

splintered fragments. Where is the Wagner of holistic dramatic ideas, the engineer of vast dramatic scenes? The point, surely, is not that the ripples of Wagner's influence (upon him and from him) can be registered in the critical seismographs of discursive networks. The crux, rather, is that Wagner was the greatest discursive networker of all, synthesizing and condensing worlds of meaning in his dramatic ideas. Somehow, we have lost the critical/analytical technology to grasp his poetics and hear the results. Or we have just got bored with yesterday's fashion.

Michael Spitzer  
 University of Liverpool  
 Michael.Spitzer@liverpool.ac.uk

doi:10.1017/S1479409814000561

Phyllis Weliver and Katharine Ellis, eds, *Words and Notes in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2013). xii + 256 pp. £55.00.

It is now a decade since the publication of a collection of Steven Paul Scher essays on music and literature. A founder of word-music studies, in 1999 he called on scholars to 'analyse familiar music-related texts as well as newly emerging, more experimental ones'.<sup>1</sup> The contributors to the fine new interdisciplinary volume *Words and Notes in the Long Nineteenth Century*, edited by Katharine Ellis and Phyllis Weliver, have more or less done this, even if nineteenth-century texts seem unlikely candidates to fit the 'newly emerging' bill. Given that word-music studies have previously focused on conventional sources such as literature and music criticism, however, it is fair to say that the extensive material explored in *Words and Notes* marks an impressive new approach to the field, bringing to light important (and occasionally experimental) texts that have slipped under the musicological radar and proposing fresh readings of some familiar literature. The contributors interpret scientific surveys, sociological inquiries, philosophical treatises and apparently scappily annotated scores, in addition to the usual press reviews, poetry, prose fiction and art song. Most of the 11 essays (and Annegret Fauser's afterword) are by musicologists, but scholars of French and English literature are also represented. With editorial duties balanced between a cultural historian of music (Ellis) and a literary scholar (Weliver), the volume is sensitive towards issues of interdisciplinary accessibility.

In their lucid introduction the editors trace the evolution of word-music studies: after the first stage in the 1980s, featuring input from 'new musicologists' such as Lawrence Kramer, they detect a second phase in the 1990s, 'characterised by the sense of how meaning is constructed by multiple discourses, as well as by how the literary and the musical embed and are embedded within cultural history' (p. 11).<sup>2</sup> This book looks set to unleash a third wave, which promises to

<sup>1</sup> Steven Paul Scher, 'Melopoetics Revisited: Reflection on Theorising Word and Music Studies', in *Essays on Literature and Music (1967–2004)*, ed. Walter Bernhart and Werner Wolf (New York: Editions Rodolphi, 2004): 485.

<sup>2</sup> Lawrence Kramer, *Music and Poetry: The Nineteenth Century and After* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

be the boldest yet. Resisting intellectual complacency at every turn, it strives to challenge two canons: that comprising Great Works of literature and music and 'that of the forms of writing appropriate for analysis within word-music studies', the latter aim aligning with what Scher espoused in 1999 (p. 14). Flattening the masterworks hierarchy is not new, but re-evaluating what counts as a legitimate music-text is an important disciplinary and interdisciplinary development. Engaging anew with problematic texts and seemingly conflicted juxtapositions of words and music is part of this project: what does it mean if a score or performance and words do not mirror each other in a particular musical context? Are word-music confrontations any less valid than word-music correspondences?

Amid the wealth of ideas proliferating here from myriad disciplinary positions, I will endeavour to highlight some key musicological issues this book raises. Peter Dayan's opening essay touches on a couple of these, such as how words mediate the act of listening to music and how the yoking together of a score and text can create artistic dissonance rather than unity. Dayan analyses a set of three minor piano pieces by Erik Satie (*Chapitres tournés en tous sens*, 1913) in which the composer subverts the norms of word-score relations in instrumental works by verbally writing between and around the staves.<sup>3</sup> The pianist's eyes are drawn to these doodles as she plays but listeners are oblivious to how Satie inscribes a secret programme solely for the performer. Where the essay treads new territory in Satie studies is by coupling these 'stave words' with a separate phenomenon in the music that Dayan labels 'shadow words' (p. 22). These phantasmal words are never verbalised: instead they comprise the catchy lyrics Satie prompted early twentieth-century Parisian audiences to hear in their heads when he quoted popular tunes of the day in these piano pieces. That Dayan can 'read' and 'hear' song lyrics that are not explicitly present underlines the deceptive depth of the composer's intertextual aesthetic. Attempting to marry either set of words to the music in order to arrive at a greater meaning, however, is an exercise in frustration, because, Dayan persuasively argues, these verbal texts have been fundamentally misunderstood. Recasting Satie as not just a musician but also 'a poet in the post-Symbolist line', 'the missing link between Apollinaire and Dada', these surrealist words assume a new role wherein they reveal the 'dual function of poetic writing', which involves the search for meaning and the realisation that this resides in a sphere beyond words (pp. 32–3).

Reference to a realm beyond words emerges in another meditation on French culture: whereas Dayan construes Satie's musical marginalia as a type of poetry, David Evans shows that the poet Théodore de Banville imagined his work in terms of musical metaphor, at a point when his contemporaries were wavering on what had been 'eternal, universal aesthetic absolutes' about relationships between nature, music and poetry (p. 171). Real poetic rhythm could only be detected by 'your ear, your musical sense', de Banville wrote (p. 176). This concept of musicality, which

---

<sup>3</sup> *Chapitres tournés en tous sens* were not the only piano pieces by Satie to feature 'stave words'; another important example is the group *Sports et divertissements* (composed in 1914 but not published until 1923). *Sports et divertissements* is a visual and musical album in which each of the scores is accompanied by Charles Martin's illustrations. The visual qualities permeate the music too, with Satie himself contributing the exquisite calligraphy for the titles and 'stave words' in the original edition. I refer to these 'stave words' as doodles in an effort to capture the hand-written, ostensibly spontaneous sense of these texts. For more, see Mary E. Davis, 'Modernity à la mode: Popular Culture and Avant-Gardism in Erik Satie's *Sports et divertissements*', *The Musical Quarterly* 83/3 (1999): 430–73.

Evans sums up as ‘impenetrable mystery, infinite complexity and subtlety’, enabled de Banville to theorise a way for poetry to transcend the aesthetic uncertainty of the post-Romantic period and remain twinned with music (p. 176). Essays such as this and Helen Abbott’s contribution on Charles Baudelaire are useful to scholars working on song settings, but occasional remarks about musical ‘mystery’ and ‘the true song of poetry’ can be vague and unproductive from a musicological standpoint (p. 202). Minor differences in disciplinary perspectives are surely inevitable in a volume such as this though.

Although music often serves to elevate poetic thought, Susan Youens offers a fascinating case study of how it can exert the opposite effect. In Franz Schubert’s setting of Karl Lappe’s poem ‘Der Einsame’, Youens contends that the composer deliberately contests the poet’s didactic preaching to take ‘a willed approach to the moral life [and] the creative process’ (p. 210). Earnest and full of cultivated contentment, the reclusive character in Lappe’s poem is a man who Schubert refuses to let snooze comfortably in his fireside seat. Youens’ essay demonstrates how the composer pokes and prods at the poet’s uncritical image of one who finds virtue in refusing to dwell on sadness. The music satirises the man’s self-satisfaction from the outset, with the jaunty G-major piano introduction painting the hermit as a ‘mixture of amiability and priggishness’ (p. 213). The detailed song analysis explores familiar musicological terrain to an extent but, similarly to how Dayan liberates Satie’s music and text from the burden of meaningful mutual association, this methodology brings vital new insights to bear on the setting, as Youens forges a route that signposts Schubert’s opposition to Lappe’s poetic ideals. Beyond illustrating how his music disputes the tone that emanates from the literary portrayal of a man cosily sheltered from reality, the analysis also suggests that the composer used this song setting to criticise artists who succumb to a myopic worldview where pain and sorrow are banished from sight. As Youens puts it: ‘If there is much to admire in the willed focus on what is lovable in the world, says Schubert, it is also a blinkered view. ... If one refuses to confront darkness and death, one’s art is thereby limited’ (p. 219).

With Schubert winning the argument against Lappe, as it were, producing a moving, memorable song, and Youens admitting she struggled to ‘block out all memory of the music’ when reading ‘Der Einsame’, this poem is relegated to a lower status in partnership with Schubert’s score (p. 207). Relocating to France the debate about reciprocal word–music relationships and reframing it as a literary concern, Abbott asks with reference to Baudelaire’s *L’Invitation au voyage*: ‘does poetry suffer in the process of becoming song?’ (p. 183). Focusing on two settings of the text, by Jules Cressonnois and Henri Duparc, she notes that singers and scholars alike now read *L’Invitation au voyage* to the imagined, silent beats of Duparc’s rhythms and criticises as a ‘distortion’ a recording of Cressonnois’s strophic setting which omits Baudelaire’s central stanza (p. 200). Concluding, nevertheless, that flexible interpretations of his poetry are ‘permissible ... provided that the sentiment conveyed by the performer is genuine’, Abbott alludes to tensions between poets and musicians over matters of cultural ownership which are not easily resolved (p. 201).

If the essays discussed above are of general interdisciplinary interest, a couple of contributions should principally galvanise musicologists. In one of the collection’s most provocative essays, Matthew Riley censures current disciplinary (mis)understandings of E.T.A. Hoffmann’s musical writings, and subsequently the entrenched but flawed practice of championing Hoffmann as the figurehead of a post-1800 paradigm shift that Dahlhaus perceived in the emergence of musical

autonomy as a chief aesthetic concern.<sup>4</sup> Opposing the default musicological mode of interpreting Hoffmann, which ‘oversimplifies his thinking on vocal and instrumental music’ and treats his words as ‘declarative statement in the abstract realm of music aesthetics, as though taken from a treatise or textbook’, Riley asserts that Hoffmann’s writings are far more complex (p. 121 and p. 123). In particular, his fictional output is spiked with such irony and nuance that scholars need to listen carefully to its musical voices. Examining five novellas Hoffmann penned from 1815 to 1819 (relatively unknown in musicological discourse), Riley reveals that the rhetorical stance the author adopts in his 1810 review of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony comprises only one dimension of his response to Romanticism.<sup>5</sup> Although his Beethoven commentary links Romanticism with genius, transcendence and artistic unity, the novellas reveal scepticism about these claims: in truth, Riley states, ‘the Romantic experience is thus relativized ... as a pose, rather than ... a glimpse of ultimate reality’ (p. 125). Importantly, he argues that Hoffmann employs similar literary devices in the 1810 review, switching between different authorial voices, and that such recognition should prompt ‘a complete reorientation of musicological understanding of Hoffmann and his significance’ (p. 141). Unsurprisingly, Hoffmann surfaces again in Jon-Tomas Godin’s essay on sonata form, 1800–1860, which calls on scholars to revise their negative perceptions of the genre’s status during that period by acknowledging the literary and philosophical contexts in which the repertory emerged.

A handful of other essays treat ‘musical prose’ in fiction. Delia de la Sousa Correa’s close readings of Katherine Mansfield’s unfinished novel *Juliet* (1906) and short story ‘At the Bay’ (1921) trace how Mansfield, who was a highly trained cellist, entwined her literary and musical voices as one. On the other hand, Emma Sutton demonstrates that Mansfield’s contemporary Virginia Woolf maintains a distance between the two art forms with the result that her novel *The Voyage Out* functions as ‘an extended critique of Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde*’ (p. 147). Plot parallels between the two works end when the bond between lovers Terence (a novelist) and Rachel (a musician) is severed by his survival after her death, in what Sutton interprets as ‘a symbolic dismantling of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*’ (p. 160). Despite this, Sutton argues that Woolf’s novel is influenced by Wagner’s musical techniques, notably through how it contrasts ‘intensely articulate inner thought and the limited verbosity of spoken language’ – a literary device reflecting how Wagner’s score likewise ‘articulates emotions towards which the libretto can only gesture’ (p. 148 and p. 158).

Whereas Woolf was an avid and attentive operagoer, the nineteenth-century opera house was often populated by those who barely noticed the music. Examining the reception of *grand opéra* in mid-nineteenth-century Paris as mediated through a print culture of press reviews and several novels, Cormac Newark compiles a ‘history of not listening’ which links diffuse audience responses to a newly emerging genre with the cultural and social values of a fixed historical moment (p. 38). Audience reaction varied from critics ‘not

---

<sup>4</sup> Carl Dahlhaus, *The Idea of Absolute Music*, trans. Roger Lustig (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991): 7.

<sup>5</sup> See E.T.A. Hoffmann’s review of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony (1810) in *E.T.A. Hoffmann’s Musical Writings: Kreisleriana; The Poet and The Composer; Music Criticism*, ed. David Charlton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989): 234–51. The novellas in question are ‘Der Sandmann’ (1815), ‘Das Sanctus’ (1816), ‘Das Majorat’ (1817), ‘Die Fermate’ (1815) and ‘Der Baron von B.’ (1819).

hearing' the opera properly because social mores dictated they arrive late, to the easily distracted general public, as portrayed in novels such as Alexandre Dumas's *Le Comte de Monte Cristo* and Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, for whom 'not listening' was normal if there were more entertaining antics on offer around the auditorium or in the boxes home to wealthy patrons. Newark makes a convincing case for treating these journalistic and fictional texts as valuable historical documents on *grand opéra* notwithstanding their lack of musical detail. To ignore how social contexts and diverse levels of insider knowledge and institutional privilege shaped audience response to events at the Paris Opéra is to run the risk of producing scholarship on the subject which is 'ethnomusicologically untenable' (p. 52). Newark implicitly invokes the subject of aural memory too, which Shafquat Towheed elucidates further with reference to another unusual musicological source: Vernon Lee's sociological study *Music and its Lovers* (1932). This is an inquiry into listeners' experiences and a consideration of 'whether musical memory could be transmitted through the generations and shape a collective appreciation of music' (p. 74). Although Towheed cautions that Lee's research was only partially empirical and prone to her subjective interpretation, it nonetheless bears the trace of an author who was exceptionally knowledgeable about both the arts and sciences for a woman of her era.

The *Words and Music* editors downplay sexual politics as a priority in this volume but it is striking that the only two essays overtly concerned with how music acts on the body are about female writers who were also scientifically inclined (p. 14). Ann Radcliffe's Gothic soundscapes in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) are at a chronological remove from Lee's work but both writers attempted in their own ways to process and systematise their acoustic environments. Noelle Chao even suggests that the 'sonorous features' of Radcliffe's prose might be better suited to the more technical domain of sound studies (p. 89). Still, her commentary on how the female body in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* 'emerges as a vessel with the capacity to receive and preserve the sounds, voices and music of the past' is sure to spark curiosity amongst those who work on gender in more conventional musicological settings (p. 96). By concluding on a remark about gender issues after having opened with reflections on French music, I am made acutely aware of how one tends to absorb ideas through the lens of personal biases. A major accomplishment of this magisterial volume, however, is that it never allows readers to linger on a preferred single subject or scholarly mode for too long and instead inspires new, cross-referential intellectual discoveries.

Laura Watson  
Maynooth University  
laura.watson@nuim.ie

doi:10.1017/S1479409814000573