

TOWARDS A CRITICISM OF THE BODY IN MUSIC

TOWARDS A CRITICISM OF THE BODY IN MUSIC:
RECOGNIZING AND REVERSING THE MIND-BODY SPLIT
IN TRADITIONAL SCHOLARSHIP

By

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ABSTRACT

Since antiquity, the study of Western classical music has been influenced by widespread beliefs in the mind-body split. Rational and idealistic philosophies, such as those expounded by Descartes and Plato, have led prominent music scholars throughout history, including Boethius, Rameau, Hoffmann and Hanslick, to focus almost exclusively on music's so-called relationship with the *mind*—music's abstract, theoretical, intellectual or left-brain qualities. With the development of the score and the *musical work* concept in the 19th century, the roles of the composer and performer have become increasingly divided in terms of mind and body respectively. As a result, current musical studies (history, theory/analysis, aesthetics) continue to focus on the formal aspects of the composer's score and the positivistic 'facts' surrounding the composer's career, systematically disregarding the role of the body and interpretation in music making.

Recently, however, some music scholars have taken an interest in studying classical music in terms of the body. Using the writings of 20th-century philosophers which convincingly challenge rationalism both within and outside the field of music, these scholars emphasize the relevance of subjectivity (perspectivism) and the body itself in the pursuit of musical 'knowledge.' Anthony Storr, for example, draws on Nietzsche's philosophies to demonstrate the importance of the *physical* body in the creation and appreciation of music. Richard Leppert similarly borrows Foucault's theory of the *social* body to uncover neglected political aspects of the body in musical experience (e.g. gender, sexuality, class, ethnicity) and discover the potential for traditional scholarship's fully rational perspective of music to maintain oppressive social stereotypes.

Consequently, the recent development of a criticism of the body in music has become especially important for feminist music scholars. Susan McClary and Suzanne Cusick have been particularly successful at demonstrating the need for scholarship to develop methods which reflect a deeper understanding of the effects of the mind-body problem on the study and practice of music.

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INTRODUCTION

In an attempt to accord with deep, prevailing beliefs in rationalism, musical and philosophical investigations in the West have for over two millennia concentrated almost exclusively on music's seemingly abstract and objectively knowable properties. Despite the virtual explosion, in recent years, of works within philosophy and other academic fields which persuasively illustrate the importance of challenging such rational beliefs, modern music scholarship (music history, theory, analysis, aesthetics, etc.) continues, for the most part, to ignore or diminish classical music's association with the body and to deny the relevance of its social, physical, performative experience via rational conceptions of music and musical methods. By limiting its observations to the formal or structural characteristics of the score and the positivistic 'facts' surrounding the composer's career, music scholarship today maintains what we may call the mind-body split in music: the gap between, or hierarchical separation of, music's theoretical, *abstract* qualities and music's performative, practical or *experiential* realm. While traditional knowledge of classical music has enriched our understanding and appreciation of what has been considered this music's "intellectual," "autonomous," "left-brain," or *mind* qualities, it has done relatively very little to explore vital *body* and so-called "subjective" aspects of music—the music we watch, listen to and feel in performance; the music we

dance to; the music we use to form our personal and cultural identities; the music we play. In short, it neglects many of those very aspects of music we love and which make music meaningful, moving, pleasurable, and valuable for most people today.

Recently, however, some music scholars have shown an interest in looking at music in terms of the body and understanding the effects of the mind-body problem on traditional musical studies and practices. Following the lead of philosophers and scholars from other academic areas, they have begun to illustrate the importance of supplementing traditional music scholarship's exclusively, and exclusionary, rational and idealistic approaches with other, more socially and/or physically informed, perspectives. Their writings illustrate that a greater understanding of both classical music practices and scholarship itself may be obtained by contemplating, for example, this music from a socio-political, performer or feminist perspective. Indeed, such works illustrate the importance of attempting to consider the *entire* experience of music making and recognizing that the traditional rationalistic view of music is simply not sustainable in practice. In fact, it is precisely music's ability to reunite or balance mind and body in a sometimes tediously rational society which makes it such a powerful and pleasurable art form.

By examining the writings of such scholars, I hope to illustrate that we may benefit greatly from considering music in terms of the body and challenging the effects of the mind-body problem on traditional music scholarship. In particular, I wish to show how the mind-body split has influenced, and continues to influence, classical music

practices and studies, why this view of music has endured for so long (including what political and social purposes the mind-body split in music fulfils), what it means to challenge rationalism in academic studies of music, and how an *embodied* music criticism may prove beneficial. These examinations will focus specifically on the study and practice of Western Classical canonic music (as apposed to avant-garde, Western popular, jazz, or world musics), since it is this music and this area of current music scholarship which have been most strongly and/or adversely effected by rational philosophies and assumptions. I believe that only by expanding our knowledge of classical music to include the body can we stand to gain a deeper, more accurate and practical understanding of music and the ideologies which surround it. Since rationalism still represents the dominant perception of reality in Western society today, often at a relatively subconscious level, our first step is to understand rationalism and the mind-body problem itself.

CHAPTER 1

Brief History of the Mind-Body Problem

How do the mind and body function in relation to each other within our pursuit of knowledge? Are they simply two attributes of a single substance, as philosopher Baruch Spinoza claimed in the 17th century? Or do they function separately from one another, as Plato, Descartes and other dualist philosophers, both past and present, have insisted? Is knowledge of reality (metaphysics), in fact, even possible? Despite well over two thousand years of debate, philosophers have been unable to agree on satisfactory answers to these and other questions concerning the mind and body.

The so-called mind-body problem, commonly known as the Cartesian split, results in thinking about the mind (or soul) and body as separate (split) or independent from one another. Attempts to solve this problem, to explain how “our abstract, internal thoughts and intentions about action cause the physical motion of our bodies,”¹ can be traced as far back as antiquity to the writings of early Greek philosophers.² Pythagoras (6th century

¹Keith J. Devlin, *Goodbye, Descartes: The End of Logic and the Search for a New Cosmology of the Mind* (New York: Wiley, 1997), 276.

²Mario Bunge’s book, *The Mind-Body Problem: A Psychobiological Approach, Foundations and Philosophy of Science and Technology* (Toronto: Pergamon Press, 1980), page 25, further suggests that there are good reasons to believe that questions concerning the nature and relationship of the mind/soul and body were raised by primitive

B.C.), for example, believed in the transmigration of souls³ and Anaxagoras, around 500 B.C., separated matter from the mind, which he thought to be infinite.⁴ It was Plato (428–354), however, through his dialogues, who provided the history of philosophy with the first deliberate explication of the mind-body split.⁵

“At the heart of Plato’s philosophy lay his belief that the ordinary world that we know with our five senses cannot be fully real.”⁶ He worked out a theory of forms or ideas which, “though not set out in full anywhere in his dialogues,” provided a foundation for all of his thought.⁷ It asserts that there exists a world of perfect and stable objects which particular objects constantly strive, though unsuccessfully, to emulate.⁸ For Plato it is this *ideal*, universal realm which constitutes reality and in which the soul (or mind) only is equipped to understand. Particular objects, such as the body, are thus flawed, unstable and inferior to the perfect, ideal of themselves. The soul, on the other hand, like

cultures twenty thousand years ago, through their idea of the disembodied soul.

³Anthony John Patrick Kenny, *A Brief History of Western Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 1.

⁴Kenny, 21.

⁵Jerome A. Shaffer, *Philosophy of Mind*, Foundations of Philosophy Series (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1968), 2.

⁶Daniel John O’Connor, *A Critical History of Western Philosophy*, Free Press Textbooks in Philosophy (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1964), 17.

⁷*Ibid.*, 18.

⁸*Ibid.*, 17.

the forms, is believed to be immortal—existing before and after the body which imprisons it⁹—and capable of acquiring knowledge or truth “in so far as the thought-process is able to function independently of any interference occasioned by the body.”¹⁰ Since, according to Plato’s theory, the body is only a particular object and it is the mind only which is capable of understanding reality (i.e. the forms), the mind is not only considered to be separate from the body in Plato’s writings but also superior to it. Indeed, the body, “far from being the instrument or vehicle of the soul, is held to be something which encumbers and even defiles it.”¹¹

Plato’s philosophical writings have had an enormous influence on Western thought, extending to a variety of disciplines both within and without academia. Plato himself, after acquiring his theory of forms, “devoted his life to working out its consequences in all fields—political, moral, religious, educational, artistic, and scientific.”¹² His influence can be seen, for example, in Neo-Platonism, which became the dominant philosophical school during the third century A.D.¹³ and was responsible for

⁹Kenny, 29.

¹⁰Cornelis Anthonie van Peursen, *Body, Soul, Spirit: A Survey of the Body-Mind Problem* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 37.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²O’Connor, 19.

¹³Ibid., 76.

returning knowledge of Greek philosophy to the West after the dark ages.¹⁴ Plotinus (205–70), an influential neo-Platonist, extrapolated arguments directly from Plato’s *Phaedo* for his discussions of the soul as immortal and independent from the body.¹⁵ Plato’s ideas also had a notable influence on Christianity¹⁶ as well as the Renaissance Platonists in Florence¹⁷ and on the philosopher Augustine (354–430), who claimed that the mind was nobler than the body and matter.¹⁸ Plato’s ideas can be detected even in some of the writings of his student Aristotle, despite Aristotle’s apparent objection to Platonic dualism.¹⁹ All in all, Plato had a lasting effect on centuries to come “in the realm of sexual morality, education, philosophical views on the nature of [humanity], ideas of good and evil, theological propositions and a great deal more.” The idea of the body as inferior to the mind, “under the influence of Platonic concepts, ... appears time and again throughout the centuries.”²⁰

Perhaps the most influential and well known articulations of the mind-body split can be found within the writings of René Descartes (1596–1650). Because of the

¹⁴Ibid., 77.

¹⁵Kenny, 97.

¹⁶Bunge, 26.

¹⁷Kenny, 171.

¹⁸O’Connor, 85.

¹⁹Ibid., 54.

²⁰van Peursen, 34.

“extraordinary clarity” of his writings, he has been described by many as “the leading exponent of the soul-body dualism.”²¹ A mathematician as well as a philosopher, Descartes’ *a priori*, rational methods of philosophical investigations no doubt stem from his appreciation for mathematical certainty which can be acquired by the mind alone, that is, without the aid of empirical investigation.²² The logical, systematic process by which Descartes *proves* the separation of the mind and body—*rational deduction*—can be observed in his *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641). In it, Descartes doubts all of his prior knowledge and beliefs until they can clearly and logically be proved true. Once true statements or ideas are established, they may provide a foundation for the investigation of other, more complicated, ideas. For example, after Descartes proves his own existence to be true, he sets out to prove the existence of God and external material things, including the body. His investigation leads him to the conclusion that the mind and the body are separate and possess distinct mental and physical properties respectively. True knowledge of reality or the external world, he says, can only be obtained by the mind alone (i.e. not by the composite of mind and body):

It does not appear...that we conclude from these perceptions of the senses anything in addition to this regarding things external to us unless there previously

²¹Ibid., 19.

²²He substantiates his distrust of the body’s sensory perception for acquiring knowledge with the argument that we can only understand the nature of a piece of wax, which is at times both solid and liquid, using our reason, our *minds*.

be an inquiry by the intellect; for it pertains to the mind alone, and not to the composite, to know the truth in these matters.²³

The process by which Descartes arrives at this conclusion in *Meditations*, and the implications of such knowledge, are outlined in his *Discourse on Method*, where the famous “Cogito ergo sum”²⁴ (I think, therefore I am) is found.²⁵

From the Cogito, Descartes concluded that he must be “a substance whose whole essence or nature was to think, and which, to exist, has no need of space nor of any material thing.”²⁶ Like Plato, “Descartes believed that minds were immortal, that they continue to exist as disembodied minds after the body has perished in death”²⁷ and, therefore, do not depend on the body for their existence.

Thus it follows that this ego, this soul, by which I am what I am, is entirely distinct from the body and is easier to know than the latter, and that even if the body were not [present], the soul would not cease to be all that it is.²⁸

²³René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, trans. Donald A. Cress (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1979), 51–2.

²⁴O’Connor, 177.

²⁵The Cogito is the one thing that Descartes can be sure of after doubting both his senses and his reasoning. “I think, therefore I am” simply means that if I think anything at all, whether it is true or false (or even whether I am being deceived by an evil demon), I would necessarily have to exist in order to think it.

²⁶René Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, trans. Laurence J. Lafleur (New York: The Liberal Arts Press, 1950), 21.

²⁷Shaffer, 35.

²⁸Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, 21.

The mind is an abstract entity and only attached to the body in so far as it “resides in the physical brain.”²⁹ This interactionist solution to the mind-body problem regards the mind and its body within an “intimate causal connection”³⁰ in which the body is “nothing more than an apparatus for conveying information to the mind by means of signals, and for conveying orders from the mind in the same manner.”³¹ Finally, this view assumes that “there are objective facts about the external world that do not depend on the interpretation—or even the existence—of any person.”³²

The dualistic, rational views presented in his *Meditations on First Philosophy* brought Descartes fame throughout Europe.³³ Despite its flaws and the numerous philosophical challenges posed by biologists, neuro- and cognitive scientists, and philosophers from Spinoza to Wittgenstein,³⁴ Descartes’ beliefs are still “deeply rooted...in present-day science—and indeed in much of our present-day world view.”³⁵ Their enormous popularity in the 17th and 18th centuries in nearly all philosophical

²⁹Devlin, 276.

³⁰O’Connor, 185.

³¹Ibid., 186.

³²Devlin, 276.

³³Kenny, 199.

³⁴Keith Devlin provides the following list in his *Goodbye, Descartes*: Husserl, Heidegger, Ricoeur, Gadamer, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, Mead, Dewey, Habermas, Wittgenstein, Dreyfus, and others.

³⁵Devlin, 276.

branches is not without its consequences today. For instance, his influence is notable in the analytic philosophy of Gottlob Frege (1848–1925) whose writings hold the view of “all meaning and thought as disembodied and formal.”³⁶ Indeed, many scholarly fields have been directly and indirectly influenced by the philosophical ideas and methods of both Descartes and Plato. I will now turn to the field of music in order to examine the impact that their dualist philosophies have had on the study of it. A good place to start is with the philosophical branch of musical scholarship—music aesthetics.

³⁶George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 440.

Influence of Mind-Body Problem on Traditional Music Scholarship

The philosophy of music is as old as philosophy itself. Since antiquity music has been studied intellectually, often utilizing *a priori* methods which maintain the mind-body problem. From ancient Greece to the Renaissance, music was not studied “for its own sake,” but rather “as a reflection of cosmic order or as an instrument of moral education.”³⁷ It became common, therefore, to approach music from a *theoretical*, mathematical or scientific perspective.

Early Developments

The history of music aesthetics, like that of music theory, begins with the Pythagoreans in the 6th century B.C. Musical studies in ancient Greece were preoccupied largely with the theoretical issues of scale-construction and tuning systems.³⁸ Music itself was recognized as embodying numerical principles found within the laws of nature.³⁹ For instance, Pythagoras expanded his discovery of the relationship between ratios of the lengths of stretched strings and their corresponding melodic intervals to form the “theory

³⁷Nicholas Cook, *A Guide to Musical Analysis* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1987), 7.

³⁸F. E. Sparshott, “Aesthetics of Music,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), 121.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 122.

that the elements of the material world either are, or are imitations of, numbers.”⁴⁰

Distrusting the senses, which he believed were “easily corrupted,”⁴¹ Pythagoras insisted that music should be thought about rationally, as “an ‘abstract’ system of relationships storable in a set of equations.”⁴² Plato similarly believed that only “rationally based and logically developed” music could exemplify “the structural principles of all reality, including the human mind.”⁴³ These disembodied, reason-oriented views of music, as developed by Plato,⁴⁴ had an influence on the writings of Aristotle, Plotinus, and the Stoics, and has “haunted musical aesthetics ever since.”⁴⁵ In the 6th century, Boethius took up these ideas, which had strong consequences for both medieval music aesthetics and music theory.

⁴⁰Monroe C. Beardsley, *Aesthetics from Classical Greece to the Present: A Short History*, Fields of Philosophy (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1966), 27.

⁴¹Claude V. Palisca, “Theory, Theorists,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), 754.

⁴²Sparshott, 122.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Beardsley, 72.

⁴⁵Sparshott, 122.

His interest in the works of Plato,⁴⁶ Aristotle and the astronomer Ptolemy (2d–3d century) led Boethius to view “music as a branch of mathematics.”⁴⁷ Like Ptolemy, Boethius used rational methods for his investigations of music, asserting that the “imperfection of the senses demanded the aid of the intellect and of scientific instruments.”⁴⁸ As a result, nowhere in any of his writings does Boethius express even the slightest interest in practical music matters.⁴⁹ For instance, his theory does not prescribe compositional or performative rules.⁵⁰ He believed, rather, that “the musicologist who *understands* practice, is better than the mere practitioner”⁵¹ (an attitude that was later employed by Guido of Arezzo around 1030). Boethius’ became the principle methodology of musical study in the middle ages⁵² and his translations of Plato and Aristotle the only source on ancient thought available until its rediscovery in the 15th century.⁵³ By the Renaissance, however, music theorists deliberately or consciously used

⁴⁶The influence of platonic, dualistic thinking on Boethius’ work can be seen in his *De Musica*, where (as Beardsley states, pages 90–1) “number and proportion are said to be the principles of reality, through which music expresses the divine.”

⁴⁷Sparshott, 123.

⁴⁸Palisca, 742.

⁴⁹Ibid., 744.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Sparshott, 123, italics mine.

⁵²Palisca, 744.

⁵³Ibid., 749.

antiquity's rationalistic and dualistic understanding of music as a model for their own concept of music.⁵⁴ For example, the *Harmonic Institutions* (1558) of Zarlino, strongly influenced by Neoplatonic ideas, based its theory of composition on mathematical proportion.⁵⁵ Such practices continued into the Enlightenment with the writings of Descartes and Rameau.

Cartesian Rationalism and Music Aesthetics in the Enlightenment

Monroe Beardsley, in his book *Aesthetics: From Classical Greece to the Present* (1966), begins his discussion of aesthetics in the Enlightenment with a relatively substantial discussion of Cartesian rationalism. Of Descartes' influence within the 17th and 18th centuries Beardsley says:

[I]n aesthetics, as in nearly every other branch of philosophy during these two centuries, his philosophical ideas were highly influential. Where we cannot demonstrate that certain aesthetic theories were in fact derived indirectly from his principles and methods, we can at least show that, logically speaking, they belong to a family of ideas for which the period was notable, and of which Descartes was the outstanding philosophical representative, if not the actual progenitor.⁵⁶

Descartes' method of rational inquiry was utilized not only by composers and music theorists, but by poets, painters and others who "were moved to see whether even these refractory subjects (however hopelessly unmethodical they might seem) could be

⁵⁴Beardsley, 131.

⁵⁵Ibid., 153.

⁵⁶Ibid., 140.

conquered by Reason.”⁵⁷ For example, the poetic theory of Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux (*L'art poétique*, 1674) insisted that “clarity” (a requirement for Descartes’ investigative model) be also the standard by which to judge beauty.⁵⁸ The Swiss aesthetician, mathematician and philosopher Jean Pierre Crousaz (*Traité du beau*, 1714), similarly inherited Descartes’ mind-body dualism in his discussion of beauty in aesthetics. However, whereas Descartes believed that beauty was discerned only by the body’s senses—and therefore concluded knowledge of beauty to be unreliable—Crousaz went further to suggest that a “purely intellectual recognition of beauty”⁵⁹ was also possible and could therefore provide knowledge of beauty “with a rational and thus a universal basis.”⁶⁰ In fact, Descartes’ writings were so influential that Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, the first to use the term “aesthetics” in his *Reflections on Poetry* (1735), consciously developed an aesthetic theory “based upon Cartesian principles and using the rationalist deductive method.”⁶¹

⁵⁷Ibid., 141.

⁵⁸Edward Lippman, *A History of Western Musical Aesthetics* (London: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 85.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Ibid., 86.

⁶¹Beardsley, 156–57.

Descartes' own *Compendium of Music* (1618) is as much a study in methodology as it is a treatise on music.⁶² In it, as well as in further discussions of the *Compendium* within the letters Descartes wrote to his friend Marin Mersenne during 1629 and 1630, we can find, not surprisingly, the distinction between “mathematical simplicity, or theoretical concordance” (knowledge obtained by the mind) and “pleasantness of actual sound” (that experienced by the body).⁶³ This mind-body dualism, and the insistence on rational methods of musical investigation, had a tremendous effect on the music theory of Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683–1764), as he himself acknowledged.

The music theory of Rameau is certainly most *Cartesian* in its “attempt to apply scientific method to the solution of musical problems”⁶⁴ and in its “dependence on mathematical precision.”⁶⁵ In the preface of his *Treatise on Harmony* (1722), Rameau says:

Music is a science which should have definite rules; these rules should be drawn from an evident principle; and this principle cannot really be known to us without the aid of mathematics. Notwithstanding all the experience I may have acquired in music from being associated with it for so long, I must confess that only with the

⁶²Albert Cohen, “Descartes, René,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), 387.

⁶³Beardsley, 154.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, 156.

⁶⁵Richard Leppert, *The Sight of Sound: Music, Representation, and the History of the Body* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 100.

aid of mathematics did my ideas become clear and did light replace a certain obscurity of which I was unaware before.⁶⁶

It is within this preface that Rameau “drives a wedge between experience (the body or, more specifically, the ears) and reason (the mind),” since experience, according to the Cartesian plan, cannot “provide a real understanding or, by implication, justification for the form modern music takes.”⁶⁷ This idea, that *a priori* methods of musical investigation can be and/or should be used to justify modern musical practices, continued, as we shall see with the writings of E.T.A. Hoffmann and Eduard Hanslick, into the 19th century.

The Mind-Body Split and the Musical Work Concept

With the hierarchy of the mind over the body firmly in place since antiquity in both music theory and aesthetics, various economic, social and technological changes served to strengthen this mind-body division. For example, the development and systematization of musical notation around 1216 by Franco of Cologne changed the status of the composer from being a performing musician (or a “mere practitioner,” as Boethius called him) to “an intellectual working at his desk.”⁶⁸ It had the effect of both emphasizing and lending authority to those elements of musical experience that could be

⁶⁶Jean-Philippe Rameau, *Treatise on Harmony*, Translated, with introduction and notes, by Philip Gossett (New York: Dover, 1971), xxxv, in Leppert, 101.

⁶⁷Leppert, 100.

⁶⁸Sparshott, 124.

easily and objectively written down.⁶⁹ As a result, music became defined more in terms of composition (i.e. particular musical objects) and composition, by its score. The tendency to see composition as *mental* labour increased further over time (for example, with the development of the printing press in the late 15th century) and, eventually, in the 19th century musical practices became regulated by the concept of the *musical work* with “its conceptually dependent ideals of compliant performance, accurate notation, and silent reception.”⁷⁰ The development of this ideology, influenced by philosophies of music from the past and shaped by musical conventions of the time, emphasized and naturalized the mind-body split in both musical practice and scholarship.

Lydia Goehr, in her book *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works* (1992), discusses the formation of the musical work concept by noting various economic and social changes which took place around 1800 including, especially, the rise of the new professional middle class. These changes served to intensify the effects of the mind-body split within the field of music and drastically altered the way composition, performance and audience reception were thought about and written about in the 19th century. Since many of these beliefs have remained current today, often unknowingly maintaining mind-body dualistic assumptions, it is useful to look briefly at some of the effects that the work concept has had on the field of music.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 253.

Composers, who were once dependent upon the church or aristocracy for employment, began in the 19th century to enjoy more musical freedom. They “were no longer thought about predominantly as in service to extra-musical institutions” but, rather, were gradually “seen as independent masters and creators of their art.”⁷¹ Composers who did continue to seek patronage did so only with the understanding that they were the ones in complete control over their own musical creations.⁷² Eventually composers saw themselves as “divinely inspired creators—even as God-like—whose sole task was to objectify in music something unique and personal and to express something transcendent.”⁷³ It is no surprise, then, that composers increasingly sought to free themselves from the burden of what they considered to be worldly demands. Goehr remarks (rather wittily),

If composers could have existed without bodily nourishment or support from external sources, they might never again have ventured outside their newly constructed ivory tower[!] ⁷⁴

Indeed, the composer sought to be independent from both the performer and audience which supported him—a project that was only possible with the development of the score.

⁷¹Ibid., 206.

⁷²Ibid., 207.

⁷³Ibid., 208.

⁷⁴Ibid., 209.

Before the 19th century, musical notation was commonly thought to be imprecise and naturally dependent on the performer's embellishment or extemporization.⁷⁵ In the 16th century, for example, notation did not include descriptive words or markings to ensure precise details concerning tempo, mood, character, tone production, attack, phrasing and dynamics be adhered to in performance.⁷⁶ Entire parts or sections of the score were sometimes left out, and much instrumental music was improvised rather than fully notated. In the 17th and 18th centuries, as well, the widespread use of thorough bass notation allowed organists, harpsichordists, guitarists and lute players to incorporate their own detailed elaborations and interpretations of the harmonic foundations of the pieces they performed using established conventions of the day. Improvisation was important also at this time, as organists were expected to compose intricate contrapuntal works on the spot, and both singers and players were required to creatively embellish melodic outlines and other scored material. Indeed, the score could easily be modified during performances or rehearsals since it “normally provided only a basis for performance rather than a rigid template” and was not yet seen as “an unchangeable mandate from composer to performer.”⁷⁷

⁷⁵Ibid., 187.

⁷⁶Ian D. Bent, David Hiley, Maragaret Bent, and Geoffrey Chew, “Notation,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), 393–399.

⁷⁷David Charlton, “Score,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), 62.

As a result, composition and performance before the 19th century were understood as continuous, rather than distinct, activities.⁷⁸ In fact, composers often performed their own works.⁷⁹ However, by around 1800 the “specificity of structural elements, standardized symbolism and improved copying”⁸⁰ allowed the score to take the place of the composer’s involvement in performance.⁸¹ The once “open interchange of musical material”⁸² common before the 19th century was replaced with a score that was understood as fixed, complete, original⁸³ and protected, as such, by new copyright laws giving full ownership of the score-work to the composer.⁸⁴ The score became, as a result, a permanent musical object, written in order to both outlast or exist separate from any particular performance of itself⁸⁵ and provide authoritative instructions for its “correct” or authentic performance.⁸⁶

⁷⁸Gochr, 190.

⁷⁹Ibid., 195.

⁸⁰Ibid., 225.

⁸¹Ibid., 229.

⁸²Ibid., 186.

⁸³Ibid., 222.

⁸⁴Ibid., 218.

⁸⁵Ibid., 186.

⁸⁶Ibid., 188.

Because of the development of more accurate, standardized musical notation and the belief in the musical work as an object, complete in itself and independent of performance for its existence, the roles of the composer and the performer in the 19th century became increasingly thought of as separate and divided in terms of mind and body respectively: Composers used their mental energies to produce works, performers produced performances with their bodies. “Rather than composing music for particular, actually existing instruments and players” or extra-musical functions, composers wrote music for “instruments and performers at a distance.”⁸⁷ They insisted that their notational instructions be “followed to the mark” and assumed complete authority over the creation and meaning of their works.⁸⁸ The role of performers, on the other hand, was understood as something less creative and more physical. Interpretation, for instance, was not understood as something creative as much as it was seen as adhering to the authoritative wishes of the composer.⁸⁹ As technical demands for the performer grew and creative responsibilities were increasingly assigned to and taken over by the composer, performers began to rehearse musical works in private “for concentrated practice and learning.”⁹⁰

⁸⁷Ibid., 226.

⁸⁸Ibid., 224–6.

⁸⁹Ibid., 232.

⁹⁰Ibid., 193.

Professional orchestras and virtuoso performers began to appear, taking performance to a new level of skill and dedication.⁹¹

Goehr notes too how the audience ceased to be a consideration within the developmental process and performance of musical works around 1800. Compositions were no longer understood as dependent on audiences or any other *extra-musical* factors or functions.⁹² Instead, audiences were expected to be both “literally and metaphorically silent” during performances.⁹³ Concert halls “started to be erected as monuments and establishments devoted to the performance of musical works”⁹⁴ to ensure that listeners give the proper, disembodied response. Concert hall etiquette determined “that audiences should listen with disinterested respect to the works being performed.”⁹⁵ No longer was it acceptable, therefore, for performances to be interrupted, for example, by bored audiences or extra-musical festivities which encouraged talking, applauding, dancing and singing along with the performance.⁹⁶ Ironically, however, if the performance or audience reception of a musical work *were* to be inappropriate or unauthentic to the composer’s

⁹¹Ibid., 226.

⁹²Ibid., 192.

⁹³Ibid., 236.

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵Ibid., 249.

⁹⁶Ibid., 192.

wishes, no harm, it was thought, could come to the musical work itself⁹⁷ which, like Plato's forms, was thought to exist above all of its particular, worldly imitations. Such platonic thinking about the musical work or the nature of music in general, as outlined by Goehr, can be found, not surprisingly, in the critical and scholarly writings that became prevalent in the 19th century.

Musical scholarship in the 19th century, like musical practices, adopted philosophies related to the work concept and, hence, the mind-body split. It was at this time that academia took a new interest in music history⁹⁸ and that "musicians sought to institutionalize the new ideals of a work-based practice."⁹⁹ As a result, musical academies and public societies sprang up all over Europe.¹⁰⁰ There was a notable increase in the production of bibliographies and music journals.¹⁰¹ For the first time biographies were being written, including Forkel's 1802 biography of Bach and that of Piccinni by Ginguené in 1800. Music history began concentrating on "great names" and "masterpieces" rather than the "histories of musical functions, uses, and styles" typical of

⁹⁷Ibid., 222.

⁹⁸Ibid., 246.

⁹⁹Ibid., 241.

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

¹⁰¹Goehr lists some of the more significant journals as Forkel's *Allgemeine Literatur der Musik* (1792), Friedrich Rochlitz's *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* (1798) and Robert Schumann's *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* (1834).

the 17th century (such as *Syntagma* by Praetorius and J. Bonnet's *Histoire générale de la musica*).¹⁰² Musicology was reconstructing itself in terms of the new romantic ideals.

Abraham Rees' *General History of Music* (1798) and *Cyclopedia* (1802), for example, represented "a new sort of music history" which viewed all musics, past and present, according to philosophies embedded in the work concept.¹⁰³ Mendelssohn's revival of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* in 1829 similarly "took the music away from the church and put it into the concert hall,"¹⁰⁴ which served to initiate the widespread "canonization of dead composers and formation of a musical repertoire of transcendent masterpieces."¹⁰⁵ By detaching music from its "original, local and extra-musical meanings,"¹⁰⁶ musicians began to re-conceive music of the past in terms of musical works.¹⁰⁷ This, Goehr believes, is the reason why the romantic aesthetic has continued to be the dominant philosophical view of music today. Of the musical work concept Goehr says:

¹⁰²Goehr, 241.

¹⁰³Ibid.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., 248.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 247.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 246.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 247.

This view is so entrenched in contemporary thought that its constitutive concepts are taken for granted. We have before us in fact a clear case of *conceptual imperialism*.¹⁰⁸

Musical Investigations of the 19th Century

Musical scholarship today continues, for the most part, to endorse the romantic aesthetic as it stems directly from musical philosophies, practices and writings of the 19th century. Not surprisingly, then, it also maintains the assumption of the mind-body split and looks to rational, positivistic methods of musical investigation. Some of these methods can be linked directly to the music criticism and scholarship which arose around 1800, such as the analysis-criticism of E.T.A. Hoffmann and the formalist aesthetics of Eduard Hanslick.

E.T.A. Hoffmann was one of the most influential critics of the 19th century. It is not surprising to recognize the mind-body split within his writings. Like most musicians of the 19th century, he understood the roles of the composer and performer to be necessarily separate, and used the term *Werktreue* to describe the performer's truthfulness or faithfulness to the musical work:

The genuine artist lives only for the work, which he understands as the composer understood it and which he now performs. He does not make his personality count in any way. All his thoughts and actions are directed towards bringing into being

¹⁰⁸Ibid., 245.

all the wonderful, enchanting pictures and impressions the composer sealed in his work with magical power.¹⁰⁹

Indeed, his hierarchical view of the composer over the performer, is evident within his comparison of the composer's musical work to a "great painting" and its performance to a "good copper engraving."¹¹⁰ His writings portray the true essence of music as mental and rational, as "quite separate from the outer sensual world surrounding him."¹¹¹

In his famous "Review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony," Hoffmann analyzes the score as if it alone were the musical work. He treats the score like an autonomous musical *object*, independent of any of its potential performances or receptive interpretations. Much in line with the analyses which became prominent in the 19th century,¹¹² and which persist often in modern scholarship today, Hoffmann dissects the score using rational methods of inquiry which appear objective in order to reveal the score's "high level of

¹⁰⁹E. T. A. Hoffmann, "Beethovens Instrumentalmusik," *Musikalische Novellen und Aufsätze* (Regensburg, 1919), 69, in Goehr, 1.

¹¹⁰E. T. A. Hoffmann, "Review of Beethoven's Piano Trios, Op.70 Nos. 1 and 2," in *E.T.A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings: Kreisleriana, The Poet and the Composer, Music Criticism*, ed., annotated, and introduced by David Charlton, trans. Martyn Clarke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 302.

¹¹¹E. 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., annotated, and introduced by David Charlton, trans. Martyn Clarke (Cambridge University Press, 1989), 234.

¹¹²Ian D. Bent, "Analysis," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), 353.

rational awareness”¹¹³ and to validate musical practices. His many musical examples and precise referrals to the score invite the reader to appreciate and take pleasure in the score for its cognitive attributes.

In fact, Hoffmann believes that Beethoven’s score is valuable *because* of its adherence to rationality (the ability to be analyzed formally) and not because of its aesthetic, *physical* appeal. According to Hoffmann, without Beethoven’s ability to control rationally the compositional process, his works would be regarded

merely as products of a genius who ignores form and discrimination of thought and surrenders to his creative fervour and the passing dictates of his imagination. He is nevertheless fully the equal of Haydn and Mozart in *rational awareness*, his controlling self detached from the inner realm of sound and ruling it in absolute authority.¹¹⁴

It is, Hoffmann suggests, rational thought and the ability to control music in an objective manner which separate the mere genius from “the master.”¹¹⁵ Such an attitude assumes that there is one ideal way to perform a piece of music. It presents the musical text as closed and limited and, consequently, does not allow the performer a creative interpretive role within musical experience.¹¹⁶ Although Hoffmann began writing criticism for the

¹¹³Hoffmann, “Review of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony,” 238–39.

¹¹⁴Ibid., 238, italics mine.

¹¹⁵Ibid., 236.

¹¹⁶Discussions of virtuosi performers, such as Liszt and Paganini, in 19th century music criticism differ considerably from writings about composers and their works (such as Hoffmann’s writings on Beethoven). Whereas the composer is hardly ever described in terms of physical attributes (since he is appreciated for his mental capacities), the virtuoso performer is written about at great lengths in terms of his physical appearance and his

Leipzig *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* in 1809,¹¹⁷ his “understanding of musical works corresponds exactly to the understanding the majority of us still have today.”¹¹⁸

Hanslick also believed that the value of music lay primarily in its rational *form*—a view consistent with the predominant 19th-century adherence to rationalism within music, as he himself acknowledged:

The striving for as objective as possible a scientific knowledge of things, of which the effects are being felt in all areas of knowledge in our time, must necessarily also have an impact upon the investigation of beauty.¹¹⁹

Like philosopher/psychologist Johann Friedrich Herbart (*Schriften zur Einleitung in die Philosophie*, 1813 and *Kurze Enzyklopädie der Philosophie aus praktischen Gesichtspunkten*, 1831), whose direct influence on Hanslick may be noted,¹²⁰ and Immanuel Kant before him (*Critik der Urtheilskraft*, 1790), Hanslick believed that only the formal characteristics of music were knowable by the mind and therefore capable of being judged according to aesthetic beauty or worth. Such musical *formalism* had a notable impact on French musicologist and music critic Jules Combarieu (*La musique,*

body. So much so, that the performer’s mental and musical abilities are either ignored or are considered secondary to the performer’s physical genius.

¹¹⁷Winton Dean, “Criticism,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), 38.

¹¹⁸Goehr, 2.

¹¹⁹Eduard Hanslick, *On the Musically Beautiful: A Contribution Towards the Revision of the Aesthetics of Music*, trans. and ed. Geoffrey Payzant (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1986), 1.

¹²⁰Sparshott, 128.

ses lois, son évolution, 1907) who “defined music as the art of thinking in sounds” and on Igor Stravinsky¹²¹ (ironically famous for his ballets!). Indeed, Hanslick’s rational, formalistic, disembodied perception of music “has enough presence in contemporary musical scholarship so that it needs either to be defended or challenged.”¹²²

In his *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen: ein Beitrag zur Revision der Ästhetik der Tonkunst* (1854) Hanslick describes form or “beauty” as autonomous, “without having any purpose of its own beyond itself” and having nothing to do with “pleasant feelings” which may arise within the listener.¹²³

The form (the musical structure) is the real substance (subject) of music—in fact, is the music itself, in antithesis to the feeling. [It is] the product of a thinking mind.¹²⁴

Feeling, on the other hand, is only an emotional effect of music which “belongs to the physical properties of sound, the greater part of which is governed by physiological laws,” and hence, is insignificant—unreliable to judge the beauty or value of music.¹²⁵

¹²¹Ibid. Combarieu founded the *Revue musicale* (originally called the *Revue d'histoire et de critique musicales*) in 1901 and held a professorship at the Collège de France between 1904 and 1910.

¹²²Henry Klumpenhouwer, “Commentary: Poststructuralism and Issues of Music Theory,” in *Music/Ideology: Resisting the Aesthetic*, ed. Adam Krims, *Critical Voices in Art, Theory and Culture*, ed. Saul Ostrow (Amsterdam: G + B Arts International, 1998), 298.

¹²³Hanslick, *On the Musically Beautiful*, trans. Geoffrey Payzant, 3.

¹²⁴Eduard Hanslick, *The Beautiful in Music*, trans. Gustav Cohen, ed. Morris Weitz (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1957), 89, 92, in Lippman, 300–301.

¹²⁵Ibid.

Hanslick also differentiates between mental and physical *pleasure* in music. The former, which he calls “aesthetic” pleasure (“Kunstgenuß”), arises from listening to harmony and counterpoint with an active understanding¹²⁶—in other words, with an appreciation of form and the rational, objective aspects of music. The latter pleasure, which he calls “pathological,” is the physical enjoyment the listener experiences when focusing on the melodic aspects of music (i.e. the voice) and is the result of “mental indolence.”¹²⁷

In pure contemplation the hearer takes in nothing but the piece of music being played; every material interest must be set aside. The tendency to allow the feelings to become aroused is an interest of that sort. Exclusive preoccupation of mind through beauty operates logically...; a predominant effect upon feeling would be more questionable, would indeed be pathological.¹²⁸

Both the writings of E.T.A. Hoffmann and of Eduard Hanslick, as well as those of other influential music critics and scholars in the 19th century, helped to reinforce the effects that the work concept, and hence the mind-body split, had on musical thought. These effects are still visible in scholarship and traditional musical practices today.

Current Music Aesthetics, Past Ideals

Recent music aesthetics often concerns itself with ontological aspects of music. Philosophical discussions aiming to define and understand precisely what a musical work

¹²⁶Hanslick, *On the Musically Beautiful*, trans. Geoffrey Payzant, 57, in Klumpenhouwer, 297–98.

¹²⁷Ibid., 64, in Klumpenhouwer, 297.

¹²⁸Hanslick, *On the Musically Beautiful*, trans. Geoffrey Payzant, 4–5.

is and how it exists have led modern aestheticians such as Peter Kivy, Jerrold Levinson, Roman Ingarden and others to defend a view of music which is for the most part (like Hoffmann and Hanslick) closed and disembodied. This is, evidently, in part because they, and the musical tradition they belong to, have not yet fully detached themselves from the ideas and consequences associated with the work concept and, in part, because of the large influence the mind-body dichotomy has had on Western philosophy.

Peter Kivy, for example, borrows Plato's theory of forms to characterize his view of music.¹²⁹ In describing what he calls "musical Platonism,"¹³⁰ Kivy actually goes beyond the 19th-century notion of the musical work in terms of rationalism; he understands the role of the composer to be that of a "*discoverer* rather than creator" of musical works.¹³¹ In other words, he believes the work exists ideally or universally—in terms of its pure, abstract "sound structure"¹³² and independent of all worldly or particular concerns including the composer's own thoughts. The performance, reception or even the score of

¹²⁹Jerrold Levinson, similarly, in his *Music, Art, and Metaphysics: Essays in Philosophical Aesthetics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), borrows Aristotle's theoretical model of reality to describe his view of the musical work. Like Kivy, Levinson believes the musical work is abstract and independent of physical properties. Unlike Kivy, however, Levinson also believes that the musical work is created—finite, historically dependent and with relational properties suggesting the work to be more than just a bare sound structure.

¹³⁰Peter Kivy, "Platonism: A Kind of Defense," in *The Fine Art of Repetition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 35.

¹³¹*Ibid.*, 40, italics mine.

¹³²Peter Kivy, "Orchestrating Platonism," in *The Fine Art of Repetition: Essays in the Philosophy of Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 77.

a musical work, according to Kivy, are nothing more than *instances* of the work, belonging to the realm of particulars and in no way can represent the work itself which exists infinitely.¹³³ Ironically, however, this ahistorical account of music does not alter Kivy's ideas on authentic/historical performance nor his belief in the performer's moral duty to remain faithful to the intentions of dead composers despite, perhaps, the performer's own aesthetic instincts or preferences.¹³⁴ This illustrates just how deeply imbedded assumptions resulting from the work concept can in fact be.

While Kivy departs from 19th century views of the musical work by seeing it from a platonic, idealistic perspective, Roman Ingarden, in his book *The Work of Music and the Problem of Its Identity*, re-examines popular, unsystematized convictions of the musical work by thoroughly investigating various practical and physical aspects of musical *experience*. As a result, Ingarden offers some insightful and accurate observations regarding composition, performance, audience reception, the score and what he believes to be the musical work itself. Although these observations imply the need for an expansion of traditional views of the musical work to include both subjectivity and the body as relevant creative forces of musical meaning, Ingarden has difficulty freeing himself from traditional philosophies of music. A brief look at Ingarden's book is therefore in order, since it both illustrates the reluctance of music scholarship to depart

¹³³Kivy, "Platonism in Music: A Kind of Defense," 37–8.

¹³⁴Peter Kivy, "Live Performances and Dead Composers," in *The Fine Art of Repetition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 105–6.

from traditional views of music and also demonstrates the tenuous nature of the work concept, and other effects of the mind-body split, within the philosophy of music. It illustrates that a disembodied, fully rational account of music is in practice philosophically incomplete and unsustainable.

Although Ingarden explicitly disagrees with Kivy's platonic view of the musical work on the basis that musical works come into existence historically, he too contemplates musical experience with an idealistic bias at times. For example, he suggests that there may be an ideal location in the concert hall from which to hear performances.¹³⁵ Similarly, he defines the musical work as an object, complete in itself since the moment of composition, and therefore independent of those elements within performance and audience reception—elements which he inadvertently suggests have the potential to create meaning. He separates the composer and his work from the performer and listener, to whom he denies any creative roles. He sees all musical meaning as imbedded within the musical work itself and therefore unaffected by interpretive elements outside the work's fixed boundaries. In fact, the only real difference between Ingarden's and Kivy's idealistic perspective is that Kivy insists that the work is *infinitely* stable and ideal while Ingarden allows the musical work to assume such a position after the composer creates the work via the score or improvisation. Herein we find a contradiction: how can Ingarden assign the composer a creative role based on the argument that

¹³⁵On page 20.

compositions are produced historically, and yet simultaneously deny the performer and audience—whose creative interpretations, Ingarden admits, are also culturally based—their own creative role? Ingarden inadvertently suggests that the performer and listener do in fact hold creative positions, like the composer, within their historical/cultural surroundings.

Whereas philosophers and musicians in the past have thought of composition as purely rational, mental labour, Ingarden describes this process in terms of “psychosomatic acts.”¹³⁶ Indeed, he acknowledges the composer’s dependence on the physical properties of performance and the limitations of compositional imagination:

before the performance of his work, even the composer himself does not know the profile in all its qualifications; at best he imagines it more or less precisely and at times he may merely be guessing at it. With regard to symphonic works it is probably always the case that it is difficult to imagine the complex profile of an orchestral work in all its detail and full tonal coloring.¹³⁷

Only through performance, Ingarden says, “can we, in the fullness of musical experience, perceive the work’s qualities.”¹³⁸ He departs from a purely rational notion of music when he notes that both sounding and non-sounding elements make up the musical work. Such elements include, for example, “irrational, emotional” qualities (purely emotional *feeling*,

¹³⁶Roman Ingarden, *The Work of Music and the Problem of Its Identity*, ed. Jean G. Harrell, trans. Adam Czerniawski (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 116.

¹³⁷*Ibid.*, 149.

¹³⁸*Ibid.*, 143.

rubato, sound colourings, etc.),¹³⁹ *extra-musical* elements belonging to the work (through thematic, rhythmic, etc., representation) and aesthetic values—all properties of the musical work which are often impossible to notate and are dependent on human, subjective interpretation. However, Ingarden chooses to see these “irrational,” subjective qualities as within the composer’s work itself rather than in part produced by and dependent on the performer and audience. In doing so, he maintains traditional views of treating the musical work as an object, closed and creatable only by the composer. This view conflicts with his description of the score as an open, incomplete object.

Ingarden describes the score as having “gaps or areas of indeterminateness which can be removed only in performance.”¹⁴⁰ He says:

Because of the imperfection of musical notation, the score is an incomplete, schematic prescription for performance. It fixes only certain aspects of its sound-base, whereas the remaining ones and especially the non-sounding elements are only partially defined and within certain limits open to various interpretations.¹⁴¹

In fact, Ingarden suggests that it is impossible to perform a score without *adding* to it those elements which are missing and which are partially or imprecisely defined. He notes, for example, the vagueness of verbal descriptions within the score and suggests that it is up to the performer to replace such ambiguities with “precise meanings.”¹⁴² In

¹³⁹Ibid., 96–7.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., 116–17.

¹⁴¹Ibid., 116.

¹⁴²Ibid., 140.

fact, Ingarden asserts that “a performer who adheres to all the details fixed in the score may introduce such crucial changes with regard to remaining elements that we may indeed wonder whether this is still the same work.”¹⁴³ It seems odd then for Ingarden to maintain that performers do not in part create musical meaning within the work.

Finally, Ingarden’s discussion of performance also suggests, ironically, both the need to expand our conceptions of the musical work and also Ingarden’s difficulty in doing so. He notices, for instance, that no two performances of the same piece can be exactly alike. They differ not only with regards to “their position in space and time” but also, for example, in their “various qualitative properties such as tone colorings, tempi, dynamic detail, the perspicuity of specific subjects, and so on.”¹⁴⁴ These differences, he says, are often the result of the performer’s creative and aesthetic choices. He therefore describes performance as:

an acoustic process...made up of a certain cluster of succeeding sound products caused by...complex physical acts (for example, fingers striking piano keys, the vibration and resonance of strings, the vibration of the air) and mental acts by the performer (as, for example, his consciousness of the acts he is performing, his control over them, his listening to his own performance and being affected by the composition).¹⁴⁵

Just as we saw with regard to the composer, historical/cultural considerations must ultimately play a role in influencing the creative choices of the performer and the

¹⁴³Ibid., 141.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., 13–14.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., 10–11.

listening habits of audiences. Ingarden acknowledges that what indeed makes a performer “outstanding” is precisely her ability to “introduce new interpretations” of a work which change our perception and understanding of it.¹⁴⁶ Ingarden praises the performer not for her faithfulness to the composer’s intent, although he does recognize that a performer must adhere to the score in order for the musical work to remain the same object, but for her ability to shape musical tastes:

in particular epochs musical works are normally performed in a specific manner imposed by outstanding, highly individualistic performers and also dependent upon the general aesthetic taste of the epoch.¹⁴⁷

However, despite these observations, Ingarden does not admit that the performer or the audience helps to create meaning within the musical work. Instead he sees the performative and interpretive differences as idealistically belonging to the composer’s musical work itself.¹⁴⁸ Like Kivy, and other modern musical scholars, Ingarden continues to maintain the effects of work concept and mind-body split in his view of music. However, through his detailed observations of the various aspects of musical experience,

¹⁴⁶Ibid., 155.

¹⁴⁷Ibid., 143.

¹⁴⁸Ingarden could perhaps be interpreted as understanding the role of the performer as written within the work itself, thereby allowing performative elements to be in fact *part of* the work within the missing elements of the score. However, he does not clearly state this nor does this interpretation cease to treat the musical work as a closed object, created solely by the composer. The composer, by this view, continues to appear as an authorial controller of his work, maintaining the effects of the traditional work concept within musical thinking.

Ingarden throws light on the fact that a disembodied view of music is problematic and unsustainable philosophically and with regards to modern musical practices and intuitions.

Problems With Modern Musicology and Music Theory/Analysis

Two areas of current musical scholarship which also seem to have particular difficulty breaking away from traditional, disembodied philosophies and methodologies are musicology and music analysis. Both, for example, approach music from a positivistic (sometimes scientific or mathematical) perspective, emphasizing the importance of obtaining knowledge which is objective and certain. On the other hand, what are thought to be subjective elements of music, such as the interpretive contributions of performers or listeners, are ignored or thought of as irrational or irrelevant. As a result, often the formal or internal elements of music are focused on by the music historian or theorist. Rarely do such writings stray from those structural elements of music which can be measured or theorized in a seemingly objective manner. In this way, modern music scholars can continue to study music in much the same manner as 19th century scholars, such as Hoffmann and Hanslick, who functioned under the romantic ideals of the work concept and in accordance to the Cartesian and Platonic objectivist, rationalist tradition of studying and philosophizing about music. They can continue, in other words, to maintain within academia, the effects of the mind-body split on music.

Joseph Kerman, in his book *Contemplating Music: Challenges to Musicology* (1985), presents some problems with regard to musicology and music analysis which can be traced back to the effects of the mind-body split. One of his main concerns is that musical scholarship lacks what he calls *Criticism*, that is:

the way of looking at art that tries to take into account the meaning it conveys, the pleasure it initiates, and the value it assumes, for us today. Criticism deals with pieces of music and men [and women] listening with fact and feeling, with the life of the past in the present, with the composer's private image in the public mirror of an audience.¹⁴⁹

He recognizes the rationalist views most scholars have of music as neglectful of musical experience *in its totality*. By contrast, Kerman opts for methods of investigation which take into consideration *both* of what are traditionally considered objective and subjective elements of music, both composition and interpretation. Importantly, he recognizes, within the field of musicology itself, that these polarities are necessarily dependent on one another rather than *split*:

The distinction between 'objective' fact-digging and 'subjective' interpretation cannot in fact be sharply maintained.¹⁵⁰

Not surprisingly then, he rejects in both musicology and music analysis the tendency to see musical composition (often the score itself) as autonomous—in the case of

¹⁴⁹Joseph Kerman, *Contemplating Music: Challenges to Musicology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 123.

¹⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 127.

musicology, independent of social (political, cultural, etc.) considerations¹⁵¹ and, with regard to analysis, free from all *extra-musical* considerations outside the music's sound structure. By concentrating on what Kerman calls "limited positivistic tasks" these scholars, in line with musical academic traditions, in his opinion, tend to slight "the music itself."¹⁵²

Musicology in the 19th century (as the study of music history in the Western high-art tradition) had a tendency to focus heavily on *objective* musical 'facts.' As mentioned above, these constituted mainly the details surrounding compositions (i.e. "great names" and "masterpieces"¹⁵³) and the "network of facts and conditions impinging on" them.¹⁵⁴ For example, "new manuscripts were discovered and described, archives were reported on, dates were established, *cantus firmi* traced from one work and one composer to another" and so on. Rarely, therefore, was this information interpreted critically in terms of aesthetics or hermeneutics,¹⁵⁵ that is, rarely did it involve performer, audience or critical interpretation.¹⁵⁶ As a result, musicology today continues to be

¹⁵¹Ibid., 42.

¹⁵²Ibid., 72.

¹⁵³Goehr, 241.

¹⁵⁴Kerman, 72.

¹⁵⁵Ibid., 42.

¹⁵⁶Kerman calls Hermann Kretzschmar, however (on page 74 of *Contemplating Music*), an exception for developing a system of musical hermeneutics.

perceived as dealing essentially with the factual, the documentary, the verifiable, the analyzable, the positivistic. Musicologists are respected for the facts they know about music. They are not admired for their insight into music as aesthetic experience.¹⁵⁷

If, as Kerman affirms, “students of musicology enter the field, generally, because of a commitment to music as aesthetic experience,”¹⁵⁸ then he must be correct in suggesting that musicology should be conceived more broadly than in purely positivistic terms. Why should musicologists, as Kerman notices, continually and deliberately (perhaps forcefully?) separate their ‘objective’ scholarly work from “their musical insights and passions” and thus ignore the very part of music they themselves find valuable? This, Kerman believes, is “a great mistake.”¹⁵⁹ He says,

musicologists should exert themselves towards fusion, not separation. When the study of music history loses touch with the aesthetic core of music, which is the subject matter of criticism, it can only degenerate into a shallow exercise.¹⁶⁰

Musicology, according to Kerman, should attempt to move beyond traditional ways of thinking about and studying music, beyond assumptions and effects of the mind-body split.

For example, the study of performance practice in the last century as a small sub-branch of musicology may be helpful in some important respects in challenging the mind-

¹⁵⁷Kerman, 12.

¹⁵⁸Ibid., 115.

¹⁵⁹Ibid., 18–19.

¹⁶⁰Ibid., 19.

body split. Although most of its work still involves the accumulation of positivistic ‘facts,’ its emphasis on *performance* allows discussions of history to include more of the experiential aspects of music traditionally considered to be “extra-musical” and thus unworthy of attention. The study of social history, organology, iconography and theoretical treatises, for instance, may lay the foundation for a more interpretive music history and (as we shall see in the section on Richard Leppert in the next chapter) discover the importance of the body’s role in music making. The study of performance practice may also facilitate discussions of a more philosophical nature regarding the creative role of the performer. There is a danger, however, for the desire of historical accuracy or “authenticity” to override the performer’s pursuit of musical pleasure, taste, and social relevance for modern audiences. As Kerman writes:

Authenticity should not be valued in itself, only in the service of the ever-better interpretation of music.¹⁶¹

Modern musical analysis (“the detailed ‘internalist’ explication of the structure of particular compositions”¹⁶²), too, has been criticized by Kerman and others for what is seen as only a “partial engagement with music.”¹⁶³ Its formalistic tendencies (originating

¹⁶¹Kerman, 193. For more on the performance practice movement see Chapter 6 of Kerman’s *Contemplating Music*, pages 182–217, and Nicholas Kenyon, ed., *Authenticity and Early Music: A Symposium* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), especially the “Introduction” by Nicholas Kenyon, pages 1–18, and Howard Mayer Brown’s “Pedantry or Liberation? A Sketch of the Historical Performance Movement,” pages 27–56.

¹⁶²*Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁶³Klumpenhouwer, 292.

in the 19th century) stem from concentrating mainly or only on the internal sound structures of musical works (composers' scores), ignoring those aspects which are thought to be subjective and thus unworthy of attention. As Kerman points out,

Music's autonomous structure is only one of many elements that contribute to its import. Along with preoccupation with structure goes the neglect of other vital matters—...everything else that makes music affective, moving, emotional, expressive. By removing the bare score from its context in order to examine it as an autonomous organism, the analyst removes that organism from the ecology that sustains it.¹⁶⁴

According to Kerman, most of the various branches or streams of analysis, including Schenkerian analysis,¹⁶⁵ Allen Forte's set-theoretical analysis, Jean-Jacques Nattiez's semiological analysis, and what Nicholas Cook calls the psychological approaches of Rudolph Reti and Leonard Meyer,¹⁶⁶ "draw on precisely defined, seemingly objective operations and shun subjective criteria."¹⁶⁷ These systematic approaches to analysis flourished precisely because they "provided for a positivistic approach to art."¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁴Kerman, 73.

¹⁶⁵Kerman suggests (on page 75 of *Contemplating Music*) that the rediscovery of Heinrich Schenker's works in 1950 at both Princeton and Yale "represents a true underground link between American neo-positivism in music and the original 19th century German movement."

¹⁶⁶However, Meyer's book *Emotion and Meaning in Music* (1956) does focus, as Kerman suggests (in *Contemplating Music*, page 108), on audience reception which, in some sense, can be seen to validate and find meaningful this aspect of music.

¹⁶⁷Kerman, 73–4. One exception, Kerman notes (page 74 of *Contemplating Music*), is the empirically and metaphorically descriptive analyses of Sir Donald Francis Tovey, which frequently evoke the "music's affect."

¹⁶⁸Kerman, 73.

Indeed, Nicholas Cook, in his book *A Guide to Musical Analysis* (1987), notices “the tendency for analysis to turn into a quasi-scientific discipline in its own right, essentially independent of the practical concerns of musical performance, composition or education.”¹⁶⁹ He seems to agree with Kerman’s view that “as a kind of formalistic criticism, analysis does not address all or even many of the problems that must be faced if music is to be studied in its integrity.”¹⁷⁰ Its “fine print and its doctored musical examples, its tables, reductive graphs, and occasional mathematical excursions”¹⁷¹ do not include those elements of music, namely interpretation or the body itself, which have been excluded due to the effects of the mind-body split within music and academia at large. As Cook importantly suggests,

the emphasis many analysts place on objectivity and impartiality can only discourage the personal involvement that is, after all, the only sensible reason for anyone being interested in music.¹⁷²

The price of attempting to study only the seemingly objective aspects of music is to lose touch with music as an aesthetic experience and, consequently, that which we find valuable. This is because, as Cook notes,

¹⁶⁹Cook, *A Guide to Musical Analysis*, 3.

¹⁷⁰Kerman, 115.

¹⁷¹*Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁷²Cook, *A Guide to Musical Analysis*, 3.

investigating the way you experience a piece of music is not something that can be done by means of formal deduction; nobody can prove your statements about what you experience to be right or wrong, true or untrue.¹⁷³

This does not mean, however, that the scholar's work should be regarded as "an exercise in uncontrolled subjectivity in which anything goes and nothing is ever correct or incorrect, better or worse." Looking at music critically, in terms of the way it is experienced, "can certainly be musically valid or invalid."¹⁷⁴ And, although the scholar's method of investigation may not appear to be of a strictly "scientific" or objective nature, it will be reliable "in the sense of having [a] meaningful or predictable relationship to the music's physical or psychological reality."¹⁷⁵

While the methods imposed by traditional musicologists and music analysts are significant and aid in, for example, our understanding of the structural aspects of musical works and the evolution of Western musical styles, this knowledge is only partial in relation to music's totality, neglecting both subjective and bodily elements of musical experience. It demands, therefore, new ways in which to approach music that do more than uncover rational, mental or objective aspects of music—methods which understand music as a holistic, aesthetic experience involving both composer and performer/audience interpretation. By realizing both the limitations of treating the composer's score as a

¹⁷³Ibid., 228.

¹⁷⁴Ibid.

¹⁷⁵Ibid., 227.

complete and rational object and the benefits of allowing the performer and audience to assume relevant creative roles within the musical process, the scholar moves away from the closed, disembodied concept of the musical work towards an understanding of music which is open to “the physicality of music making itself.”¹⁷⁶ Music, as such, is understood not only as a rational or formal sound structure but as “a form of activity: a practice”¹⁷⁷ incorporating both the mind and body.

¹⁷⁶Leppert, xx.

¹⁷⁷Lawrence Kramer, *Music as Cultural Practice 1800–1900*, California Studies in 19th Century Music, ed. Joseph Kerman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), vii.

CHAPTER 2

Recent Developments Towards a Theory of the Body

Since the late 19th century, philosophers have increasingly focused their attention away from the mind and towards the body. Their writings have not only seriously challenged the validity of the Cartesian split and rationalism, but have attempted to undo, and thereby rectify, the body's widespread marginalization in philosophy since Plato. Within the 20th century, this re-examination of the body (as Self, according to the new post-Darwinian¹ materialism) has led to profound effects in all areas of scholarship including biology, medicine and psychology.² There have also been a number of "broad social changes which have brought the body into prominence." Such changes include the growth of postwar consumer culture (with its "new emphasis on keeping fit, the body beautiful and the postponement of aging by sport"), the feminist movement, and "the development of postmodern themes in the arts."³ Within the past decade, especially,

¹*The Descent of Man* (1871) was Darwin's major contribution towards this new focus on the body. As Anthony Synnott writes in *The Body Social: Symbolism, Self and Society* (New York: Routledge, 1993), pages 24–5, Darwin "argued, from a biological perspective, that humans were animals." This had the effect of overturning Victorian ideals and reversing the mind-body dichotomy: "now mind was dependent on body."

²Synnott, 28.

³Bryan S. Turner, "Recent Developments in the Theory of the Body," in *The Body: Social Process and Cultural Theory*, ed. Mike Featherstone, Mike Hepworth and Bryan

developments in the theory of the body in anthropology, sociology, feminism, and philosophy have begun to demonstrate the importance of including the body (i.e. reversing the mind-body split) in academic and philosophical discussions. Two philosophers, Nietzsche and Foucault, have been particularly convincing and powerful in this respect.

One of the most influential reactions against the mind-body split can be found within the writings of German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900). Nietzsche attacks rational and idealist philosophers, such as Descartes and Plato (Socrates), as well as Christianity for an insistence on viewing the body as an “enemy” of the soul or mind. It is precisely the belief in the idea of a soul (what Nietzsche often refers to as the will, ego or “I”) which has allowed them not only to “disregard the demands of the body” but also to systematically reduce “all bodily feelings to moral values.”⁴ To these “despisers of the body” Nietzsche responds:

I am body entirely, and nothing beside; and soul is only a word for something in the body... You say ‘I’ and you are proud of this word. But greater than this—although you will not believe in it—is your body and its great intelligence, which does not say ‘I’ but performs ‘I’.⁵

S. Turner (London: Sage Publications, 1991), 18.

⁴Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, ed. Walter Kaufmann, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), 131.

⁵Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), 61–2.

Understanding the body as “Self”⁶ which incorporates and gives rise to that which we normally call the mind or soul, Nietzsche develops his theory of the *will to power* in order both to replace and explain the widespread popularity of rationalism.

According to Nietzsche’s description of the will to power, bodies of all organisms work not only to preserve themselves but to aid in their own “expanded reproduction.”⁷ Instinctual, therefore, is their “drive to absorb and dominate other organisms, other bodies, and thus add to the body’s own ‘quanta of power.’”⁸ To accomplish this, the body (its organs, senses, etc.) develops in such a way that it forms a particular perspective of reality which is most functional for its expanded reproduction. The “development of the organs of knowledge,”⁹ is one such example of how the human body attempts to make itself more powerful. Therefore, what we normally refer to as the “mind” or “soul” is really an “instrument” of the body.¹⁰ Rationalism’s belief in the ability to obtain *objective*

⁶Ibid., 62–3.

⁷Scott Lash, “Genealogy and The Body: Foucault/Deleuze/Nietzsche,” in *The Body: Social Process and Cultural Theory*, ed. Mike Featherstone, Mike Hepworth and Bryan S. Turner (London: Sage Publications, 1991), 271.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 267.

¹⁰Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 62. In *The Will to Power* (page 264) Nietzsche explains that ‘thinking’ “as epistemologists conceive it, simply does not occur: it is a quite arbitrary fiction, arrived at by selecting one element from the process and eliminating all the rest, an artificial arrangement for the purpose of intelligibility.”

knowledge outside the body's senses is simply an illusion—one which itself aids in the functionality of human bodies. As Nietzsche puts it:

Truth is the kind of error without which a certain species of life could not live...It is improbable that our "knowledge" should extend further than is strictly necessary for the preservation of life.¹¹

Indeed, Nietzsche is clearly "against positivism" in favour of his "perspectivism"; he believes that there are no facts, "only interpretations."¹²

Consequently, many of these ideas spill over into Nietzsche's thought on art and aesthetics. In *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), for example, he illustrates his contempt for, and the inadequacy of, rationalism as the sole means of understanding artistic experience. The book was written largely in reaction to the puritanism and Hellenism of the educated German middle class (the *Bildungsbürgertum*) which "looked towards classical Greece as the model of virtue, education, freedom and self-restraint." By contrast, Nietzsche showed that Greek values, like all aesthetic experience, "had more in common with sexual ecstasy, religious rapture or the frenzy of primitive dance" than they did "with the quiet, individualistic contemplation of a work of art in a spirit of disinterested, rational enquiry."¹³ Greek tragedy, Nietzsche explains, was simultaneously comprised of two opposing "artistic energies" or "art-states of nature"¹⁴: The *Apollonian* state (mind),

¹¹Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 272.

¹²Ibid., 267.

¹³Turner, 12.

¹⁴Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 38.

represented by the Greek god Apollo, is associated with “measured restraint,” calmness and “freedom from the wilder emotions,”¹⁵ and is epitomized in the art of sculpture. The *Dionysian* impulse (body), depicted by the god of music Dionysus, resembles states of “intoxication” and “rapture”—the “complete self-forgetfulness” that comes with an “annihilation of the ordinary bounds and limits of existence.”¹⁶ It is in this latter state that one experiences both the “terror” and “blissful ecstasy” of reality no longer concealed or tamed by Apollonian order. Therefore, although art embodies both the Dionysian and Apollonian, the “sensual and erotic response of the body rather than the neutral enquiry of the mind [is] the core of all artistic experience.”¹⁷

French philosopher Michel Foucault (1926–84) was much indebted to the writings of Nietzsche. Not surprisingly, Foucault also thought it necessary to place the body in the foreground of his investigations. However, unlike Nietzsche, who viewed the body primarily in its physical, biological (universal) sense (in terms of organs, senses, drives etc.), Foucault understood the body as a social phenomenon—a fundamental basis and *product of society*. The body is not only, as Nietzsche claimed, responsible for our thoughts and perceptions of reality (through its will to power) but is itself, “manipulated,

¹⁵Ibid., 35.

¹⁶Ibid., 36, 59.

¹⁷Turner, 12.

shaped [and] trained”¹⁸ by these thoughts. “Knowledge,”¹⁹ according to Foucault, creates a body which “obeys, responds, becomes skillful, and increases its forces.”²⁰ In response to academia’s long history of considering only “the purely biological” aspects of the body, Foucault says:

But the body is also directly involved in a political field; power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs.²¹

Cutting across a variety of fields, including medicine, psychiatry, law, the social sciences and literary studies,²² Foucault considers the body *in its social and political contexts*. As a result, he not only illustrates the centrality of the body in these areas, but also attempts to

¹⁸Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), 136.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 27–8. Against the tradition which assumes that objective knowledge can only be obtained by suspending power relations, Foucault realizes that it is power itself which produces knowledge, that “knowledge” is never disinterested. Thus, Foucault writes (on page 27 of *Discipline and Punish*) that “knowledge” and “power” are almost synonymous as the two “directly imply one another.”

²⁰Foucault, 136.

²¹*Ibid.*, 25. Therefore, whereas Nietzsche makes a distinction between nature (Dionysian or reality) and culture (Apollonian or artistic interpretation of reality), Foucault blurs the boundary between these two.

²²Michael Clark, “Foucault, Michel,” in *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Literary Theory: Approaches, Scholars, Terms*, ed. Irena R. Makaryk, Theory/Culture Series (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1993), 319.

piece together a history or, more accurately, a *genealogy*,²³ of the body from a socio-political perspective.

In *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975), for example, Foucault describes a major shift in how the body was disciplined, and consequently understood in relation to the soul, at the end of the Classical era. During the 17th and 18th centuries, punitive methods revolved around the public displays of torture and the slow, brutal deaths of criminals. Power—which for Foucault is always “power over the body,” or “bio-power”²⁴—belonged mostly to the state, which claimed to have only the criminal’s *soul* (that which was thought to be his Self) at interest. With the birth of the prison at the advent of modernity as the new penal system, power became “immanent in society.”²⁵ No longer were bodies subjugated “through direct physical cruelty,” but via an all-seeing societal gaze which placed the body under a constant, self-conscious surveillance.²⁶ Institutions, including schools, hospitals and factories, began to mirror the structure of the

²³Unlike traditional historical analysis which aims to understand human nature by discovering continuities and patterns of development, “genealogy” both recognizes such continuities as products of interpretation (rather than objectivity) and attempts, instead, to describe the ruptures, discontinuities and non-progressive shifts in history. (Foucault borrowed the term from Nietzsche’s *Genealogy of Morals*, 1887.)

²⁴Synnott, 232.

²⁵Lash, 259.

²⁶Ibid. To describe this gaze, Foucault uses as a metaphor Bentham’s *Panopticon*, in which the prisoners (be they madmen, patients, workers, etc.) are not only under constant surveillance but cannot see their watcher or each other. This “state of conscious and permanent visibility,” Foucault says (page 201, *Discipline and Punish*), “assures the automatic functioning of power.”

prison and adopt similar disciplinary measures in order to make “possible the meticulous control of the operations of the body.”²⁷ Eventually, “every microscopic, minuscule activity” of the body, “in every institution of the body politic” (i.e. the whole of society) was scrutinized and dominated.²⁸ The body became *docile*, disciplined and “practiced.” In both the interests of political obedience and economic productivity, it was “subjected, used, transformed, and improved.”²⁹ As a result, the soul (“psyche, subjectivity, personality, consciousness, etc.”) was thought to be attached to the body in order to ensure the body’s obedience from within and at all times. In this way, the modern body does not imprison the soul as Plato, Descartes and other dualist philosophers have insisted, but the other way around: “the soul is the prison of the body.”³⁰

Foucault’s work, which places modern ideas about the body and soul (or mind) into a socio-historical perspective, attempts, like Nietzsche’s writing, both to undermine and explain the modern tendency towards rationalism. While Nietzsche flatly denies the possibility of the mind-body split (from a biological perspective, in favour of his theory of the will to power), Foucault acknowledges that the *soul* exists, but only as a “historical reality”³¹ (for the production and regulation of docile bodies). As well, both Nietzsche

²⁷Foucault, 137.

²⁸Synnott, 232.

²⁹Foucault, 136.

³⁰Ibid., 29–30.

³¹Ibid., 29.

and Foucault, in contrast to rationalism, advocate their own brands of perspectivism—biological and cultural respectively—which understand all knowledge as interpretive rather than objective. Both philosophers continue to inform a developing theory and history of the body. Indeed, “the growing popularity of Foucault” and “the revival of interest in Nietzsche,” have been largely responsible for the recent “deluge of books on the body”³² in all areas of scholarship including, recently, music.

³²Turner, 18.

Towards a Criticism of the Body in Music

While recent philosophical findings which reject the mind-body split and rationalism have made within the last thirty years³³ a substantial impact on other fields of study such as literary, film and visual art criticism, music scholarship has been, on the whole, disinclined to explore how these changes might effect its own discipline. The reluctance of many music scholars to take seriously the bodily, experiential, and seemingly subjective aspects of music has (as I illustrate in Chapter 1) resulted in part from their deeply embedded beliefs in the concept of the musical work, which stresses music's autonomy from cultural or social considerations. However, within the past decade or so some music scholars have taken an interest in looking at music in terms of the body. Their willingness to reconsider many strong assumptions related to the musical work is largely due to their appreciation of other areas of scholarship. Literary studies, especially, have not only problematized rationalism in its own field, but have directed similar research towards music as well. The writings of literary critic Roland Barthes have been particularly influential in this respect, since they work to undo many of the effects of the mind-body hierarchy in both literature and music.

³³in coherence with poststructuralist developments of the 1970s.

Roland Barthes: From *Musical Work* to Text

Nearly all the recent writings on the body in music can be linked in some way or another to the pioneering work of Roland Barthes (1915–1980). In agreement with Nietzsche and Foucault, he makes use of two related themes which have been significant in challenging music scholarship's tendency to look at music rationally or *objectively*. First, he stresses the importance of looking at the physical body itself in music scholarship. It is this aspect of music, he believes, which gives music its value. Second, in his proclamation of “the death of the author,” Barthes shows that “the author does not have a privileged position in determining the meaning of his or her work”³⁴ and, therefore, regards interpretation or subjectivity as an essential component of all artistic experience. Scholars attempting to contemplate the body in music have drawn on both themes, suggesting their importance as a basis for a criticism of the body in music scholarship.

In “The Grain of the Voice” (1972), Barthes focuses primarily on, and stresses the importance of, the *bodily* (physical, experiential, material) aspects of music rather than its seemingly abstract or formal sound-structure. Borrowing from French psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva, Barthes illuminates this dual nature of music by distinguishing between *geno-*

³⁴Stephen Bonnycastle, “Barthes, Roland,” in *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Literary Theory: Approaches, Scholars, Terms*, ed. Irena R. Makaryk, Theory/Culture Series (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1993), 245.

song (body) and *pheno-song* (mind) respectively with regards to vocal music. Pheno-song, Barthes says,

covers all the phenomena, all the features which belong to the structure of the language being sung, the rules of the genre, the coded form of the melisma, the composer's idiolect, the style of the interpretation: in short, everything in the performance which is in the service of communication, representation, expression, everything which it is customary to talk about.³⁵

It is the “cultural”³⁶ or *Apollonian* side of music—that which can be measured, theorized or discussed in a seemingly objective way (i.e. formally or positively)—and for this reason, that facet of music which academia traditionally has been the most eager to explore. Barthes uses Fischer-Dieskau's singing as a paradigm example of pheno-song in order to illustrate the limitations of acknowledging only this aspect of music.

According to Barthes, although FD's singing is “inordinately expressive—the diction is dramatic, the pauses, the checkings and releasings of breath, occur like shudders of passion” and “everything in the (semantic and lyrical) structure is respected”³⁷—it nevertheless lacks a certain bodily quality or “grain” and, consequently, the very thing which Barthes feels constitutes a *good* (i.e. pleasurable³⁸) performance. It

³⁵Roland Barthes, “The Grain of the Voice,” in *Image - Music - Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 182.

³⁶*Ibid.*

³⁷*Ibid.*, 183.

³⁸Unlike Hanslick, who derives “pleasure” from music's formal structure, Barthes' “‘aesthetics’ of musical pleasure,” as he calls it (in “The Grain of the Voice, page 189), is *bodily*—not at all “pathological”!

offers the listener *solely* what can be described as musical accuracy and impersonal (docile) vocal technique and, therefore, “never exceeds culture” (pheno-song), never offers us an “individual”³⁹ (uncultured or *Dionysian*) body: “the throat, the mask, . . . the tongue, the glottis, the teeth, the mucous membranes, the nose.” In the case of FD, Barthes complains, “it is the soul which accompanies the song, not the body.”⁴⁰

The “geno-song” or “grain,” by contrast, is precisely this *bodily* aspect of music—that which Barthes says is responsible for the “individual thrill” he experiences listening to music and singing in particular. It is the part of music which “seduces” and “sways us into *jouissance*.”⁴¹ For this reason, it is that aspect of music which is, for Barthes, both the most valuable and the most difficult to describe in words.

The *geno-song* is the volume of the singing and speaking voice, the space where significations germinate ‘from within language and in its very materiality’; it forms a signifying play having nothing to do with communication, representation (of feelings), expression; it is that apex (or that depth) of production where the melody really works at the language—not at what it says, but the voluptuousness of its sounds-signifiers, of its letters—where melody explores how the language works and identifies with that work. It is . . . the *diction* of the language.⁴²

³⁹Barthes, “The Grain of the Voice,” 182.

⁴⁰Ibid., 183.

⁴¹Ibid. *Jouissance* is that state of bliss where, as in the Dionysian or pre-linguistic realm, “*signifiante* explodes” (according to Barthes, page 183, “The Grain of the Voice”) and boundaries, like language, are surrendered.

⁴²Ibid., 182–83. Barthes uses Swiss baritone Charles Panzéra (1896–1976) to exemplify geno-song. Panzéra was known in the United States and throughout Europe as an exquisite interpreter of French *mélodies*.

Barthes' use of the concepts "geno-song" and "grain"—in order to "set up a new scheme of evaluation" which does not "judge a performance according to the rules of interpretation, the constraints of style..., the 'respect for what is written,' etc."⁴³—works not only to include the body in his consideration of music but also to reverse what has been traditionally valued in classical music scholarship. Like Nietzsche, Barthes believes that physical bodily pleasure, rather than the neutral inquiry of the mind, is the core of musical experience.⁴⁴ Unsurprisingly, Barthes also contemplates music from the perspective of the performer.

Being an amateur musician himself, Barthes notes, in his "Musica Practica" (1970), that there are actually "two musics" (or two aspects of music): "the music one listens to"—typically that which music scholars write about—and "the music one plays."⁴⁵

The music one plays comes from an activity that is very little auditory, being above all manual (and thus in a way much more sensual). It is the music which you or I can play, alone or among friends, with no other audience than its

⁴³Ibid., 188–89.

⁴⁴See also, for example, Barthes article "Rasch," in *The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation*, trans. Richard Howard (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), where Barthes examines Schumann's *Kreisleriana* (Opus 16, 1838), not in terms of its tonal structure, but what he perceives (on page 299) to be "Schumann's body" in the music—its bodily "beats."

⁴⁵Roland Barthes, "Musica Practica," in *Image - Music - Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 149.

participants...a muscular music in which the part taken by the sense of hearing is one only of ratification, as though the body were hearing—and not ‘the soul.’⁴⁶

Barthes notices that, since Beethoven (one of the first 19th-century composers to witness the effects of the musical work concept), this *practical* music has become virtually obsolete. No longer does it belong to the amateur (“a role defined much more by a style than by a technical imperfection”) but to a select group of “professionals, pure specialists whose training remains entirely esoteric for the public.”⁴⁷ The result:

passive, receptive music, sound music, is become *the* music (that of concert, festival, record, radio): playing has ceased to exist; musical activity is no longer manual, muscular, kneadingly physical.⁴⁸

In other words, modern musical practices tend to eradicate “in the sphere of music the very notion of *doing*.”⁴⁹ However, Barthes insists that this bodily, physical aspect of music can (*should*) exist not only to give the listener pleasure but to instill in her “the desire to *make* that music”⁵⁰ (he places himself among the performers in this category).

By valuing, even acknowledging, this practical realm of music, Barthes works to undo the very fabric of the musical work concept—its emphasis on compositional

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid., 150. Barthes asks (in “Musica Practica”, page 149), “who plays the piano today?... To find practical music in the West, one has now to look to another public, another repertoire, another instrument (the young generation, vocal music, the guitar).”

⁴⁸Ibid., 149–50.

⁴⁹Ibid., 150.

⁵⁰Ibid.

freedom from extra-musical activities, its understanding of the musical work or score as a complete or fixed object, the rise of musical professionals or virtuosos in the spirit of *Werktreue*, etc.—and thus problematizes the effects of the mind-body split still prevalent in music scholarship today. Barthes asks,

What is the use of composing if it is to confine the product within the precinct of the concert or the solitude of listening to the radio? To compose, at least by propensity, is *to give to do*, not to give to hear but to give to write.⁵¹

By “writing” Barthes suggests that the performer, like the listener, does not merely take a passive role in the musical process, but in interpreting the music (with her body,⁵² her subjectivity) she actually writes it “anew.”⁵³ This brings us to the second theme in Barthes’ work which has helped to lure music scholarship away from its rationalist and objectivist tendencies: the idea that the interpreter of music, be it the performer playing or the audience listening, takes part in creating the musical work from her own bodily, subjective position.

In “The Death of the Author,” Barthes problematizes the objectivist notion of “writing” in mainstream culture and scholarship. With the “prestige of the individual” in modern capitalist society, he says, developed an ideology in literature (and music) which

⁵¹Ibid., 153.

⁵²The body, according to Barthes (page 149, “Musica Practica”), “controls, conducts, co-ordinates, having itself to transcribe what it reads, making sound and meaning, the body as inscriber and not just transmitter, simple receiver.”

⁵³Barthes, “Musica Practica,” 153.

“attached the greatest importance to the ‘person’ of the author” (“his life, his tastes, his passions,” etc.). In “histories of literature, biographies of writers, interviews, magazines, as in the very consciousness of men of letters anxious to unite their person and their work through diaries and memoirs,”⁵⁴ the utmost importance has been placed on the author’s intentions for understanding or interpreting literature.

The *explanation* of a work is always sought in the man or woman who produced it, as if it were always in the end, through the more or less transparent allegory of the fiction, the voice of a single person, the *author* ‘confiding’ in us.⁵⁵

This view of writing, Barthes complains, limits the work to a “single ‘theological’ meaning (the ‘message’ of the Author-God)”⁵⁶ and reduces it to a closed or fixed object. By contrast, Barthes asserts that “it is the language which speaks, not the author.”⁵⁷ Once the reader engages herself with the work, it is her *experience* of the work which determines its meaning, not what is perceived to be “the author’s declared intentions.”⁵⁸

⁵⁴Roland Barthes, “The Death of the Author,” in *Image - Music - Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 143.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Ibid., 146.

⁵⁷Ibid., 143. Barthes substantiates this claim (in “The Death of the Author,” pages 143–46) by describing the dependency writing has on language itself, i.e. other writing. The literary work (or *text*), he says, is “a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash.” Therefore, “to write is, through a prerequisite impersonality...to reach that point where only language acts, ‘performs,’ and not ‘me.’”

⁵⁸Roland Barthes, “From Work to Text,” in *Image - Music - Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 160.

Writing, as Barthes understands it, is just as much the personal (and by extension, cultural) experience of the reader actively participating in (as apposed to passively consuming) the creation of the text as it is the act of setting down, *inscribing*, the actual words of the literary work.

To give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing.⁵⁹

Barthes uses the word “text” (in contrast to “work”) to both describe the style or philosophy of approaching literature which takes into account its openness (the possibility for numerous subjective meanings and interpretations) and refer to those literary works which *exaggerate* this style or explore this potential of writing by inviting, or emphasizing its need for, the active co-creative involvement of the reader. Barthes, therefore, prefers to view literature (like music) in terms of *texts* rather than *works*. He urges academia to reconsider its objectivism, its “*respect* for the manuscript,”⁶⁰ and its obsessive pursuits to discover within literature and music “an ultimate meaning.”⁶¹

Classical music too, since the 19th century, has (as I discuss in some detail in Chapter 1) been thought of primarily in terms of works (i.e. the musical work concept) and consequently, music scholarship has placed great emphasis on the author—in this

⁵⁹Barthes, “The Death of the Author,” 147.

⁶⁰Barthes, “From Work to Text,” 160. Society too, through its use of the copyright, Barthes suggests (page 160, “From Work to Text”), “asserts the legality of the relation of author to work.”

⁶¹Barthes, “The Death of the Author,” 147.

case, the *composer*—as the absolute creator and owner of his musical works. Nicholas Cook notes, for example, how

“musicologists try to set composers’ thinking into its original context, editors try to find the most faithful way to notate what composers intended, and performance practice experts try to reconstruct how composers wanted their music played.⁶²

Furthermore, music theory/analysis focuses primarily on the compositional writing itself as though it were closed off from all outside extra-musical factors or interpretations, while music history depends on the details surrounding the composer’s life and works in order to ‘objectively’ examine the context in which these compositions were written and thought to be understood. Only recently have some music scholars begun consciously to *interpret* this music from their own personal/cultural perspectives, to recognize that “every text is eternally written *here and now*”⁶³ through the co-creative act of the reader’s or listener’s personal interpretation and, as such, open to a multitude of meanings and possibilities. By replacing the concept of the musical work with that of the musical *text*, the music scholar is able to explore those experiential, including those bodily, aspects of music which are too vitally connected with its significance to be continually ignored or marginalized. Scholars can begin, in other words, to explore the relevance this music has, and/or *can* have, for us today. As Barthes concludes,

⁶²Nicholas Cook, “Music Theory and the Postmodern Muse: An Afterword,” in *Concert Music, Rock, and Jazz Since 1945: Essays and Analytical Studies*, ed. Elizabeth West Marvin and Richard Hermann, Eastman Studies in Music 2 (University of Rochester Press, 1995), 423.

⁶³Barthes, “The Death of the Author,” 145.

to give writing its future, it is necessary to overthrow the myth: the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author.⁶⁴

Recent Body Theory and the New Music Scholarship

By consciously challenging accepted views and assumptions related to rationalism and the musical work concept, scholars have finally (nearly two decades after Barthes) begun to problematize the effects of the mind-body split within music scholarship.⁶⁵ Their writings, as I have already suggested, work to understand music more broadly than in terms of the musical work or the composer's autonomous score but as open to the *experiential* and, therefore, socio-cultural and bodily aspects of music. Drawing on recent developments in philosophy and other academic areas, these writings emphasize the importance of including performer/audience *interpretation* and *the body* itself within musical investigations. They explore or suggest alternative, perhaps more satisfying, methods for approaching music, often (unlike the formalism and positivism of traditional methods) encouraging or acknowledging a more personal involvement with the music they study. As a result, these writings not only offer valuable insight into classical music practices and ideologies (i.e. understand them from a socio-cultural/political perspective), but reveal important facets and issues of musical practice previously neglected by

⁶⁴Ibid., 148.

⁶⁵often, but not exclusively, under what has been described (for example, in Klumpenhouwer's "Commentary: Poststructuralism and Issues of Music Theory," page 290) as the new "poststructuralist music scholarship."

traditional scholarship and uncover the value this music has for many, if not most, people today. Such changes may lead to a richer, fuller understanding of music—music “in its totality.”

In the remainder of this thesis, I shall attempt to demonstrate further the benefits, indeed the necessity, of looking at the body in music by examining some of the ways in which scholars have begun to recognize and reverse the effects of the mind-body split within music scholarship. I will show how their writings suggest the need to move beyond the musical work concept towards a broader conception of music (such as the musical text) and consider their use of new methods which attempt to include the body in music. More specifically, the next two sections, which focus on the writings of Anthony Storr and Richard Leppert, will give us a better understanding of what exactly the body in music is (what it entails). Chapter 3 will then demonstrate how this new knowledge has been utilized specifically by feminist music criticism.

Anthony Storr: The Physical Body in Music

The work of psychiatrist Anthony Storr was written partly in response to the dominant trends in the psychology of music which had “adopted an almost entirely ‘disembodied’ approach to its subject matter.”⁶⁶ His book (ironically entitled) *Music and*

⁶⁶Eric Clarke and Jane Davidson, “The Body in Performance,” in *Composition, Performance, Reception: Studies in the Creative Process in Music*, ed. Wyndham Thomas (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 74.

the Mind (1992) is, by contrast, representative and indicative of this field's "growing awareness in the 1990s of the advantages of a rather more realistically corporeal approach."⁶⁷ Prompted significantly by Nietzsche's writings on art and music, Storr describes what he calls musical *arousal* in order to confirm the importance of examining the *physical* body in music.

Like Nietzsche, Storr claims that the nature of music must be understood in terms of both the mind and body. Using Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy*, he describes this dual nature of music by distinguishing between Apollonian order in music—the abstract "form" or "structure" of musical composition—and what he calls the work's "emotional" or "expressive" content⁶⁸ (its "musical material"⁶⁹) and its "*physical* experience."⁷⁰ It is this Dionysian aspect of music which, both Storr and Nietzsche suggest, serves as the basis for all musical experience. Music, thus, is "physically and emotionally based"; like tragedy, "rooted in the body, and Dionysian, however much it [has] to be shaped and organized by Apollonian techniques."⁷¹

⁶⁷Ibid. See also, for example, David Lidov, "Mind and Body in Music," *Semiotica* 66 (1987): 69–97, and Clarke and Davidson, "The Body in Performance."

⁶⁸Anthony Storr, *Music and the Mind* (New York: Maxwell Macmillan International, 1992), 39.

⁶⁹Ibid., 166.

⁷⁰Ibid., 24, italics mine.

⁷¹Ibid., 166.

In order to *prove* these claims, Storr describes musical experience in terms of “arousal,” that is,

a condition of heightened alertness, awareness, interest, and excitement: a generally enhanced state of being...at its minimum in sleep and at its maximum when human beings are experiencing powerful emotions like intense grief, rage, or sexual excitement. Extreme states of arousal are usually felt as painful or unpleasant; but milder degrees of arousal are eagerly sought as life-enhancing.⁷²

According to Storr, music is more than just a mental or “intellectual exercise,”⁷³ but actually “causes increased arousal in those who are interested in it and who therefore listen to it with some degree of concentration.”⁷⁴ This emotional effect of listening to music can be shown scientifically as it “manifests itself in various physiological changes, many of which can be measured.” For example, using an instrument called the *electromyograph*, significant “increases in electrical activity in the leg muscles” of subjects listening to music can be documented, even when those subjects are asked to remain physically still. Similarly, Storr notes that musical arousal is responsible for the “physical restlessness” and involuntary movements of listeners impelled, for example, “to beat time with their feet or drum with their fingers” despite concert hall etiquette which attempts to restrain such bodily involvement with the music.⁷⁵ Let us not forget or underestimate also the powerful and often irresistible urge music gives us to dance! Despite these and other

⁷²Ibid., 24–5.

⁷³Ibid., 88.

⁷⁴Ibid., 24.

⁷⁵Ibid., 25.

observations of the actual physical experience of music, “the importance of physical movement as a constituent of musical behaviour” has, Storr affirms, “been underestimated.”⁷⁶ Indeed, it is music’s capacity to arouse us physically and emotionally that is considered by many to be one of its most valuable (pleasurable, life-enhancing) characteristics. According to Storr, it is an important reason “why people seek to listen to or to participate in music”⁷⁷ in the first place.

If we find that a piece of music *moves* us, we mean that it arouses us, that it affects us physically.⁷⁸

Musicality, thus, stems from one’s ability to become “physiologically aroused” or *moved* by music.⁷⁹ The “impulse to compose,” (contrary to traditional beliefs which understand composition as exclusively mental labour), is also a Dionysian impulse which (as anthropologist John Blacking affirms) “usually begins as a rhythmical stirring of the body.”⁸⁰ However, despite music’s obvious physicality and the fact that much of its value derives from its ability to arouse, music scholarship, Storr complains, tends to suppress this side of music in its investigations. By contrast, Storr shows that, since the nature of

⁷⁶Ibid., 31.

⁷⁷Ibid., 28.

⁷⁸Ibid., 184. Emotion is linked directly to the physiological states or changes in the body which music is responsible for arousing.

⁷⁹Ibid., 29.

⁸⁰Ibid., 184.

music is comprised of the Apollonian *and* Dionysian, any attempt to understand or appreciate a musical work fully must necessarily include both of these aspects. He says,

it is manifestly absurd to restrict the way we talk and write about music to language which deliberately excludes any reference to what makes a musical work expressive and capable of causing arousal... The formalist analysts are trying to make the appreciation of music purely cerebral, whereas music is rooted in bodily rhythms and movement.⁸¹

Storr recognizes that contemplating those aspects of music which have traditionally been associated with either the mind or the body actually corresponds with two opposing ways in which people generally approach or relate to music. Borrowing from art historian Wilhelm Worringer, he describes these approaches in terms of *abstraction* and *empathy*. Aesthetic appreciation of a musical work by means of abstraction contemplates the Apollonian side of music; it attempts to discover “form and order” within the work and thereby “requires detachment” on the part of the listener.⁸² In its attempt to remain objective, it “eschews the personal, the particular, the emotional, the subjective” and thus tends to utilize critical and analytical functions located within the left hemisphere of the brain.⁸³ By contrast, an “empathic identification with the work” or “emotional response to music” requires the listener to “absorb himself into it, make himself one with it.” This emotional and physical involvement, or arousal, engages the

⁸¹Ibid., 78.

⁸²Ibid., 39.

⁸³Ibid., 38.

brain's right hemisphere and can be shown to lead to marked changes in "blood-pressure, respiration, pulse-rate and other functions controlled by the involuntary, autonomic nervous system"—changes which do not take place when the same subject adopts an analytical or critical stance. Of abstraction and empathy, Storr notes that "one or [the] other attitude is usually predominant" in individuals and, "when exaggerated, leads to mutual misunderstanding." For instance, "empathic identification with a musical work may so emotionally involve the listener that critical judgement becomes impossible." Likewise, "an exclusively intellectual, detached approach"—the aim of most traditional scholars—"may make it difficult to appreciate the music's emotional significance."⁸⁴ Therefore, although Storr (being a psychiatrist) believes "it is perfectly possible to study music from a purely objective, intellectual point of view" by means of abstraction, he concludes that "this approach alone is insufficient."⁸⁵ To understand a musical work fully the listener must be able to both criticize its seemingly abstract Apollonian qualities and empathize with its Dionysian aspects; the "appreciation of music requires both parts, although either may predominate on a particular occasion."⁸⁶ Furthermore, Storr asserts

⁸⁴Ibid., 39. Indeed, Storr believes this explains the "many disputes both in psychology and in aesthetics." It seems that, with regard to empathy and abstraction, "each participant claims that whichever attitude he personally adopts is the only valid one." (See Storr, page 39.)

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶Ibid., 40. Storr recalls an experience he once had listening to the radio after helping one of his colleagues investigate the effects of the drug mescaline. The drug had the effect of enhancing his emotional responses while eliminating his ability to perceive form. As

that the separation between “form and expressive content”⁸⁷ is, in fact, artificial and in doing so blurs the traditional boundaries between mind and body in music.

If a listener comes to know a work of music well, he is responding to it as a whole. Form and content in music and body and soul in human beings are equally indivisible if either are to live.⁸⁸

Indeed, music is “both intellectual and emotional, restoring the links between mind and body.”⁸⁹

Storr’s *Music and the Mind*⁹⁰ is successful in demonstrating the importance of both broadening traditional conceptions of music to include the body (emotion) and allowing our emotional/physical or empathic responses to music a place in scholarly writings. His observations—themselves a product of combining the personal with the scientific—of the *experiential* aspects of music (as opposed to those of an abstract score) accurately describe the value music has for many people. However, his belief in scientific objectivity (despite Nietzsche’s strict perspectivism) and his reliance on “experimental

he recalls (page 40): “Mescaline made a Mozart string quartet sound as romantic as Tchaikovsky. I was conscious of the throbbing, vibrant quality of the sound which reached me; of the bite of bow upon string; of a direct appeal to my emotions.” From this particular experience, both “pleasurable” and “disappointing,” Storr was convinced that the appreciation of music must necessarily use both the part of the brain which is “concerned with emotional responses” and that which “perceives structure.”

⁸⁷Ibid., 39.

⁸⁸Ibid., 88.

⁸⁹Ibid., 183.

⁹⁰See, especially, Storr’s second chapter entitled “Music, Brain and Body.”

confirmation”⁹¹ as *proof* of music’s vital link to the body enables Storr to be satisfied, consequently, with what he believes are just the ‘facts.’ He does not attempt to understand *why* the mind-body split (i.e. treating music as though it is only abstract) has been so prevalent in traditional music scholarship despite the seemingly popular, and contradictory, consensus which takes for granted the emotional/physical impact and relevance of music. As a result, his book overlooks many of the important insights and issues raised by other music scholars who look at the body in music from a more socio-cultural/political perspective.⁹² One scholar who explicitly addresses this question and, consequently, uncovers many issues previously absent in music scholarship, is Richard Leppert.

Richard Leppert: The Social Body in Music

Like the writings of Barthes and Storr, Leppert’s book *The Sight of Sound: Music, Representation, and the History of the Body* (1993)⁹³ contemplates the actual bodily *experience* of music making. However, whereas Barthes and Storr, drawing on Nietzsche,

⁹¹Storr, 103.

⁹²What Storr calls “the body” in music, as we shall see, is limited to traditional concepts: as emotion, the body’s senses, etc.

⁹³Leppert’s *Sight of Sound*, as the title hints, focuses primarily on artworks depicting musical scenes and decorated musical instruments between 1600 and 1900 in order to understand musical/artistic socio-cultural practices at this time. Therefore, he emphasizes, in the introductory chapter of his book, the importance of studying the *visual* aspects of music—what he calls the “sight” (or “site”) of music making: performance.

focus primarily on the purely physical aspects of the body in music, Leppert illustrates, in accord with Foucault, the importance of also understanding the body in music from a socio-cultural/political perspective. Like Foucault, Leppert realizes that the body is

more than a living, biological, phenomenon. It is also a history beyond the flesh, blood, and bones that form it... The body is real, but its reality is produced, by cognition, as a representation. It is a product of multiple discourses constructed via the body's sensory capacities.⁹⁴

As a result, Leppert's book attempts to look at a more holistic or complete account of the body in musical experience—one which takes into account both *the physical body* and *the social body*: categories which, as Foucault illustrates, exist separately only in theory.

Leppert describes musical pleasure, and hence the experience of music itself, as being both, and simultaneously, *disinterested* (physical) and *interested* (social). By “disinterested” he refers to that aspect of musical pleasure discussed by Nietzsche, Barthes and Storr—that which is “produced in part by aural stimulations, which in turn elicit physiological and emotional responses that result in some sense, inevitably temporary, of well-being.”⁹⁵ It is that part of musical experience which is “physical-

⁹⁴Richard Leppert, *The Sight of Sound: Music, Representation, and the History of the Body* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), xx.

⁹⁵Ibid., 85. Barthes describes this “well-being” in terms of “*jouissance*”; Storr uses the term “arousal”; Nietzsche—Dionysian “rapture.”

emotional”⁹⁶ or “embodied,”⁹⁷ “pleasure for pleasure’s sake,”⁹⁸ as it were, and as Leppert points out, “it may be simultaneously of body and mind and as such the sonoric simulacrum of an organic totality absent from an otherwise fractured reality.”⁹⁹ Indeed, such bodily pleasure or “bliss,”¹⁰⁰ cannot, in practice, be separated entirely from cognition, nor can it escape the “mental awareness of the difference it allows, momentarily, from...the rationalized.” Put another way, music’s pleasure is always somewhat interested; it is “never totally innocent,” never completely separate from socio-political issues and considerations or “experienced solely as autonomous reactions.” Rather, it is “semantically rich”—meaningful both as a practice and in its resulting sonority.¹⁰¹

It is precisely music’s meaningfulness, or more accurately, its “semantic slipperiness”—what Leppert describes as music’s ability to “manifest its compliance with the social order in the very act of disclaiming that compliance and making it ironic,”¹⁰²—which allows music to be pleurably interested. However, this instability or

⁹⁶Ibid., 86.

⁹⁷Ibid., 85.

⁹⁸Ibid., 86.

⁹⁹Ibid., 85.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 147.

¹⁰¹Ibid., 86.

¹⁰²Ibid., 85.

imprecision of music as a semiotic practice (i.e. its reliance on subjective/cultural interpretation) is not entirely blissful; music's power to create, enforce, or revert social meanings and beliefs is often also a great source of tension and anxiety in that, for example, it poses a "threat"¹⁰³ to Western ideals of rationalism. To alleviate such anxieties about music, "culture has consistently sought not merely to control it but to marginalize its practice,"¹⁰⁴ even, as with the rise of the musical work concept, at the expense of "the very sound for which music might be thought to exist."¹⁰⁵

Such control over musical practices and sonorities, and hence musical meanings, exerts itself notably through gender difference with regards to expected musical behaviour as these map onto the mind-body split. For example, in 18th century England, as elsewhere, the way in which men and women were expected to approach music, and the effect such actions had in "forming their character and identity," were "strikingly different." For men, an ideal musical education was "theoretical" and stressed the value of music as "pure abstraction." Men were expected to approach music "cognitively as a 'science' concatenating philosophy and mathematics."¹⁰⁶ For women, musical education

¹⁰³Ibid., 147.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., 84.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 65. Leppert further notes (on page 85) that music's semantic slipperiness is responsible for its being thought of in terms of "a lack" or "triviality." Conversely (and paradoxically) he adds, music's "literal quality of nothingness" is the very thing which confirms its "immeasurability."

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 64–5.

was “largely practical” emphasizing music’s, and what was thought to be women’s, emotional/bodily nature. Although women were encouraged to perform music (in private or for family and friends, usually on instruments thought to be appropriate for their sex), they were expected to do so *passively*, “carelessly,” as without ambition or interest in contemplating music, or taking their studies, too seriously.¹⁰⁷ It is not surprising then, that in Europe, since at least the 18th century,¹⁰⁸ “musical practice—the actual making of music, the sonorities produced in performance—is consistently gendered: as Woman, as Other, and quite often as enemy.” Leppert explains:

Frequently the target of concern was music’s relation to the body and, by implication, the mind and soul. Music’s impact on the body was characterized as a moral question, which in truth operated as a smoke screen for anxieties about identities grounded in nation, class, and gender insofar as these might be construed as qualities of the body.¹⁰⁹

Indeed, there is more at stake here than simply allowing music’s ability to produce physical/disinterested effects on the body. To esteem music’s *silent* attributes is, in effect, to control also music’s “power to destabilize virtually every social relation, notably including relations between men and women, one social class and another..., Europeans and racial Others, and so on.”¹¹⁰ In other words, the mind-body split in music represents more than just a split between intellect and emotion, form and content, theory and

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 67–8.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., 155.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., 65.

¹¹⁰Ibid., 66.

practice, objectivity and subjectivity, pheno-song and geno-song, Apollonian and Dionysian, composer and performer (and/or audience); it actually refers to what may be considered *social* aspects of the body in musical experience: gender, sexuality (sexual desire), ethnicity, social class, etc. As one would expect, the *dominant* half of each social binary (e.g. masculine, heterosexual, white, upperclass) is mapped onto the privileged category of mind while the marginalized or Other half of the hierarchy (feminine, non-heterosexual, non-white, lower class) is linked to the marginalized, often immoral, position of the body. Therefore, from Leppert's socio-political perspective, as a "nonsonoric" practice music

is valued, not for aesthetic reasons or for its inherent mathematical logic, but as a means to an end: it is a tool for domination."¹¹¹

Indeed, the mind-body split in music has the effect of not only silencing music's sonority—its sensual, emotional qualities as experienced in practice—but also silencing those who are associated with music's socially embodied qualities.

Leppert considers this to be "a far more important matter than a theorization of a 'science' of music in the absence of musical sound." Like Storr, Leppert believes that most people with musical interests consider the essence of music to be not its existence "on paper, so to speak" (which he says is, "in any but small doses, profoundly boring"), but its experiential, physical qualities (that which most people seek when they seek "music"). He notes, for example, that although writers since at least the 18th century

¹¹¹Ibid., 65.

“urged upper-class men to consume music in an abstract contemplative, non-performative, and silent” way, there is actually “little evidence to suggest that many did so, despite the enormous body of literature devoted to the topic.”¹¹² According to this, and to other examples in Leppert’s book, it seems that music is “sometimes sufficiently strong to overcome the most stringent restrictions, if not outright prohibitions, relating to its production and consumption.”¹¹³

Leppert provides us with another musical example which illustrates the power of musical experience to sustain and disrupt social meanings, and society’s need to control such power via rationalism, in his brief historical consideration of Felix Mendelssohn’s *Lieder ohne Worte*. By applying his understanding of music—as both a disinterested/physical and interested/social bodily experience—to his investigation of the historical context in which these pieces were composed and performed, Leppert reveals the physical and socio-political complexity of the situation surrounding this and other music in Victorian England. Moreover, Leppert’s example illustrates that focusing on music as an embodied *practice* necessarily works to include performers—in this case, women—and Others typically neglected in traditional musicology’s silent and composer-oriented (white, male, educated, etc.) history. Drawing largely on Barthes’ views of the

¹¹²Ibid. This may suffice to explain why the emotional/physical impact of music is so popular among audiences and some scholars like Storr and Leppert despite the wide acceptance of the mind-body split in traditional music scholarship.

¹¹³Ibid., 85.

physical nature and pleasure of music and adding to it Foucault's understanding of the body as a social phenomenon, Leppert illustrates the benefits of considering the physical and social body in our understanding, and historical investigations, of music. In other words, he offers us a taste of what a socially and physically embodied musicology or music criticism might be like.

Leppert considers Mendelssohn's *Lieder ohne Worte*, composed between 1829 and 1845, in order to understand better Lord Leighton Frederic's 1861 painting with the same title. What is of interest to Leppert, then, are not the formal aspects of the score or the details surrounding Mendelssohn's career as a composer (such as his relationship to other classical composers, philosophers, etc.), but how these pieces were understood socio-culturally, what political role they played, and how this necessarily involved the body. He considers, for example, the connection between the titles given to these pieces (i.e. what the pieces were perceived to *mean* at the time of their circulation) and the identities of the bourgeois women to whom they were marketed.

According to their titles, these "songs without words" can be described as being *about* "night, dreams, memory, regret, lost happiness, leaving, returning, spring, spinning, and death (besides a few that are called boat songs)." However, as Leppert points out, only five of the forty-eight pieces were actually named by Mendelssohn himself (these being the three boat songs, the "duet," and "Folksong"); The rest were supplied by publishers "who themselves in effect 'read' the pieces purposely, and smartly, in terms of

their potential audience.” That is, they attempted to *fix* the meaning of both the music and, consequently, its performers:

Publishers, themselves bourgeois, understood women’s social roles; accordingly, they knew, or at least thought they knew, women’s subjectivities: the desires, anxieties, and investments underwriting their identities. The supplied titles prered for these performers the compositions’ musical semantics.¹¹⁴

This had the effect of not only attempting to control the semantic slipperiness of the music, but more importantly, that of “woman” herself. (Is it any surprise that most of these titles, as Leppert suggests, “insists on the priority of love”¹¹⁵ given that they were intended for women at this time?) However, as we shall see, such an attempt at sonic and semantic control could not be entirely successful, as even Mendelssohn realized.

It was never Mendelssohn’s intention to fix or close the meaning of these pieces (which may explain why he did not supply the titles himself). On the contrary, the addition of these titles aimed to “undercut Mendelssohn’s own renunciation of words, as if to render objective, and objectively visible, what he was determined to leave unspoken.”¹¹⁶ Put another way, Mendelssohn’s “lack of interest”¹¹⁷ in supplying the titles had the effect of leaving the music’s meaning *open* to the performer’s own embodied interpretation. This makes perfect sense, considering Mendelssohn’s own views on the

¹¹⁴Ibid., 213.

¹¹⁵Ibid.

¹¹⁶Ibid., 214. As Leppert notes (on page 214), “the appellation announces a text-subject but refuses to state it.”

¹¹⁷Ibid.

nature of music which, as Leppert suggests, is very much in agreement with those of Barthes.

Leppert links Barthes' understanding of music with that of Mendelssohn's by citing the following famous quote in which Mendelssohn responds to a question concerning meaning in his *Lieder ohne Worte*:

People usually complain that music is so ambiguous; that they are doubtful as to what they should think when they hear it, whereas everyone understands words. For me, it is just the reverse. And that is so not only for whole speeches, but for single words also: they too seem to me so ambiguous, so indefinite, so open to misunderstanding in comparison with real music which fills one's soul with a thousand things better than words. To me, the music I love does not express thoughts too indefinite to be put into words, but too definite. If you ask me what I thought, I must say: the song itself as it stands.¹¹⁸

Leppert interprets this passage using Barthes' description of "musica practica," that is, music from the performer's perspective: both "auditory" and "muscular" and as such, capable of creating "union, envelopment, and pleasure" (or as Barthes puts it: "*jouissance*"¹¹⁹). According to Leppert, the ambiguity of language Mendelssohn speaks of is precisely the result of its being "radically abstract" or "divorced from the body" (at least in comparison with music). On the other hand, music for Mendelssohn is what Leppert describes as "mind-body—deeply personal, *felt*, and thus personally specific."¹²⁰

¹¹⁸Ibid. Quoted in Heinrich Eduard Jacob, *Felix Mendelssohn and His Times*, trans. Richard Winston and Clara Winston (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1963), 185–86.

¹¹⁹Leppert, 215.

¹²⁰Ibid., 214.

Like the writings of Barthes, Mendelssohn's passage understands music as "a cognitive-physical act, in which the separation of mind from body momentarily disappears,"¹²¹ in opposition to the concept of the musical work and traditional music scholarship's adherence to the mind-body split. As Leppert notes:

Music, which for most philosopher-aestheticians is peculiarly, totally abstract, is for Mendelssohn concrete ("definite") and *hence* unspeakable because its impact is sensual/emotional, embodied and physical—but *not* separate from cognition.¹²²

The inclusion of cognition in Mendelssohn's/Barthes' understanding of musical performance necessarily understands the performer as a "*whole* body, an *interpreting* body,"¹²³ one which (as Barthes implies in his "Death of the Author") assists in the creation of musical meaning, indeed, of the music itself.

In Victorian England this meant that bourgeois women, as performers, "did not always remain enclosed in the semantic boundaries assigned to" them.¹²⁴ For example, they took on the role of creator, or at least co-composer, through their musical interpretations—a role which was specifically associated with the mind and masculinity. Furthermore, if we take into account Barthes' and, as Leppert suggests, Mendelssohn's understanding of performance as "the temporary reinscription of human 'totality' (mind *with* body *at* art)," then these women were engaged in musical acts which temporarily

¹²¹Ibid., 215.

¹²²Ibid., 214.

¹²³Ibid., 215.

¹²⁴Ibid.

permitted the collapse of rationalism and the resultant pleasure or bliss which would have otherwise been completely socially forbidden, given its “erotic” implication and its link with the “orgasmic.”¹²⁵ The “semantic openness”¹²⁶ Mendelssohn intended for his *Lieder ohne Worte* thus could not be entirely restrained by political considerations. Publishers could not wholly control the meanings of these pieces or their performers. Even *with* their titles, this music, through “the binding of the physical to the cognitive,” ironically, still provided bourgeois women with the opportunity to overcome many of the restrictions placed on them at this time via the mind-body hierarchy. As Leppert concludes, taking advantage of such an opportunity

mark[ed] a refusal to abide by the terms of Cartesian dualism, the very foundation of the politics of gender, class, and racial difference—according to which certain men think and all women merely feel.¹²⁷

If Leppert is correct in his socio-political interpretation of the mind-body split in music, then sustaining this split in scholarship, in effect, supports the means by which to marginalize Others as they symbolically map onto the social body in music. By contrast, Leppert’s understanding of musical experience or practice—as both physical and social—leads to the inclusion of these and other social aspects of music previously neglected or marginalized by traditional music scholars and is thus sensitive towards

¹²⁵Ibid.

¹²⁶Ibid., 214.

¹²⁷Ibid., 215.

some feminist concerns with traditional music scholarship. For example, Leppert's consideration of Mendelssohn's *Lieder ohne Worte* illustrates the relevance of both the performer and women—those aspects traditionally considered to be *extra-musical*. Furthermore, by focusing both on the physical and social bodily experience of music, Leppert's book not only works to broaden traditional conceptions of music, but also broadens what has traditionally been understood as “the body” itself—from a purely physical definition (senses, emotion) to one which is socially and politically encoded (gender, sexuality, ethnicity, social class). As with other scholars we will be looking at in the sections to follow, Leppert's socio-political approach to music begins to piece together a “history of the body”¹²⁸ *in music* and, in this sense, continues the work of Foucault.

¹²⁸Ibid., xx.

CHAPTER 3

Feminist Music Criticism and the Body

As a political “tool for domination,” the mind-body split in music has sparked the interest of scholars approaching music from a *feminist* perspective. This is not surprising given feminism’s “commitment to understanding and eliminating systemic oppression.”¹ Following the lead of many feminist critics in other fields of scholarship (literary, art and film criticism²), these scholars are “highly critical of the abstractness and dualism of patriarchal or male-dominated thought.” They recognize within their own tradition that such thought

tends to depersonalize experience and to structure reality in terms of tightly interwoven sets of binary oppositions—male/female, reason/emotion, mind-body, good/evil, culture/nature, self/other—which...wrongly dichotomize what is continuous and fluid, setting rigid boundaries where none exist.³

¹Wayne D. Bowman, *Philosophical Perspectives on Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 360. As Bowman points out (on page 360), feminism today aims not only to understand and transform power relations between men and women but is itself “markedly pluralistic” and “sensitive to difference” of all kinds including differences in sexual orientation, ethnic background, education, and class.

²Susan McClary, “The Undoing of Opera: Toward a Feminist Criticism of Music,” foreword to *Opera, or the Undoing of Women* by Catherine Clément, trans. Betsy Wing (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1988), ix.

³Bowman, 361.

By contrast, the new feminist music criticism has challenged these and other hierarchies in music scholarship by viewing music as a *bodily experience*—both social and physical. Like Leppert, these scholars are interested in the connection between the mind-body split in music and the marginalization of Others in Western society. Thus, they study music's ability to create and sustain social meanings including, especially, those involving gender and sexuality. Their writings demonstrate that approaching music from a feminist perspective is not only politically responsible but also useful for problematizing rationalism in both musical practices and academia. In fact, many of the issues raised by what we might call “a criticism of the body in music” overlap considerably with feminist concerns.

There are three general ways in which feminist criticism has affected music scholarship. All aim in some sense to problematize the mind-body split in music. Originally feminist music criticism aimed to recognize the achievements of women who were “conspicuously absent from canonical lists of honoured musicians, theorists, and works.”⁴ By “identifying, editing, analyzing, and recording music by women throughout history” (i.e. expanding the canon to include women composers) and by considering, like Leppert, “the social circumstances in which women in music were active”⁵ via

⁴Ibid., 363.

⁵Renée Cox, “Recovering *Jouissance*: An Introduction to Feminist Musical Aesthetics” in *Women and Music: A History*, ed. Karin Pendle (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 332.

performance, composition, teaching, and patronage⁶ (despite systematic discouragement of women's participation in male-dominated, public institutions), feminist music scholars attempted to include women and Others previously absent from music scholarship. That is, they embraced those aspects of music thought for centuries by traditional scholars to be extra-musical due to their association with the physical and social experience of music and, accordingly, the body.

More recently (within the past decade), feminist music criticism, following the ground-breaking work of Susan McClary, has begun to explore how Western ideas about *gender* and *sexuality* inform musical practices and scholarship. Such investigations work not only to include within scholarship these and other social aspects of music associated with the body but also demonstrate how Western culture's wide-spread adherence to the dominance of the mind over the body, and especially its link with the masculine-feminine hierarchy, substantially affects the actual composition and theorization of classical musical pieces, forms and often whole musical genres. More specifically,

music is examined for representations of women that promote fear, hatred, and subordination, and for harmful stereotypes of femininity and masculinity. These theorists urge critical examination of the gender messages embedded in pleasant patterns of sound, and the development of listening and performance strategies that resist such messages.⁷

⁶Karin Pendle, Preface to *Women and Music: A History*, ed. by Karin Pendle (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), iv.

⁷Bowman, 364.

Consequently, these scholars often notice differences between what is socially perceived to be masculine versus feminine musical traits in canonical works and in what may be characterized as feminist music. This brings us to the third way in which music scholarship has been influenced by the development of feminist criticism.

The discovery of potentially sexist and misogynist messages underlying many Western classical compositions has led both scholars and composers to consider consciously the possibility of a “female” or, perhaps more accurately, “feminine” aesthetic in music—that is, music which is expressive of women’s or feminine experience. Whereas in the past many women composers “have had to adopt masculine modes of expression in order to be taken seriously as artists”—i.e. adopt classical musical forms in order to realign themselves under the “masculine” category of *mind*—today they purposely “choose to advance qualities traditionally associated with women and to celebrate the expression of these qualities”⁸ including, especially, those affiliated with the body. For example, these composers often make use of “non-verbal” or “presymbolic” sounds in vocal music. However, even more effective is this music’s tendency, like feminine writing in literature, to deconstruct hierarchies, such as the mind-body split, altogether.⁹ Tactics in this direction include creating flexible, cyclical forms which “disrupt linearity” and “avoid definitive closures,” using “continuous repetition with

⁸Cox, 333.

⁹This avoids the potential for further reduction of women to their bodies.

variation” for gradual development of musical ideas, focusing on the musical moment over its surrounding structure, and avoiding the “dialectical juxtaposition and resolution of opposites” commonly found in the so-called rational music of many male classical composers.¹⁰ Furthermore, the feminist music of postmodern performance artists, such as Laurie Anderson¹¹ and Diamanda Galas, is based almost entirely on the premises that the artist is, among other things, “a performing body.” As Susan McClary explains:

In performance art, artist and performer are usually one, and the piece is that which is inscribed on and through the body. The radical separation of mind and body that underwrites most so-called serious music and music theory is here thrown into confusion.¹²

Indeed, an understanding of rationalism’s influence on musical practices and scholarship has been particularly valuable for feminist musicians and scholars alike. There should be no doubt that in order to properly consider this music one needs an adequate knowledge of both feminism and body theory. However, it is also becoming increasingly clear that such knowledge is useful for approaching other musics as well—popular, 20th-century avant-garde, world and even, as feminist music critics are beginning to demonstrate, Western classical music. I shall now turn my attention towards

¹⁰Cox, 334.

¹¹As Susan McClary notes, on pages 137–38 of *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), Anderson’s “complex” treatment of the body in performance both confuses “habits of thought grounded in gender difference” and uses the body as a sophisticated musical instrument.

¹²McClary, *Feminine Endings*, 137.

two music scholars whose feminist writings on music I find particularly useful in illustrating how an appreciation of the social and physical body can deepen our understanding of classical music—Susan McClary, who I have already briefly mentioned, and Suzanne Cusick. Because they ground their feminist approaches to music in an understanding of the mind-body split (that aspect of the feminist project which has “engendered such fear and loathing” in mainstream musicology¹³), they not only highlight the importance of such knowledge for a feminist perspective of classical music but also show the necessity for contemplating the body’s role in music in general.

Susan McClary: The Semiotics of Gender and Sexuality in Classical Music

As mentioned above, the recent work of Susan McClary demonstrates the importance of including social aspects of the body within academic writings on music. Like Leppert and Foucault, McClary recognizes that the body—gender and sexuality, but also “race, ethnicity and class”¹⁴—is both biologically *and* socially constructed:

By “the body,” I do not mean some kind of transhistorical entity. Our experiences of our bodies and sexualities are as socially constructed as any other dimension of culture.¹⁵

¹³Philip V. Bohlman, “Musicology as a Political Act,” *The Journal of Musicology*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (Fall 1993): 431.

¹⁴Susan McClary, “Towards a Feminist Criticism of Music,” *Canadian University Music Review: Alternative Musicologies* 10/2 (1990): 9.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 15.

Thus her appreciation of the body in music is largely social—dependent on the belief that music both reflects and participates in the formation of society. Music, she says, is “not simply a leisure entertainment” (disinterested), but “a site in which fundamental aspects of social formation are contested and negotiated.”¹⁶ Through music we learn “how to experience our own emotions, our own desires, and even (especially in dance) our own bodies.”¹⁷

This is no less true for classical music than other more *apparently* social musics. Not only does considering gender and sexuality contribute “enormously to our understanding of music as a social discourse,”¹⁸ it can also, as McClary suggests, tell us a great deal about “the music itself”—that is, what has traditionally been equated with the formal/structural aspects of music contained within the classical score—and, thus, that which “has long been held to be impervious to interpretations that would link its patterns to concerns of the material or social world.”¹⁹ Indeed, McClary’s feminist perspective of classical music significantly challenges those long-held notions of autonomy in traditional

¹⁶McClary, *Feminine Endings*, 54.

¹⁷Ibid., 53.

¹⁸McClary, “Towards a Feminist Criticism of Music,” 15.

¹⁹Ibid., 9.

music scholarship. It defines “the music itself” as socially meaningful and bodily—“the music as it operates within human contexts.”²⁰

Like Leppert, McClary is interested in the political reasons *why* classical music has been considered by traditional scholars to be above “mundane issues such as gender and sexuality,”²¹ why its “theories and notational systems do everything possible to mask those dimensions of music that are related to physical human experience and focus instead on the orderly, the rational, the cerebral.”²² She too traces these peculiarities back to the mind-body split but also to the wide-spread subordination of women in Western culture:

As feminist scholarship in every discipline is beginning to demonstrate, the tendency to deny the body and to identify with pure mind underlies virtually every aspect of patriarchal Western culture. Thus, it is not surprising to find that this fundamental mind-body split likewise informs classical music as well as its institutions.²³

²⁰McClary, *Feminine Endings*, 23. McClary strengthens her position with regards to musical autonomy by offering the following explanation of meaning in music (on page 21 of *Feminine Endings*): “Like any social discourse, music is meaningful precisely insofar as at least some people believe that it is and act in accordance with that belief. Meaning is not inherent in music, but neither is it in language: both are activities that are kept afloat only because communities of people invest in them, agree collectively that their signs serve as valid currency.”

²¹*Ibid.*, 9.

²²McClary, “Towards a Feminist Criticism of Music,” 14.

²³McClary, *Feminine Endings*, 54.

She complains that a “good deal of what does or does not get talked about”²⁴ in music scholarship unfortunately relies on this and other rigid “interlocking Western binary oppositions”: culture/nature, objectivity/subjectivity, European/racial or colonial other, bourgeois/working class, and most notably (with regards to McClary’s work), masculine/feminine.²⁵ Therefore, by stimulating discussions about gender, sexuality and other social/bodily issues in her writings, McClary wilfully problematizes rationalism in music scholarship and classical music practices. That is, she demonstrates how such hierarchies often substantially inform the actual composition, reception and theorization of this music. However, it is imperative to keep in mind that classical music adheres to the mind-body split not in the sense that it somehow transcends the social or physical (as traditional scholarship would have us believe), but rather in its ability to create musical manifestations of this hierarchy as it, for instance, maps onto gender and sexuality.

Representations of gender and sexuality in classical music are, understandably, most visible in programmatic or texted musical forms. In dramatic music especially, such as opera, the music often clearly strives to depict gender differences via male and female characters. Erotic scenes and characters as well are usually accompanied by or associated with music that relates convincingly to prevalent social beliefs and stereotypes. Not surprisingly, then, does McClary’s book, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and*

²⁴McClary, “Towards a Feminist Criticism of Music,” 15.

²⁵Ibid., 14.

Sexuality (1991), begin its task of unmasking such representations by concentrating first on their appearance within opera. In fact, as McClary recalls, it was originally with the development of opera in the 17th century (the *stile rappresentativo*) that composers first began to consider consciously the problem of how to construct gender difference within music, to decide what “femininity” and “masculinity” should *sound* like.²⁶ Since then, she says, composers have “worked painstakingly to develop a musical semiotics of gender” and sexuality,²⁷ and in general, the “vocabulary by means of which dramatic characters and actions could be delineated in music.”²⁸ So although many of these musical codes in opera seem natural to us today, they are in fact cultural constructions reflective of the time in which they were written.²⁹

McClary successfully demonstrates how such constructions of gender, sexuality and other aspects of the body inform classical music in her feminist/social/musical analysis of Georges Bizet’s opera *Carmen* (1875). By focusing on its socio-musical methods for representing masculine versus feminine characters, she illustrates how these constructions “predispose this opera to particular narrative treatments of gender and

²⁶McClary, *Feminine Endings*, 35.

²⁷Ibid., 7.

²⁸Ibid., 35.

²⁹Indeed, one of the reasons that canonic classical music continues to resonate with modern audiences is not because this music is “universal,” but rather, as McClary points out (on page 8 of *Feminine Endings*), because many of Western cultural beliefs with regards to gender, sexuality and other social issues have remained relatively stable.

sexuality”³⁰ which reflect beliefs in rationalism. In fact, the mind-body problem can be regarded as the structural basis, if not impetus, for the entire opera.

Far from being “above” matters of the body, McClary shows the opera *Carmen* to be highly organized both dramatically and musically according to binary oppositions that deal specifically with issues of gender and sexuality. In this way, all of the characters in the opera are carefully positioned in relation to the mind-body dichotomy. For instance, Micaëla and Carmen, the two leading women characters in the opera, are mapped onto the mind and body through their opposing Western stereotypical “constructions of female sexuality.”³¹ Micaëla (“José’s childhood sweetheart”), on the one hand, complies with patriarchal norms. She is the stereotypical “virgin” or “Angel in the House: the sexless, submissive ideal of the bourgeoisie” whose sexuality is “carefully defined” for her and contained within strict societal expectations. Accordingly, her melodies are “simple, lyrical, sweet.” Her musical discourse, both unwaveringly diatonic (i.e. “never deviating into insinuating inflections”) and rhythmically straightforward, conforms precisely to those qualities which form the structural basis of traditional Western classical music.³² Hence, it relies on and reinforces classical music’s ideological association with the mind in order to establish and support Micaëla’s supposed sexual disembodiment. Indeed, by

³⁰McClary, *Feminine Endings*, 55.

³¹Ibid., 56.

³²Ibid., 56–7.

relying on such preconceived notions of the mind-body split in classical music, Micaëla's discourse can be understood quite clearly, especially in comparison with Carmen's music, as compliant with the masculine in the sense that it appears to be "innocent of physicality."³³

Carmen, by contrast, represents what McClary describes as the stereotypical "whore." Her music celebrates the body and eroticism through the "physical impulses of exotic, pseudogypsy dance." Its "contagious" rhythms and "chromatic excesses" indicate that Carmen "is very much aware of her body." Her *dance* pieces (the "Habanera" and "Seguidilla") not only draw attention to Carmen's body but also inspire those who are listening—José and the audience itself—to become aware of their own bodies as well.³⁴

McClary notices, for example, that

before she even begins to sing, [Carmen's] instrumental vamp sets a pattern that engages the lower body, demanding hip swings in response.³⁵

In the presence of such bodily rhythms it is not surprising that the musical tension created by the chromaticism and dissonance of Carmen's discourse becomes associated with *sexual* tension by the classical listener. One has only to recall that famous

³³Ibid., 57.

³⁴Ibid., 56–7. The audience is invited to align itself with the male subject position of the opera through the eyes and ears of the protagonist José and through his classical musical discourse.

³⁵Ibid., 57. What is perceived by the classical listener as an increase in musical arousal (the physical body) becomes associated with sexual arousal.

“Habanera” opening, as McClary does, with its tension-building “descent by half-steps” towards the tonic to realize that the sexual intensity of Carmen’s character, like her music, is “slippery, unpredictable, maddening.” Carmen ruthlessly plays with the listener’s expectations, “sometimes granting the tonic, but often withholding it sadistically at the last instant before implied gratification.”³⁶ As McClary notes:

Her melodic lines tease and taunt, forcing the attention to dwell on the moment—on the erogenous zones of her inflected melodies.³⁷

Indeed, all the attention Carmen’s musical and dramatic discourse gives to the body clearly sets her apart from Micaëla, other ‘rational’ characters and even the bourgeois listener who are all symbolically affiliated with that supposedly transcendent and “universal” discourse of Western classical music.³⁸ Through its rhythmic and chromatic intensity, Carmen’s music places her in the position of “the dissonant Other who is necessary for the motivation and sustaining of the plot”³⁹ and, as McClary later suggests, its resolution.

Carmen’s potential to threaten the sureholds of rationalism, through her dramatic/musical associations with the body and sexual desire, is played out beautifully in the musical discourse of the protagonist José. Indeed, McClary observes that it is his own

³⁶Ibid., 57–8.

³⁷Ibid., 57.

³⁸Ibid., 59–61.

³⁹Ibid., 57.

personal mind-body crisis which seems to structure the whole opera. At the beginning of the opera José resides assuredly on the side of patriarchal and rational law, among those disciplined soldiers whose musical discourse is comprised entirely of Western classical music. He and his musical discourse are thus established from the outset, like Micaëla's, as being "devoted to lofty sentiments rather than to the body." However, once he becomes seduced by Carmen, his seemingly "transcendental" musical discourse betrays "musical images of fevered longing" and sexual climax.⁴⁰ His "Flower Song," for example, recreates the feelings of sexual frustration he experienced in prison through the clever use of a "pitch-ceiling" which his melodic line, after some difficulty, finally "penetrates." Here, as elsewhere, melodic climax mirrors sexual climax and so José's once "well-behaved discourse of masculine European classical music" is revealed within this "self-absorbed monologue" as, in fact, "masturbatory." Additionally, José's music begins to take on perceived feminine/sexual musical characteristics such as "chromatic harmonization."⁴¹ Certainly, throughout the remainder of the opera, Carmen manages to seduce José "repeatedly into betraying his superior, transcendental classical music discourse." It soon becomes evident that Carmen and her "lower-class pop music"⁴² are

⁴⁰Ibid., 59.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid., 64–5.

not only a “threat” to patriarchal control and security but one which must be purged for the sake of rationalism.

McClary’s most interesting, insightful and troubling observations, no doubt, stem from her exploration of how such stereotypical constructions of gender and sexuality are regulated within the opera’s larger dramatic narrative and corresponding musical structure. She describes, for example, how the opera is itself “framed” within that masculine and rational discourse of traditional classical music.⁴³ Like most classical pieces written in the 18th and 19th centuries, this opera demands, in accordance with classical conventions, “complete resolution onto the triad” for tonal closure.⁴⁴ Carmen, whose musical discourse is both rhythmically active and chromatically unstable (i.e. that of the dissonant feminine Other), must therefore be sacrificed in order for this satisfactory conclusion of the opera to occur. In this way, her violent murder by José, symbolic of the defeated body—“femininity” and “sexuality,” but also the “colonial, non-white, non-Christian, and lower class”⁴⁵—can be justified.

In that final scene where José tries, unsuccessfully, to force Carmen to give in to his wishes “the harmonic bassline turns into a maddeningly slippery chromatic floor.”

⁴³Ibid., 60. The development and resolution of both musical and dramatic tension in this narrative is dependent on the character Carmen as she represents the obstacle or conflict which José must overcome.

⁴⁴Ibid., 62.

⁴⁵Ibid., 66.

The listener, fluent in the structural conventions of classical tonality, wishes this “flood of chromaticism” to be resolved, “for stability to be re-established.”⁴⁶ Cadential closure, synchronized perfectly with Carmen’s murder on stage at the end of the opera, therefore comes as a relief to the audience; Carmen’s death, presumably tragic, becomes *pleasurable* within this musical context. As McClary puts it,

Bizet’s musical strategies...set up almost unbearable tensions that cause the listener not only to accept Carmen’s death as “inevitable,” but actually to *desire* it.⁴⁷

Thus the resolution of José’s mind-body problem is predetermined from the start. Patriarchal and rational order, here marked as tonal stability, must necessarily have the last word. Given that Carmen’s “erotic power, her ethnic exoticism and her pop culture songs are seen as grounded in the body,”⁴⁸ it comes as little surprise that the opera concludes with the literal collapse of Carmen’s body on stage.

By now it should be obvious why McClary chose to analyze this particular opera along feminist lines. From McClary’s description, as I have outlined it so far, the opera evidently conspires to quash the feminine as it is symbolically represented by Carmen and her bodily musical discourse. It betrays deep-seated anxieties regarding the body and sexuality, and perhaps works to reinforce traditional patriarchal bourgeois social beliefs

⁴⁶Ibid., 62.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid., 65.

considered to be oppressive and inapplicable by today's feminist standards. However, as McClary clearly states, *Carmen* "must not be dismissed as a lesson in simple, straight forward misogyny or racism."⁴⁹ The opera can, in fact, as she recognizes, be interpreted in a number of ways.

For example, McClary notices at least two ways in which the opera's "rational narrative closure" is somewhat ambiguous. First, the signature tune of José's colonial, exotic rival Escamillo ("Toreador Song") makes up the musical materials for the opera's final resolution during José's supposedly triumphant murder of Carmen. Secondly, although the opera is rid of its dissonance and chromaticism, its final cadence which marks the necessary "return to diatonicism," occurs in a different key from which the opera began and thus strays, according to McClary, from traditional conventions for marking complete closure.⁵⁰ Furthermore, since it is Carmen's music which is the most alluring and memorable in the entire opera and, as McClary suggests, because "the José who is in love with Carmen (despite his persistent cowardice) is infinitely preferable to the pasteboard soldier Micaëla encounters at the beginning," the opera may be viewed as "a bitter *critique of* European patriarchal forms of gender construction."⁵¹ In fact, *Carmen* can be understood as a critique of rationalism itself, as McClary explains:

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Ibid., 62–3.

⁵¹Ibid., 66, italics mine.

Even though *Carmen* ultimately delivers the horrible bottom line of male (white, bourgeois) domination, the opera would not, in fact, work if it were not playing into some of the most agonizing contradictions of Western culture.⁵²

However, whether the opera works to support misogynist, racist messages, or whether its musical meanings are “used out of context in ironic, self-empowering strategies,”⁵³ *Carmen* is, after all, killed by José at the opera’s conclusion and this, McClary believes, is a fact which “must never be forgotten or minimized.”⁵⁴

To be sure, the example McClary provides of gender construction in *Carmen* is not an isolated one. As feminist music critics have begun to demonstrate, powerful or “sexual” female characters are frequently portrayed as threatening or Other via minor keys, chromaticism and dissonance (in relation to the tonal stability and rhythmic regularity of rational male or patriarchal characters) in operas from Mozart to Wagner. Feminist/literary theorist Catherine Clément (one of McClary’s major influences), in fact, devotes her entire book, *Opera, or the Undoing of Women* (1979), to the specific examination of how these operas demand “the submission or death of the woman for the sake of narrative closure” and rational tonal resolution.⁵⁵

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³McClary, “The Undoing of Opera,” xiv.

⁵⁴McClary, *Feminine Endings*, 66.

⁵⁵McClary, “The Undoing of Opera,” xi. See Catherine Clément, *Opera, or the Undoing of Women*, trans. Betsy Wing, with a foreword by Susan McClary (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

However, issues of gender and sexuality, and particularly their relation to the mind-body split, are not limited to dramatic or programmatic classical music only. Like *Carmen*, non-programmatic (“pure,” “absolute”) instrumental music also relies significantly on “constructions of gender, the ejaculatory quality of many so-called transcendental moments, the titillating yet carefully contained presentation of the feminine threat, [and] the apparent necessity of violent closure”⁵⁶ for its effects and social significance.

Take, for example, one of Western classical music’s most paradigmatic tonal structures, the sonata-allegro procedure; it too can be seen as based upon such gender informed narrative structures. As McClary explains, its primary and secondary themes are known for their respective “aggressive” (or “thrusting”) versus “lyrical” qualities and can be said to represent, in effect, those utterances considered to be masculine and feminine. They were, in fact, customarily referred to as such at the turn of the 19th century. In adherence with the Western narrative model (and not unlike the framing device which structures *Carmen*), the first theme in the tonic key—“in essence the protagonist of the movement”—masters or overcomes the threats of the (feminine) Other, here represented by the secondary theme/key of the exposition, for tonal resolution and thematic/narrative closure.⁵⁷ Indeed, long before any *explicit* reference to gender difference was made in

⁵⁶McClary, *Feminine Endings*, 67.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 68–9.

relation to instrumental music, composers writing in sonata and other classical forms drew precisely upon the semiotics of gender and sexuality as they were established and somewhat naturalized in opera. Therefore, gender may have been a compositional factor in many of these earlier instrumental pieces as well:

the themes of many an eighteenth-century sonata movement draw upon the semiotics of “masculinity” and “femininity” as they were constructed on the operatic stage, and thus they are readily recognizable in their respective positions within the musical narratives.⁵⁸

Yet despite the validity and seriousness of McClary’s observations, there has unfortunately not been within music scholarship, until very recently, an outlet in which to discuss openly and critically these and other social/bodily issues in classical music. This is ironic since, as McClary shows, it was traditional music scholarship itself which first described classical music as often organized along lines of gender and sexuality.

As McClary demonstrates, the past writings of traditional music theorists, actually “betray an explicit reliance on metaphors of gender...and sexuality in their formulations.” McClary finds their discussions illuminating both in musical and social terms as they help to demonstrate not only that classical music is indeed organized in part by such “mundane” issues but also to reveal how such organizations expose sexist, misogynist and rational social beliefs and stereotypes within classical music practices and

⁵⁸Ibid., 14. See also Marcia J. Citron, “Feminist Approaches to Musicology,” in *Cecilia Reclaimed: Feminist Perspectives on Gender and Music*, ed. Susan C. Cook and Judy S. Tsou (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994). Citron understands the sonata aesthetic itself as gendered masculine via its reliance on metaphors of power, hegemony, opposition, competition, etc.

scholarship. The explicit classification of cadence-types according to gender, for example, reveals “some of the most prominent of Western beliefs concerning sexual difference.” That is, what theorists had chosen to call (even as little as thirty years ago) the “masculine” cadence is characterized as “strong,” as “normal,” and is “identified with the more objective, more rational of musical discourses while the so-called “feminine” cadence is considered to be, by contrast, “weak,” “abnormal” and typical of the “romantic” styles (i.e. “subjective”).⁵⁹ Consider also how the hierarchical relationship between the major and minor triads is similarly mapped onto the masculine/feminine binary. According to Arnold Schoenberg (as McClary notices in his *Theory of Harmony*, 1911) and other theorists, the minor “feminine” mode is seen as “unnatural” while the major “masculine” mode is described as “natural,” that which is necessary for an authentic cadence.⁶⁰ Again, the feminine is designated to that which is perceived as undesirable or opposed to rational musical norms. (As we saw earlier, Bizet utilizes both examples for his construction of gender/sexual differences within *Carmen*.)

Finally, McClary explains that analogies to sexuality too can be located within the writings of prominent music theorists. McClary reminds us of the writings of Heinrich Schenker, for instance (in particular his *Harmony*), with their “explicitly sexualized tropes.” His discussions illustrate in technical, “quasi-mathematical” terms how classical

⁵⁹Ibid., 10.

⁶⁰Ibid., 11.

music itself, far from “transcending” issues of the body, “often relies heavily upon the metaphorical simulations of sexual activity for its effects.” Schenkerian analysis, according to McClary, can be said, in fact, to “chart simultaneously the principal background mechanisms through which tonal compositions arouse desire and the surface strategies that postpone gratification.”⁶¹

The problem with such references to gender and sexuality in traditional music theory then, as McClary sees it, is not their lack of technical scrutiny, but rather that they are steeped in sexist and misogynist mythical assumptions. That is, these scholars understand classical music’s particular (sexist, misogynist, etc.) adherence to social beliefs regarding gender and sexuality as natural rather than ideologically constructed.⁶² Despite the fact that these metaphorical terms are, for the most part, no longer used within scholarship today, obviously does not indicate that such bodily means for musical organization have suddenly disappeared or have become irrelevant.⁶³ Indeed, many classical musical works (such as *Carmen*) continue even today to shape or utilize these social constructions of gender and sexuality for their effects. As McClary suggests, it was only when such meanings became “socially embarrassing” that formalists began to regard

⁶¹Ibid., 12–13.

⁶²Ibid., 13.

⁶³However, it does raise the question as to whether or not such music—especially within larger narrative structures like the sonata—can possibly be experienced by a Western audience apart from its original associations.

classical music as meaningless.⁶⁴ By contrast, McClary understands the necessity of problematizing the inherent, or at least potential, sexism and misogyny of classical musical components and forms and of bringing to light such manifestations within specific musical examples (which besides being problematic are also extremely interesting and insightful). Such issues, she says, “ought to spark discussion, as controversial novels or pop songs often do.” Indeed, when, as McClary says, the “erotic continues so often to be framed as a manifestation of feminine evil while masculine high culture is regarded as transcendent,” and when “the pervasive cultural anxiety over women as obstacles to transcendence justifies over and over again narratives of the victimized male and the necessary purging or containment of the female,” then it becomes quite clear that such issues need to be addressed rather than constantly ignored by scholarship. Not only are these issues vital according to the feminist agenda but also, far from being extra-musical, tell us a great deal about what traditional scholars consider to be the music itself. However, initiating such changes in music scholarship will not be an easy task. This is because, as McClary concludes,

classical music is perhaps our cultural medium most centrally concerned with denial of the body, with enacting the ritual repudiation of the erotic—even (especially) its own erotic imagery. For in Western culture, music *itself* is always in danger of being regarded as the feminine Other that circumvents reason and arouses desire. Hence the ongoing academic struggle to control music objectively: just as Carmen must be brought in line with patriarchal demands, so the

⁶⁴McClary, “The Undoing of Opera: Toward a Feminist Criticism of Music,” xiv.

musicologist must silence music, deny that it has meaning, and impose theoretical closure on this discourse that often provokes far more than it can contain.⁶⁵

McClary is, no doubt, successful in demonstrating the importance of including gender and sexuality, as well as other social aspects of the body such as ethnicity and class, within academic writings on music. Far from being autonomous of social or material considerations, she shows classical music—in particular the score or music itself—as clearly dependent upon such “mundane” issues. Moreover, her work begins to examine the extent to which rationalism, and its relationship with sexism, racism, and other hierarchical binaries, have affected classical music practices and scholarship alike. She illustrates convincingly that classical music needs to be examined in such terms through her discussions of the sonata form and, especially, *Carmen*, in which dependence on both the physical and social for dramatic and musical effects is striking. (Can one imagine, for example, any thorough musical discussion of *Carmen* that does not in some way involve issues of the body?) Furthermore, McClary’s clever scrutiny of traditional scholarship’s reliance on metaphors of gender and sexuality demonstrates that music scholarship should attempt to understand its own working assumptions. Contemplating how the body, and more specifically the mind-body split, factors into classical music’s ideology (of which traditional music scholarship is inevitably a part) can allow scholarship to finally move beyond assumptions related to the work concept which deny music’s social and bodily significance and simultaneously, as McClary illustrates, mask

⁶⁵McClary, *Feminine Endings*, 79.

the potentially oppressive premises on which much of this music is developed. However, that which makes McClary's work so convincing—the fact that it works to understand the score or music itself (i.e. the music's actual pitches and rhythms as opposed to what has traditionally been thought of as extra-musical considerations outside the score) from a social and bodily perspective—also, ironically, in some important respects limits her work.

McClary's reliance on the score for her observations, much in line with traditional scholarship, often confines her examinations to the more fixed or closed aspects of the musical text. She is frequently caught between traditional ideas that define and attempt to explain the musical work only in terms of its historical significance—according to the composer's (i.e. author's) intentions—and recent philosophies that understand musical and other artistic meaning as dependent on its interpretation, historical and otherwise. For example, in her discussion of sonata form McClary seems to indicate that its themes/key areas are in fact *always* gendered, at least within a Western cultural context, by virtue of their structural relationship (as narratologist Teresa de Lauretis suggests). She says, for instance, that the secondary thematic material in sonata form (like the antagonist function in literature) is “understood on some fundamental cultural level as a feminine Other.” And yet, she also states, conversely, that the Other “need not always be interpreted strictly as female,” that it “can be anything that stands as an obstacle or threat to identity.”⁶⁶

⁶⁶Ibid., 16. It is clear, nevertheless, that McClary believes that the second theme's close association with the feminine Other merits feminist examination regardless.

Similarly, she allows for multiple interpretations of *Carmen* on the one hand, but also considers those interpretations which are divorced from what she understands to be the opera's original (ideal) context to be, so to speak, "out of context" on the other.

Paradoxically, just as McClary complains that the masculine must be given the last word in this opera, she too finally concludes that Carmen's murder, presumably misogynist, racist, etc., "must never be forgotten or minimized."⁶⁷ So although McClary is successful on many levels in examining music from a social and bodily perspective (certainly, the above criticisms are not meant to diminish her achievements, especially in the areas of music history and theory) and often observes music's ability to be ironic and open to multiple interpretations, she nevertheless tends to favour or tie music down to its original context.⁶⁸ By viewing classical music as closed or fixed she inevitably comes to regard

⁶⁷Ibid., 66.

⁶⁸If anything, McClary's seemingly contradictory interpretations of the binary oppositions underlying this classical music are indicative of a central problem which music critics must inevitably face. It is difficult to know in any concrete terms (i.e. positively) where the music's socio-historically embedded meanings should end and the music's semantic openness to new interpretations begins. No doubt, McClary's goal of challenging strong traditional notions of autonomy—which refute *all* meaning in music, including its original historical physical/social dependence—has led her to emphasize music's original cultural significance and the composer's intentions at the expense of its interpretive openness. It should be clear, however, that music is never at any one time autonomous from socio-cultural factors, but only *appears* as such in the sense that its meanings are unstable over time and with respect to changing audiences.

this music's seemingly inherent misogyny, sexism, racism, etc., as also fixed and necessarily harmful.⁶⁹

Furthermore, while McClary does frequently admit to or demonstrate the importance of considering the audience's or critic's interpretation of classical music, she neglects to consider almost completely (except within a brief footnote) how the performer's interpretation of the score might also influence the meaning of the work. This too is ironic, since the classical music performer has also been traditionally associated with, as we saw both in Chapter 1 and our discussion of Leppert, the feminine and the body (in opposition with the composer's link to the masculine and the mind). Her descriptions of the characters in *Carmen*, for example, are dependent solely on their appearance within the score (as she sees them from her feminist perspective); no actual performers or performances are mentioned. Thus, much in line with traditional beliefs in *Werktreue*, McClary's writings on at least classical music take for granted the vital assumption of the passive feminine performer and leave unexamined this dimension of the mind-body split in music.

⁶⁹It comes as no surprise then when she reveals her preference for listening to other feminist and popular musics in part because they seemingly avoid supporting such oppressive hierarchies. See for example the conclusion to her article, "Towards a Feminist Criticism of Music," page 17, where she says explicitly, "The pernicious mind-body split that so informs classical music is simply not operative in much of this music, which manages to be both politically astute *and* physically engaging... Give me Laurie Anderson, Prince, or Madonna any day."

I shall now turn to the writings of Suzanne Cusick who, in her feminist discussions of classical music, specifically and purposely highlights the importance of also considering the performer and thus illustrates the nature of this music to be both open to and dependent on its multiple interpretations.

Suzanne Cusick: The Performative Experience of Music

Suzanne Cusick's consideration of the mind-body split within music scholarship stems from her appreciation of classical music as both a feminist music scholar and a performer. As a performer, she recognizes that it is the performer's perspective of music and the phenomenon of musical performance in general (as experienced by both performer and audience) which has been most severely neglected and distorted by traditional scholarship's tendencies towards rationalism and objectivism. Accordingly, she works to include the body in her academic writings by focusing on the *performative* experience of music. Being a feminist, Cusick also realizes that gender may in fact be found most readily in the performative acts of performers and audiences alike. For this reason she insists, furthering McClary's argument, that a feminist consideration of the body in music must inevitably move beyond the score to also study (locate gender in) music's performance. It is only by studying music as it is experienced in performance (i.e. music in its totality), Cusick believes, that we can begin to "know music more

intimately”⁷⁰ and, consequently, move beyond traditional scholarship’s currently limited accounts of both the performer and music.

In her article, “Feminist Theory, Music Theory, and the Mind/Body Problem,” Cusick demonstrates the importance of including the body in our conception and investigations of music by focusing on music as it is understood and experienced from the performer’s perspective. She accomplishes this by drawing on her own relationship with music, utilizing and trusting her empathic and personal responses. Being also a music scholar, she is able to describe directly how the mind-body split manifests itself in traditional music scholarship and, consequently, within her own thinking. She notes, for example, a discrepancy between how she was trained to understand and respond to music as a “musicologist” (one who *thinks* about music) and how she experiences and knows music as a performer:

As a performer, I act on and with what we ordinarily call music with my body; as a musicologist I have been formed to act on (and with?) what we ordinarily call music with my mind, and only my mind.⁷¹

It is scholarship’s insistence that music be thought of and treated purely in terms of *mind*—that is, by means of abstraction—which Cusick finds so problematically at odds with her “performing self.”⁷² It is largely her attempt to bridge this gap between

⁷⁰Suzanne Cusick, “Feminist Theory, Music Theory, and the Mind/Body Problem,” *Perspectives of New Music* 32 (Winter 1994): 21.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, 9. In this way the scholar aligns herself with the composer.

⁷²*Ibid.*, 10.

performance and scholarship which urges Cusick to challenge its preoccupation with music's abstract and rational qualities.⁷³

Traditional music scholarship, Cusick complains, identifies both the composer and the music itself solely in terms of *mind*, that is, in opposition to the performer and *body*. For example, music theory, she notices, tends to focus almost exclusively on the “fixed”⁷⁴ aspects of the composer's score—“the grammar and syntax of pitches and durations”⁷⁵ or the “relationship of notes to each other”⁷⁶—thereby excluding other relevant information having to do with the performer, the body's involvement in music making, or music as it is experienced and understood by most people through its performance. In an attempt to rescue music from the subordinate realm of the body, the scholar maintains what Cusick describes as “the epistemological illusion of all-encompassing, and thus objective, knowledge.”⁷⁷ Indeed, this “all-encompassing

⁷³Several attempts have been made to examine and bridge this gap by other music theorists. For an overview of such attempts see Charles Fisk, “Performance, Analysis and Musical Imagining,” *College Music Symposium*, Vol. 36 (1996): 59–72; Tim Howell, “Analysis and Performance: The Search for a Middleground,” in *Companion to Contemporary Musical Thought*, Vol. 2, ed. John Paynter, Tim Howell, Richard Orton, and Peter Seymour (London: Routledge, 1992); and Catherine Nolan, “Reflections on the Relationship of Analysis and Performance,” *College Music Symposium*, Vol. 33/34 (1993/94): 112–139, especially pages 121–23 where she attributes this gap to the realization of the modern score (i.e. the musical work) in the 19th century.

⁷⁴Cusick, “Feminist Theory, Music Theory, and the Mind/Body Problem,” 10.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, 13.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, 16.

⁷⁷*Ibid.*

knowledge” misses precisely those aspects of music Cusick herself perceives as an organist and knows, or wishes to know, as a feminist. It often cannot explain or even take into consideration, for example, important social issues such as gender or those physical, bodily aspects of music she as an organist recognizes as an integral part of music. It does not, in other words, allow for the types of questions she, as both a performer and feminist, is interested in asking. Not surprisingly then does Cusick feel this approach to be at times “profoundly unmusical.”⁷⁸ Moreover, Cusick illuminates scholarship’s exclusion of the body in music as ironic (if not completely absurd) since, as she puts it:

Music, an art which self-evidently does not exist until bodies make it and/or receive it, is thought about as if it were a mind-mind game. Thus, when we think analytically about music, what we ordinarily do is describe practices of the mind (the composer’s choices) for the sake of informing the practices of other minds... We end by ignoring the fact that these practices of the mind are nonpractices without the bodily practices they call for[!]⁷⁹

Cusick’s attempt within her academic writings to restore the body back to music begins with a reconsideration of the position of the performer. Since, as Cusick notes, “it is performers who are most ignored and dismissed by a mind-mind conception of music,” an embodied music scholarship or theory might be best accomplished by approaching music from a “performer-centered subject position.”⁸⁰ For practical purposes, the performer treats and thinks about the music she plays not as a complete or fixed object, as

⁷⁸Ibid., 9.

⁷⁹Ibid., 16.

⁸⁰Ibid., 18.

the scholar/listener typically does, but as “a set of actions to be coordinated in particular ways” or, more simply put, as “*something you do*”⁸¹ (i.e. *musica practica*). She may therefore be in a position to more easily recognize the importance of considering also music’s open, performative qualities and moving beyond beliefs in the musical work concept including, especially, its preoccupation with the composer’s score. As Cusick writes,

the score is not the work to a performer; nor is the score-made-sound the work: the work includes the performer’s mobilizing of previously studied skills so as to embody, to make real, to make sounding, a set of relationships that are only partly relationships among sounds.⁸²

Indeed, if as Cusick claims, as do other scholars including Storr and Leppert, that “the act of making music is the exact site of an actual solution to the mind/body problem,” then surely any “theory of musical bodies”⁸³ must consider the musical work from the performer’s perspective: “as a set of scripts for bodily performances.”⁸⁴

The performer’s function too should be recognized by scholarship not merely as bodily (in the narrow, dualist sense of the word) but as equally in terms of body and mind. As we have already seen in Chapter 1 and elsewhere, the performer is too often

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Ibid., 14. As Cusick notes (on page 17 of “Feminist Theory, Music Theory, and the Mind/Body split”), acquiring a performer’s perspective of music may involve taking more time to speak with performers in the studios and practice rooms.

reduced to the body category by traditional beliefs resembling Hoffmann's *Werktreue* and ensuing traditional methods. As such, the performer is treated as something of an automaton, artificially distinguished from the work and its meanings. Cusick, by contrast, demonstrates that the performer is "embodied"⁸⁵—i.e. of body *and* mind in relation to music—by emphasizing the performer's capacity to interpret, and thus co-create, "the music itself." She shows, in other words, that the performer, from her bodily and subjective position, can have a significant effect on musical meaning.⁸⁶ And while she admits that playing classical music obviously requires some understanding of the "composer's intentions," for Cusick, this means no more than knowing "what will be required of you if you are to either realize or contradict them."⁸⁷

Cusick provides a small but significant musical example which demonstrates how the body, and more specifically the performer's embodied perspective (physical and cognitive), can play an important role in determining the meaning of a work. Her description of a passage from Bach's choral prelude on "Aus tiefer Not" (in his *Clavierübung*, Part III, BWV 686) reveals that the performer indeed understands and experiences the piece very differently from the scholar or listener. This passage, which

⁸⁵Ibid., 18.

⁸⁶Here Cusick applies what we may recognize as Barthes' theory of the death of the author to the role of the performer so that both audience *and* performer may be seen as responsible for co-composing the music's meaningfulness via interpretation.

⁸⁷Cusick, "Feminist Theory, Music Theory, and the Mind/Body Problem," 18.

sets the words “send me the grace my spirit needs,” is for the scholar/listener who focuses primarily on its rational structure or pitch syntax not particularly striking or unusual. Both harmonic and contrapuntal analysis would not, for instance, identify this passage as at all “critical” to the work’s meaning. Here, “grace” might simply be heard in the dance-like melody within the bass.⁸⁸ For Cusick, however, this passage represents no less than the “climax” of the work, as “grace” is experienced much more “dramatically” and physically by the organist. What she describes as “the most physically challenging movement in the piece” occurs at the beginning of this passage:

Neither foot can rest long enough to balance the body, neither hand can rest long enough to balance the body. For these few terrifying measures (terrifying in the organist’s experience), one might as well be floating in midair, so confused and constantly shifting is the body’s center of gravity.⁸⁹

Thus “grace,” for the organist, is not heard at the beginning of the phrase (where the grace-like melody in the bass occurs) but is *felt* half way through the phrase (soon after the word “grace” is sung) when the “body’s craving for a place to balance” finally resolves and the organist’s “difficulty” or “terror” disappears.⁹⁰ For the organist then, “grace” may be understood physically and cognitively in terms of balance, ease, rest, etc., and as the resolution of its opposite—difficulty, terror or confusion.

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰Ibid.

Cusick therefore shows that there are at least two ways to interpret this passage: as a listener, where melodic representation of the word “grace” is minor to the piece’s meaning as a whole; and as a performer, where “grace” is experienced physically as the climax of the work. And although the organist’s understanding of the piece cannot be *heard* by the audience (except perhaps as “wrong notes, muddled articulations, or some subtle way the organist’s bodily ease will result in more confident playing”⁹¹) nor found within the formal aspects of the score, Cusick argues that it is nonetheless equally valid and meaningful since, as she puts it:

To deny musical meaning to things only the performers of a work will know implicitly denies that performers are knowers, knowers whose knowledge comes from their bodies and their minds...[and] is in effect to transform human performers into machines for the transmission of mind-mind messages between members of a metaphorically disembodied class, and, because disembodied, elite.⁹²

Her example illustrates, then, that the performer can be a relevant interpreter or co-creator of musical meaning and, accordingly, that music may be broader than traditionally conceived via the musical work concept. Like Leppert, she shows the capacity of music, as it is experienced in musical performance, to be semantically slippery and, by extension, dependent on the perspectives of both the performer and audience (i.e. *textual*). This, as we shall see, has important implications for feminist music criticism.

⁹¹Ibid.

⁹²Ibid., 19–20.

As mentioned earlier, Cusick is also interested in the relationship between classical music and *gender*. Like McClary, she recognizes that gender metaphors circulate, and can therefore be discovered, within a society's music: "in the sounds composers choose, in the ways people hear those sounds and in the associations they make with them."⁹³ However, unlike McClary, Cusick is more concerned with learning how gender is "*performed*"⁹⁴—how the bodies of performers "enact metaphors of gender" or "enact the constitution of gender itself."⁹⁵ This is because, as she notes,

we cannot possibly know all the gender content there might be in a given work without understanding how our music's complex conversations require actual bodies to behave.⁹⁶

Thus, Cusick's focus on musical performance enables her to locate gender both within specific pieces and, more importantly as we shall see, within the performance traditions which surround these pieces.

For example, Cusick notices that musical performance itself has traditionally been "gendered feminine because it so involves the body." Like Leppert, she recognizes that the performer, or the performer's perspective of music (as open, semantically slippery,

⁹³Ibid., 14.

⁹⁴Ibid. As Cusick writes (on page 14 of "Feminist Theory, Music Theory, and the Mind/Body Problem"), what she, being a performer, finds the most fascinating in Butler's thought, as described in her book *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), is her proposition that "the gendered self is the cumulative result of *performances*."

⁹⁵Ibid., 17.

⁹⁶Ibid., 21.

textual, etc.), has “acquired the negative prestige usually borne by the mark of the feminine.”⁹⁷ The role of the composer, by contrast presumed to be masculine, is also, as Cusick notes, gendered as such “*not because so many individuals who live in the category are biologically male*, but because the composer has come to be understood to be *mind-mind* that creates patterns of sounds to which other *minds* assign meanings.”⁹⁸ Not surprisingly then, Cusick stresses the need for a feminist music criticism or an embodied music scholarship to look beyond the score and consider also gender as it manifests itself within the musical acts of “performing bodies.”⁹⁹ As she concludes:

Metaphorically, when music theorists and musicologists ignore the bodies whose performative acts constitute the thing called music, we ignore the feminine. We erase her from us, even at the price of metaphorically [and literally] silencing the music.¹⁰⁰

Indeed, by interrogating “the social and symbolic meanings embedded in the bodily techniques used to produce sounds,”¹⁰¹ scholarship may acquire more insight not only into how music and gender intersect (and thus provide additional opportunities to alter the ways in which gender stereotypes affect, and are affected by, musical practices and

⁹⁷Ibid., 20.

⁹⁸Ibid., 16.

⁹⁹Ibid., 17.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 16.

¹⁰¹Ibid., 17.

beliefs)¹⁰² but also into how ideas connected to the mind-body split, gendered or otherwise, have influenced the ways we think about and treat performance and, accordingly, the music itself.

In her article, “Gender and the Cultural Work of a Classical Music Performance,” Cusick further problematizes the mind-body split in music scholarship by continuing to challenge its adherence to *Werktreue* or, what she calls, “the ideology of faithful performance.”¹⁰³ By showing that the performer is more than just an automaton but also a significant interpreter or co-creator of musical meaning, Cusick strengthens her arguments which insist that what has traditionally been described as the body plays an important role in the creation and practice of music. She illustrates that scholarship could benefit greatly from considering music as it is experienced through performance and recognizing how unchallenged assumptions related to the mind-body split and the musical work concept can often lead to limited or inaccurate views of both performance and music. In addition, she uses her personal, experiential understanding of the performer to explore how music is gendered through its performance. This, she believes, will allow us

¹⁰²For example, Cusick writes (on page 20 of “Feminist Theory, Music Theory and the Mind/Body Problem”) that we may learn “how musical choices—like one’s instrument or medium—might be gendered in unexpected ways, not for what the instrument or medium seemed to represent but for what its performance encouraged one to enact; or for how it characteristically interacted; or for how its performance characteristically negotiated the relationship of body and mind.”

¹⁰³Suzanne Cusick, “Gender and the Cultural Work of a Classical Music Performance,” *Repercussions* 3/1 (Spring 1994): 80.

to change confidently the old gender scripts informing pieces and practices of classical music, as well as address some of the problems McClary's feminist critique of classical music raises.

Cusick begins her article by describing a dilemma which presumably results from the "feminist critique" of classical music—"the deciphering and demystification"¹⁰⁴ of its gender messages—such as the one proposed by McClary. Cusick describes how she and other conscientious feminist critics and listeners who read and accept such criticism have responded with considerable anxiety to what they see as "classical music's complicity in sustaining ideas of gender and sexuality we find anachronistic and oppressive." As Cusick explains:

Once we've begun the deciphering, many of us feel with gathering regret that we can never listen to music again...a music we have loved passionately for most of our lives; a music we have found to be a source of pleasure and power; a music that once seemed to grant our psyches a safe field for the play of deep feeling with deep thought.¹⁰⁵

Cusick's intentions to change the way traditional scholarship perceives musical performance, accordingly, stems in part from her desire to consider how we might comfortably continue to listen to this music now that we, as Cusick says, "can no longer romanticize it."¹⁰⁶ Indeed, if McClary's feminist interpretation of classical music is

¹⁰⁴Ibid., 77.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 78.

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

correct, then how can we justify our listening to music or our partaking in any art form, for that matter, which obviously or implicitly represents ideals of womanhood, or other ideals, “we now find antiquated,” oppressive or even “downright repellent”?¹⁰⁷

The problem with continuing to embrace and promote such simultaneously beautiful and offensive works today, Cusick believes, has less to do with the music itself or with what is presumed to be the original intentions of the composer, and more to do with the way this music has continued to be framed by beliefs in and rituals surrounding faithful performance. It is thinking of and treating the musical work as “fixed and irresistible,” as independent from any of its particular performances (“without which,” Cusick adds, “they would be inaudible and thus irrelevant”), which is “the proximate cause of this apparent dilemma.”¹⁰⁸ According to Cusick, “the cultural (if not aesthetic) power” of musical works, both programmatic and absolute, “depends utterly on their being received as closed”¹⁰⁹ objects. Indeed, her article illustrates that once we allow the role of the performer to be that of a co-creator of musical meaning (and thus a relevant part of the music itself), the supposedly inherent misogynist, homophobic, racist, etc. messages or meanings found by McClary and others within much classical music may be reinterpreted so as to become ironic and even ironically empowering. In fact, Cusick

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 81.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., 79.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., 80.

believes this would enable us to keep many of the presumably oppressive classical works in the repertoire without running into political or moral conflicts. If so, then feminist music criticism would be wise to reconsider in its investigation of the body, as Cusick does, the “unquestioned premise”¹¹⁰ of the ideology of faithful performance.

Cusick’s description of the ideology of faithful performance reveals that it not only dismisses performance as a worthy subject for serious contemplation in scholarship but acts as a filter for the physical and social aspects of music even when these are experienced through performance. That is, it teaches us *how* to listen—or, as Cusick writes, how to “perform [our] role as an audience member”¹¹¹—so that the performance may actually serve to reinforce ideas of the mind-body split and musical work concept rather than challenge them.¹¹² For example, it trains us to ignore and/or severely limit our bodily reactions to, and personal involvement with, the performance of a piece. This includes forgetting all bodily stimuli that do not come from our ears¹¹³ (such as the ones

¹¹⁰Ibid., 79.

¹¹¹Ibid., 84.

¹¹²Professional and academic musical training which encourages listening to musical performance with score in hand may be particularly successful at reinforcing a rational view of music and its resulting gender stereotypes.

¹¹³Cusick, “Gender and the Cultural Work of a Classical Music Performance,” 82. Thinking about music as a purely auditory experience is a relatively new, and by no means *natural*, practice. As Leppert suggests (in *The Sight of Sound: Music, Representation and the History of the Body*, pages xix–xx), for example, “throughout much of Western musical history, a virtual homology existed between” sight and sound. According to Barthes’ “Musica Practica,” as well, it is less music’s *sound* and more its *tactile* qualities which make music so sensual and pleasurable.

observed by Storr), ignoring “the physical presence of the singer on the stage” and all we know or “imagine about her life outside this performance,”¹¹⁴ and perhaps even suppressing “the deeply erotic nature of musical performance”—the “scopophilic power” and pleasure of sitting in the dark, the “erotic intimacy” we experience with the performer’s body and voice, the “merging and submerging of Selves” into a higher form of reality or consciousness¹¹⁵ (*jouissance*), etc. In short, faithful performance teaches us to focus all of our bodily awareness on “the experience of sound” or “the music itself” and, strangely enough, to suppose this music is “independent of any performance,” that it is “more or less congruous with the composer’s intentions.”¹¹⁶ Thus, unless we consciously challenge this view, what we, in our role as listener, will describe of a performance may be limited to a rather narrow and biased definition of music.

Furthermore, the faithful performance ideology implies that we, as an audience, must limit ourselves to, or focus on, what we believe to be the composer’s intentions over the performer’s (or even our own) interpretations when determining the meaning of a piece. As Cusick writes, we come to expect the performer to behave like a “medium” performing for us, her “client,” “messages from the dead.”¹¹⁷ Performance, as such,

¹¹⁴Ibid., 84.

¹¹⁵Ibid., 85.

¹¹⁶Ibid., 84.

¹¹⁷Ibid., 82.

becomes “a public demonstration of obedience to ideas manifest in a particular work”¹¹⁸ where the performer must subordinate her own “*persona*” to that which we believe exists in and of the music itself.¹¹⁹ This means that the faithful performer will often be forced to perform ideas she, and we, find antiquated for the sake of providing us with a correct or authentic rendition of the composer’s work. However, more than this, the performer will be expected to perform “the correct relationship of a subaltern to hegemonic power” regardless of which piece she performs. That is, she will, through the faithful performance ritual, perform the role of an Other—both metaphorically feminine and linked to the body. As Cusick asks somewhat rhetorically, could it be that every faithful performance is, in fact, always already a “performance (or spectacle) of cultural hegemony?”¹²⁰ She questions, for instance, her own practice as a performer:

might *my* particular performance serve to make the idea of a woman’s submission seem natural? Might my real work be that of demonstrating for you how submission may be most beautifully performed? Might I always be performing the role of a subaltern who knows her place?...even if I performed a work with no overt gender content, might I be in any case performing my own abjection?...That is, might my performance *always* be partly a performance of the gender system?¹²¹

She evidently thinks so if her performance is presumed to be faithful. And if so, then, as Cusick writes, “what better frame story for texts that subtly encode all sorts of

¹¹⁸Ibid., 97.

¹¹⁹Ibid., 82.

¹²⁰Ibid., 92.

¹²¹Ibid.

prescriptions for social behavior—including gender”?!¹²² In fact, Cusick believes that it is partly this frame story—the “decidedly unequal”¹²³ power relationship between the composer and performer and the persuasion it provides for the performer to exercise her “interpretive franchise within quite narrow limits”¹²⁴—which is to blame for “the dramatic decline in classical music’s popularity over the last generation”¹²⁵ in America.

Fortunately, the performer need not be defined within such tight boundaries. As Cusick writes:

We who are professionals, however, know that there is more going on than what our audiences expect. For us, good performances are ones which interpret in sensitive and imaginative ways. That is, when *we* sit down to prepare a piece for performance, we imagine the performance to be ours at least as much as we imagine it to be that of “the music itself.”¹²⁶

In fact, she believes that performers may help to redefine what has been traditionally believed to be their role and status in music by replacing the ideology of faithful performance with what is called “resisting performance.” That is, performers may consciously or purposefully use their interpretive franchise to teach alternative performance practices which resist, rather than enforce, obedience to antiquated social

¹²²Ibid., 85.

¹²³Ibid., 91.

¹²⁴Ibid., 86.

¹²⁵Ibid., 98.

¹²⁶Ibid., 86.

patterns in music, including “breaking up the rigidities of the old gender script.”¹²⁷

However, for resistance to truly occur, as Cusick affirms, it must be “performed at every level.” This includes, first of all, reconstructing “the ritual of classical performance itself, so as to challenge, mock or reconfigure in unpredictable ways the likely performances of audiences.”¹²⁸ For example, Cusick recognizes that much classical 20th-century music (she points to the music of John Cage and Pauline Oliveros as examples) already aims to do this by drawing attention to or exaggerating music’s openness and dependence on the performer’s and/or audience’s creative involvement.¹²⁹ Secondly, the performer’s “interpretation” must be redefined “as a complex negotiation between performer and script, in which both have agency.” Thus, in the same way that musical works should not be thought of or treated as “merely vehicles for performers,” the composer’s intentions too should not dictate precisely and invariably musical or political ideas which are no longer relevant for performers and audiences today.¹³⁰ By contrast, the performer should be encouraged to develop a relationship with music which results in simultaneously imaginative, musical and authentic performances (within reasonable limits of the composer’s intentions). Finally, music must be defined less in terms of the work concept

¹²⁷Ibid., 98.

¹²⁸Ibid.

¹²⁹Musical theorizing or criticism may also be useful in challenging an audience’s inclination to listen to music passively.

¹³⁰Cusick, “Gender and the Cultural Work of a Classical Music Performance,” 99.

where its meaning is thought to be fixed and closed, and more in terms of an open musical text in which meaning is “contingent on choices and performative acts” of both audiences and performers.¹³¹

Cusick concludes her article with a musical example of a resisting performance—namely, Jessye Norman’s recorded performance of Robert Schumann’s “beautiful and hateful”¹³² song cycle *Frauenliebe und -leben* (opus 42; with Irwin Gage, on Philips 420 784–2, 1975)—which she believes may serve as a “useful model of how we all might perform cultural resistance rather than cultural obedience”¹³³ to classical works we find antiquated.¹³⁴ This performance demonstrates well how the performer may use her role as a co-creator of musical meaning both to gain semantic control over objectionable gender and other social messages thought to be located within the composer’s score and to resist her own performance of the gender system by refusing to perform absolute submission to what are believed to be the composer’s intentions. It illustrates, therefore, that resisting performance may allow us to keep pieces we find politically objectionable in the repertoire, that performers can create musical

¹³¹Ibid.

¹³²Ibid., 80.

¹³³Ibid., 108.

¹³⁴Cusick figures that if Norman is able to “re-read even so offensive a work as *Frauenliebe und -leben*...into acceptability,” than “we could re-read anything”! (See “Gender and the Cultural Work of a Classical Music Performance,” page 79.)

performances of antiquated works which are relevant and meaningful for audiences today.

Furthermore, as Cusick notes, Norman's performance demonstrates that

a resisting performance need not seem "unmusical." Indeed, this is a performance that teaches us how resistance, rather than submission, may be beautifully performed.¹³⁵

Cusick discusses first how Norman's performance works to reconstruct the faithful performance ritual itself by virtue of its being recorded. As her discussion shows, recording technology may serve well to reconfigure the ways in which audiences respond to classical music by literally removing it from the confines of the concert hall and placing it into other, often more private, contexts like one's home. The performance as such does not demand "bodily obedience" or other social rituals normally required of its audience. For example, as listeners we need not sit still in the dark or keep silent¹³⁶ and may, in fact, take full advantage of the creative possibilities that the CD player's remote control device offers us by "choosing not to listen to some bits," by replaying "favorite bits over and over," or by "playing the songs in any order regardless of the narrative." As listeners, we may, in effect, "re-perform Norman's performance."¹³⁷ As Cusick writes:

Because we can move about, expressing our experience of ecstasy any way we choose, we need not focus on it as an exclusive experience of minds and ears.¹³⁸

¹³⁵Cusick, "Gender and the Cultural Work of a Classical Music Performance," 100–101.

¹³⁶*Ibid.*, 101.

¹³⁷*Ibid.*, 103.

¹³⁸*Ibid.*, 101.

That is, we need not filter out the physical or social aspects of music we have been taught to suppress via the work concept and mind-body split. As well, Norman herself may escape the many “customs of live performance”: the “costumes” and “bright lights,” the “need to be either still or dramatizing,” the “constraints of our scopophilic power,” etc.¹³⁹ Her studio performance may have the effect of subverting Schumann’s intentions in all sorts of ways, including allowing her to bring much more of her everyday self to the performance.¹⁴⁰ So although Norman, as Cusick discusses next, purposely uses her interpretive skills to resist or co-create the gender content located in Schumann’s song cycle, we should keep in mind that “the world of recorded performance is already a world open to the performance of multiple resistances.”¹⁴¹

Some feminist music scholars have shown that singers may perform resistance to anachronistic gender content within musical pieces and the ritual of faithful performance itself by utilizing their virtuosic power or sheer vocal beauty to effectively “usurp the composer’s authorial voice”¹⁴² (that is, by emphasizing the piece’s geno-song qualities).

¹³⁹Ibid., 102.

¹⁴⁰Ibid.

¹⁴¹Ibid., 104.

¹⁴²Ibid., 106. See for example, the works of Carolyn Abbate: “Music’s Voices,” in *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), and “Opera, or the Envoicing of Women,” in *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship*, ed. Ruth Solie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); and Rebecca Pope’s essay, “The Diva Doesn’t Die: George Eliot’s Armgart,” in *Embodied Voices: Representing Female Vocality in Western Culture*, ed. Leslie C. Dunn and Nancy A. Jones (Cambridge:

Cusick's description of Norman's recording, on the other hand, illustrates that Norman consciously resists prescriptions for gender stereotypes located within Schumann's through her co-creative vocal and musical interpretation at the level of pheno-song. To show this, Cusick looks in particular at Norman's recorded performance of the second song in Schumann's cycle, "Er, der Herrlichste von Allen," in comparison to what has been considered the piece's faithful performance.

Cusick describes the faithful performance of "Er, der Herrlichste von Allen" in terms of its long performance tradition as popularized by the singer Lotte Lehmann.¹⁴³ Lehmann's "authentic" version demands that the character of the young woman, or "Frau," in the piece be portrayed as "completely happy" in her love and, accordingly, that the singer begin this song "joyfully, radiantly, almost dizzy with delight."¹⁴⁴ As Cusick writes:

Ordinarily what we expect from this song is a passionate rush, a piano part that might represent in its energy and triad outlines the young man she loves, or that might represent her own thrill at the sight of him. We expect, too, an exuberant, joyous, unfettered singing style.¹⁴⁵

Cambridge University Press, 1994).

¹⁴³Lehmann popularized her interpretation of Schumann's Lieder through her "famous and oft-emulated performances" as well as "her publication of interpretive guides to the standard repertoire." (See Cusick, "Gender and the Cultural Work of a Classical Music Performance," 105.)

¹⁴⁴Lotte Lehmann, *More Than Singing: The Interpretation of Songs*, trans. Frances Holden (New York, 1985), 151–9, in Cusick, "Gender and the Cultural Work of a Classical Music Performance," 105.

¹⁴⁵Cusick, "Gender and the Cultural Work of a Classical Music Performance," 104–5.

Norman's recorded performance, however, as Cusick describes it, is much more self-conscious and controlled, not at all indicative of the character of the young woman in the piece we would normally expect. Norman's "lumbering, somber tempo" and "astonishingly clear, exaggerated diction,"¹⁴⁶ for example, do not lead us to believe that the Frau is completely swept away by the passion she feels for her beloved but, rather, that she—and by extension Norman—is somehow more aware of the words she is singing. Norman's performance differs also in its "consistently amateurish execution of the vocal turns that end phrases praising the young man's virtues."¹⁴⁷ Her voice here, "gawky and hesitant," gives the impression that the Frau is not as entirely comfortable with or confident in her praises as Lehmann's version would lead us to believe.¹⁴⁸ On the contrary, the Frau, and hence Norman, as Cusick suggests, sound much more "forced." The "Frau's vocal difficulties" are intensified further by Norman's "timbral inconsistencies"—what Cusick describes as her "peculiar sound, wavering between a voice placed far back in her throat and one placed where a woman's voice should be, in her head."¹⁴⁹ Thus, Norman sounds, ironically, like someone who is "ill at ease with her own voice"; ironically, because, as Cusick writes, Norman "is a singer whose technical

¹⁴⁶Ibid., 105.

¹⁴⁷Ibid.

¹⁴⁸Ibid., 106–7.

¹⁴⁹Ibid., 105–6.

mastery is second to none.”¹⁵⁰ Could it be, then, that Norman and her Frau are uneasy with the voice Schumann has given them?

As Cusick writes, “Norman performs the Frau as an utter contradiction of her own *persona*.”¹⁵¹ For not only are her vocal inconsistencies so unlike the singing we would normally expect from the diva (and the Frau), but also Norman “is a singer whose voice typically obliterates most of the consonants in its path.”¹⁵² Thus Norman’s performance “draws attention to itself *as* a performance”¹⁵³ and it becomes clear that she is purposely drawing our attention towards Schumann’s problematic words and away from the music itself—“the patterns (so powerful and pure) of sound to which one might innocently listen, as if they were beautiful in themselves.”¹⁵⁴ That is, we are invited by Norman “to confront this song as symbolic” and “fully bearing its verbal message”¹⁵⁵—to contemplate, rather than ignore, the meaning of the words—and to confront also how she chooses to sing them in relation to what we would ordinarily expect from a faithful performance. Therefore, one way in which Norman resists Lehmann’s performance of Schumann’s piece and its supposedly inherent gender messages is to present the music as

¹⁵⁰Ibid., 106–7.

¹⁵¹Ibid., 105.

¹⁵²Ibid., 107.

¹⁵³Ibid., 105.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., 106.

¹⁵⁵Ibid., 106–7.

a “socially constructed”¹⁵⁶ text: one with social/gender messages located in the words and musical accompaniment, and one which Norman, as a co-creator of musical meaning, may reconstruct via her own vocal and musical interpretation to fit her, and our, social circumstances today. In doing so she reconstitutes what we might understand by the word “music” to include its social, irrational, or un-structured qualities, including its openness to performative interpretation.

Norman’s “strained and amateurish sound” can also be understood as her resistance to—or Norman’s interpretation of the Frau’s resistance to—the verbal and musical gender content located within Schumann’s score. By resisting the idea of faithful performance which demands the subordination of her own intentions or interpretations, Norman undermines what is thought to be Schumann’s authorial intentions for the piece; She alters the meaning of the piece as it is faithfully understood and normally performed. She, in essence, makes it ironic.

For in Norman’s performance, “Er, der Herrlichste” cannot be heard as Lehmann’s interpretation crafts it—the song of an innocent, enthusiastic girl in love. Rather, Norman invites us to hear the Frau’s voice struggling with the enforced discipline of enunciating someone else’s seemingly uncongenial words; a voice struggling to perform in the phrase-ending turns the Frau’s coming social role as ornament to her future husband’s life.¹⁵⁷

Furthermore, because Norman draws our attention “to the mechanics of the performance,” that is, to its “constructedness,” we as an audience can more easily

¹⁵⁶Ibid., 106.

¹⁵⁷Ibid.

recognize the gender it encodes as also constructed or performed, rather than natural. This, Cusick suggests (drawing on Judith Butler), in itself may lead us to question the validity or sustainability of the piece's gender content.¹⁵⁸

In short, Norman's recorded performance of Schumann's cycle "allows for the circulation of new ideas of both gender and performance, ideas that more closely match the concerns of our time than they do those of Schumann's time."¹⁵⁹ It illustrates that, as a performer, Norman need not confine her work to the composer's intentions or act in accordance with the ideology of faithful performance but may, in fact, use her creativity and social situatedness—her role as co-creator—to reinterpret anachronistic gender meanings located within the pieces she performs. In doing so, she challenges the gender stereotypes upon which this and other classical music has been written and also effectively alters traditional conceptions of the performer as all *body* and music as pure *mind*. She cleverly takes advantage of this music's capacity to be ironic and socially contingent. Indeed, as Cusick confirms, "Norman performs our own anxieties about these songs even as she sings their notes."¹⁶⁰ Thus, her resisting performance offers us a solution to McClary's problem. For if the gender or social meaning of Schumann's song cycle is in part dependent on its performative experience of the performer and/or audience

¹⁵⁸Ibid.

¹⁵⁹Ibid., 108–9.

¹⁶⁰Ibid., 109.

it should be possible (maybe even necessary), Cusick believes, to keep this and other so-called ‘objectionable’ works in the repertoire. As Cusick explains:

If we remove the minor premise, the hidden assumption of faithful performance, musical works automatically become open texts. For their implied meanings can be resisted and contested by an endless variety of performative acts that create the meanings available to receiving listeners.¹⁶¹

Cusick concludes (drawing on Barthes) that we “*can* listen to music again” provided we learn to listen “differently.” This means we can no longer “romanticize” music in accordance with the work concept or mind-body split, that we must listen “not so much for the work as for the text.”¹⁶²

Both of Cusick’s articles convincingly challenge traditional beliefs in the mind-body split as they are manifested in the idea of faithful performance and the gap between composition (music’s seemingly abstract and objective qualities) and performance (music as it is experienced physically and socially). By focusing on music *as it is performed*, Cusick brings music’s bodily and social qualities to the forefront of our awareness. She is particularly successful in blurring the boundaries between the role of the performer and that of the composer, highlighting instead their co-dependence as creators of musical meaning for audiences.

The performer, she demonstrates, is not an automaton or medium but acts with both body *and* mind in order to interpret and possibly resist what are believed to be the

¹⁶¹Ibid., 79–80.

¹⁶²Ibid., 109.

composer's intentions. In fact, both of Cusick's musical examples above confirm that the performer's physical body (the body as it has traditionally been defined) has a direct effect on musical meaning: In the first example, Cusick's bodily imbalance comes to represent the organist's absence of, and longing for, a state of grace; In the second example, the actual *sound* of Norman's voice (where and how it is placed within her body) can be said to depict Norman's, the Frau's and/or our own disapproval or uneasiness with the outdated gender stereotypes located both within Schumann's score and in the ritual of faithful performance itself. Furthermore, both examples indicate not only that the performer may act as a co-composer of musical meaning but that mind and body (or pheno-song and geno-song) in musical performance are also overlapping rather than mutually exclusive, rigid categories.

By focusing on the performative experience of music rather than the composer's abstract or rational score, Cusick is also able to expand our knowledge and understanding of how gender is performed through music. She shows that it is the mind-body split within musical practices rather than the music itself which is responsible for sustaining problematic social stereotypes within classical pieces. For instance, her clever look at the gender implications of the ideology of faithful performance reveals that the performer, who is traditionally gendered feminine by virtue of her relationship to the bodily aspects of music, may always already perform gender inequality unless faithful performance be replaced with resisting performance. As Cusick's consideration of Norman's performance of Schumann's *Frauenliebe und -leben* illustrates, the performer may certainly resist both

a piece's specific antiquated gender content and her traditional role as a subservient feminine Other through her physical and cognitive co-creative interpretation of the composer's score. Such resisting performance, Cusick believes, will allow performers to create performances of antiquated works which are politically responsible and relevant for audiences today.

Finally, Cusick's focus on performance illustrates the importance of broadening traditional conceptions of music to include *both* the composer's intentions and the performer's physical and social interpretation. By demonstrating, in her theoretical discussions and musical examples, the performer's capacity to co-create the music itself, Cusick succeeds in portraying and treating music not as a fixed or closed (i.e. controllable) object, but as an experience open to multiple interpretations, meanings or resistances: as semantically slippery or ironic. She shows, in fact, the importance for performers and audiences alike to understand music as open or textual for socio-political resistance of musical meaning to be successful.¹⁶³

¹⁶³Incidentally, a branch of literary studies called 'Performance Criticism' may prove to be a useful model for such music criticism. Based on the theory that written plays are realized, and must therefore be studied, in light of their performances, the performance critic's analysis of plays include viewing multiple productions of the same play, interviewing playwrights, actors and production staff, as well as studying plays in light of their surrounding theatrical conditions—both historical and current. See, for instance, C. E. McGee, "Performance Criticism," in *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Literary Theory: Approaches, Scholars*, ed. Irena R. Makaryk, Theory/Culture Series (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1993), 133–139, and W. B. Worthen, "Deeper Meanings and Theatrical Technique: The Rhetoric of Performance Criticism," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 40/4 (Winter 1989): 441–55.

Although Cusick's focus on music's performance provides us with new and valuable insights into the pieces we study and their relation to classical music practices (insights which may ultimately alter the way we think about and use this music), at times, her intense concentration on the performer as co-creator works, ironically, to neglect or underestimate the audience's power to also re-interpret the musical meaning of a performance and thereby does not consistently portray and treat *performance* as also open to interpretation. Whereas Cusick does recognize the audience's capacity to "re-perform"¹⁶⁴ a resisting performance (for example, via recording technology) she does nothing to explore how a so-called faithful performance may inspire or allow for similar results. For instance, she does not discuss at all the audience's potential to re-interpret Lehmann's (also recorded) performance into acceptability. On the contrary, her claim that resisting performance practice may allow us to keep antiquated pieces in the repertoire implies that Cusick believes the audience alone is not likely to resist what are thought to be the composer's intentions or intended meanings.

One could argue, however, that the listener might, through her own personal and particular socio-historical situatedness, bring to a performance, consciously or subconsciously, experiences from her own life so as to re-perform even the most potentially oppressive and offensive performances of pieces.¹⁶⁵ (It may be difficult, in

¹⁶⁴Cusick, "Gender and the Cultural Work of a Classical Music Performance," 103.

¹⁶⁵How might I, as a listener at the turn of the 21st Century, for example, understand Lehmann's so-called faithful performance of Schumann's *Frauenliebe und -leben*?

fact, to imagine an audience today that would not at least be aware of the socio-historical significance or context of Schumann's song cycle, for example.) If we accept, as Cusick does, Barthes' proclamation of the death of the author—that the meaning of a work is not determined exclusively or predominantly by the author but is open to and dependent on the multiple subjective or textual interpretations of the reader—then might we not also understand the *audience's* subjective and culturally dependent interpretations to be just as relevant as the performer's? Indeed, unless we recognize that the audience, including the critic, may do just as much as the performer to reconfigure the ritual of faithful performance, we risk treating *musical performance* as a closed or fixed object (as “the performance itself”) in much the same way that traditional scholarship objectifies composition. Perhaps, then, we could conclude that *all* performances, including Lehmann's faithful performance of Schumann's *Frauenliebe und -leben*, are to some extent resisting in the sense that they must inevitably involve the personal and social interpretations of both performers and audiences, that traditional definitions of music which include only the composer's fixed intentions (score) or intended meanings are a product of viewing music in terms of the mind-body split, not an accurate indication of what actually occurs in practice.

Would I necessarily take the performance literally, accepting and perhaps reinforcing its anachronistic gender messages? Or might I instead see it, ironically, as tragic or horrific, possibly even comic?

CONCLUSION

Music scholarship may benefit greatly from considering music's relationship with the body and developing methods which reflect a deeper understanding of the effects of the mind-body problem on the study and practice of classical music. As we have seen, there are several important reasons for doing so. In Chapter 1, I illustrated that a consideration of the body in music is long overdue. Since antiquity, philosophical and musical investigations have focused almost exclusively on music's so-called relationship with the mind (or soul)—music's abstract and thus seemingly objective or fixed properties—consistently discouraging or avoiding approaches to music which do not support a rational or idealistic outlook.

As a result, such traditional music scholarship has come to represent limited interests and a rather narrow perspective of music. It fails to investigate music's physical, experiential, or subjective dimensions. These include those sounding and non-sounding properties of music which can not be clearly contained within the score, the performer's and audience's physical and interpretive involvement in music making, and music's meaningful function within society both past and present. Consequently, such scholarship neglects many of the aspects of music which most people (including, ironically, many traditional music scholars themselves) value and consider to be an integral part of music.

It thus begs for alternative, perhaps more critical, ways in which to approach music—methods that not only work to piece together a more complete, and thus reliable, picture of music (music in its totality) but which allow questions concerning its own foundational ideologies to be addressed.

Never has this been clearer than today. Despite strong resistances to change still being felt in many classical musical institutions, mainstream music scholarship faces several serious and obvious obstacles to the continuation of its mind-mind assumptions. How can its rational and objectivist beliefs and methods deal with, for example, the new interest in the body by composers and performers both within and outside the western classical tradition? Similarly, a continued rational approach to classical music may lead to possibly damaging effects on both the quality of its performance (in terms of creativity, musicality, reception, etc.) and its popularity, i.e. failing to remain socially applicable or politically sensitive. Indeed, such a limited perspective of music, as Chapters 2 and 3 illustrate, cannot possibly satisfy or represent the needs and interests of the diversity of people or subcultures listening to classical music today. Nor can traditional scholarship continue to ignore the numerous writings within philosophy and other academic areas, such as feminist and literary criticism, which not only convincingly challenge the validity and sustainability of rationalism and objectivism (in favour of perspectivism) but do so also specifically within the field of music. But perhaps the most convincing reason for more traditional scholars to begin taking a serious look at the body, and accordingly the

mind-body split, in music is that some music scholars have already begun to do so. Their works demonstrate that an embodied music criticism is both successful and necessary.

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