

2 | The Emergence of Musical Romanticism

KEITH CHAPIN

For all its proponents' protestations of difference, Romanticism emerged from the Enlightenment. The intellectuals and artists who debated the arts and their significance at the end of the eighteenth century belonged to the same well-educated and relatively well-to-do European social circles. They shared tastes for music that ranged from the emotionally intense to the lyrically simple, and from expansive grandeur to intimate delicacy. They had strong interests in antiquity and in the lessons that could be learned for the present. They were aware of the power of music, in particular, to trouble rational discourse.

These common foundations provided the productive framework for competition and discussion. Telling differences could often arise as artists competed with their forebears and with each other, and as people of letters discussed the news and issues of the day. Thus, even as eighteenth- and nineteenth-century musicians cultivated the main genres of vocal and instrumental music – opera, Mass, oratorio, symphony, string quartet, sonata, song – the register of their musical expression shifted from grace to fervency and from wit to exuberant striving. Even as entertainment, religious devotion, and the representation of status remained primary functions of music, those who felt that music should do more shifted their attention away from moral needs towards metaphysical or existential ones. Even as artists looked to the past for inspiration, they began to shift their attention away from classical Greek and Roman civilisation towards the alternate antiquities of 'primitive' folk cultures or medieval religious cults. And even as critics recognised that music did not convey ideas clearly and distinctly, this turned from its failing to its insuperable advantage.

Musicians and Writers

When discussing the origins of musical Romanticism, it is useful to distinguish between its emergence amongst musicians and amongst the writers who often led discussions of taste. Although these groups interacted, they did not always belong to the same social circles and they had different goals.

To track these differences and others, this chapter focuses on composers, not to distract from their position in a complex economy involving performers, teachers, printers and publishers, and a web of amateur listeners and music makers, but rather because shifts in musical style and taste can best be seen today in their works.

Successful musicians in the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries often came of age in family craft traditions. J. S. and C. P. E. Bach, Beethoven, Bellini, Cherubini, Couperin, Field, Grétry, Liszt, Mozart, Rameau, Reichardt, Rossini, Salieri, and Weber were all born of professional musicians, and some of them could point to successive generations of musicians behind them. The social level of this group is indicated by the exceptions. Major composers who were not born of families of professional musicians tended to come from artisan or the modest middle levels of society. Handel's father was a barber-surgeon. Clementi's was a silversmith; Gluck's, a forester. Haydn's father and grandfather were wheelwrights and Schubert's and Chopin's fathers were teachers. Donizetti's father's highest attainment was the position of custodian and usher at a pawn shop.

As professionals working in craft traditions, musicians were strongly linked to the institutions that employed them, in particular the court, church and city, but also to the aristocratic classes that dominated society. Their position was often an ambiguous one. They were members of the court or church establishment, but also practitioners of one of the fine arts. The practical result of this ambiguous position was that most musicians were not fully integrated in the discussions that led to the formation of Romantic ideals. Those that were, such as Jean-Philippe Rameau in Paris or Johann Philipp Kirnberger in Berlin, often found that writers and intellectuals failed to understand the basic principles of their craft. In 1756, the philosopher Moses Mendelssohn wanted to supplement his private study of the mathematical side of music theory and took some practical keyboard lessons from Kirnberger. However, he could not understand why the time signatures of $6/8$ and $3/4$ were not equivalent: they appeared to be fractions, after all. In his report after Mendelssohn's death, the publisher Friedrich Nicolai attributed the misunderstanding to Kirnberger's lack of philosophical clarity of expression. For his part, Rameau eventually fell out with Jean le Rond d'Alembert over the latter's simplification of his harmonic system in the *Eléments de musique* (1752).¹

The writers and intellectuals who defined the aesthetics of Romanticism or adapted them to the musical sphere tended to come of age in families without such close ties to the world of professional music making. Many came from fathers or even families with equally strong professional links

to positions involving the written or spoken word, whether as jurists or lawyers (Beyle, better known under his pen name Stendhal, Wackenroder, E. T. A. Hoffmann, and Wordsworth) or as preachers or ministers (Coleridge, Schelling, the Schlegel brothers, Schleiermacher). Writers whose families were not involved in words directly often came from ones that had earned high positions in society through success in banking and commerce (Hölderlin, Goethe, and de Staël) or in the army or civil service (Hegel, Schiller, and Hugo). Others were of aristocratic lineage (Byron, Chateaubriand, La Motte Fouquet, Leopardi, Mickiewicz, and von Hardenberg, who used the pen name Novalis). These familial backgrounds based in good writing or good breeding often offered educational paths into the art of discussion and debate, whether through specialised secondary schools or universities (such as the Friedrich-Werdersche Gymnasium in Berlin where Tieck and Wackenroder wrote their first poetry, or the Tübinger Stift, the university residence in Tübingen where Hegel, Hölderlin, and Schelling first dreamed of a universal poetry), or through artistic and intellectual salons (such as those of Henriette Herz in Berlin or Suzanne Curchod (Necker) in Paris).

Thus, writers and musicians at the cusp of Romanticism often developed their skills in different arenas, the former in one of intellectual debate and affluence, the latter in one of skilled service. As always, there are exceptions, but often ones that prove the rule. As scions of a well-to-do banking family of assimilated Jews in Berlin, Felix Mendelssohn and his sister Fanny Hensel (née Mendelssohn) may owe their dedication to the craft traditions of music – a dedication exceptional amongst Romantic musicians – in part to the fact that they did *not* stem from the same professional and religious backgrounds as other musicians. That said, while musicians often did follow literary developments, they did not necessarily aim at similar goals. In many of the short stories, novels, and philosophical tracts of the period, music serves as a figure by which writers could explore philosophical issues such as the origins of languages and cultures, the limits of signification in communication, or the nature of interiority.² Musicians certainly appreciated the high standing that had been assigned to them by the world of letters. On 23 March 1820 Beethoven included some flattering words in a letter recommending a travelling acquaintance to E. T. A. Hoffmann in Berlin.³ However, as Carl Dahlhaus noted, the vague terms of the letter do not allow one to assume that Beethoven fully agreed with Hoffmann's seminal review (1810) of the Fifth Symphony.⁴

Musicians worked in a world in which listeners often interpreted music in narrative terms. The music of the highest prestige – opera and oratorio – had

its tales written into it, of course, but even ascendant genres of instrumental music such as symphonies, string quartets, and sonatas were often assigned stories or sequences of images to explicate their meanings. Music theorists Jérôme-Joseph de Momigny and Adolf Bernhard Marx, for example, respectively associated the first movement of Mozart's String Quartet in D minor, K. 421 (1783), with Dido's lament from Virgil's *Aeneid*, and Beethoven's Symphony No. 3 ('Eroica', 1804) with the development of a military man. In this context, Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* (1830) – with its accompanying programme that functions 'like the spoken text of an opera' to explain the motivation for the music and depict an 'episode from the life of an artist'⁵ – exemplifies a general practice of linking instrumental music and narrative. This practice could range from examples of explicit programme music, as with Berlioz's work, to indicative titles to individual movements, as in Beethoven's Symphony No. 6 ('Pastoral', 1808), to entire works, as with Clementi's Piano Sonata Op. 50 No. 3 (*Didone abbandonata*, 1821).⁶

Thus, even as writers began to explore the ways that the arts might 'aspire to the condition of music', as the critic Walter Pater wrote later in the nineteenth century,⁷ musicians themselves seem to have aspired to the communicative powers, communal relevance and social status of poets, playwrights, painters, and other artists who could tell a story. Recent work in music theory has shown that theories of narrative and metaphor can be productively applied to 'abstract' instrumental music. Such work does not try to nail down precise meaning, but rather shows how, for example, Chopin's Ballade in G minor, Op. 23 (1835), can evoke the feeling of nostalgia, instil a hope and desire for resolution, and trace the tragedy of the collapse of such hopes. This musical narrative resonated with similar feelings of nostalgia, high hopes for the future, and subsequent deception amongst contemporaries; say, amongst Chopin's fellow Poles exiled in Paris after the failure of the revolutions of 1830.⁸ Musicians placed moods into sequences that mirrored the ups and downs of comedy and tragedy, used styles or 'topics' to evoke associations, and in general explored the ways that the forms of music map onto the forms of human experience.

While musicians and writers would always have slightly different interests, musicians gradually joined elite artistic discussions more fully towards the beginning of the nineteenth century. Despite restrictive social attitudes, women played an essential role in this convergence, in particular through their roles as hosts of artistic salons. These informal gatherings where artists and writers mixed with aristocratic patrons gained popularity in

Paris in the seventeenth century, but multiplied there and spread to many other European centres in the eighteenth. The salons of Mesdames Geoffrin, Dupin, d'Épinay, and others were the centre of the intellectual ferment of the French Enlightenment, attracting Voltaire, Rousseau, d'Alembert, Diderot, Grimm, and many other men of letters. As the condescending thinking went, women had a special role in the conversations that took place, softening and smoothing the disputational tendencies of men, allowing them to avoid dry, academic discussions.⁹ Parisian salons set both the tone and the vogue for salons throughout Europe well into the nineteenth century, and *salonnières* like Suzanne Curchod and Germaine de Staël (Paris), Henriette Herz and Rahel Varnhagen (Berlin), and Friederike Brun (Copenhagen), amongst others, provided opportunities for artists to try out their ideas and their products before an intimate, sympathetic audience. As assimilated Jews, Herz and Varnhagen encouraged free thinking in their salons in a way that made them essential to the birth of German Romanticism.

Although these high-profile salons had a strong bias towards words, they prepared the ground for a more general flowering of intellectual and artistic debate amongst artists in various media, often in semi-formal friendship circles that occasionally owed some of their intensity to their function as an escape from the political controls on public life. Schubert's circle included the poets Mayrhofer and Schober, the composer Hüttenbrenner, and the painter Schwind, amongst other lovers and practitioners of the arts. The painter Delacroix's journals record his frequent discussions with Chopin and the writer George Sand on artistic matters. E. T. A. Hoffmann drew inspiration from his own friendship with fellow writers Chamisso and La Motte Fouquet to give a framing tale to a collection of his previously published tales (*Die Serapionsbrüder*, 1819–21). In it the eponymous brothers of Serapion discuss 'their' stories and give some sense of the discussions that might have taken place when Hoffmann, Chamisso, and La Motte Fouquet met each other. At times friendship circles were exclusively male, often misogynistically so. At others, women participated as equal members, as artistic creators in their own right or, in a twist on their original role as cultured arbiters of enlightened debate, as romantic muses.

As one looks for the emergence of Romanticism, it is easy to call attention to the university town of Jena – where Fichte, Hölderlin, Novalis, Schiller, Schelling, the Schlegel brothers, Tieck, and others gathered to discuss ideals and idealism – or to the books, journals, philosophical poems, introductions to plays, and other publications that circulated in and

between France, Germany, Italy, Britain, and other countries. Ideas mattered, and those that wrote about them are justly recognised for capturing the issues that moved the multitude (or rather that part of it that was literate and at least moderately well-to-do). But the emergence, dissemination, and practical adaptation of Romanticism owed as much if not more to the freewheeling discussions of both men and women who loved and made love, drank and tried drugs, and roamed over moors, along lakes, and through fields and forests, not to mention reading, sketching, painting, telling tales, writing poetry, making music, and so much more. Gathering together at the Stagemann salon in Berlin, a bunch of young friends acted out a story of love and death revolving around a miller maid, improvising poetry to capture the emotions and erotic tensions of the event. The play was serious, as Jennifer Ronyak has noted: the participants in the play and in the salon were themselves enmeshed in a complex web of attachments and infatuations, and the event allowed them to play through issues of identity and attachment in a way both pleasant and rich in philosophical resonances.¹⁰

Events such as these demonstrate how salons and friendship circles could stimulate imaginations, cross social divides, and draw music, writing, and other artistic media closer together. Many of the participants or onlookers at this song-play were later active in the arts, including Luise Hensel (a poet), Wilhelm Hensel (a painter who later married Fanny Mendelssohn), Clemens Brentano (a poet), and Wilhelm Müller (a poet). In 1818, musical settings of poems from the event were published by the musician Ludwig Berger, another salon attendee, and most memorably, in 1824 by Franz Schubert as *Die schöne Müllerin* (*The Beautiful Maid of the Mill*).

Styles of Emotion: Romanticism and Its Eighteenth-Century Precedents

In both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, musicians and writers alike were well aware of the strong link between music and the emotions. As the musician and lexicographer Heinrich Christoph Koch confidently defined music in 1782, ‘amongst the fine arts, it is the one that expresses feelings by means of the combination of tones’.¹¹ By the early nineteenth century, writers – including Koch himself – were beginning to question whether the emotional power of music was the root of its aesthetic value, but no one questioned the empirical power of music over the emotions.

It makes little sense to portray 'classical' music as rational and Romantic as emotional, as if music followed the shift from Enlightenment to Romanticism in lockstep. Still, there were differences in how musicians and critics channelled music's emotional power and how they interpreted it.

In the broadest terms, the pendulum of taste began to swing from grace to expressive intensity towards the end of the eighteenth century, reversing the swing from 'baroque' elaborateness towards the more delicate stirrings of the heart that had occurred towards its beginning. While at work on the *Singspiel, Entführung aus dem Serail* (*Abduction from the Seraglio*, 1782), Mozart noted in a letter to his father that he wished to express Osmin's rage with an adventuresome modulation. Yet he explained that there was a limit to both emotional excess and the modulation plan, as music 'must never cease to be *music*'.¹² The spirit of restraint stood well with an approach to form that emphasised the careful articulation of phrases, and an aesthetic that stressed comprehensibility and the communicative bond between composers, performers, and listeners. Early Romantic composers hardly gave up on negotiations between excess and the demands of taste, but they proclaimed an affinity with excess in a manner that would have been foreign to Mozart.

This shift in emotional register was matched in performance practice. In his performance manual for keyboard players, François Couperin noted that keyboard players should not sit facing the keys straight on, but rather sit slightly turned away from the keyboard and towards listeners. This would allow the performer to look at the listeners with the proper 'air of ease at his harpsichord, without fixating his gaze on any object or looking too vague', thus ensuring that listeners knew that the performer played for them alone.¹³ By contrast, those who listened to Beethoven and Chopin noted their sense of distraction from the world as they played, while virtuosos like Liszt were lauded for the intensity of their concentration. Rather than enjoying a connection of conversational ease with performers, Romantics appreciated the intensity of introvert self-absorption or extrovert showmanship.¹⁴

Such pendulum swings of taste underpin such convenient historical monikers as the baroque, classical, and Romantic periods, but musicians of the eighteenth and nineteenth century worked within a common stylistic framework, one that complicates any easy distinction between classical and Romantic music. Towards the beginning of the eighteenth century, the basso continuo disappeared (except in religious music), tonal emerged from modal harmony, and the chains of short motivic or metric units typical of baroque *Fortspinnung* ('spinning forth') gradually gave way to

more regular phrase lengths. German musicians referred to the resulting style as the *galant* style, borrowing a French term associated with delicacy, agreeableness, and cultured cosmopolitanism. As the eighteenth century progressed, musicians elaborated this into a sophisticated and elegant style flexible enough to be varied across genres, national borders, and ultimately generations, such that early-nineteenth-century composers found it adaptable to their own purposes. The style used cadences to articulate phrases and order them hierarchically into comprehensible large-scale form. It featured a simple homophonic texture that could be enriched to varying degrees by the sharing of motives between melody and accompaniment. It balanced main and subordinate themes judiciously so as to offer both unity and variety, often enriched by the borrowing of stylistic materials from a variety of genres. And it led themes along a harmonic path that treated closely related keys as structural poles, and that used dramatic and surprising modulations to dramatise the movement between these poles.

Romantic musicians learned these procedures, treating the composers who excelled at them (especially Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, but also Clementi and Cherubini) as classics and thereby doing much to create the notion of a classical style in music in the first place. They also learned a principle of balance that this panoply of technical means made possible, a principle that, for example, they saw embodied in the visual arts in the statuary of classical Greece and Rome. They thus projected back onto the eighteenth century a notion of the classic and classicism that no musicians of that time would have used with respect to themselves.¹⁵

Yet this is not all that Romantic musicians learned. Eighteenth-century musicians also worked below or above what might be called a middle style of elegance and grace, in both cases creating a special type of 'sublime' intensity and directness of effect. As they did so, they would often simplify, complicate, or undermine these compositional strategies, along lines dictated by the requirements of particular musical genres. At one point, music historians liked to find various pre-Romanticisms in the eighteenth century, treating the cultivation of extreme emotion as harbingers of things to come. It is wiser to see these genre and style traditions as sites where eighteenth-century musicians explored the lower and upper extremes of style for their own ends, albeit in ways that would resonate for later Romantic composers.

The most obvious site of the cultivation of the extreme in the eighteenth century was the opera house. From its earliest days, opera had allowed characters to show the depth of their love or the height of their rage with a musical language modulated to moments of extreme psychological

pressure. Vigorous passagework, audacious harmonies, and rapid breaks in continuity might show storms of the soul. They might also set the storms that raged around characters, linking lightning to licks of the violin or flute and thunder to the dull roar of low tremolo or drum rolls (not to mention to special lighting and sound effects of the theatre). Second, opera offered a stage for gods, goddesses, and other supernatural events to show themselves, surrounded by an aural shadow of slowly unfolding uncanny harmonies and sepulchral timbres, often with generous use of trombones or low strings.

For a long time, such effects were labelled *Sturm und Drang* (storm and stress) in an attempt to connect them to the North German literary movement of that name that flourished during the 1770s. However, the musical use of these techniques was more geographically widespread and lacked the political edge of that proto-nationalist, anti-French, and socially progressive literary movement. Clive McClelland has usefully suggested the terms *tempesta* and *ombra* to describe these speedy and slow theatrical styles respectively.¹⁶ From the theatre they migrated easily to instrumental genres that demanded grandeur and audacity, especially the symphony. In some cases, instrumental works that stormed with stress actually originated as overtures to plays, as in the case of Haydn's symphonies of the 1770s.¹⁷

A second site for the cultivation of extreme emotion was Northern Germany, where musicians such as Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach channelled the North German tradition of elaborate music making (represented above all by his father, Johann Sebastian Bach). Scholars once referred to this musical tradition as one of *Empfindsamkeit*, a term based on the German translation of the English word 'sentimental' from Laurence Sterne's late novel *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy* (1768). As the origin of the term indicates, the German literary tradition imitated English literary antecedents. Musicians like C. P. E. Bach may have achieved a style in which the arc of expression is interrupted and undercut by surprising turns of phrase, sudden shifts in style, and an approach to musical form that privileges disruption over formal integration. However, the musical traditions had other roots, especially the keyboard fantasy. Always an opportunity for musicians to show their skill and ingenuity (e.g., J. S. Bach's Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue in D minor, BWV 903), the fantasy became a way for composers to fascinate listeners with picturesque surprises and show inspired genius. When the English music historian Charles Burney visited C. P. E. Bach in Hamburg, he commented not only on the composer-performer's inspired improvising, but also on the fervency that was caught in the sweat of his brow.¹⁸

It was not just the turbulent end of the scale of passions that caught eighteenth- and, later, nineteenth-century fancy. There was also a halo around styles of seeming innocence and simplicity. In the case of folk song, men of letters such as James Macpherson in Scotland or Johann Gottfried Herder in Germany largely took the lead in identifying folk poetry and songs as a token of immediacy.¹⁹ Although nationalist pride and a jaundiced eye towards the generally celebrated achievements of the Enlightenment gave folk song and poetry special significance, the humble simplicity of traditional melodies offered them an attractive alternative to the elegance and grace that informed musical taste generally.

Professional musicians during the eighteenth century were certainly aware of this fashion for folk music, but many did not musically realise the sound of innocence. Haydn and Beethoven respected the simplicity of Scotch, Irish, English, and Welsh folk songs in settings commissioned by the Scottish publishing entrepreneur George Thomson, but they used accompanimental figuration in the piano that invokes the domesticity of easy piano works. Carl Friedrich Zelter found the Haydn's folk-song collections '*Haydensch*' (Haydnesque) rather than '*heidnisch*' (heathen).²⁰

It was again in Northern Germany that one could find composers willing to adopt a humble style in a way that answered the ideal of unassuming virtue, untouched by the corrupting influences of civilisation. Although composers centred in Berlin, including Zelter and Johann Friedrich Reichardt (both correspondents of the poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe), may not have thought of themselves as a 'Berlin Song School', as they are sometimes described, they were attuned enough to literary debates to eschew sophistication.

As musicians elsewhere became more aware of literary ideals of innocence and humility, they sometimes followed suit. In the poem 'Heidenröslein' (1771, pub. 1789), Goethe described in simple strophes a conversation between a young boy and a rose on the heath. When Schubert set it in 1815, he maintained simplicity through the regularity of a two-bar rhythmic-melodic pattern (in most cases, a bar of quavers leads to a semiquaver turn; largely stepwise melodic motion is capped by valedictory leaps) and a demure piano accompaniment (chords broken into an easy back-and-forth between bass and upper voices, with good-natured tags at the close of the vocal phrases). Although contemporary reviewers noted that he tended towards the sophistication of art song, Schubert knew well how to apply this sophistication with the light touch appropriate to the ideal of folk song.

Another site of simplicity was church music. When writing religious music, composers had always mediated between the tried-and-trusted

styles favoured by churchmen and the catchy styles that pulled in publics in the theatre. The conservatism of church music bespoke the age and stability of the church itself. In addition, the respect for tradition allowed certain works and styles to emerge somewhat contradictorily both as hallmarks of bygone, simpler times and as tokens of an eternal order. In the first part of the eighteenth century, Italian and Italianate composers had simplified ornate, 'baroque' textures along leaner lines, touching the heart with candid melodies of understated drama, invoking counterpoint with the affecting suspension rather than learned motivic working, and pointing meandering modal harmony towards the focussed directionality of functional tonality. Giovanni Battista Pergolesi's *Stabat mater* (1736) and Carl Heinrich Graun's *Der Tod Jesu* (*The Death of Jesus*, 1755) were widely performed and critically celebrated well into the nineteenth century.

Finally, styles inherited from the seventeenth century, often protected from the tides of fashion through their association with the church, persisted through the eighteenth century to find new favour as composers sought to invigorate *galant* vim with dramatic intensity or monumental grandeur. One of these styles was that of learned counterpoint, strict voice leading, and motivic elaboration. The tradition was an old one, defended against the *galant* tendencies of his time by Johann Sebastian Bach. A second, related one was that rooted in commemorative and celebratory choral music, as found for example in the English anthem, the French grand motet, or sections of the Catholic Mass. Particularly when adapted to public occasions, as when Handel's *Messiah* was performed with large forces in 1784 in London, such works achieved a striking monumentality.

As Romantic musicians looked back, they could learn many styles of emotion, both light and intense, and they could learn them from many places. Although they eventually expanded on them, turning a military march or a celebratory *Te Deum* into a revolutionary hymn, they always listened with cocked ears to their predecessors' sensitivity to balance and the means by which they had complicated, enriched, or undermined this balance. Without an awareness of this diversity of styles, musicians of both centuries would not been able to knock it akilter with such panache.

Ethics and Metaphysics

As the eighteenth century turned to the nineteenth, musicians explored styles of emotion that were either less cultivated or more fervent than the cultured sophistication that best suited Enlightenment ideals of taste,

decorum, and common sense. Yet this exploration of the extremes happened within specific aesthetic and ideological contexts. Emotion meant new things in the nineteenth century, and both humble and high registers of music often fuelled new thoughts on the nature and significance of music.

One hallmark of thought about music in the eighteenth century was a focus on the empirical experience of music. Music theorists and critics may have bent enlightened, critical rationality to the development of a music-theoretical vocabulary suited to music, to an aesthetics of expression that took account of the ways that music did *not* imitate nature, and more generally to the ways that music did *not* lend itself to Enlightenment,²¹ but they largely refrained from the speculation on music and world harmony that had excited musicians and critics even up through the early eighteenth century. Once divorced from speculative theory, music appeared at times to be little more than entertainment, ‘an innocent luxury’, as the English music historian Charles Burney wrote.²² The pleasure may not seem so innocent today; as the term ‘luxury’ shows, music could also serve as a signifier of social class and education. Yet this relative nonchalance about the powers of music suited an instrumental repertoire of sonatas, concertos, and sinfonias that aimed at *galant* effects, as well as an operatic repertoire that retold stories of heroism and happy ends from ancient history and classical mythology.

Where musicians and writers ascribed more significance to music, they tended to link the emotional power of music, and of the arts generally, to ethics. The emotional power of the arts might make the moral or religious lessons in many eighteenth-century tales and poems more palatable, or they could even elicit the height of feeling that made empathy possible in the first place. As the German encyclopaedist Johann Georg Sulzer (a contemporary of C. P. E. Bach) wrote in the *General Theory of the Fine Arts* (1771–4), ‘Expression is the soul of music. Without it, music is but an entertaining diversion. But with it, music becomes the most expressive speech overpowering the heart. It compels us to be tender, then to be resolute and steadfast. It can quickly bring forth our pity, and just as quickly, admiration.’²³

One also sees this attention to emotion and ethics in the sentimental turn to plays and operas that occurred in the last third of the eighteenth century. As specified by Aristotelian theory of drama, comedy had always focussed on contemporary characters from the middle and lower classes, often subjecting them to the humiliations and comeuppances of slapstick and farce. Dramatists like Goldoni in Italy, Diderot in France, and Lessing

in Germany sought to give theatre more respectability with characters that could inspire virtue and empathy. Opera librettos, including those penned by Goldoni himself, showed a similar turn, especially in vernacular operatic genres such as *opera buffa*, *opéra comique*, and *Singspiel*.

As the eighteenth gave way to the nineteenth century, the swing towards the special intensity of innocent naiveté and high drama went hand in hand with a shift away from ethics and towards metaphysics. In his oft-cited review (1810) of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, E. T. A. Hoffmann wrote that 'Music reveals to man an unknown realm, a world quite separate from the outer sensual world surrounding him, a world in which he leaves behind all feelings circumscribed by intellect in order to embrace the inexpressible.'²⁴ The turn towards metaphysics could lead in different directions, from the depths of the soul to the heights of religious devotion, or even both.²⁵

Between heights and depths, Romantics also developed a form of metaphysics that focussed on rare capacities and rarefied experiences. These could highlight the sheer magic of human presence in the world, often in a way that would continue to chime in less metaphysical, more existentialist strands of twentieth-century criticism and philosophy. Reporting on a performance of an unidentified Haydn quartet, Mozart quintet, and Beethoven's 'Archduke' Trio, Op. 97, the French Romantic painter Eugène Delacroix noted a remark by Chopin on the differences between Haydn and Mozart. Haydn had achieved his perfection through experience, but Mozart 'had no need of experience; knowledge was always found with him at the level of inspiration'.²⁶ Chopin avoids explanation of Mozart's ability, though he must have known that Mozart had had a famous pedagogue as a father and had travelled the major musical centres of Europe as a child. Rather, Chopin uses words of wonder to capture his experience of numinous presence in the hearing of Mozart's music and to nod towards what he perceived as the miracle of its production. When treated with attitudes of wonder, even the prosaic matter of Mozart's acquisition of skill can bespeak the truth of the world and the human place in it.

The turn towards metaphysics found its way into practices of reception, as when Hoffmann heard Beethoven or Chopin and Delacroix heard Mozart. In particular, it offered a framework by which instrumental music could be heard as an echo of the absolute. It also affected operatic subjects. While comedy did not vanish from nineteenth-century stages, artistic attention turned back towards stories of heroism and the supernatural. Already at the end of the eighteenth century, there was a fascination

with magic, as seen in such works as Grétry's *Zémire et Azor* (1771, based on the story of Beauty and the Beast) or Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* (*The Magic Flute*, 1791). As appropriate to their respective generic roots in *opéra comique* and *Singspiel*, they did not focus on the high-status gods and goddess of classical Greek or Roman mythology. Instead, their plots originated in tales told by Enlightenment men of letters seeking to teach ethics or enlightenment in an exciting way, often by borrowing the humble forms of the folk or morality tale. By the early nineteenth century, composers were turning tales of magic towards more heroic ends, often against a backdrop that emphasised the close relationship between nature and the supernatural.²⁷

Carl Maria von Weber's *Der Freischütz* (*The Free Shot*, 1821) shows how styles of humility and excess could take on special significance when refracted through metaphysical prisms. Led astray by fellow forester Kaspar, Max has magic bullets made at midnight by invoking the demonic spirit Samiel. Six will strike true, but one belongs to Samiel. With these bullets, Max hopes to reverse his bad fortune and win the hand of his beloved Agathe in a shooting competition. The battle between good and evil is made musically manifest by a back-and-forth between songs of innocent goodness and evil experience. Innocence is expressed by the folk-song-like choruses of bridesmaids and hunters, who represent the people and their 'natural' relationship to the forest, to tradition, and to God. The evil of the supernatural resonates through the turbulent textures, exotic harmonies, and disruptive gestures that accompany the midnight casting of bullets in the Wolf's Glen. The humble religiosity of hymn also leaves a trace, in particular in the closing communal song of thanksgiving. Agathe might represent a position of ethical goodness, but the opera focusses less on issues of practical morality than it does on religion, the supernatural, and the redemptive power of love. Agathe's innocence and religion saves her from 'Samiel's' bullet, and thereby saves Max as well, despite the error of his ways. More than just an emotion, love carries with it the divine power of salvation.

The role of the forest and the folk in *Der Freischütz* also highlight a turn towards a different type of relationship with the past. Artists of all ages learn from their predecessors, whether it be the techniques associated with particular styles, genres or media, or the works that make them ripe for intertextual quotation and adaptation. Artists also learn standards of excellence, generally ones linked with particular norms of style or genre. Yet the language of this relationship to the past, as well as the models imitated, can vary considerably over history. By the turn of the nineteenth

century, artists and intellectuals had lost confidence in perpetual progress. They sought alternatives to the cultivation of the classical past, looking for immediacy rather than reflection, seeking a life within nature rather than a manipulation of it, and idealising the simplicity of rural life over the complexity of urban existence. Yet this glorification of an alternate antiquity – of immediacy over reflected study – did not change the many connections that existed between artists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Although brought up in a family of music and theatre professionals and a composition pupil of Michael Haydn (younger brother of Joseph, best known for his old-fashioned church music), Weber (1786–1826) had imbibed the language and ideals of Romanticism, developed his own literary aspirations, and even drafted a Hoffmannesque novel, *Tonkünstler Leben (Tone-Poet's Life)*. He was thus well placed to set its dreams to music, giving *Der Freischütz* the telling genre designation of 'Romantic Opera in Three Acts'. Like many of his contemporaries, Weber could reach back to and extend eighteenth-century musical traditions at the same time that he created a new, Romantic musical world.

Notes

1. Laurenz Lütteken, 'Zwischen Ohr und Verstand: Moses Mendelssohn, Johann Philipp Kirnberger und die Begründung des "reinen Satzes" in der Musik', in Anselm Gerhard (ed.), *Musik und Ästhetik im Berlin Moses Mendelssohns* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1999), 136–7; Thomas Christensen, *Rameau and Musical Thought in the Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), ch. 9.
2. See the chapters by Gelbart (Chapter 5), Stanyon (Chapter 3), and Watkins (Chapter 12) in this volume.
3. E. T. A. Hoffmann, *Briefwechsel*, ed. Hans von Müller and Friedrich Schnapp, 3 vols. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1967–9), vol. 2, 245.
4. Carl Dahlhaus, *Klassische und romantische Musikästhetik* (Laaber: Laaber, 1988), 108.
5. Hector Berlioz, [Printed Concert Programme] *Episode de la vie d'un artiste Symphonie fantastique, en cinq partie* (Paris: n.p., 1830), n.p. [1].
6. See further Alexander Wilfing's chapter in this volume (Chapter 11).
7. Walter Pater, 'The School of Giorgione' (1873), in A. Phillips (ed.), *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 86.

8. See for instance Karol Berger, 'Chopin's Ballade Op. 23 and the Revolution of the Intellectuals', in John Rink and Jim Samson (eds.), *Chopin Studies II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 72–83, and on the Second Ballade, Op. 38, Jonathan Bellman, *Chopin's Polish Ballade: Op. 38 as Narrative of National Martyrdom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).
9. Dena Goodman, *The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), 99–111.
10. Jennifer Ronyak, "'Serious Play", Performance, and the Lied: The Stägemann *Schöne Müllerin* Revisited', *19th-Century Music*, 34/2 (2010), 141–67.
11. Heinrich Christoph Koch, *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Composition*, 3 vols. (Rudolstadt and Leipzig: A. F. Böhme, 1782–93), vol. 1, 4.
12. Emily Anderson, *The Letters of Mozart and His Family*, 3rd ed., rev. and ed. Stanley Sadie and Fiona Smart (London: Macmillan, 1985), 769.
13. François Couperin, *L'Art de toucher le clavecin* (Paris: Author, 1716), 4–6.
14. See further Dana Gooley's chapter in this volume (Chapter 18).
15. See my 'Classicism/Neoclassicism', in Stephen Downes (ed.), *Aesthetics of Music: Musicological Perspectives* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2014), 144–69.
16. Clive McClelland, *Ombra: Supernatural Music in the Eighteenth Century* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2012), and *Tempesta: Stormy Music in the Eighteenth Century* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2017).
17. Elaine Sisman, 'Haydn's Theater Symphonies', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 43/2 (1990), 292–352.
18. Charles Burney, *The Present State of Music in Germany, the Netherlands, and the United Provinces*, 2 vols., 2nd ed. (London: Becket et al., 1775), vol. 2, 270. Annette Richards, *The Free Fantasia and the Musical Picturesque* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
19. See the chapter in this volume by Matthew Gelbart (Chapter 5).
20. Letter from Zelter to Mendelssohn, 9 June 1829, quoted in Thomas Christian Schmidt, *Die ästhetischen Grundlagen der Instrumentalmusik Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdys* (Stuttgart: M & P, 1996), 95.
21. Laurenz Lütteken, 'Musik in der Aufklärung–Musikalische Aufklärung?', *Musiktheorie*, 14/3 (1999), 213–29.
22. Charles Burney, *A General History of Music*, 4 vols. (London: Author, 1776–1785), vol. 1, xiii.
23. Nancy Kovaleff Baker and Thomas Christensen (eds.), *Aesthetics and the Art of Musical Composition in the German Enlightenment: Selected Writings of Johann Georg Sulzer and Heinrich Christoph Koch* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 51.
24. E. T. A. Hoffmann, *E. T. A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings: Kreisleriana, The Poet and the Composer, Music Criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 236.

25. See the chapters by James Garratt (Chapter 9) and Holly Watkins (Chapter 12) in this volume.
26. Eugène Delacroix, *Journal: 1822–1863* (Paris: Plon, 1996), 134 (21 February 1847).
27. See further Francesca Brittan's chapter in this volume (Chapter 8).

Further Reading

- Chapin, Keith. 'Classicism/Neoclassicism', in Stephen Downes (ed.), *Aesthetics of Music: Musicological Perspectives* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), 144–69.
- Dirst, Matthew. *Engaging Bach: The Keyboard Legacy from Marpur to Mendelssohn* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
- Eigeldinger, Jean-Jacques. *Chopin: Âme des salons parisiens (1830–1848)* (Paris: Fayard, 2013).
- Gelbart, Matthew. *The Invention of 'Folk Music' and 'Art Music': Emerging Categories from Ossian to Wagner* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
- Head, Matthew. 'Fantasia and Sensibility', in Danuta Mirka (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 259–78.
- Kramer, Lawrence. 'The Schubert Lied: Romantic Form and Romantic Consciousness', in Walter Frisch (ed.), *Schubert: Critical and Analytical Studies* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), 200–37.
- McClelland, Clive. 'Ombra and Tempesta', in Danuta Mirka (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 279–300.
- Richards, Annette. *The Free Fantasia and the Musical Picturesque* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
- Ronyak, Jennifer. *Intimacy, Performance and the Lied in the Early Nineteenth Century* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018).
- Rosen, Charles. *The Romantic Generation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).
- Safranski, Rüdiger. *Romanticism: A German Affair*, trans. Robert E. Goodwin (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2014).
- Spitzer, Michael. *Metaphor and Musical Thought* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2004).

