

## THE CONDITION OF MUSIC IN VICTORIAN SCHOLARSHIP

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*By Anna Peak*

MANY VICTORIAN COMMENTATORS, from Herbert Spencer and Charles Darwin on, saw music as the most primitive of all the arts, an inarticulate precursor of language, and yet many Victorians, particularly towards the end of the century, also saw music as the purest of all art forms.<sup>1</sup> The tremendous tension between these two views meant that music provided, and provides, an ideal way to understand more completely Victorian ideas about evolution, gender, and race in relation to aesthetics, although scholarship on music has only begun to consider those relationships. But as Vernon Lee long ago pointed out, in a series of thoughtful essays about music published in *Fraser's Magazine* and other periodicals in the 1870s and 1880s, music has always been slower to develop than other arts or fields of study. This is in fact why musicologists speak of “nineteenth-century music,” rather than Victorian music: the Romantic period in music, for example, is starting as the Romantic period in literature had largely ended; the English Musical Renaissance comes after the renaissance period in British literature; and so on. Musicology, likewise, is a comparatively young field,<sup>2</sup> and the study of nineteenth-century British music – long limited to Gilbert and Sullivan, if considered at all – younger yet. Studies of literature that engage with music as an important part of the historical context of a given text depend on developments in musicology for a proper understanding of that context, which is why such works are comparatively few. *Why* music should be slower to develop than other fields is a question outside the scope of this essay,<sup>3</sup> but the good news is that in the past ten years a number of useful and valuable works of scholarship on nineteenth-century British music have appeared, examining not only neglected composers and musical works, but also performers, concert organizers, music publishers, instruments and their history, and evolutionary, Orientalist, and nationalist discourses about music. This scholarship, valuable in itself, not only expands our knowledge of musicology and cultural history; by pointing out some of the deep connections between literature and music in the Victorian period, such scholarship also suggests new ways to think about literary forms, canon formation, and aesthetic theories.

The story of scholarship on nineteenth-century music in fact begins to a large degree with literature scholars, who were eager to understand more fully the world lived in by the authors they studied. Unfortunately, as these scholars had only a small base of musicological knowledge on which to stand, their works tend either simply to catalogue how many times a given author mentions music, as does, for example, James Lightwood's *Charles Dickens and Music* (1912), or to argue that music possesses some ineffable qualities also exemplified

in a given author's writing style, as do Robert Wallace's *Jane Austen and Mozart: Classical Equilibrium in Fiction and Music* (1983) and his *Emily Brontë and Beethoven: Romantic Equilibrium in Fiction and Music* (1986). These works assume that music has objective aesthetic standards and define music in relation to musical categories that are treated as real and ineffable – categories that were in fact, as recent works in musicology have shown, being constructed particularly and importantly in the Victorian period. As a result, these texts give readers and scholars little with which to grapple and indeed their titles almost completely sum up their arguments.

A more nuanced view of music in literature had to wait – and to some extent still waits – on developments in musicology. Nineteenth-century British music, though abundant, was not generally deemed “art” in the nineteenth century, even in Britain itself. As a result, Britain's musical history was almost completely ignored until the 1970s. Books such as Cyril Ehrlich's *The Piano: A History* (1976) and Nicholas Temperley's two-volume *The Music of the English Parish Church* (1979) were among the first to take seriously British music and musical practices in the nineteenth century, and both Ehrlich and Temperley, along with such colleagues as Christina Bashford and Simon McVeigh, worked tirelessly to demonstrate through painstaking and wide-ranging scholarship the extent to which nineteenth-century England was saturated with music, from domestic and public performances to production of instruments to publication of sheet music, emphasizing music as an economic and cultural phenomenon.

On another front, the advent of feminist musicology in the late 1980s and 1990s helped lead the way for the consideration of music as not simply sounds, but rather as an art form and a discourse that is a product of historical and cultural conditions. Although ethnomusicology considered music in a similar fashion, ethnomusicology often focused on non-Western and “primitive” music, shifting the focus away from Western canons and thus leaving Western musical history largely unchanged, while feminist musicology challenged conventional narratives of Western musical history altogether. Its focus on women and gender partly coincided with, but mostly followed, a similar focus on women's issues in Victorian studies at the end of the twentieth century – one reason literary scholars, many of whom have embraced art history, have been much less interested in music. Susan McClary, for example, notes in the introduction to her ground-breaking collection of essays, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (1991), that her emphasis on feminism and gender, though new for musicology, seems behind the times for scholarship more generally: “I am painfully aware that this volume . . . is being assembled at a time when cynical voices in many other fields are declaring feminism to be passé. It almost seems that musicology managed miraculously to pass directly from pre- to post-feminism without ever having to change – or even examine – its ways” (5). The strong reaction which the work of McClary and others (notably Marcia J. Citron and Ruth A. Solie) provoked within the musicological community – there are anecdotal accounts of screaming matches at meetings of the American Musicological Association, for example – demonstrated the extent to which such work was groundbreaking for the field. Even further, the fact that music history still remains a history of Great Men suggests that the study of gender is not yet unnecessary, and that Victorianists could find fruitful ground for studies of gender in musicological or interdisciplinary studies of nineteenth-century music.

Because the current picture of Western musical history and its canon was largely constructed beginning in the nineteenth century, and because many forgotten women

composers either published, trained, or were born in the nineteenth century, this feminist musicology in tandem with the work of Ehrlich, Temperley, and others helped to spark a new interest in nineteenth-century music in relation to gender. Ruth Solie's *Music in Other Words* (2004), for example, collects essays written over the course of her career and includes studies of the composer Dame Ethel Smyth as well as of music lover Sir George Grove, director of the Royal College of Music and founder of *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. Works like Derek Scott's "The Sexual Politics of Victorian Musical Aesthetics" (1994), Derek Hyde's *New-Found Voices: Women in Nineteenth-Century English Music* (1998), and Paula Gillett's *Musical Women in England, 1870–1914* (2000) examine in detail the significant role that women played in the history of nineteenth-century music and suggest, both directly and indirectly, that the long-standing devaluation of nineteenth-century music has had a great deal to do with women's involvement in it.

All of this scholarship dovetailed nicely with a then more-prevalent focus in literary scholarship on gender in relation to constructions of femininity, and thus a new spate of works examining music in literature focused on women and, to a large extent, on a woman. Mary Burgan's essay "Heroines at the Piano: Women and Music in Nineteenth-Century Fiction" (1986) was one of the first works to examine nineteenth-century British music's cultural context, drawing on instruction manuals, periodicals, *Punch* cartoons, and a range of literary works, most notably by Austen, Dickens, Eliot, and Thackeray. Burgan's essay was followed by a number of works that analyzed, with a thoroughness worthy of their subject, representations of music in the works of George Eliot. Beryl Gray's *George Eliot and Music* (1989) and Delia da Sousa Correa's *George Eliot, Music and Victorian Culture* (2003) tread much the same ground, although Sousa Correa's text is more thorough (as is to be expected from a later study) and each scholar interprets novels such as *The Mill on the Floss* (1860) and *Daniel Deronda* (1876) somewhat differently. George Eliot's novels are also analyzed at length in Phyllis Weliver's *Women Musicians in Victorian Fiction, 1860–1900* (2000) – nearly half the book, in fact, focuses on Eliot – and in a number of the essays collected in Sophie Fuller and Nicky Losseff's edited collection *The Idea of Music in Victorian Fiction* (2004). These single-author studies, though valuable, did little to persuade Victorianists in general of the value of music as a field of study, precisely because they were single-author studies, and because they did not significantly challenge scholarly consensus on the novels they examined. One does not need to study Eliot's representations of music, for instance, to know that Eliot makes use of evolutionary theory in her works, or that she was an exceptionally knowledgeable author whose every reference was made with care.

Even today, the fact that nearly all works on nineteenth-century music are published by two houses (Ashgate and Boydell & Brewer) and the fact that studies of literature in relation to music are often shelved in the MLs rather than the PRs and written by scholars trained first as musicians indicate that studies of nineteenth-century music have not gained anything like the same wider traction in Victorian studies as have studies of nineteenth-century visual arts. Because musicology for decades forewent considerations of cultural context in favor of an emphasis on pure form, non-musicologists unfamiliar with what is sometimes called the New Musicology assume that attending to connections between music and other arts will vitiate their ability to study the ways that class, race, gender, and sexuality shape aesthetic creation and judgment. But the last ten years have seen the publication of a number of works on nineteenth-century British music that apply the New Musicology's interest in music's cultural context in ways that should convince Victorianists at large that this is not true.

The last ten years in particular have seen the publication of numerous works of scholarship on nineteenth-century British composers, performers, conductors, instruments, and music publishers, all of it aimed at finally shattering forever the idea the long-standing assumption of many scholars that nineteenth-century England was a “land without music.” The General Editor’s Series Preface to every volume in Ashgate’s “Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain” series, for example, feels constrained to point out – as does nearly every book and essay on the topic – that “[a]lthough the nineteenth century has often been viewed as a fallow period in British musical culture, it is clear from the vast extent of current scholarship this view is entirely erroneous. Far from being a ‘land without music’, nineteenth-century Britain abounded with musical activity” (Beale xiii). The essays in *The Piano in Nineteenth-Century British Culture* (2007) edited by Therese Ellsworth and Susan Wollenberg aim to prove this by focusing on the more technical side of piano history; Roy Johnston’s “‘That Domestic and Long-suffering Instrument’: The Piano Boom in Nineteenth-Century Belfast” details the history of piano-making in Belfast, while essays such as R. Larry Todd’s “Mendelssohnian Allusions in the Early Piano Works of William Sterndale Bennett” and Yo Tomita’s splendidly-titled “‘Most ingenious, most learned, and yet practicable work’: The English Reception of Bach’s *Well-Tempered Clavier* in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century seen through the Editions Published in London” engage in formal analysis of musical works. Ellsworth’s “Victorian Pianists as Concert Artists: The Case of Arabella Goddard (1836–1922)” contributes a welcome discussion of gender. Ellsworth examines Goddard’s career to highlight the ways that changes in performance culture – for example, “the shift from composer-performers to performer-interpreters” (151) – made space for women to become professional musicians.

The essays in *Music and Performance Culture in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays in Honour of Nicholas Temperley* (2012), edited by Bennett Zon, similarly cover rich and varied ground. Divided into four parts, “Musical Cultures,” “Societies,” “National Music,” and “Methods,” this collection not only contains much thoughtful scholarship, but nearly every essay in the collection points the way towards some new sub-field of study. Some highlights of this strong collection include Christina Bashford’s opening essay on “Hidden Agendas and the Creation of Community: The Violin Press in the Late Nineteenth Century,” which is a rare look at music in the periodical press in relation to its readership, while Susan Wollenberg contributes a fascinating look at “Charles Garland Verrinder and Music at the West London Synagogue, 1859–1904” and Michael Allis likewise examines an under-studied group in his “Performance in Private: ‘The Working Men’s Society’ and the Promotion of Progressive Repertoire in Nineteenth-Century Britain.” The section on “National Music” is sadly short, containing only two essays, by Peter Horton and Julian Rushton, but each suggests new directions for the study of British nationalism in relation to aesthetics by detailing the ways that British music was judged as art or not in relation to anxieties about evolution and music’s role in imperialist discourse. The book’s concluding essay, “Recapitulation and the Musical Education of Victorian Children: *The Child’s Pianoforte Book* (1882) by H. Keatley Moore,” by Bennett Zon, ends the collection on a particularly strong note as Zon’s always-thoughtful work contributes new knowledge to the study not only of nineteenth-century music but also children’s life, theories of evolution, and theories of education. Zon also contributes a loving and thorough assessment of Nicholas Temperley’s massive contributions to scholarship on nineteenth-century British music and a bibliography of Temperley’s works which clocks in at fifteen pages.

While these essay collections suggest many new avenues for research, a number of recent book-length works instead explore in depth one corner of nineteenth-century Britain's musical world. Several recent works focus on specific musical figures who had been long since forgotten despite the important role they played in nineteenth-century British musical life – figures who have been overlooked because they were music publishers or concert organizers, rather than composers or performers. These works demonstrate convincingly the numerous ways in which Britain helped shaped the current musical canon. Christina Bashford's *The Pursuit of High Culture: John Ella and Chamber Music in Victorian London* (2007), for example, focuses on Ella's role as a musical "organizer and 'enabler'" (1) in shaping musical tastes, canonizing works, creating careers for musicians, composers, and music publishers, and what Bashford calls the "sacralization" (3) of certain works of art music within the context of market forces with which other countries, such as Germany, largely did not have to contend. As such, Ella's career provides a revealing insight into nearly all aspects of British musical life as well as suggesting new ways to think about the role of economics, commercialization, and the popular in relation to music and aesthetics generally.

Likewise, *Charles Hallé: A Musical Life* (2007), by Robert Beale, examines a figure who played an important role in shaping "the repertoire of classical orchestral music . . . as we now know [it]" (xv) through his maintenance of a permanent symphony orchestra in addition to an impressive career as a pianist. Not only does Beale discuss Hallé's life, career as a performer, management of his orchestra, and contributions to shaping the nascent musical canon in punctilious detail, down to the menus served at dinner parties, he does so with remarkable clarity and idiosyncratic charm. The book's traditional chapters are interrupted half-way through with a short "Interlude" chapter, for example, that provides a case study in Hallé through a detailed examination of a single opera season, and the book concludes with "An Appreciation of Hallé as a Person." Throughout, Beale writes in short paragraphs – sometimes only a sentence long – and a driving style ("But fate took a hand" [76]), mixed with meditative asides and thought-provoking comparisons, that pull the reader along through a mass of unfamiliar material that might have been dry otherwise. Fiona Palmer's *Vincent Novello (1781–1861): Music for the Masses* (2006) takes yet another tack, examining the career of one of Victorian Britain's most important music publishers. Palmer's work builds on Victoria Cooper's earlier *The House of Novello: Practice and Policy of a Victorian Music Publisher* (2003), which had focused more on placing Novello's music publishing practices in historical context as well as on Novello's buying public and readership for its journal the *Musical Times*. Palmer's work, in contrast, is more of a biography of Vincent Novello himself, together with a consideration of his personal editorial practices and the extent to which he revised the compositions he published.

While works such as these sometimes take gender into account, they generally do so only in passing. Yet the piano, violin, flute, and cello were gendered in specific ways in the nineteenth century<sup>4</sup> and the study of music complicates scholarly understanding of Victorian gender ideology in new ways by revealing new contradictions and fissures in that ideology. Fortunately, a few recent works take gender into extended account. Judith Barger's *Elizabeth Stirling and the Musical Life of Female Organists in Nineteenth-Century England* (2007), for example, is a detailed study of how women were largely excluded from playing the organ in the nineteenth century, and of how they managed to do so anyway. The organ, being a deeply resonant instrument, was considered largely off-limits for women because women's bodies

were held to be particularly susceptible to the dangers and possible sexual overtones of vibration (Peak, “Music of the Spheres,” chapter 3), yet determined women such as Stirling still managed to become professional organists by presenting themselves in accordance with Victorian constructions of what it meant to be a “lady organist” while also being held back by those same constructions.

The essays in Ian Biddle and Kirsten Gibson’s *Masculinity and Western Musical Practice* (2009) are even more thought-provoking in their examination of gender in relation to masculinity and queer sexualities – an emphasis long overdue in studies of nineteenth-century British music, and one that is therefore particularly illuminating. This collection builds on the ground-breaking work of an earlier essay collection, *Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology*, edited by Philip Butt et al. (1994), and, like the essays in *Queering the Pitch*, many of these essays examine the ways that music *qua* music was constructed as feminine and therefore effeminate and how male composers and performers either suffered from stigma or endeavored to construct themselves as particularly manly and virile. While the collection covers a range of music from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century, many of them are of particular interest to scholars of the Victorian period. Howard Irving, for example, in “Haydn and the Consequences of Presumed Effeminacy,” argues persuasively – as the title indicates – that the decline of Haydn’s reputation in the nineteenth century was due to the perceived effeminacy of his music, while Fred Everett Maus, in “Virile Music by Hector Berlioz,” demonstrates how Berlioz’s reputation rose because his music was seen as masculine. Corissa Gould examines Sir Edward Elgar’s tortured relationship to ideas about art and effeminacy in “Aspiring to Manliness: Edward Elgar and the Pressures of Hegemonic Masculinity,” and Marcia J. Citron contributes a thoughtful look at “Gendered Reception of Brahms: Masculinity, Nationalism and Musical Politics” that is not only a welcome consideration of the role of music in British nationalism but the ways that nationalist discourse is gendered.

Another welcome trend is the examination of Orientalism and non-Western music in several excellent essay collections. Part I of Rachel Cowgill and Julian Rushton’s *Europe, Empire, and Spectacle in Nineteenth-Century British Music* (2006), for example, contains a number of essays that demonstrate ties between British and European musical cultures. More importantly, however, Parts II and III examine Irish and colonial music and representations of the Other in popular nineteenth-century works and performances. Particularly of note are the contributions by Bennett Zon and Derek Scott. In “From ‘incomprehensibility’ to ‘meaning’: Transcription and Representation of Non-Western Music in Nineteenth-Century British Musicology and Ethnomusicology,” Zon explains how musicology has been shaped by biased transcriptions of non-Western music and more generally by Victorian racial “science.” Derek Scott’s “Blackface Minstrels, Black Minstrels, and their Reception in England” traces the popularity of blackface minstrelsy in England and its relations to Irish music as well as to African and African-American influences. While Zon’s essay demonstrates his familiarity with scholarship on Orientalism, post-colonialism, and Otherization, Scott’s is filled with unexamined terminology about what constitutes “black” music (267) or “vulgar” female behavior (279) as well as frequent hedge statements about the “audience’s perceived sensitivities” (279) and seeming laments that we cannot now enjoy “the old *Carry On* films” (279) or certain *Monty Python* sketches (280) as “we” used to, concluding in an oddly defiant tone that “you may be embarrassed by the role played by minstrelsy, . . . but its impact . . . cannot be ignored” (280).<sup>5</sup>

Much more remains to be done with regard to nineteenth-century blackface and African music in Britain, but the essays in *Music and Orientalism in the British Empire, 1780s-1940s: Portrayal of the East* (2007), edited by Martin Clayton and Bennett Zon, provide new and valuable insights into other non-Western cultures. India is a particular focus, as is usual in studies of Orientalism: Nicholas Cook contributes an essay on Hindustani music; Joep Bor examines European portrayals of Indian temple dancers; and Martin Clayton discusses “Musical Renaissance and Its Margins in England and India, 1874–1914.” India is not the exclusive focus, however. Philip V. Bohlman and Ruth F. Davis’s “*Mizrakh*, Jewish Music and the Journey to the East,” for example, discusses the role that music played in the creation of “two sets of images of Jerusalem, one set arising in the Jewish Diaspora, the other in the Britain of Mandatory Palestine” (101). Organized in short bursts of text interspersed with poetry, advertisements, illustrations, and musical examples, it is one of the more poetic contributions to the volume, but filled with statements such as “it is along that journey to Jerusalem that we first encounter the English nineteenth century” (97) that are not adequately explained by either the text or the pictures. More typically scholarly are Sophie Fuller’s “Creative Women and ‘Exoticism’ at the Last *Fin-de-siècle*” and Phyllis Weliver’s “Tom-toms, Dream-fugues and Poppy Juice: East Meets West in Nineteenth-century Fiction,” which make connections between musicology and representations of the East in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), *The Moonstone* (1868), and *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870). Bennett Zon’s typically thoughtful and thorough contribution, “‘Violent Passions’ and ‘Inhuman Excess’: Simplicity and the Representation of Non-western Music in British Travel Literature,” analyzes British portrayals of Indian, African, Maori, and Egyptian music, among others, in order to point out the ways that Victorian racial science has shaped aesthetic categorizations of music.

Zon’s book-length study, *Representing Non-Western Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (2007) makes the same basic point, but is considerably more than an extended essay. *Representing Non-Western Music* is magisterial in its sweeping yet thorough examination of the history of ethnomusicology in relation to nineteenth-century anthropology, travel literature, evolutionary theory, and psychology. Zon’s central argument is that it was the nineteenth century, not the twentieth, that moved musicology away from Orientalism and racism, “disentangling institutionalized Orientalism from issues of Race, and ultimately . . . situating non-Western musics within a more modern – and ultimately more humane – cultural hermeneutic” (14). This is a difficult argument to make, given how widespread racist discourse was in the nineteenth century, but Zon builds his case by tracing the history of anthropology, musicology, and conceptions of evolution to demonstrate how discourses of the time worked relative to each other rather than relative to twenty-first century discourses. The book’s first three sections, “Early Anthropological Influences,” “Musicology in Transition to Evolution,” and “Individualism and the Influence of Evolution: Charles Samuel Myers and the Role of Psychology,” function as an extended critique of Edward Said’s definitions of Orientalism, tracing the ways that Victorian musicologists increasingly refused to “project a teleological historiography leading ineluctably from the primitive East to the civilized West” (145), while pointing out that musicologists who made that refusal were nonetheless still embroiled in racist discourse or troubled by “racial incomprehension” (8), that is, an inability to conceptualize non-Western music at all after rejecting Orientalist judgments. Consequently, some musicologists simply eliminated non-Western music from musical history altogether. Zon argues, however, that the research of

musicologists and ethnomusicologists led them to disagree not only with Herbert Spencer's views on the evolution of music from speech to symphony but logically undermined the idea of progressive evolution altogether. By the end of the century, a new emphasis on music in relation to individual listeners further undermined racial theories by defining music in relation to something other than racial categories. The book's final section, "Retaining Cultural Identity: A. H. Fox Strangways and the Problems of Transcription," is the shortest, arguing that Western ethnomusicologists began transcribing non-Western music in ways that were "foreignizing" rather than "domesticating" (260) in order to preserve a sense that non-Western music had its own identity. While the book might usefully have questioned the extent to which such strategies are truly egalitarian, its great strength is Zon's constant awareness of the ways in which the individual Victorian writers with which he deals could still be racist while moving ethnomusicology as a whole away from racism and Orientalism. Thus the book's stated aim, to demonstrate that ethnomusicology began prior to the 1950s (291), is considerably more modest than what it actually achieves: a nuanced discussion of Orientalism and Victorian constructions of race that also demonstrates the extent to which even the most theoretical discussions of music are always embedded in intellectual, social, and cultural history.

The emphasis that these works place on historical context has enabled other scholars to examine the role of music in relation to other arts during the nineteenth century. Claire Mabilat's *Orientalism and Representations of Music in the Nineteenth-Century British Popular Arts* (2008), for example, examines music in relation to theatre, fiction, paintings, and photographs, and calls for a reconsideration of Orientalism in non-musical works by taking their uses and representations of music into account. And, thanks to this explosion of impressive musicological scholarship, a number of new works on music in literature have appeared that examine literary representations of music beyond the novels of George Eliot. Such works have not yet had time to grapple with the most recent scholarship on music in relation to queer sexuality or Orientalism; instead, these works demonstrate the relation between Victorian authors' literary techniques and their opinions about music. Mark Asquith's *Thomas Hardy, Metaphysics, and Music* (2005), for example, is a useful reconsideration of the works of Thomas Hardy in light of Hardy's considerable knowledge of music (Hardy came from a long line of church musicians) to argue that Hardy's works were more experimental and innovative than they are usually credited with being. Other notable contributions include Herbert Tucker's "Unsettled Scores: Meter and Play in Two Music Poems by Robert Browning" (2014), Andrew Eastham's "Walter Pater's Acoustic Space" (2010), Shafquat Towheed's "'Music is not merely for musicians': Vernon Lee's Musical Reading and Response" (2010), and my own "Music and New Woman Aesthetics in Mona Caird's *The Daughters of Danaus*" (2014), which likewise suggest, directly or indirectly, that the literary techniques of authors who were deeply interested in music and musical form are best understood in relation to that interest. Caird's novel, for example, has often been judged as aesthetically lacking, in keeping with a general tendency to see works by women through a political lens rather than as also being works of art; I argue, however, that the novel is deliberately constructed to be as jarring as its heroine's musical compositions in order to call such divisions between the political and the artistic into question.

Caird's case is not unique; paying attention to the role of music in literature has the potential to illuminate many forgotten corners of Victorian culture by helping scholars better understand popular but forgotten Victorian novels. Phyllis Weliver's *The Musical Crowd*



in *English Fiction, 1840–1910: Class, Culture and Nation* (2006) makes a particularly valuable contribution in discussing not only oft-studied works such as *Villette* (1853) and *Howards End* (1910), but also recovering obscure works such as Sara Elizabeth Sheppard's extremely popular *Charles Auchester* (1853) and analyzing less-canonical novels such as Samuel Butler's *Erewhon* (1872), Mrs. Humphrey Ward's *Robert Elsmere* (1888), and George Meredith's *Sandra Belloni* (1864). Particularly of note is Weliver's chapter on "Shaw's Fiction and the Emerging English Musical Renaissance" for its examination of G. B. Shaw's fiction in light of his interest in music, arguing that the English Musical Renaissance "[a]s Shaw configures it" (155) should be dated approximately forty years earlier than it usually is, to the 1840s rather than the 1880s. Naturally, one chapter cannot be expected to cover everything, but more attention to Shaw's early career as a music critic, perhaps drawing on the work of Eugene Gates, would have been very welcome. Robert Bledsoe's *Dickens, Journalism, Music: Household Words and All The Year Round* (2012) takes up this question of how authors helped shape the musical canon from a different angle, detailing the ways that music is discussed in Dickens's journals. Bledsoe argues that Dickens through these journals intervened in contemporary debates about music and in so doing helped to shape the current classical canon, although this argument is sometimes lost in the work's mass of detail and emphasis on how Dickens decided to publish more about music as the years went on because of his friendships with the musically-inclined.

Complementing these studies are two essay collections that explore formal connections between literature and music, though neither concentrates exclusively on nineteenth-century Britain. Nonetheless, some of the essays in these collections might be of interest to scholars of the period. *Phrase and Subject: Studies in Literature and Music* (2006), edited by Delia da Sousa Correa, brings together general theoretical essays such as "Stances towards Music as a Language" by Daniel Albright and "Music before the Literary: Or, the Eventness of Musical Events" by Anthony Britten along with more specific considerations of composers and authors. Scholars of the Victorian period will be most interested in Regula Hohl Trillini's "The Dear Dead Past: The Piano in Victorian and Edwardian Poetry" and Lawrence Kramer's "Saving the Ordinary: Beethoven's 'Ghost' Trio and the Wheel of History." The essays in *Words and Notes in the Long Nineteenth Century* (2013), edited by Phyllis Weliver and Katharine Ellis, do focus on the long nineteenth century as the title promises, but concentrate on works from the early nineteenth and twentieth centuries more than works from the Victorian period; the collection also focuses on European authors and composers rather than British ones. Still, Weliver and Ellis contribute an opening essay on "Approaches to Word-Music Studies of the Long Nineteenth Century," and Shafquat Towheed's "The Science of Musical Memory: Vernon Lee and the Remembrance of Sounds Past" is a welcome contribution to a growing body of scholarship on the life and thought of Vernon Lee. And while these works examine the role of music in literature, Michael Allis's *British Music and Literary Context: Artistic Connections in the Long Nineteenth Century* (2012) takes an important and strikingly original approach in examining instead the role of literature in music. Allis argues that nineteenth-century composers and their works have seemed lacking in artistry because modern scholars have neglected the ways in which nineteenth-century music is rife with literary allusions. Allis traces the influence of Victorian literature on the music of the period, suggesting that works heretofore seen as problematic can be re-evaluated and judged rightly as art once we understand the literary context in which they should be understood.

A work such as Allis's is made possible not only by the great scholarship done by many musicologists, but also by the growing body of musico-literary scholarship. There is room for many more such interdisciplinary studies in the future. Scholars of art history, for example, might examine the significance of scenes of music making and the visual portrayal of musical instruments in works beyond the oft-discussed *The Awakening Conscience* (1853). Richard Leppert's excellent studies of music and visual culture in the eighteenth through twentieth centuries (focusing, however, on the eighteenth) provide exemplary models for future scholarship, and the work of Karen Beth Yuen, who explores connections between music, literature, and the visual arts in the works of Dante Gabriel Rossetti and other pre-Raphaelites, also points to worthwhile topics of future study. The convening of conferences and conference panels such as "Music and Literature: Critical Polyphonies" (2015), organized by Fraser Riddell, a graduate student at Durham University, or "Victorian Literature and the Arts," a panel I am scheduled to chair at the Northeast Modern Language Association in 2016, indicates growing interest in such connections, as does a forthcoming special issue on "The Arts in the Periodical Press" (scheduled to appear in 2017) which I am editing for *Victorian Periodicals Review*.

As aesthetic categories and judgments that were shaped by racism, sexism, and imperialism are revised, future studies may be able to benefit from new recordings and performances of actual nineteenth-century British music. Joanna Swafford's website, *Songs of the Victorians* ([songsofthevictorians.com](http://songsofthevictorians.com)) analyses musical settings of Victorian poems, punctuated with clips of the music itself; regrettably, however, the site only includes four poems. In part this is due to the dearth of recordings of music from the period, but the British label Hyperion Records ([hyperion-records.co.uk](http://hyperion-records.co.uk)) has led the way in resurrecting forgotten works by nineteenth-century British composers such as William Sterndale Bennett. In some cases Hyperion provides the first recording of British compositions that had languished in libraries in manuscript form – *Bennett & Bache: Piano Concertos* (2007) is an example. The reprinting of Sterndale Bennett's *Lectures on Musical Life* (2006) is another helpful addition to primary source material from the period.

In addition to race, gender, and sexuality, future studies might usefully focus on music in relation to social class. A few works on the subject do exist: William Weber's *Music and the Middle Class: The Social Structure of Concert Life in London, Paris, and Vienna Between 1830 and 1848* (1975) is one such study; Meirion Hughes and R. A. Stradling's notorious *The English Musical Renaissance, 1840–1940* (revised edition, 2001), which argues that the English Musical Renaissance was the controlled creation of certain elites and forced on all other social groups, is another.<sup>6</sup> Rachel Cowgill and Peter Holman's edited collection *Music in the British Provinces, 1690–1914* (2007) deals somewhat with the Victorian period and with issues of social class in Britain, as do Derek Scott's *Sounds of the Metropolis: The 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Popular Music Revolution in London, New York, Paris, and Vienna* (2008) and various works on Victorian music halls such as Barry J. Faulk's *Music Hall and Modernity: The Late-Victorian Discovery of Popular Culture* (2004), but much more work remains to be done on music in Britain in relation to social class. The lives of itinerant and Romani musicians, for example, would be worth exploring in relation to this question as well as in relation to questions of gender and nationalism. More work with Victorian periodicals – from musical journals such as the *Musical Times* and *Musical Opinion* to articles about music in journals from *Bow Bells* to the *Saturday Review* – would be especially useful; because we can learn about periodicals' readership from their prices and types of advertisements, they

are a rich source of information about any given topic in relation to social class. Further study of music in Victorian periodicals would greatly further scholarly understanding of the formation of the current musical canon and the forces driving its creation.<sup>7</sup>

Ultimately, the most valuable future scholarship on music in Victorian Britain will be interdisciplinary because interdisciplinary scholarship is the only way to understand a period that did not make the same category distinctions that current scholars do. It is also the best way to uncover the significant role that Victorian Britain played in creating the categories and aesthetic judgments scholars use today to think about music, literature, and other arts. Such scholarship, as the work of Allis, Eastham, myself, and others has shown, has the power to reveal art where art was not seen before. Because many nineteenth-century composers looked to literature and authors looked to music for ideas about form, we cannot fully understand or even see the artistic achievements of either composers or authors without understanding such connections. A great deal more work will have to be done to reveal this kind of hidden artistry. But it is exciting work, for it will involve reclaiming aesthetics for the non-elite.

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## NOTES

1. Although this concept is widely associated with Walter Pater and Oscar Wilde, neither was original in claiming that music was the type of art. Numerous Victorian commentators from Thomas Henry Huxley (see “Professor Huxley”) to John Addington Symonds had agreed with or argued over this conception of music.
2. See Aspden and Huebner; Banfield.
3. The reason sometimes given for this phenomenon is that writing about music is too difficult – like dancing about architecture, as the saying has it. Byerly, for example, argues that music is “[a]n ephemeral art that does not lend itself to the glossy reproductions with which we all hope to illustrate our books[;] music is more difficult to capture than painting, photography, advertising art, or the myriad forms of spectacle that are now recognized as central aspects of the Victorian experience” (126). However, even if this is true, it explains only the lag in scholarship about music, not why the renaissance or Romantic periods in music itself should have come after their counterparts in literature and the visual arts. I am inclined to think myself that developments in scholarship about music in part simply follow, after some normal delay, developments in music itself. But the full answer to this question is more complicated and has to do in part with the nineteenth-century creation of a new music history, musical canon, and musical aesthetic. I explore this question in more detail in my current book project, *Not a Universal Language: Musical Aesthetics and Literary Formalism at the Fin de Siècle*.
4. This phenomenon has been discussed in a range of works; of particular note are the works of Paula Gillett and Richard Leppert. For a discussion of nineteenth-century periodicals in relation to this phenomenon, see Peak, “Music of the Spheres,” Introduction.
5. A more nuanced, less nostalgic look at blackface minstrelsy is given in an essay by Michèle Mendelssohn published in the *African American Review* in which Mendelssohn connects W. E. B. DuBois’s use of spirituals to nineteenth-century minstrelsy and the dandyism of Baudelaire and Wilde. Mendelssohn is more concerned, however, with American minstrel traditions.
6. For an excoriating, but scholarly and fair, critique of Hughes and Stradling, see Frogley.
7. In a paper presented to the Research Society for Victorian Periodicals, I argue that class anxieties led working- and lower-class men to elevate their status by constructing masculinity rather than class as key

to musical achievement, eliminating women from the burgeoning musical canon in the process before they themselves were in turn written out of history by upper-class scholars.

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