

scendental and 'absolute' versus its potential for socio-cultural meaning.

Chapter 6 sits somewhat awkwardly between the Beethoven chapters, but makes sense chronologically, as Fillion here discusses Forster's final novel, *Maurice* (she omits *A Passage to India* from her analysis), published posthumously in 1971 for fear of allegations concerning its focus on male homosexuality. Forster started writing it as early as 1913, and Fillion traces the novel's influences to Tchaikovsky's biography (published in an abridged English translation in 1906), which detailed the composer's struggle with his sexual identity and his unhappy marriage. As Fillion argues, this biography was to influence Forster personally and in the drafting of his novel: *Maurice*, too, gets to read Tchaikovsky's biography, and throughout the novel Tchaikovsky's music is used as a code for homosexuality.

Fillion's neglect of *A Passage to India* (1924) is more puzzling. Sound (in form of the echo in the Marabar Caves) and music (as performed by the Indian musician Godbole) play a crucial role in the novel, as they contribute to the overall sense of disorientation the English characters feel in a country that remains incomprehensible to them because they cannot see nor hear 'the real India'. This cultural ignorance is significant in the novel's attack on imperial rule, while it also reflects Forster's own difficulties with understanding Indian music. Therefore, I would tend to disagree with Fillion that music in *A Passage to India* merely plays 'a relatively minor symbolic role in its trenchant sociopolitical critique of colonialism in India' (p. xxi).

In chapters 7 and 8 Fillion steers away from Forster's literary fiction to focus on his personal writings on Beethoven's sonatas (unfinished, begun in 1939) and his collaboration on Benjamin Britten's opera *Billy Budd* (premiered 1 December 1951). Although astute and insightful, both chapters feel rather brief. It is, without a doubt, fascinating to see Forster's notes on Beethoven's piano sonatas; published for the first time, they provide a brilliant insight into Forster's personal thoughts about his experiences of playing the sonatas, as well as his critical evaluation of the music. Fillion's introductory summary and commentary are highly useful. However, its brevity (ten pages of Fillion's commentary that precede five pages of Forster's notes) left me wanting more. The shift from Forster's novels raises the question why Fillion did not include a chapter on his theoretical writings about music.

Chapter 9 concludes the book with a concise summary of how music works in Forster's novels, how it informs the characters' personalities, and how it mirrors and comments on the cultural-historical context of composers and works. Moreover, it offers a signpost to other musical authors such as Thomas Mann and Marcel Proust.

Michelle Fillion's volume is a very timely publication in the current surge of interdisciplinary studies, particularly in the field of word and music studies, and she references work by other word and music scholars such as Lawrence Kramer's *Music and Poetry: The Nineteenth Century and After* (Berkeley, 1984) and Delia de Sousa Correa's *George Eliot, Music and Victorian Culture* (Basingstoke, 2003). Her book is therefore to be welcomed as a significant contribution to our understanding of Forster and early twentieth-century music.

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*Richard Wagner: Tristan und Isolde*. Ed. by Arthur Groos. pp. ix + 215. Cambridge Opera Handbook. (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2011, £17.99. ISBN 978-0-521-43738-7.)

Any degree of hyperbole with which one might speak of *Tristan und Isolde* will already have been exceeded. Thus Arthur Groos's editorial Introduction to the new Cambridge Opera Handbook opens with Nietzsche's celebrated dictum, '*Tristan und Isolde*, the actual opus metaphysicum of all art', and soon quotes Wagner dating a letter to Ludwig II 'the second day of *Tristan*' (13 June 1865). A new calendar has begun, the air of another planet almost upon us. Yet it is often difficult to know what to say beyond apparently truthful yet breathless panegyrics, including those that fall, like Nietzsche's, into reverse. (Adorno managed both at once, his dialectics less negative than those for the *Ring*.) Groos's handbook quite properly grasps the nettle by proposing different standpoints from which to view the work: scholarly anamorphosis, one might say, though the danger remains of considering all as equal, when music and metaphysics seem persistently in this particular case to trump all other concerns.

'A musical synopsis,' writes Groos, would, 'unlike the overview of a conventional number opera', most likely be 'as arduous to read as it would be to write.' Instead, therefore, we have

the editor's own translation—the first, so far as he is aware, or I am—of Wagner's complete prose draft from 1857. This is very useful, especially when so finely rendered into English, though the lack of some form of musical 'synopsis' or outline remains felt. What strikes most upon rereading the sketch is its considerable length, for a plot in which not very much ultimately would 'happen', and the greater prominence accorded not just to the exterior world of the day, but to that world viewed in frankly political fashion. Such discrepancies fascinate the scholar and the *Tristan* devotee, yet the unwitting reader might be misled as much as by more obvious differences in plot. A few editorial notes would have assisted.

I cannot help but wonder whether many stage directors would prefer the work envisaged in the sketch to Wagner's final exaltation of metaphysics. Christof Loy, directing *Tristan* in 2009 for Covent Garden, declared that he could not 'really equate the couple's position as outsiders with a Schopenhauerian denial of the world'. Ironically—unknowingly, I suspect—that inability seems to have led Loy to stage the second act as 'opera', rather as Wagner, quoted in Thomas Grey's chapter, acknowledged he could have written it (p. 70): 'against a brilliant court ball, "during which the illicit lovers could lose themselves . . . where their discovery would generate a suitably scandalous impression and the whole apparatus that goes with that"'. Instead, in *Tristan* as music drama, 'almost nothing but music occurs in this act'.

Stewart Spencer's informative account of *Tristan's* production history, extending as far as Claus Guth's 2008 Villa Wesendonck production for Zurich, shows that few stagings have been brave enough to take the composer-conductor-director at his word. (Not that that is necessarily Spencer's intention.) The much-maligned Cosima came closer than many, at least in intent. Her tentative suspicion of Wagner's realism appears surprisingly progressive, presaging directors such as Adolphe Appia and Alfred Roller and perhaps coming closer to Wagner's metaphysical conception than he had himself as director. The *Prosaentwurf* had drawn to a close, *Götterdämmerung*-like, with the words, 'The bystanders are profoundly moved', before concluding, 'Marke blesses them'. However, in 1859, summarizing the work's concerns for Mathilde Wesendonck, Wagner omitted not only King Marke's forgiveness, but also Tristan's agonies at Kareol. True action, the *Handlung* of his own description, had been irreversibly transferred to the noumenal world:

'redemption: death, dying, destruction, never more to waken!' (*Tristan und Isolde: Vorspiel*, in *Sämtliche Schriften und Dichtungen*, ed. Richard Sternfeld and Hans von Wolzogen, 16 vols. in 10 (Leipzig, 1912–14), xii. 346).

That, at least, is my reading, against which one should note that, even in 1859, Wagner describes the 'custom of the time' as having led to the sin of marriage for politics' sake, although his words seem very much a preliminary to lead us forever into the opposed realm of the Night. John Deathridge, in his chapter, 'Public and private life: On the genesis of *Tristan und Isolde* and the *Wesendonck Lieder*', also posits a transformation from (p. 21) 'relatively straightforward story of imagined love tragically compromised by jealousy into a desolate near-metaphysical exploration of the anguish of being-in-the-world brought about by the fatal intoxication of exquisite passion'. However, the principal concern of Deathridge's contribution lies elsewhere: a flight from the 'private' world of the *Lied*, partly defined by Liszt's *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* article on Robert Franz, into the 'public realm'. Moreover, it is crucial to Wagner's still much-misunderstood vision, as Deathridge points out in a searching exploration, that Tristan and Isolde are martyrs not only to 'the public world that has caught them in its vice, but also . . . [to] the torment of love itself' (p. 34). In Michael Tanner's words, then, *Tristan* is the 'Passion of passion' (*Wagner* (London, 1996), 140). Deathridge takes a post-Adornian turn in claiming (p. 35): 'Wagner's staging of the private in metaphysical, quasi-religious form takes on, before its final redemption, a drastic, almost tyrannical character that is not so much at odds with social authority as peculiarly reliant on it.' One might add that *Tristan's* celebration and indictment of romantic and Romantic love grant it a special place somewhere between, if not beyond, the St Matthew Passion and *Così fan tutte*. Mozart's work, however, remains clear-eyed, more 'modern' in its absolute refusal to transcend, able to express what it does through a form of 'artificiality' not available to Wagner as a child of German Romanticism.

Groos adopts a different form of revisionism in his chapter, 'Between memory and desire: Wagner's libretto and late Romantic subjectivity', suggesting that the secondary literature has emphasized musical problems at the expense of the (verbal) text, neither musicologists nor literary scholars having shown much awareness of 'nineteenth-century "libretto language"' (p. 37). There is much that stands as a useful corrective: for instance, the contrast

in Wagner's favour between his verse and that of a well-regarded contemporary poet, Karl Immermann, and Wagner's use of the Goethian nonce-word 'Liebeslust', suggesting Wagner's positioning of his poem as an alternative to *Faust* (pp. 37–8, 41). Yet the emphasis in Wagner's aesthetics and practice lies not only upon the combination of words with music and of those with other aspects of the drama too, but still more so upon the heightening of the expressive potential of one aspect by virtue of dialectical heightenings of the others. Should we separate words, music, gesture, ideas, and so on, for short-term analytical reasons or even just to find somewhere to begin, we need constantly to remind ourselves of the need to recombine. It seems that the Germanist editor wishes at least to tilt the scales unduly away from music, a suspicion granted credence by his perhaps unmerited claim (p. 37) that 'twentieth-century musicologists'—presumably twenty-first too?—'are unaccustomed to the emotional and rhetorical excess of Romantic verse drama in general'. That said, Jürgen Maehder's chapter on timbre would have benefited from a little more effort to relate his concerns to concerns such as those Groos outlines, and indeed to other forms of analysis and criticism. Exaggerations such as 'the compositional legitimation of an instrumental line increasingly relies on the sonic result it produces' (p. 114) might thereby have been avoided.

Joseph Kerman's chapter offers by contrast a brief yet pregnant discussion of how the Act I Prelude might contribute to understanding of more than just itself: words and music. His opponent, imaginary or otherwise, is similar to Groos's: music theorists who have 'little... to say... about the opera itself' (p. 54). Kerman suggests that a 'Prelude complex', namely the first seventeen bars—Robert Bailey's 'opening unit'—constitutes a recurring element in the drama and helps shape musical development as 'elastic framework for recitatives, for actual verbal language' (p. 57). It is not the only way to consider Wagner's music, but, as Kerman freely owns (p. 66), 'all technical and quasi-technical terms have to be stretched hard to keep up with Wagner's mature practice'. Moreover, Kerman recognizes throughout that consideration of the music is likely to be most fruitful when it goes beyond merely relating analysis to Wagner's other concerns, so as to incorporate them and, to a certain extent, to found itself upon them. (The same, of course, may be said of those other concerns.)

Read in conjunction with Grey's chapter, we gain further illumination of the broader dramatic elements from analysis. Treatment of the 'Glance' motif follows on nicely from Kerman's treatment of the Prelude. For, whatever the intent—and the degree or skill of realization—of Wagner's stage directions, only the music can truly instantiate transformations such as that of the 'lovers' musical gaze' (p. 86). Grey also reminds us what a shock the floating tonalities and indeterminate metre of the unaccompanied, 'acousmatic'—borrowing from film theory—*Sailor's Song* must have presented to early audiences. He over-eggs the pudding, though, in claiming (p. 73) that 'for generations, operas had almost invariably opened with lusty, full-voiced choruses, backed up by all the orchestral resources at hand'. Mozart and Beethoven would have dissented; so would the composer of *Tannhäuser* and by now almost three of the (admittedly unstaged) *Ring* dramas. Should the song then be considered 'a calculated provocation'? Perhaps, though I find it difficult to believe that Wagner's belief in his work would have been overridden by any impulse *pour épater les bourgeois*: more likely, surely, a post-Beethovenian—or proto-Mahlerian—acceptance that the public might have to wait.

Not necessarily so, however, in the case of Hans Werner Henze, whose 1973 *Tristan* is the final work discussed in Steven Huebner's fascinating intertextual traversal of 'Tristan's traces' from the celebrated *Meistersinger* references onwards. (Henze's 1971 'show', *Der langwierige Weg in die Wohnung der Natascha Ungeheuer*, partly born out of concern at the bourgeois public success of his most Wagnerian opera, *The Bassarids*, certainly seems designed in every respect to provoke.) One only wishes that Huebner had been allotted more space. *That* chord receives its due, but so do other 'traces', for instance *Tristan*-esque eroticism, decadence, and also, more critically, 'desublimation' in Hindemith (*Mörder, Hoffnung der Frauen*), Satie, and even the Buñuel-Dali film, *L'Age d'or*, its pornography mocking transcendence. I was a little surprised, though, to see no late twentieth- or early twenty-first-century works discussed. Jonathan Harvey's 2007 *Wagner Dream*, for instance, might stand closer to *Parsifal*, but *Tristan* has relevance here too. Huebner rightly points (p. 165), however, to the difficulty 'Wagner's romantic transcendence' has held for the twentieth century—and presumably the twenty-first. Standing in the wake of Schoenberg, Adorno, Boulez, et al., we tend to find Wagnerian totality something to

which our age may or may not aspire, but either way cannot achieve. Perhaps the *Ring*, with its overlapping influences, narratives, and messages, comes less close to perfection and therefore lends itself more readily to contemporary, fragmentary emulation.

The two chapters that have previously appeared elsewhere, those by Deathridge and Kerman, are very much worth rereading, yet it is worth noting that a relatively short volume (166 pages, exclusive of endnotes and index) devotes thirty-three pages to reproduction of essays readily available elsewhere, the former in a book published three years previously. Maybe a point is being made about fragmentation. It is, moreover, perhaps surprising not to have a chapter dealing with musical performance: neither Furtwängler nor Flagstad receives a mention. Nor does performance practice. Should 'historically informed' accounts eschew the Shepherd Song's English horn in favour of the *Holztrumpete*? Given his subject of timbre, Maehder might have acknowledged that the solo he ascribes to the former instrument was not necessarily intended for it. From a philosophical standpoint, more on Schopenhauer, Grey's references notwithstanding, and a more than cursory mention of Novalis might have befitted a 'handbook'. However, a book many times larger would still have had difficult choices to make; Groos's shifting of priorities certainly prompts us to consider what our own might be.

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*Wagner and the Erotic Impulse*. By Laurence Dreyfus. pp. xvi + 266. (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., and London, 2010, £19.95. ISBN 978-0-674-01881-5.)

The year 2010 saw the publication of two books on Wagner with seemingly similar issues at their core: Barry Emslie's *Richard Wagner and the Centrality of Love* (Woodbridge, 2010) [reviewed by Roger Allen in *Music & Letters*, 92 (2011), 492–5] and Laurence Dreyfus's monograph about 'the centrality of the erotic impulse in [Wagner's] music' (p. 116). However, the two books could not be more different in their approach and content, reflecting perhaps how unstable, or rich, the concepts of Love and Lust are for Wagner. Emslie's discussion of 'Love' is essentially a theoretical tract that journeys to the conceptual heart of Wagner's ideologies of race, blood, and redemption, and

probes the contrasting female archetypes that Wagner—according to Emslie—strove to reconcile and unify: namely the two biblical Marys, virginal and carnal. Depicted perhaps most divergently as Elisabeth and Venus in *Tannhäuser*, these archetypes reach their 'reconciled' union in Wagner's final drama, *Parsifal*, in the figure of Kundry. Clearly, Emslie is arguing that for Wagner, Love and Lust belong together, even if they have been separated—one of the many separations in Wagner's *Weltanschauung*—by (especially modern) culture. With the aid of Herder, Hegel, Feuerbach, and a dash of postmodern theory, Emslie's wide-ranging discussion takes him through the texts of Wagner's dramas and many of his most significant prose works, but he never mentions the music.

By contrast, Dreyfus's book is driven by the music, and Wagner's textual apparatus serves only a supporting role. Dreyfus's focus on the 'erotic' also avoids a discussion of 'love', an implicit acceptance of the separation that Emslie argues against. So we are left with the aesthetic representation, and ultimately the audio-physical pleasure, of the erotic hinted at in the text of the dramas, but which saturates the score.

Dreyfus is facilitated in his approach by specifically disregarding any recent theoretical arguments. Instead, he returns to the source meaning, in this case, Wagner's music and the immediate reaction to it by listeners famous and not so famous. Although this methodology and emphasis might dismay some readers, I was happy to be immersed in the music, given that so much recent Wagner literature seems to claim that a coherent argument about Wagner can be made in its absence.

In his own time, Wagner was a scandal, Dreyfus argues, not because of his unusually vocal anti-Semitic pronouncements or proto-fascistic nationalism—issues that have come to dominate the Wagner discourse over the past two to three decades—but because of his over-the-top eroticism: immediately recognized and rejected by some, wholeheartedly embraced by others. In other words, Dreyfus (re-)visits an old discourse, one of the first produced by Wagner's overwhelming oeuvre. And yet, to paraphrase a line from *Die Meistersinger*, Dreyfus takes something old but makes it new, because no one has yet written a book that proposes to examine closely how Wagner relates to and deals with the erotic.

Though the cultural barriers preventing a discussion of eroticism have been eroded, one reason for the lacuna stems from the methodo-