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EDITED BY DELIA DA SOUSA CORREA

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Edinburgh University Press Ltd
The Tun – Holyrood Road, 12(2f) Jackson’s Entry, Edinburgh EH8 8PJ

Typeset in 10/12 Adobe Sabon by
IDSUK (DataConnection) Ltd, and
printed and bound in Great Britain.

A CIP record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978 0 7486 9312 2 (hardback)
ISBN 978 0 7486 9313 9 (webready PDF)
ISBN 978 0 7486 6314 6 (epub)

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost my thanks go to the Section Editors for each historical part of the *Edinburgh Companion to Literature and Music*: Suzanne Aspden, Stephen Benson, Helen Deeming, Ros King and Elizabeth Eva Leach. Their specialist subject and period knowledge has been vital to the scope of the volume from the outset. Thank you for your hard work and for being so ready to share your expertise with a wide range of scholars and readers. Also to each and every one of the contributors: thank you for helping to put our interdiscipline on the map. For advice and encouragement at the early stages of planning the project, I would like to thank the late Daniel Albright, Margaret Bent, Peter Dayan, Josie Dixon, Katharine Ellis, Robert Fraser and Lawrence Kramer.

Major thanks are due to Jackie Jones at Edinburgh University Press, whose pioneering idea it was to have an *Edinburgh Companion to Literature and Music*. She has been a constant support throughout as have her colleagues Dhara Patel, Adela Rauchova, Ersev Ersoy, James Dale and Eliza Wright. Thank you also to Nicola Wood for copy editing and to Margaret Christie for compiling the index. I am grateful to the three anonymous EUP readers, whose useful and heartening reports helped to refine the project. The Open University provided funding for the volume’s cover illustration, index and for editorial support. This was undertaken by Peter Lee: thank you Peter. Further thanks to Eleanor Anderson at the OU for help with image research and to Richard Mann and Regula Hohl Trillini who read specific chapters. Thanks also go to the staff of the Bodleian library.

Opportunities to attend and speak at a number of conferences during the compilation of this volume, and to publish various research and reference articles, have fed into its conception. Specifically, I am grateful to Walter Bernhart, Werner Wolf and fellow members of the International Association for Word and Music Studies (WMA), whose biennial conferences gather together interdisciplinary colleagues from across the world. Like many interdisciplinary scholars, I benefited greatly from chances to organise and participate in events under the hospitable umbrella of the Institute of Musical Research during its residence at Senate House. I am also grateful to Sally Shuttleworth and Laura Marcus for asking me to speak at the Oxford English Faculty’s Victorian and Twentieth-Century Seminars, to members of the Song Network at the Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities and to Michael Allis, Isobel...
Armstrong, Carolyn Burdett, Donald Burrows, Dino Felluga, Gail Marshall and colleagues for formative opportunities to speak and/or write on related interdisciplinary topics. I have valued the occasions for the Open University Literature and Music Research Group to run public study days as part of the Oxford Lieder Festival, where talks and discussions provided practical reminders of some of the reasons this communication between words and music matters so much. Thanks to Sholto Kynoch for entertaining the idea, to Taya Smith and colleagues, and to the contributors to these events, including stalwarts Helen Abbott, Natasha Loges, Robert Samuels, Laura Tunbridge and Richard Wigmore.

Family and others were a vital source of encouragement and necessary distraction during the too many years of this volume’s gestation. Richard, Gwen and Rosamund, special thanks to you. I am grateful to my many supportive OU colleagues. Thanks go to many friends including Jane and Lynton Appel, Rosamund Bartlett, Elizabeth Clarke, Kirsty Gunn, Harriet Harris, Julia Hollander, Kathryn Laing, Marina Luttrell, Uttara Nattarajan, Francis O’Gorman, Charlotte Purkis, Tabitha Tuckett, Charles Williams and many others too numerous to name here. Grateful thanks also to Bernadette Lavery, Mary Mountford-Lister, Dennis Remoundos, Luke Solomons, Gill Stoker, Ginny Turner and their colleagues.

Delia da Sousa Correa
For David and in memory of Annelene
INTRODUCTION

Delia da Sousa Correa

Oh, if I had Orpheus’ voice and poetry with which to move [. . .]

Euripides

If we let music say as much as it can, if we acknowledge that it finds, among other things, the level of our deepest selves, are we not acting in the spirit of the poet Orpheus who coaxed a lost self from the underworld? For this is what we share with that legendary musician from the dawn of our sonorous age: we too have never left off discovering how music matters.

Scott Burnham

This volume explores literature and music’s alliances over the course of nine centuries. Music and literature have an ancient affinity, indeed a common origin. These arts are deeply rooted in the physical and emotional experience of humankind. Ancient myths that we have inherited and continue to treasure tell us how crucial they have been through the ages. The lyre of the biblical poet Jubal is another version of the powers embodied in the figure of Orpheus, both ‘poet’ and ‘legendary musician’, as invoked above. Myths of music and poetry’s original unity have had an ongoing life in later times: as in homage to the authenticity of folksong by Rousseau and the English Romantics, or in E. T. A. Hoffmann’s celebration of the composer-poet. The sister arts of words and music – Milton’s ‘Blest pair of sirens’ of ‘voice, and verse’ – have also been in competition, or at odds with one another; words have resented the distractions of music and music set to words has been divided from music that floats free of them.

But, while enjoying a relationship that may be contested as much as harmonious, it has always been the case that literature and music have needed each other: that the idea of music is fundamental to writing and that music turns to literature for topics and structures, and to words to demarcate what music is and how it matters.

For us now, the dominant modes of thinking about music and literature’s importance to one another date back to the Romantic period and beyond. Intransigently and inspiring, what are essentially Romantic ideals about music persist, notwithstanding the rise of firmly-grounded materialist theories of culture. ‘Music’ is still widely assumed to be what poetry, and literature in general, aims for. It is apprehended as a transcendent power, beyond meaning and beyond words: it shows us the limits of verbal language, or draws our attention to the music of words, the nonsemantic attributes that we also experience in language. Music impacts directly on the
emotions – and this affective power has certainly been valued in it since ancient times and emulated by writers. Music in turn, which long drew on the art of rhetoric to enhance the delivery of that affective power, has, since the Romantic period, invoked the poetic as a chief measure of its worth.

However, scholarship that reflects widely on relations between literature and music, as mapped and celebrated in this volume, constitutes a relatively recent field. In 1984, Lawrence Kramer’s comparative study *Music and Poetry: The Nineteenth Century and After* heralded a new research area that developed rapidly during the ensuing decades. His reflections on such study continue to be foundational. The ‘new musicology’ investigated wider cultural meanings and contexts for music, and claimed that, notwithstanding its traditional status as the most ineffable of arts, music was amenable to interpretation. ‘Music’ Kramer proposes in his 2002 *Musical Meaning*, ‘nearly always has potential meaning in an intersubjective or cultural sense, even if it rarely has meaning in a simple enunciatory sense’:

And once this meaning is acknowledged, once it is accepted as a common experience rather than dismissed because it lacks the apparent security of the imagetext, it cuts across and counterbalances the imagetext’s cultural dominance. Musical meaning discloses what the imagetext’s richness of representational content necessarily dissembles: the radically ascriptive nature of all interpretation. It embodies the recognition – the problem, the opportunity, the danger, the pleasure – that meaning is improvised, not reproduced, performed not revealed.

As Kramer had already pointed out, one consequence of critical theories that valued referential uncertainty in language was that ‘the resistance to signification once embodied by music now seems to be an inextricable part of signification itself’. His sense of the implications and possibilities that this realisation opens up for interpretation in general is also evident in the passage just quoted. For Kramer, the sense that a gap exists between what can be interpreted and what remains mysteriously out of reach is not unique to music, but can be experienced in responses to other art: it is this very gap that prompts our desire to interpret. This desire to interpret forges a close connection between music and literature: the compulsion to ‘read’ that underpins the production of meaning indicates that all music is to some extent ‘texted music’. Kramer describes himself as attempting a ‘tricky balancing act’ to defend cultural interpretations of music while acknowledging the importance of longstanding views of musical experience as noumenal. The experience of music as something transcendent and unsayable will always be enjoyed by those who love it, but it is possible, Kramer proposes, to ‘incorporate’ it into an understanding of musical meaning as historically, ideologically and functionally dependent. Although a number of writers on music have wanted to defend the idea that there are elements in musical experience that remain independent of these contexts, or have continued to advocate more formal, analytical approaches to music, the cultural study of music has transformed the discipline of musicology, encouraging approaches that understand musical meaning as arising dynamically within shared social and cultural networks.

The ‘methodological goldmine’ that musicology has found in literary theory has opened up new possibilities for the joint study of literature and music. Over the past
few decades, musical theorists, such as Carolyn Abbate, Jean-Jacques Nattiez and others, have engaged closely with literary theory. Literary parallels are strongly invoked when music is analysed as sharing important features of narrative, as demonstrated by Kramer’s two essays for this volume. The influence of cultural studies has additionally increased the scope of scholarship in both disciplines, widening the range of material falling under scrutiny, the questions asked of it, and the contexts explored.

As this volume shows, interdisciplinary research in literature and music is now a vibrant and still-expanding field. Topics combining work on literature and music increasingly feature on the programmes of both interdisciplinary and disciplinary conferences, and a growing number of literary scholars have explored ways in which relations with music can illuminate the critical interpretation of texts. Rather than forming a closely-defined field, joint research on literature and music is characterised by the diversity within its constituent disciplines as well as the multiplicity of work that is enabled when literature and music are brought together. Nevertheless, researchers in the field claim a shared interdisciplinary identity. A dedicated subject association, the International Association for Word and Music Studies (WMA) was founded in 1997; it holds biennial international conferences and publishes its own book series, *Word and Music Studies*. The work presented by its vigorous branch of younger researchers, the WMA Forum, bodes particularly well for the future of an interdiscipline that attracts a growing number of researchers from early in their careers.

As an ever-greater variety of work in literature and music flourishes, awkward questions arise as to whether genuinely interdisciplinary work can exist – in general, or between these two disciplines of literature and music in particular. Certainly, the breadth of the work represented in this volume demands an expansive understanding of interdisciplinary endeavour. This generosity is advocated by Lawrence Kramer, who, although he himself holds professorial posts jointly in Literature and Music, is far from insisting that work in literature and music needs to make an equal contribution to both disciplines. The practicality of any such stringent stipulation is doubtful since, as he wryly notes, if ‘extended comparative studies of music and literary works are still rare; good ones are downright scarce’. For Kramer it is valid to ask a broader question, ‘what can the tandem reading of musical and literary works have to offer the critical study of music?’. The present volume is equally concerned with the complementary investigation of what such tandem readings can bring to the study of literature. It is committed to the idea that bringing literature and music together helps us to think about each art more deeply; it is also an encouragement to extend our thoughts about how art matters to work in the humanities (and to humankind).

Thus, in this volume we set about discussing the importance of words to music and of music to words in the broadest of terms. Arguably both ‘music’ and ‘literature’ may be attributions that are less determined by responses to innate qualities of works in these media than by a condition of purposeful listening and reading on the part of their audiences. (Arguably, too, few of us are genuinely entirely ready to shed the first part of that equation in the ways we interpret and evaluate art.) Complete consensus about what constitutes an art is impossible; nevertheless, the categories of ‘literature’ and ‘music’ have a sufficiently shared resonance to provide the focus for an interdisciplinary field, no matter how diverse, and for a volume such as this, no matter how various the approaches represented and the objects of its study in recent times.
The growing field of literature and music research thrives in the face of an all-too-common silence about music within literary criticism, and in works of critical and aesthetic theory. As Stephen Benson points out in this volume, the huge impact of critical theory on the study of music took place despite music’s general absence from the major critical and theoretical works on which it drew.17

Recently, philosophical work in the new aestheticism has finally argued for the importance of music to wider aesthetic theory. Andrew Bowie argues that although music’s non-referential content, its ‘transcendence of the sayable’, has ‘too often been used as a means of fetishising art, it is a mistake therefore to assume that the only possibility for the critic is to unmask mystifications; instead, scholars should work to reveal the ways in which music and, by extension, other arts, can bring us up against the limits of more discursive forms of articulation’.18 To Bowie, music is more important to the understanding of culture and individual psychology than is recognised by approaches that explain aesthetic experience as exclusively the product of dominant political and economic forces. While insights gained from the contextual study of the arts are invaluable, it is vital to realise ‘that there are dimensions of cultural articulation which transcend what we can say about them, which are not necessarily usable for ideological purposes, and which are crucially connected to the ways we try to understand ourselves as subjects’.19 The inclusion of music within our critical thinking is essential: ‘One of the reasons why so much recent theory, in which music plays a minimal role, is prone to misjudge aesthetic issues lies [. . .] precisely in its failure to appreciate the significance of the non-conceptual form of music for any account of the subject.’20 Kramer and Bowie might differ over whether there is any autonomous element in the experience of musical transcendence, but both their arguments imply that critics with a combined focus on music and literature may be well-placed to contribute to critical thought and practice within the humanities at large. Music’s potential value to larger cultural projects is a point also taken up by Michael Klein, who provides a further, concluding, essay for this volume. Music’s importance in this respect might be understood in the light of Kramer’s claim that ‘musical meaning is the paradigm of meaning in general’.21

Meanwhile, however, music currently remains largely absent from works of critical and aesthetic theory other than those by musicologists. Within literary criticism, relations between literature and the visual arts have continued to receive more critical attention than those between literature and music, notwithstanding the vitality of the interdisciplinary field of literature and music studies, and music and literature’s shared reference points in critical theory. This is an imbalance that our volume wishes to help redress. Some understandable hesitance about discussing music relates to the way in which it is seen as requiring specialist technical knowledge. However, while discipline-specific skills and knowledge compel respect, this need not preclude us from thinking more deeply about how music matters to the experience of writers and readers, and how literature matters to those who make and listen to music. The essays in this volume seek to make connections between literature and music a more common reference point for scholars, students and readers, as well as to represent and foster links between our fields.

Over the past few decades, developments in critical practice have continued to augment the variety of work undertaken between the two disciplines. The three essays
immediately following this introduction each reflect on important methodological concerns related to research in literature and music.

The current prevailing interest in forms of intertextuality in both disciplines allows for an ever-wider variety of textual and cultural points of connection to be illuminated; a sense of what an almost limitless web of connections within and between different works might open up for readers and listeners and critics (who are readers and listeners first) has been richly productive for interdisciplinary work. In ‘Intertextuality, Topic Theory and the Open Text’, Michael Klein examines the ways in which theories of intertextuality have impacted on musical analysis. He illuminates parallels between literary ideas of intertextuality and musical ‘topic theory’ to provide a wider framework for understanding this now widely practised approach to musical analysis. The questions that intertextual approaches raise about the autonomy of authors and composers, about the idea of a unique work and art, and about the roles and subjectivities of listeners and readers, are taken up again in Klein’s closing essay for the volume.22

Lawrence Kramer’s work has continued to advance and refine cultural modes of interpreting music that pay particular attention to music’s engagement with literary forms of narrative. In his essay here on ‘Secrets, Technology and Musical Narrative’, Kramer probes the methodological complexities and challenges presented for analyses of narrativity in music, including his own essay in the nineteenth-century part of this volume. These complexities arise not least from the ways in which narrative itself eludes our attempts conclusively and coherently to demarcate its workings, forever changing its forms, including in response to new technologies.

Following the burgeoning of critical theory and its subsequent cultural turn, we can observe a renewed interest in form in much recent critical and theoretical work, although this concern with form is now often inflected by close attention to historical context.23 As early as 1989, Kramer noted that formalist modes of analysis had fallen from favour in music criticism, ‘not so much as techniques but as ends in themselves’, and this also holds true of much work in literary criticism.24 Nevertheless, during the initial rise of cultural studies, scholars who combined interests in context and form risked an uncertain response from their disciplinary peers. Recently, more scholars within the interdisciplinary field of literature and music have overtly advocated approaches that combine historical and formal modes of interpretation, finding that ‘Twenty-first-century musico-literary criticism at its best’ overcomes the divide between these approaches by creating ‘formally and historically sensitive’ accounts of connections between literature and music.25

While some of the developments that I have outlined were prompted in reaction to one another, they do not form a sequential progression but constantly overlap and interact with one another, and with important critical traditions that long precede them. For some critics, a powerful strand links the values implicit in much present-day interpretive effort and the aesthetic and critical ideals of Romanticism. Relations between literature and music can be especially significant for such scholars in both disciplines. The methods at our disposal for interpreting music in the face of its referential opacity may have multiplied, but this has not closed down the question of how criticism might acknowledge qualities that we continue to value in music, as also in literature, although – or because – they elude definition; qualities that poetry has always valued and criticism might too. From this perspective, the Romantic tradition continues to be fundamental to the future of work in literature and music and beyond:
indeed, Andrew Bowie’s proposed new aestheticism draws on the ‘best Romantic aesthetic theory, from Hölderlin to Schlegel and Schleiermacher’.26  

Like the Romantics, the musicologist Scott Burnham, whom I quote at the head of this introduction, maintains that the poetic has remained the category that allows for exploration and acknowledgement of what, in musical experience, is most ‘directly and broadly vital to humanity’.27 Rather than asking ‘What is music about?’, Burnham posits, ‘We might shift our question from inherent properties of music to ways of relating to music; we might ask, “What are we about when we are about music.”’28 Critics who are open to music’s potential meanings in this spirit, who integrate an account of its affective power over them into their analysis, are essentially engaged in a poetic form of criticism: ‘the process through which one engages a non-verbal, emotional and/or aesthetic stimulus by trying to express it for oneself in words; this is a poetic act’.29

For the word and music scholar and French-literature specialist Peter Dayan, the existence of poetry may, in turn, be understood as dependent on the idea of music. An appeal to music in writing can paradoxically signal language at its most literary – thus most poetic – and the point at which words reach their limit.30 For Dayan, French critical theory best helps us to understand that literature’s engagement with music illuminates what we fundamentally care about in the experience of art – especially in the face of loss. In ‘Derrida, de Man, Barthes, and Music as the Soul of Writing’, the essay that completes our trio of methodological reflections, Dayan exemplifies as much as he explicates his commitment to this approach. He brings literature and music together to inspire us to think simultaneously about how they matter to one another and how they move us as listeners and readers.

After these three essays on methodology, The Edinburgh Companion to Literature and Music covers relationships between literature and music from the Middle Ages to the present in five historical sections. It closes with a final essay reflecting on future aspirations for the interdiscipline. With its focus on the relationships between two artistic media and two academic disciplines, this Companion offers a genuinely bi-disciplinary resource, authored (and in several cases co-authored) by literary scholars and musicologists. A comparative element is significant for all the historical periods covered. As a one-volume resource, the volume has a dominant focus on Western music and British literature because it would be impossible, within the space of a single book, adequately to account for the breadth of current work in world literature and international music. Nevertheless, musicologists habitually range widely through European literatures and the volume also gives its readers access to some of the exciting interdisciplinary work that is undertaken by scholars working in modern European literatures other than English.

The volume as a whole is structured to be straightforward and easy to navigate. Academic disciplines and their resources are chiefly organised by designated historical periods, and a historical structure was chosen as most helpful to the volume’s users. However, the contents are organised by century, rather than ‘period’; this accommodates various disjunctions between familiar literary and musical periods, disjunctions that might in themselves interest readers of the volume and encourage them to interrogate conventions of periodisation in their own areas of study. Each of the five historical parts of the volume contains an introductory editorial essay which outlines
connections between literature and music in the timespan covered and the development of the academic study of these connections; these essays also offer significant discussions of current and future methodological directions. Together with the contributions that follow for each part, they make recent developments in interdisciplinary scholarship available to a wider readership, including those new to the field or with different historical areas of expertise.

The historical range of this volume allows readers to trace shifts and developments in relations between literature and music over almost a thousand years. Cumulatively, work ranging over this timespan also illuminates points of connection that arch across the centuries: the ways, for instance, in which music’s power over the emotions has been of paramount importance within very different contexts, or the extent to which certain Romantic conceptions of poetry and music persist to the present day, as do ideas about music and national identity.

Because literature most frequently turns to music of the past for inspiration and music often turns to past literature for its subjects and models, a degree of connectivity over time is conspicuous within many musical and literary genres. For example, essays in Part IV of this volume discuss how nineteenth-century opera turned to English literature of earlier periods for its libretti, and how texts from the nineteenth century were adapted in twentieth-century opera. In the twentieth century, the intermedial possibilities opened up by new media intensify the still largely unexplored question of how music and text might reach us congruently. Stephen Benson proposes that certain contemporary texts can be ‘read as potential text score and so as prompt for performance’, while the editors of Part I of this *Companion* recommend a similar approach to much older music: the interdependent co-existence of music and text in the medieval period should lead us to regard both musical score and written text as partial instructions towards a performance to be completed respectively by words and by music.31

Thus certain fundamental points of connection have a very long reach. The way, for example, in which textual allusions to known, or potential, song lyrics leave medieval texts ‘haunted by song and sounds’ is identified as an increasing focus for critical attention by the editors of Part I of this volume.32 A corresponding point is then taken up in a case study by Ros King in Part II where she investigates once-familiar musical and textual completions for songs indicated within Renaissance plays.33 A form of musical haunting is also fundamental to many readings of musical allusion in nineteenth- and twentieth-century novels. Such narratives frequently contain song lyrics for which a melody is (sometimes intentionally) hard to identify. Even where the music can be identified, a certain sense of ghostliness remains intrinsic to the experience of reading these allusions. The way in which remembered music lingers in the mind may colour the experience of reading, or perhaps the performance practices and contexts depicted have lost familiarity over time. Interestingly, this does not really change for readings of texts dating from the age of precise musical reproduction in radio broadcasts and recordings; by now, the technologies and shared musical reference points of the first part of the twentieth century have receded into a past almost as foreign to the majority of readers as the 1800s. The broad sweep of connection which I have invoked is thus not intended to suggest an undifferentiated common ground between us and former periods of literature or music. Musical and textual hauntings can remind us how tantalisingly incomplete our reconstructions of the past, of necessity, must be.
And yet, what remains either discernible or imaginable about how these related arts were made and mattered in the past is vital to how they continue to matter to us now.

In total, *The Edinburgh Companion to Literature and Music* offers readers just over seventy new research essays and introductions that both chart developments in a dynamic field and make original contributions to it. Commissioned from international scholars in literature, music and modern languages, these essays jointly represent and extend the variety of recent interdisciplinary research on literature and music and provide an overview of previously unavailable breadth.

The work that is gathered here is necessarily and appropriately diverse, employing a multiplicity of approaches to illuminate the profusion of relations between literature and music under view. The majority of the contributions are brief case-study essays, with a proportion of more thematic essays. The total number of articles in each historical part reflects the current intensity of interdisciplinary work in each period. The flexible case-study format creates a focus on closely-related works, figures or motifs, enabling wider generalisations about relations between literature and music to be rooted in discussion and analysis of particular instances of connection between these arts. This format accommodates a variety of critical methods, as best befits the topic of each essay, and is fruitful for those wishing to pay attention to the particularity of aesthetics, as well as to wider context. At the same time, authors have been able to use specific cases to reflect on how their work is situated within ongoing developments in literary-musical studies and to make points of relevance to the wider scholarship of their period.

All the historical introductions in this volume discuss theoretical developments that inspired and followed the development of the new musicology, which has fostered new opportunities for interdisciplinary work in every period. In their introduction to Part I, Elizabeth Eva Leach, Helen Deeming and Ardis Butterfield reflect on how the ‘cultural turn’ in the study of music has benefited work on the medieval period, stimulating scholars to expand their attention to the wider contexts for musical experience and to re-envisage the functions of still-extant musical and verbal notation. For scholarship of the Middle Ages, the rise of interdisciplinary approaches over the past few decades has revived the joint study of text and music practised by earlier scholars who often united musical and philological expertise. A return to the combined study of arts that were conjoined during the period itself promises to redress some of the disjunctions set up by the increasingly specialised discipline boundaries that have arisen over the past century. This re-engagement with the intermediality of medieval art itself has allowed scholars to think anew about the period’s ‘abundance of contact between music and words’ so as to help us to understand medieval literature as simultaneously poetic and musical.34 The interdisciplinary topics explored in this part of the volume demonstrate how reconfiguration of scholarship in the period can open up a so far little explored field of comparative research to which the essays collected here make significant contributions.

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw increasing distinctions between different arts and the first development of some of the genres that were to come to prominence from the eighteenth century onwards. Nevertheless, symbiotic relationships between words and music remained fundamental during the Renaissance and beyond; thus careful attention to historical, cultural and theoretical contexts leads to illuminating results
for close analysis of music and literature of these centuries. As Ros King demonstrates in her introduction to Part II of this volume, principles of rhetoric were applied to music as well as helping to determine (‘notate’ even) the performance of poetry. The rhetorical ‘disposition’, or detailed patterning, of the elements of music and poetry emotionally engage and entrain their audiences. A better comprehension of how this works, particularly in the interplay of poetic metre and rhythm, may be gained by experiencing properly informed performances of Shakespeare and other dramatic poetry of the period. King’s introduction demonstrates how, as proposed by Kramer, meaning – in words as much as in music – is ‘performed not revealed’.35

Notably, some of the features of music that were to interest theorists of later eras already play a role in sixteenth-century discourse; music was valued as a form of communication that can bridge cultural divisions, and indeed it facilitated the exercise of soft power by sixteenth-century explorers in winning the trust of indigenous populations. Despite the gulf of centuries, fundamentally similar views of music’s affective power and of hierarchies of primitive and civilised music were to be elaborated when nineteenth-century scientists and thinkers developed evolutionary accounts of music’s origin and purpose. During the eighteenth century, detailed evaluations of music’s persuasive and emotive powers were to come to the fore as music’s association with the art of rhetoric formed the basis for emerging cultural and aesthetic theories that continued to underpin accounts of music in subsequent centuries.

For the remaining parts of our Companion, dedicated to the eighteenth century onwards, a more generic organisation holds sway. Connections between literature and music are chiefly explored with reference to the literary and musical genres that emerged during the eighteenth century, became predominant during the nineteenth, and remain the major focus for scholarship to the present day. As Suzanne Aspden explains in her introduction to Part III of this volume, opera, via the development of recitative and other elements, became the genre within which the relationship of words and music was most intensively explored during the eighteenth century; it also became the focus for growing interest in music as a vehicle for the expression and promotion of national character. The essays in this section of the volume reflect the way in which relationships between literature, music and constructions of national identity are appropriately a major concern of scholarship on this period. For work on the eighteenth century, the influence of critical theory has facilitated scholarly attention to the importance of rhetorical principles within music as well as language, and has broadened the scope of both literary texts and historical contexts under consideration.

Over the eighteenth century, music’s relationship with speech, theorised according to the principles of rhetoric, became part of the emerging study of aesthetics and thus the subject of wider philosophical enquiry. If music’s association with rhetoric had given it a closer alliance with the power of rhetorical utterance to move an audience, now, as Aspden notes, music also became increasingly celebrated for its power to express emotion. Its persuasive powers notwithstanding, music’s lack of specific referential content had long ranked it below both poetry and painting – whose mutual alliance had been seen as predominant on the basis of the Horatian principle ut pictura poesis (poetry is as painting). Now, the idea of music as a vehicle for feelings beyond the capacity of words and a transcendent power, set it at the head of the aesthetic hierarchy.36 Instrumental music, free from the controlling power of words, was to become increasingly valorised. Meanwhile, music’s relationship with language remained of
urgent interest, including to philosophers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and later to nineteenth-century thinkers such as Herbert Spencer and Charles Darwin.

Both the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century parts of this volume include topics that explore significant reconfigurations of relations between literature and music in the decades straddling the turn of these centuries; with the advent of Romanticism, aesthetic principles were established that continue to resonate. The Romantic elevation of music as the art which embodies the essence of all other arts, including poetry, remained explicitly at the centre of nineteenth-century thinking, as made clear by Pater’s famous 1877 dictum that ‘All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music’. This position remains fundamental to how we often conceive relations between literature and music.

My introduction to the nineteenth-century part of the volume discusses how literature, both poetry and prose, turned to music as a metaphor and model with a new intensity at this time. Meanwhile music, having shared a reference point in rhetoric with literature until the eighteenth century, turned increasingly to both poetic and narrative forms of literature as a source of inspiration and as a model for its own structural and expressive practices. The degree to which parallels with literary narrative became an important principle within musical composition and reception has helped to provide a particularly strong basis for comparative work with literature in scholarship on the nineteenth century. The music and writing of that period were the springboard for initial interdisciplinary work by Kramer and others, and subsequent work in this period has been prolific.

The fifth and final part of The Edinburgh Companion to Literature and Music covers the twentieth century and the early twenty-first century. As is commensurate with the plethora of developments following the mid-twentieth-century opening up of a comparative field, this is the most extensive part of the volume. As Stephen Benson outlines in his introduction to Part V, connections between literature and music since 1900 have been hugely varied, and have involved radical changes to how music and literature are defined, produced, reproduced, heard and read. While many continuities with earlier periods persist – Benson discusses ways in which opera, for instance, has continued to work out relationships between words and music – the literary and musical canons have expanded immensely, and so have the now very fluid categories of ‘literature’ and ‘music’ eligible for inclusion. Along with a greater diversity of theoretical approaches, this expansion in itself determines that the study of literature and music should be a diverse and far-reaching field; the study of literature and music now also constantly intersects with work in sound studies, which has recently developed as a related area of research.

In his introduction to this final part of the volume, Benson observes that literature, relatively speaking, has changed less in its dominant forms and its modes of production and consumption than has music: throughout the past century, the concept of music expanded to encompass sounds and acoustic experiences not previously included in this category; huge technological changes in how sound is reproduced and disseminated reinforced this, and have, for example, facilitated the current dominance of pop music in listening experience.

However, this disparity in their rate of change has augmented rather than diminished the rich interdependence of literature and music. As Benson observes, developments in musical recording have also offered writers ‘new possibilities for verbal
representation and invention’ that await further exploration.\textsuperscript{41} Accounts of music in literature remain vital in the ways in which they reflect on these changes in music, for literature offers ‘the most precious and detailed recording of the life of music in the era of its technological reproduction’.\textsuperscript{42} The degree to which we need to register listening experiences in words to mark them out as music forms an important dimension of interdisciplinary criticism, just as the evident ‘endless multiplicity’ of their relations compels us ‘continually to rethink what we mean by “words” and “music”’.\textsuperscript{43}

In the concluding essay to this volume, Michael Klein considers directions in which interdisciplinary methodologies in literature and music might develop, including in the light of the contribution made by this volume. For Klein, the future could potentially see work in literature and music participating in a great variety of endeavours: ‘I hope to show that a discipline devoted to literature and music has something to offer the projects of modernity, postmodernity, sociology, subjectivity, ideology, and on and on’, he writes.\textsuperscript{44} It will be crucial to future research that we communicate a considered account of how works of literature and music matter to the present alongside our investigations of the frequently alien past from which they arose:

Literature and music are like a double letter tossed in time to be picked up by a self for whom they were never intended, in a time for which they were not written. But when we take up these strange letters of sight and sound, we become the proper destination for their alien message simply by considering them as if they were written for us.\textsuperscript{45}

Implicitly, Klein’s concept of a musically informed subjectivity is that, much as in Lawrence Kramer’s accounts, it operates not only at ‘the level of our deepest selves’, to quote Scott Burnham, but intersubjectively – and across boundaries of both time and space.\textsuperscript{46} Klein emphasises that this ‘act of receiving literary and musical texts from the past as if they were written for us’ entails equal scrutiny of subjectivity and historical context. It requires our joint discipline to look ‘inwards’ to acknowledge individual ‘thoughts and responses’ to literature and music and their ideological bases, and also to look ‘outwards’: to history, to adjacent arts disciplines, and to ‘the greater projects of modernity and postmodernity within which it operates and to which it aspires to contribute’.\textsuperscript{47}

An increasingly overt emphasis on acknowledging how literature and music matter to us now is apparent amongst scholars who advocate that critics should not ignore present aesthetic responses or simply elide these within a history of past aesthetic response. This reflects an important shift of attention to the subjectivities of listeners and readers in criticism generally, a move which need not substitute critical and historical modes of scholarly analysis but can complement these.

A present and ongoing challenge is to find scholarly and rigorous modes of acknowledging, within critical analysis, the ways in which literature and music move us.\textsuperscript{48} Klein’s essay exemplifies the extent to which much of the most insightful interdisciplinary thinking on literature and music seeks to balance important elements that might sometimes have been regarded as opposed to one another. Often, this entails matching academically rigorous scholarship with acknowledgement of the aesthetic and emotional responses that draw us to literature and music. Such a combination will lead to a stronger and more meaningful mode of criticism than if either component
were absent. For Scott Burnham, this parity involves recognising the common ground shared by academic analysis and poetic insight, ‘acknowledging the poetic content and applicability of our analytic assumptions, as well as the analytic utility of our poetic observations’. Andrew Bowie posits the need to balance scholarly knowing and unreflecting aesthetic response, ‘mere theoretical “knowingness” and mere unreflective aesthetic enjoyment’. Michael Klein advocates counterpoising historical knowledge with present responses.

These varied arguments differ in ways that are not insignificant, yet all highlight how important this quest to unite analytical scrutiny and a registering of aesthetic response is to the future of scholarship and its audiences. If we want a wider audience among those who love literature and music, then it is vital to convey some sense within our scholarship of what draws us to these arts. This is a fundamental consideration for a volume such as this, which seeks to speak to readers for whom it offers a new combination of disciplines, as well as to those whose interests so far have been developed within a specific historical period.

Implicitly, and often explicitly, the authors in this volume seek to share their scholarly expertise in a manner that also conveys how and why liaisons between literature and music are important to human experience of these arts. We want a diversity of readers to discover the riches on offer in the pages that follow. We hope that you will find much to fascinate and much that resonates with how these two arts and their interactions matter to you and matter in the world. For, however manifested and defined at different times, the interdependence of music and literature – what Stephen Benson eloquently calls their ‘mutually constituting and affirming entanglement’ – is as old as the arts themselves and an ever more valuable object of enquiry and delight.

Notes


5. Previous to this, pioneering studies such as Music and Literature: A Comparison of the Arts by Calvin S. Brown (1948) and Verbal Music in German Literature by Steven P. Scher (1968) had paved the way for this integration of literary and musicological approaches.

11. Ibid., p. 5.
16. Ibid.
17. See Stephen Benson, Introduction to Part V of this volume.
20. Ibid., pp. 79–80.
22. See also Michael Klein, Intertextuality in Western Art Music (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005).
23. Kramer himself has expressed concern that a largely welcome emphasis on the contexts in which audiences hear music has meant that inquiries about ‘how’ music is performed threaten to ‘displace’ rather than ‘complement’ questions about ‘what’ constitutes ‘the social force of the musical work’ (‘A New Self: Schumann at 40’, Musical Times (Spring, 2007), 3–17 (p. 3). Meanwhile, in literary studies there have been growing signs over the past few years of a renewed, albeit keenly historicised, interest in form. This is demonstrated by Angela Leighton’s 2006 On Form which was reviewed by Seamus Perry as indicative of a new ascendency of ‘Form’ over ‘History’, Times Literary Supplement (24 and 31 August 2006), 12. Leighton’s most recent book is Hearing Things: The Work of Sound in Literature (London: Harvard University Press, 2018).
27. Burnham, p. 212.
28. Ibid., p. 213.
29. Ibid., p. 214.
30. See Dayan’s ‘Derrida, de Man, Barthes, and Music as the Soul of Writing’ in this volume. See also Music Writing Literature.
31. Stephen Benson, Introduction to Part V of this volume; Ardis Butterfield, Helen Deeming and Elizabeth Eva Leach, Introduction to Part I of this volume.
32. Ibid., Butterfield, Deeming and Leach.
33. Ros King, ‘From Tragicomedy to Opera? John Marston’s Antonio and Mellida’ in this volume.
34. Butterfield, Deeming and Leach in this volume.
36. See Suzanne Aspden, Introduction to Part III of this volume.
38. Benson, Introduction to Part V of this volume.
40. Benson, Introduction to Part V of this volume.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
46. Burnham, p. 216, as quoted at the head of this introduction.
47. Klein, ‘Origins and Destinations’ in this volume.
48. This is certainly not to advocate the privileging of passing subjective responses as a basis for aesthetic judgement. As Bowie comments, feelings about a concert where a listener felt sleepy and disengaged hardly form adequate grounds for defining aesthetic value; see Bowie, p. 78.
49. ‘I am asking us to recognise that we have never truly abandoned the notion of poetic significance in music. This involves acknowledging the poetic content and applicability of our analytic assumptions, as well as the analytic utility of our poetic observations’ (Burnham, p. 199).
51. Ibid. Bowie emphasises that, since what moves those who write about art is essentially what moves anyone, we must not ‘lose sight of the reasons why we might have engaged in the first place with the works about which we theorise’.