation of music increased 'the value of *the musician* himself', making him 'an

[8] See Lawrence Kramer, 'Hands On, Lights Off: The "Moonlight" Sonata and the Birth of Sex at the Piano', in *Musical Meaning: Toward a Critical History,* 29-50, on this tradition and popular anecdotes about Liszt playing the Sonata by moonlight.
[9] Huneker, *Melomaniacs,* 241.
[10] Ibid, 28.
[11] Ibid, 41-42.
[12] Ibid, 54.

oracle, a priest, indeed more than a priest, a kind of mouthpiece of the 'in itself' of things, a telephone from the beyond'.[13] Huneker's 'The Disenchanted Symphony' gives us another composer who is a 'telephone from the beyond': Pobloff's interest in correspondences between tone and colour anticipates, as Jed Rasula points out, the synesthetic experiments of Alexander Scriabin.[14] Pobloff's over-zealous pursuit of the 'fourth dimension' leads to a psychological attack during a rehearsal of his symphony, in which his orchestra apparently disappears. The 'sort of magnetic halo' which appears over his head as he ponders the mystic fourth dimension might be a corruption of the Romantic deification of composers, while the story ironically displaces the Romantic 'notion of confounding musicians with madmen': Pobloff rationally shrugs off this notion, only for his subsequent attack to cast this into doubt.[15] Like many stories in *Melomaniacs*, 'The Disenchanted Symphony' ends by stoking the flames of belief and cynicism. Pobloff, his individualistic hubris suitably chastened, 'disenchants' the symphony and regains his orchestra by playing the climactic passage backwards. Aghast to find they have been passing the time in playing cards, while he has had a fourth-dimensional experience, he berates them in distinctly Romantic language: 'Didn't you catch a glimpse, as through an open door, of rare planetary vistas, of a remoter plane of existence? Were there no grandiose and untrodden stars?'[16]

Women, in Huneker's musical fiction, remain in the contested position outlined in chapters four and five. He features no female composers, and women are usually singers, as in the several Wagnerian tales in *Melomaniacs*. Like Willa Cather's collection *Youth and the Bright Medusa* (1921), these indicate the continued interest in the Wagnerian female singer as a figure of feminine strength and self-expression. Yet another of Huneker's composer stories, 'The Rim of Finer Issues', touches ambivalently on the themes of women's self-expression which I expounded in chapter five. The composer Arthur Vibert is one of Huneker's less visionary

[13] Quoted in Jed Rasula, *History of a Shiver: The Sublime Impudence of Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 110.
[14] Ibid, 33.
[15] Huneker, *Melomaniacs,* 328-29.
[16] Ibid, 346.

figures: a 'fastidious puritan', his aspirations are outstripped by those of his wife, Ellenora Bishop, who signals her New Woman sensibilities by taking the name George when publishing her poetry.[17] Criticising her husband's 'blind adherence to older forms' and pointing to Wagner's invention of a new form, Ellenora resembles the forward-thinking female composer Hadria Fullerton in Mona Caird's *Daughters of Danaus.* She makes an overt riposte to women's exclusion from composition by asserting: 'The way must be shown you by woman...who has no originality according to your Schopenhauer'.[18] As in Caird's and Corelli's novels, the composer functions to vindicate women's preference for *literary* self-expression; Ellenora denigrates the way composers can express 'all manner of wickedness' only for it to be 'idealized by tone', and asks: 'Why can't language have the same privilege?'[19] The next story, in which Vibert – to great acclaim – appropriates Ellenora's words for his symphonic poem, renders the comparison of men's and women's opportunities in music and literature all the more ambiguous. Women may have greater insight into 'that visionary rim of finer issues', but men continue to succeed onstage.[20] Ultimately, the story asks what it means to view music as possessing qualities literature lacks – a view through which the figure of the Romantic composer was constructed.

By disrupting narrative linearity and conjecturing on music's capacity to supersede language with its 'insidious, subtle, dangerous power', Huneker's composer fictions anticipate modernist literary interactions with music.[21] As I noted in chapter six, decadent literature such as Huneker's engendered a proto-modernist transformation of Romantic musical discourses, pointing towards the 'musicalization of fiction' which Huxley's fictional author Philip Quarles ponders in *Point Counter Point.* Much has been written about music in modernist literature and its sometimes unacknowledged debts to Romanticism, notably in Brad Bucknell's suggestion that focusing on music might bridge these eras, and therefore:

[17] Ibid, 101.
[18] Ibid, 109.
[19] Ibid, 113.
[20] Ibid, 116.
[21] Ibid, 34.

> offer an explanation of modernism's continuing interest in, and exploration of, the subjective and imaginative realm; it may give heritage to the exalted status of art and of the alienated artist so prevalent in modernist literature; and, too, it may suggest clear precedents for the experimentation in artistic form that is a continuing part of twentieth-century literature.[22]

My intention in this thesis, however, has been to assert nineteenth-century fiction's place in this trajectory. The early writing about composers and music by Hoffmann and his contemporaries inaugurated, I suggest, a Romantic mode which was historically and even geographically specific (Germany in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries) and yet transhistorical. Already by the late nineteenth century, authors engaged with a mode which – as in Huneker's writing – seemed to be inherited from the past and to live in the present. We have seen authors preserving elements of this mode even while seemingly rejecting it. Chapters four, five, and six showed the reshaping of Romantic 'receptive' genius by concepts of gender and pathology; yet the texts in those chapters suggest a continued desire to preserve this model of genius, in spite of those challenges, because of its Romantic associations. If music was ineffable, transcendent, mystical, the composer's inspiration could not be reduced to a mundane model of work – even though the rise in the number of professional female musicians produced an emphasis on male musicians' mastery, as opposed to instinct. Nineteenth-century authors acted similarly to the modernists, in Waddell's study, who 'anatomized what Isaiah Berlin called the Beethovenian 'image', taking apart the accumulated venerations through which a man is constructed as a genius' and 'nevertheless helped to keep that image alive'.[23] It is not just twentieth-century authors who, like Huxley, 'meditate[d] on Beethoven' in thinking about the limits of literary expression.

Focusing on Wagnerism, Rasula calls music 'the trojan horse that smuggled Romanticism into modernism'.[24] Huneker's and Cather's feminine Wagnerism – their fictional portraits of formidable, alluring, disturbing sopranos – suggests that movement's centrality in the transformation of cultural understandings of identity between the nineteenth and early

[22] Brad Bucknell, *Literary Modernism and Musical Aesthetics: Pater, Pound, Joyce, and Stein* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 14.
[23] Waddell, *Moonlighting,* 222.
[24] Rasula, *History of a Shiver,* 59.

twentieth centuries. It is also worth remembering, though, the adaptability of Wagnerism as a broadly conceived set of ideas. Nietzsche's turn against Wagner is evidence enough, but by pairing Nietzsche's comments with those of Nordau and the fictional works by Lee and Makower in chapter six, I have suggested how Wagnerism could mean all things to all people – the apex of civilization and the cause of its downfall, an exemplar of perfect form and a force of complete chaos. Nordau, with characteristic venom, called Wagner 'the last mushroom on the dunghill of romanticism', even while propounding the composer's centrality among the ills of modernity.[25] Beyond that chapter, Wagner(ism) has manifested throughout this thesis as, sometimes all within the same text, an invigorating model of national regeneration, a sign of neurosis, a misogynist restriction of women's expression, a possibility for *un*restricted expression for women, reactionary hypocrisy, revolutionary innovation, asceticism, worldliness, counter-culture, and the dominant culture. These interpretations of Wagnerism coexist in the texts by Eliot, Du Maurier, Caird, Corelli, Lee, Makower, and eventually Huneker and Cather. This breadth – often seemingly paradoxical – of interpretation suggests the entire project of creating cultural meaning out of music may be an exercise in futility. Music ultimately cannot be pinned down. In writing, it becomes, in Zoltan Varga's appropriately decadent phrase, 'like the pool Narcissus is gazing into': the only thing it conclusively reveals is its intimate relation with subjectivity.[26] By provoking, and sustaining in tension, such polarised responses, Wagnerism brought this quality to the fore. Yet my thesis has intended to expand our understanding of this quality beyond Wagner (much as Rasula specifies that 'Wagnerism' should be considered distinctly from the composer Richard Wagner himself).[27] Across my chapters, I have shown the reception and consciousness of other figures and movements to be vital in shaping fiction as Romanticism moved towards modernism: especially in English fiction, figures such as Mendelssohn, Beethoven, Schumann, Chopin, and Liszt, and movements such as the English Musical Renaissance and the fragmentation of concepts of 'national' music to incorporate folk

[25] Nordau, *Degeneration,* 195.
[26] Varga, *The Acoustic Self,* 20.
[27] Rasula, *History of a Shiver,* 12.

material and the cultural institution of the music halls. Not only that, but as chapter one showed, fiction was integral in making these composers – not just Wagner – mean all things to all people.

While helping to narrate these processes of cultural transformation, the composer figure also troubles our sense of linearity, bringing a transhistorical Romanticism into the text even when that text appears to be discarding the vestiges of an earlier inheritance. Bucknell's identification of music as enabling 'constant interchange between synchronic and diachronic realms' is best shown in chapter six, in which Lee and Makower position their composers between degeneracy and genius thanks to music's uncanny ability to activate a 'continual confrontation with the past within the present'.[28] Elsewhere, Fraser Riddell has written of 'music's queerness' as its 'threat to the straight linearity of temporal progress: its power to apparently pull the listener backwards in time, or to appear to suspend time, or to invoke a sense of time running faster or more slowly'.[29] This quality has been well recognised in modernist literary criticism, with Marcel Proust's fictional composer Vinteuil an obvious point of reference in discussions about music's disruption of narrative time and memory. Yet as Shafquat Towheed has shown in a chapter whose title nods to Proust, nineteenth-century authors such as Vernon Lee also recognised this quality.[30] The texts by Lee, Makower, and Du Maurier all post-dated the invention of the phonograph, which immeasurably altered conceptions of music and temporality for them as well as their modernist successors. Du Maurier's novel is distinctly modern in its fantasy of automated musical reproduction; yet at the same time, Svengali is cut from the same cloth as Heine's Paganini in *Florentine Nights,* a revision of the familiar *Maestro* figure which – like the ambivalent endings of Huneker's tales – never quite disqualifies the prospect that the *Maestro* might indeed have magical abilities.

[28] Bucknell, *Literary Modernism and Musical Aesthetics,* 607, 604.
[29] Fraser Riddell, *Music and the Queer Body in English Literature at the fin de siècle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 177.
[30] Towheed, 'The Science of Musical Memory: Vernon Lee and the Remembrance of Sounds Past', in *Words and Notes in the Long Nineteenth Century,* ed. Weliver & Ellis, 73-84. Bucknell's above-quoted comments on music and time come in a discussion of Pater, but he primarily discusses Pater in relation to modernism.

Focusing on the composer reveals the synchronic and diachronic qualities of Romanticism itself. The trajectory I trace in fiction across the nineteenth century is both a persistence and a return.

Several chapters have shown how authors used the composer to explore the aesthetic possibilities of music's relationship to time: able to transport the listener back to a specific moment from afar, but also taking on new significance with the development of history, with repetition, and in new contexts. Chapter one showed writers' investment in texts (both fiction and non-fiction) in committing to history an otherwise ephemeral art, creating canons, and placing classical music – with its particular focus on the composer – at the top of the aesthetic hierarchy. The repetition of music in performance, creating new versions, exerted pressure on Romantic paradigms constructed around the *Werktreue* ideal of originality, as chapters four and five studied through the lens of gender. These chapters also emphasised the centrality of the body, a fact sometimes overlooked in early Romanticism but brought to the fore later in the century. Although fiction could only represent the listening experience second-hand, it emphasised the affective qualities of music as a performance, not merely an idea. Early Romantic writing idealised an unrealisable 'purely musical' experience, unimpaired by spectacle – whether the showiness of the virtuoso, the cheap trickeries employed by the commercial composer, or the desirability of the female musician's body. Accusations of performativity underlie Wagner's attacks on Jewish composers and, later, Nietzsche's critique of Wagner. That ideas of spectacle, performativity, and inauthenticity constantly arise in writing about music suggests the tensions caused by, firstly, music's ephemerality as a medium, its reliance on performance, and secondly, the commercial industry which sprang up around music during the nineteenth century. Fictional representations of composers simultaneously replicate the Romantic desire for pure music and, through their focus on the composer as an embodied presence, remind the reader of the performative, the showy, and the uncapturable.

The composer's role in fiction is amplified by this interplay between music as abstract and embodied. Authors looked to the composer with the same longings as Nietzsche, author and

composer himself, who wrote in 1887: 'In comparison to music all communication through words is shameless. The word diminishes and makes stupid; the world depersonalizes; the word makes what is uncommon common'.[31] Yet on top of rendering the text 'uncommon', the composer figure brought ambiguities. In Makower's *Mirror of Music,* the composer's attempts to figure herself as a creator of works are undermined by the narrative consigning her to a performative (and pathologized) sphere. Corelli also consigns her aspiring composer to this sphere, in a curious move which reaffirmed her own turn to literature. Authors depicting the composer engage in an agonistic process which is often a way of rethinking the capacities and purposes of music and literature.

Other examples from these texts suggest the amplified role, or what Henry James in referring to Eliot's Klesmer called a 'multitudinous' quality, of the composer in fiction. Klesmer's ambiguities stem from a changing reception of Romantic ideas: he is a figure of authority, especially over the novel's female singers, but limited in his ability to communicate anything, in Eliot's estimation, of real value. In chapter two, we saw how Eliot presents Klesmer and his music as cosmopolitan and nationally specific, though with inconsistencies as to *which* nation – German, Polish, Slavic, Jewish. Even one musical allusion – Klesmer's settings of *Freudvoll, Leidvoll, Gedankenvoll* or Heine's 'Ich hab' dich geliebet und liebe dich noch' – can trigger these multitudinous meanings. Different as *Trilby* might seem, my comparisons of the novels across multiple chapters have shown its affinities with Eliot's novel through the complex significance of the composer figure. The various levels to Du Maurier's engagement of Romantic ideas are perhaps best considered in relation to Jewish identity. As chapter three showed, by constructing Svengali along anti-Semitic lines, Du Maurier engaged a long tradition of musical discourse which Wagner had infamously reconfigured, using Romantic terms to exclude Jewish composers. Yet at the same time, *Trilby*'s revaluation of musical canons and its privileging of performance – what I have called its post-Romantic or anti-Romantic stance – works against the Wagnerian

[31] Quoted in Georges Liébert, *Nietzsche and Music,* trans. David Pellauer & Graham Parkes (London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 3.

invective it recruits, repositioning the Jewish composer figure (and the woman) as the new inheritors of ultimate musical prestige. Indeed, Jewishness is a recurrent trope – the *central* trope – for authors exploring the legacy of Romantic ideas, occurring in vastly different ways in the novels I have focused on most: *Charles Auchester, Daniel Deronda,* and *Trilby* (and, if only as the merest hint, *The Mirror of Music*). Fiction is uniquely capable of maintaining dynamic and sometimes contradictory ideas about music: as I mentioned in my introduction, poetry's relationship to music in this period tended towards idealism. In fictional narratives, music and the composer take on multiple meanings, connoting both artistic idealism and embodied cultural practices, making fiction both a receptacle of contemporary ideas about music and a place to reimagine what music should be.

Right at the beginning of the period, fiction took on this reflective yet reconfiguring role. Discussing Hoffmann's musical fiction, Matthew Riley writes: 'The Romantic experience of music is…relativized through narrative technique and typecasting; it is presented as a perspective, or even a pose, rather than – as it claims to be – a glimpse of ultimate reality'.[32] As Riley points out, Hoffmann often places his most high-flown Idealist invective in the mouths of eccentric characters, creating a sense of knowing detachment from the Romantic mode he was instrumental in inaugurating. A century later, Huneker would take a similarly ironic stance towards a tradition which, at the same time, he was perpetuating. From Hoffmann to Huneker and beyond, fiction is a place of critical dialogue with wider views on music and musicians. The relationship between music and literature was mutually influential across the period: Hoffmann's Kreisler was not only, in some ways, a fictional avatar for his author, but a lasting icon for Robert Schumann and Johannes Brahms. Much later, we find Thomas Mann drawing on Arnold Schoenberg to create the composer Adrian Leverkühn in *Doktor Faustus* (1947).[33]

[32] Matthew Riley, 'E.T.A. Hoffmann Beyond the "Paradigm Shift": Music and Irony in the Novellas 1815-1819', in *Words and Notes in the Long Nineteenth Century,* ed. Weliver & Ellis, 125.

[33] Mann also drew extensively on the life and works of Nietzsche, as well as interpolating ideas about Wagner, Beethoven, and other composers; but Schoenberg was 'the *real one*' according to Mann's inscription in the copy he sent to the composer. See E. Randol Schoenberg, *The Doctor Faustus Dossier: Arnold Schoenberg, Thomas Mann, and their Contemporaries, 1930-1951* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2018).

Mann's novel took certain Romantic paradigms (obsessive compulsions, demagoguery, pathology) to such disturbing extremes, and such proximity to Nazism, that he was obliged to clarify, in later editions, which elements of Leverkühn related to Schoenberg – primarily, the invention of the twelve-tone scale – and which did not. Yet as well as the real composers in whom Mann was interested, Leverkühn has ancestors in nineteenth-century fiction: Klesmer, Svengali, Lee's Magnus in 'A Wicked Voice', Makower's Sarah in *The Mirror of Music.*

These composer fictions illustrate what I called in my introduction the persistence of Romanticism. They participate in an idealisation of music which proclaims its power as a 'universal language', as ineffable, as a metaphor for subjectivity and identity. This latter quality became incredibly important for modernist authors as they sought new ways to 'unveil a side of the self that is not accessible via linguistic representation', as Varga writes: 'Through the incompatibility of music and language, writing the acoustic self reveals the impossibility of the self'.[34] This sense of impossibility also informs the role of music in literature more generally. Peter Dayan calls music and literature 'as incompatible as they are inseparable', and the musical-literary style of much nineteenth-century writing draws attention to both of these qualities.[35] Fiction about the composer and music reminds the reader of what the author and literature cannot do: it expresses the striving of literature, as in Pater's famous dictum, to transcend the word and take on music's expressive qualities, its affectivity, its non-representational gestures to the abstract, mystical, the not-yet-understood. Yet fiction featuring the composer, specifically, takes us beyond the mere *idea* of music in literature. My focus on the composer has particularised this idea to reveal how authors write back to Romanticism. As a character, the composer draws attention to music as a cultural practice, to institutions, industries, and commerce (ever more so as the nineteenth century progressed). The amplified possibilities represented by the composer include an ability to maintain this balance between ideal and real. Embodied in a character who moves through the text and interacts with other

[34] Varga, *The Acoustic Self,* 20.
[35] Dayan, *Music Writing Literature,* 19.

characters, music becomes humanised, and the reader is called to recognise the myriad ways in which people interact with music. At the same time, authors can never quite demystify music, even when their texts engage critically with it as a sociocultural practice, because music's ineffability remains an essential facet of its analogy with identity: and this is why the composer remains, throughout the period, an uncanny, experimental, uncontainable figure.

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