

The Invention of Beethoven
and Rossini

Historiography, Analysis, Criticism

Edited by NICHOLAS MATHEW

and

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MARTIN DEASY

1 | Dahlhaus's Beethoven-Rossini *Stildualismus*:
lingering legacies of the text-event dichotomy

JAMES HEPOKOSKI

[The differing cultures of Beethoven and Rossini point to] nothing less than a far-reaching rift in the concept of music, a rift that constitutes one of the fundamental musical facts of the nineteenth century. This distinction between opera and instrumental music . . . was a major, if not the decisive, factor in the resultant duality of styles . . . Beethoven, virtually in one fell swoop, claimed for music the strong concept of art, without which music would be unable to stand on a par with literature and the visual arts; Rossini, however, preserving in the nineteenth century a residue of the eighteenth-century spirit, was completely oblivious of this concept. Beethoven's symphonies represent inviolable musical "texts" whose meaning is to be deciphered with "exegetical" interpretations; a Rossini score, on the other hand, is a mere recipe for a performance . . . Rossini's musical thought hinged on the performance as an event, not on the work as a text passed down and from time to time given acoustical "explications"; and a score could be adapted to the changing conditions governing various theaters without violating its meaning.¹

These words provoke. In their stark binaries they throw down the high-art gauntlet in a manner both sternly magisterial and unsettlingly controversial. That manner has been especially vexing for a number of Anglophone music scholars who came of age in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, striving to wrest free from such ways of framing music-historical issues. This is no news. For the past quarter-century, some of the leading British and American thinkers, seeing in skeptical, more current trends the roads to scholarly emancipation, have grown suspicious of what were once standard claims of traditional musicology and its intertwined relationship with the Germanocentric art-music project. Into such emerging agendas Dahlhaus's late-century defense of the work concept and its related aesthetic implications took on, for some, a haunting *nom/non-du-père* aspect that has been difficult to dispel. This, too, was once our past, our old faith, and for all of Dahlhaus's concern to project a studied, historical even-handedness, it is difficult for English-language readers not to hear behind such words the familiar tone of exclusionary confidence in the Austro-Germanic, nineteenth-century instrumental work.

Here Dahlhaus summoned up the majesty of Beethoven's symphonies, affirmed as art in the most elevated terms (*der emphatische Kunstbegriff*), cognitively profound and calling forth sustained, contemplative exegeses, in order immediately to juxtapose them with a connotatively dismissive wording for a Rossini opera score as a "mere recipe" (*eine bloße Vorlage*).² What rankles is not his admiration for Beethoven's achievement, which needs no defense – although there is also a strong sense in which Beethoven's scores were also *Vorlagen* (scripts, instructions, proposals) for performance, as Dahlhaus would surely have agreed. Rather (with the deprecatory adjective *bloß* – "mere," connotatively "nothing more than"), it is his seemingly untroubled collapse of Rossini's music – along with, doubtless, broad stretches of comparable non-Germanic repertoires – into intellectually second-tier, ephemeral "events" that did not invite a complementary intensity of reflection on their own terms and, perhaps by implication, still do not do so today. That Beethoven and Rossini, and the heirs to their traditions, were working within differently inflected musical worlds, however one might wish to construe them, is not at issue. Instead, it is Dahlhaus's absolutizing of that difference, granting entrance for only one of them into the temple of "the emphatic concept of art." His quick, frictionless assessment is facilitated by his lofty tone and loaded language, conveying the impression of pronouncing a definitive verdict, one also seeking to bear a prescriptive force for musically sensitive readers.

At issue once again, then, is the style-dualism that Dahlhaus sought to revive over three decades ago, in his *Die Musik des 19. Jahrhunderts*, as a foundational category for the historian's conceptual marshaling of the dispersed traces of that century's music. Such a situation presents us with a paradox. On the one hand, these claims are reductive and ideologically loaded, as all dualisms are likely to be. More than that, Dahlhaus's hierarchically structured oppositions seem unwittingly to have been tailor-made for an elementary deconstructionist critique: they propose oppositional binaries in which the one (*text*, here understood as the notational content of a singular work)³ is to be grasped as more valuable than the marginalized other (*event*), each term of which is to be defined in large part by what it is not. (Given such an invitation, the incitement to reverse these oppositions, replacing the center with the margins, may be more than some Derrideans can resist.) In addition, not only are they deferential to the Beethoven-to-Schoenberg art-music tradition but they are also superannuated and German-culture-specific in obvious ways. For such reasons they are all too readily historicizable. On the other hand, Dahlhaus's assessments were by no means casually constructed. Grounded in mid-century

methodological and philosophical reflection, they remain impossible to dismiss – with any sense of intellectual responsibility. In base-line terms (*Grundbegriffe*, or foundational concepts) they precipitate a binary conviction that for long has been grafted onto the institutional art-music project. Moreover, it seems productive at least to ponder the Beethoven-Rossini *Stildualismus* ("duality of styles") assertion, particularly as couched in Dahlhaus's authoritative tone. It does interlace music and philosophy in telling ways – at least *some* music and *some* philosophy. And, as I suggest below, what Dahlhaus advanced as a binary dualism appropriate to nineteenth-century music is a conceptual dualism that is still thriving, even among his sharpest critics, in recast variants.⁴

But Dahlhaus's assertion is fraught with traps for the unwary. While near the outset of *Die Musik des 19. Jahrhunderts* [*Nineteenth-Century Music*] he was eager to resuscitate the wording of Kiesewetter's binary from 1834, "Die Epoche Beethoven und Rossini,"⁵ it would be short-sighted to suppose that he was principally concerned with writing about either Beethoven or Rossini as a topic per se – that is, as individualized composers pursuing their craft within rich and complex cultural situations. For Dahlhaus neither the persons nor the inevitable messiness of historical details seem to have mattered much. Those who devote scholarly time to Italian opera can hardly escape noticing that Dahlhaus, at bottom, had little or no interest in Rossini *qua* Rossini – little desire to grasp this music on its own terms, much less to situate it within the thick-context specifics of its own cultural circumstances. Indeed, in *Nineteenth-Century Music* his first example of the Rossinian side of the *Stildualismus* is a four-measure extract of a cavatina from Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots*, as if it were all one and the same thing: Mediterranean opera and Not-Beethoven.⁶ One might also conclude that here and elsewhere Dahlhaus was ultimately not much interested in Beethoven either, except insofar as the latter could be brought on stage as the foremost token of an aesthetic principle, that of the now-attained musical "text" (functionally relatable to the concept of the "artwork" or "the strong concept of art") to be reflected upon by Schoenberg-oriented analysis and hermeneutics. In *Nineteenth-Century Music* Dahlhaus called upon these composers to serve as exemplars to advance the broader aesthetic claims of the more generative abstract binary, *text* and *event* (or, for most purposes, *work* and *event*), which are the real topics of his historical overview.

Similarly, in the initial, *Stildualismus* section of that book – the part considered here – Dahlhaus showed no concern for the actual views of Kiesewetter, except to peel off the latter's binary, "the era of Beethoven and Rossini," one of a succession of such dualistic subheadings in Kiesewetter's

book.⁷ This enabled him to claim a veneer of historically applicable nineteenth-century terminology and then to recirculate it freely for his own purposes as a *Grundbegriff*. In the same way, he merged Kiesewetter's binary with another one from almost eight decades later, the "two cultures of music" (not the "twin musical cultures," as mistranslated in the English version),⁸ metaphorically adapted from August Halm's 1913 study, *Von zwei Kulturen der Musik*.⁹ Halm's "zwei Kulturen" were fugue and sonata, represented by Bach and Beethoven. But no matter: Dahlhaus found the 1913 catchphrase's familiarity to be transferable to what he wished to regard as another aesthetic-cultural split, text and event, now also to be conflated with "Die Epoche Beethoven und Rossini."

In short, the book's real action takes place in the "subthematic" concepts boiling productively underneath the workaday surface of mere composers, compositions, and potentially recoverable social environments. This approach to historical writing claims to dive below the charged details of the actual cultural surfaces that inevitably complicate interpretive matters in order to posit generative *Grundbegriffe* that drive the whole enterprise.¹⁰ Not coincidentally, it finds its methodological correlate in Dahlhaus's own construals of the significance of Beethoven's musical technique, especially as enhanced in the composer's late style. Here, he claimed, "the thematic structure is a mere façade: the actual musical idea, instead of being presented to view as a clearly defined theme, retreats into the interior of the music, half invisible, as a subtheme . . . Once the thematic structure becomes merely a surface phenomenon . . . the expression begins to take on a mask-like aura."¹¹ As soon as we grasp Dahlhaus's procedural analog to this – historical subthematicism – we realize how off-target an enterprise it is to correct or object to his descriptions of the music of Rossini, Beethoven, or others (many of which descriptions are as inadequate as they are confidently declared) or to point out his paper-thin constructions of the historical circumstances of the periods under review. In these terms, quibbling with Dahlhaus's "facts" gets one nowhere.

Nor need one belabor what is also obvious in Dahlhaus's text-event binary, namely that here the term "text" reflects an older usage, one in which a form-governed "text" (graphically reproducible content, the notational trace) was a correlate of the phenomenological concept of a "work," with attention paid to authorial intentionality, potential stability of meaning, and so on.¹² In more recent times, the scholarly community's different inclination, post-Barthes, post-Derrida, has been to construe "work" and "text" as dichotomous, to identify the latter term more with the poststructuralist postulate of textuality that connotes a text as something unstable

and nonclosural, an open methodological field, a tissue of quotations – including paratexts, intertexts, and much else besides – exploding the supposedly self-contained work into a dissemination of cultural implications, sometimes contradictory ones, all of which are constituents of a broader system of dissonant social discourse.

But at least for the moment we can put aside more current concepts of text to return to Dahlhaus's, where we find that these key terms – text and its sibling, work (*Werk*), as well as their opposite, event (*Ereignis*) – appear as leading themes throughout his oeuvre from the late 1960s through the late 1980s. It is within this larger Dahlhausian context that one may situate his similar remarks about the Beethoven-Rossini *Stildualismus*. Time and again we encounter phenomenologically rooted defenses of the "aesthetic object" (one that "keeps the listener at a distance, not unlike a sacred object") along with the persistence of its "aesthetic presence," a textual stability inviting reflective explication through the differing epochs and places of historical time; an insistence, consequently, that the genuine artwork, in history (unlike the mere event), winds up being "cut away from the accidental conditions out of which it arose"; and the distinction between art and non-art equated with the distinction between text and event.¹³ What follows from this is Dahlhaus's call for an "aesthetic" (and not "political") exegesis of genuine texts or works, though not of (Rossini-like, Paganini-like) events. Because the latter are mere "arrangements" or "scenarios," any such piece "calls neither for formal analysis nor for an interpretation of contents." "There was nothing to 'understand' about the magic that emanated from Rossini's music."¹⁴ That music exists largely to deliver the affective charge of its execution's moment, following which it expires into barrenness – or, put more skeptically, following which its latent intellectual barrenness is made manifest.¹⁵ Rounding out the position, Dahlhaus conceded that an event-based piece or virtuoso-centered performance might indeed attain a degree of "perfection" on its own, limited terms, though in its evanescence and basis in momentary effects it could never attain the "greatness" of the true artwork.¹⁶

That this is a limited construction of how music of all types might be appropriately treated by scholars could hardly be clearer to present-day readers. There is no reason to suppose that the claimed dichotomy is so absolute, so pristinely dualistic. Musical artifacts claimed as works are also event- or performance-based in multiple ways, not so easily extracted from local histories and individual performances. Conversely, music that Dahlhaus would consign to event status need not be excluded from consideration by means of the exegetical methods that some commentators

might wish to identify as more typically associated with “art,” however that might be defined. One hardly needs reminding that the past few decades have opened significant inquiries into a wider range of styles and genres of musical discourse – and by no means on an intellectually impoverished level.

The distinction blurs further when we recall the observations of such reception theorists as Hans Robert Jauss, who insisted in a once-noted essay from 1970 that texts (or works) are themselves unstable and that the reading or exegesis of any text is itself a performative event:

A literary work is not an object that stands by itself and that offers the same view to each reader in each period. It is not a monument that monologically reveals its timeless essence. It is much more like an orchestration that strikes ever new resonances among its readers. . . . Anyone who considers a series of such literary facts as a piece of the history of literature confuses the eventful character of the work of art with that of historical matter-of-factness . . .

[Thus a central question in reception history becomes:] How can the individual work, which positivistic literary history determined in a chronological series and thereby reduced to the status of a “fact,” be brought back into its historical-sequential relationship and thereby once again be understood as an “event”?¹⁷

Jauss’s fact/event dichotomy may have found responsive echoes in Dahlhaus’s text-event binary. In the words cited at the beginning of this essay, the latter did underscore the importance of the music’s invitation for the production of “‘exegetical’ interpretations.” Still, Dahlhaus’s larger point is that it is the persistent aesthetic presence of a Beethoven work – its background basis in ideas, as opposed to what he considered to be the alternatives represented by a Rossini score – that encourages us to contemplate it in this manner at all. Yet even if one grants Jauss’s assertion that works are actualized only in the performative events of reading and interpretation, we have at least muddied the conceptual waters. At bottom, texts or works are what they are only because they can again and again, like notational scripts, become the basis for exegetical performances typically designed to impress within the synchronic field of cultural production and its economy of prestige. To the extent that the reading-event is prioritized as the necessary factor giving voice to the otherwise mute work, the implication follows that in the last analysis works are subordinate to the event-based reawakenings that make them perceptually possible. Presumed works evaporate into vacuities until they are recalled back into tangibility by singular performative readings that are themselves transitory, evaporative events.

Reverential convictions: modes of truth-telling

Lurking in the background of all this is the familiar belief that the art-music experience is capable of providing its text-adequate listeners with access to a world-forgetting plunge into a personally enriching profundity. Truth claims buttress the foundations of the ideology of art music, which was forged primarily in the nineteenth century. It was the particular genius of Dahlhaus that he devised a sophisticated method of reaffirming these convictions by insisting that he was exploring them as historical facts that should not be swept away – that is, examining them sympathetically via the hermeneutic principle of *Verstehen*.¹⁸ In the most ardent variants of the truth-assertion (rarely too far away from the main lines of Beethoven commentary), one claims an elevated content capable of being sacralized into a *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* that discloses an otherwise-hidden spiritual, sublime, or historical essence. In this view, artworks, as emancipatory spaces, are to be kept ritually clean, preserved from threats of contamination by the impure everyday world outside. In turn, this places the highest demands upon performers, listeners, and commentators. What is required is a willingness to believe, an openness to the experiential otherness given to us in the artwork. (As is well known, the prevalence of this strain of discourse, along with the problem of the work concept itself, has been much interrogated in recent decades. Seeking to puncture the sober old pieties is by now a well-worn orthodoxy in its own right.)¹⁹

While Dahlhaus’s high-register style is idiosyncratic, it is only one subposition among a larger group of traditional, interrelated claims that have encouraged a close and honorific examination of the musical details of Beethoven’s compositions – and not, say, of Rossini’s or Paganini’s or Meyerbeer’s. A characteristic aim of this larger group is to affirm that some previously postulated truth is recoverable either beyond the acoustic surface or embedded in its sonic materiality. This can be an exclusively musical truth – the claim that Beethoven and his like provide us with revelatory explorations into the sonic language (a point of view found, for instance, in Charles Rosen’s familiar treatment of late Beethoven)²⁰ – or one that is philosophical, culture-critical, spiritual, testimonial, negative-dialectical, and so on: take your pick. Once the truth-claim is thrown into the mix, the conceptual and moral stakes are raised, and the evaluative burden is thrown into the laps of the performer and the listener in order to challenge their adequacy to the task. This elite repertory comes to be regarded as a prized collection of musical singularities to be embraced one

by one with high-culture seriousness – a reverent bond underpinned with a vow of veneration – lest one fall prey to the charge of musical insensitivity, coarse philistinism, or worse.

Conveying an effect of rapt, ultimate seriousness is more or less de rigueur among performers of European art music. It is an integral feature of the ritualized enterprise, the ticket to admission. Here nothing is more important than the devotional attention to a rendering of individualized detail. The ceremonial retracing of revered classics is to be kept inviolable and intact, at least for the duration of the performance. In this cultic temporal span, one participates in the reanimation of *this* specific fugue, *this* specific sonata, not *that* one, and in the best of circumstances the listening audience or selected members thereof will reciprocate communally, as a supportive congregation of believers. Such devotion is not limited to Germanic repertoires: today's performers and devotees of, say, Rossini – or Meyerbeer, or Paganini – approach the manufacturing and reception of their musical products with a similar closeness of training, attention, and regard. Complementarily, in their analyses of individual pieces, the central lines of music theory – Schenkerian, Schoenbergian, neo-Toveyan, or otherwise – have typically been supercharged with evaluative verdicts grounded in the work concept and its affirmative explication: uncovering a trans-historical depth capable of enriching all who dive into it. Much traditional musicology also falls into this pro-work-concept cluster of approaches – the battery of historical and biographical studies, sketch-studies, commentaries on individual pieces, and the like, most of which have sprung from the assurance that some works and some composers merit more sustained attention than do others.

Because they are concerned with cultural diagnoses and asseverations of value, Adornian-inflected discussions also intersect with this diversified group. To be sure, Adorno's concept of the work was dialectically complex, stressing such aspects as the historicity and demands of the musical material at hand as well as the work's fundamental processuality, its growth and becoming in time, not its schematic or formulaic architecture: "Through contemplative immersion the immanent processual quality of the work is set free."²¹ And for Adorno the goal of analysis, above all, was that of uncovering the truth content (or lack of it) within any composition.²² Still, in important senses the work concept remained viable, even if reconfigured, and once again the focus was on the hermeneutic explication either of single compositions (or passages) or of the specific style and dialectical historicity that their techniques exemplify. Here, though, we find a distinctive flavor that only seems to depart from the others because of its diverging

style of discourse: its prestige-enhancing intellectualism; its contempt for present-day cultural affirmation; its polemical tone; its negative-dialectic predilections; its anti-empirical stance; its abstract prose style; its potential for deconstructive critique and the unmasking of illusions; its disdain for the smooth technicalities and "unities" of traditional Anglo-American music-theoretical approaches; and its corresponding emphasis on prying open musical incongruities, fissures, discontinuities, disunities, shattered subjectivities, and the like.

Within persisting neo-Adornian strains the impulse remains fundamentally reverential: that of "believing in Beethoven" in one way or another.²³ The implicit assumption is that comparable verities could not be leveraged out of lesser (usually non-Austro-Germanic) styles of composition. However Adorno's positions are refashioned, the conviction remains that Beethoven's works (along with, say, Brahms's, Mahler's, Schoenberg's, Berg's, and Webern's) are truth-tellers, messages in a bottle. Especially in late Beethoven and his successors these are interpreted as culture-critical indictments that a benighted society, riddled with false consciousness and empty diversions, would rather not hear. "Through these [late-Beethoven] quartets," writes Daniel K. L. Chua, "Adorno puts humanity on trial . . . How can [mere music] theory measure up to these quartets which are not merely difficult but seem to evade and disable the orthodox systems of analysis? How do you read a work that reads you?"²⁴

In such a pressing hermeneutic enterprise the language employed is often propelled along with generous infusions of hyperbole. In some recent instances it advances religious convictions, as with Chua's own late-Beethoven work, which in its latest offerings blends a theological inflection of Adorno with the thought of, among others, Emmanuel Lévinas, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Jacques Derrida, along with such postmodern Christian theologians as Jean-Luc Marion, John Milbank, and John D. Zizioulas. Samples: "The [*beklemmt* section of the Op. 130] Cavatina evokes the suffering gaze of Christ"; "Through this fellowship of suffering in which the excluded are redeemed, Beethoven's countenance [in the *Missa Solemnis*] is transfigured by the alterity of Christ-in-the-Other . . . Who then, is the Other in the Cavatina? The human is both some-*body* and no-*thing*: a disclosure and erasure; Christ incognito"; "Or, as Adorno puts it, the music 'understands us' and 'speaks to us'"; "To come back to Adorno's phrase: 'It . . . waits with sad eyes for us to answer.'"²⁵

In the hands of other writers, quite differently, the hyperbole cycles back to an *a priori* affirmation of a truth content accessible only as mediated through the innermost workings of the dialectical materiality of critical

theory and Adorno himself, as in Michael Spitzer's *Music as Philosophy: Adorno and Beethoven's Late Style* (2006): "A composer of enormous specific gravity . . . Like an astral singularity, Beethoven is so heavy that he bends light . . . An arresting feature of Theodor Adorno's interpretation of Beethoven is that the late style sits at the center of all centers in the grand narrative of Western civilization: the peak of our cultural Himalayas." Or: "Mediation of the subjective and intersubjective paradigms is the Grail of modern philosophy, and only Beethoven discovers it." These are deployments of the Austro-Germanic concept of text or work *in excelsis*, music as ultimate disclosure, here approachable only by those committed to the writings of Adorno – believers in a new, secular doctrine of *sola scriptura*. "Beethoven could be said, perhaps, to contain the truth of Adorno."²⁶ Who could ask for anything more? From the exalted heights of these declarations the different worlds evoked by *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *La Cenerentola*, and *Guillaume Tell* are nowhere in sight.

Reconfiguring Dahlhaus's binary: four alternative hermeneutic genres

Instead of existing as objective properties of pieces of music, it is more productive to regard the concepts of text/work and event as what I call *hermeneutic genres*: sanctioned modes of approach or ritualized encounter. Deciding whether to read a piece within one of the severally available modes of heuristically presumed autonomy (text/work; aesthetic) or within that of a more historically documentary approach (event; social/political) is a matter of the preferred intention of the moment, a matter of determining which kinds of questions, among many, we wish to ask of the music at hand. Text-ness and event-ness are not isolatable properties inherent to any sonic object under discussion. No piece is solely a text to be explicated or an event to be socially interpreted. Rather, text- or event-categories, and the modes of encounter that follow from them, are functions of the investigator's immediate interests in pursuing such an investigation in the first place. To ask whether Beethoven's "Waldstein" Sonata "is" essentially (and only) autonomous (or not) or whether Rossini's *Tancredi* "is" essentially (and only) a part of its original social reality (or not) is pointless. There are no ontological questions at stake here, only agendas and interests – of performers, audiences, and commentators.

Much recent writing challenges the traditional constructions of the text-event dualism, at least with regard to the evaluative stances outlined above.

And yet even among its most corrosive critics the dualism is still perceptible, just as its customary tone of declarative, moral urgency often winds up being transferred to other causes. In what follows I outline four categories of interpretive alternatives within the field of production currently occupied by English-language musicology and music theory. I do not wish to suggest that other position-clusters do not exist nor that the following four are mutually exclusive. Far from it: from time to time they have been intermixed in provocative ways. My purpose in what follows is only to sketch out a few sectors – methodological strategies – within the current field of Anglophone academic writing about music and to relate them to the work-event (or text-event) dualism articulated by Dahlhaus.

1. A first alternative strategy is committed to the projects of demystification and the challenging of orthodox narratives of "music history." Its appeal is not to any persisting aesthetics but rather to music's collusion with structures of power. Willing to place the concepts of the aesthetic and the contemplative under suspicion, this strategy treats the reverential, "text" side of the binary critically, undercutting the effusions associated with the doctrine of autonomy by exposing them as socially constructed and complicit with specific agendas. Arguments along these lines have been the staples of what was once heralded as the new musicology, and the numerous inflections of this post-aesthetic orthodoxy (social critique, cultural politics, identity issues) could hardly be more familiar. Since its chief target is normally the concept of autonomy, what is to be interrogated – repeatedly – is the presumed canon of Western European artworks, along with the ideologies that have supported and sustained them. Attention is therefore typically focused on culturally prestigious repertoires, especially the Austro-Germanic classics, within which Beethoven is marked as the epicenter, with the aim of deconstructing their aspirations to historical transcendence.

Truth-claims continue to be made, but these are not the aesthetic truths sought after by the grand tradition. Rather, this is truth as *exposé*: an unmasking of the apparatuses of power that individual works and styles reinforced. In this strategy's most fortified strains, the work concept is discarded as a delusion. Part of the appeal of this stance lies in performatively smart demonstrations of *lèse-majesté*, proof positive of the degree of one's own emancipation from the snares of the work concept. Thus no more sacramental treatment; no more timeless work uprooted from material-historical entanglements. Beethoven's music becomes an event, too, replanted back in the rich, untidy soil of history. As Dahlhaus noted, by sidelining any transhistorical aesthetic claim, such a strategy works toward equalizing Beethoven's music, in terms of our interest in its

historical or social function, with, say, the music of Rossini or with any other once-marginalized music, in the furthering of whose cause we might wish to participate.

The diversified subapproaches within this postaesthetic cluster appeal to different strains of historical or literary interdisciplinarity. Critically oriented deployments of reception history are especially favored approaches. In these cases reception history is wielded to reveal the traces of aesthetic ideology or devotional canon-formation – the uncovering of not-all-that-hidden political or social interests, particularly in touchstone reception texts or influential commentaries. Here one is attracted less to the internal details of musical texts than to the discourses that surrounded them and the way that those discourses were bolstered in later decades. Much of this scholarship is resolutely historical and empirical, scouring relevant books, periodicals, newspaper articles, concert or opera programs, academic regimens, and the like in order to draw forth potentially incriminating discourses and ignored subtexts, nationalist and otherwise, surrounding canonical composers and their works. The new empiricism marshals concrete evidence to shed light on unsettling corners of “music history” that older, more affirmative historical traditions had minimized or explained away too frictionlessly.

The methodologies at hand can differ. Some favor a prosecutorial ideology critique, exploring the dark side of the Austro-Germanic canon, its political or class implications, and the way that what would become its cultural coercion was manufactured and promoted. Others favor a thick-context (anthropological) history, or the advancing of postcolonial or identity-politics interests. Still others proceed by way of Foucauldian *epistèmes* or discourses of power, or by way of in-house critiques of the concealed interests of traditional art music’s commentators, historians, and theorists – music history’s history: how we became who we (think we) are. However done, such approaches step outside the discipline’s insider-discourse in order to puncture the myth of the work-concept – to break the spell, to question the “faith in the game” or the sanctifying “consecration” once promoted by the ritualized “circle of belief” (terms familiar from Bourdieu).²⁷ The key thing is to demonstrate that the concept of the purely musical and its institutional celebration is historically contingent, a manipulative illusion once believed in but now in the cold light of day revealed as naked ideology (even as we postlapsarian-streaked historians might continue to regard it, from a more critical distance, as what the music once meant to a different culture, no longer ours).

As a point of principle, this work-skeptical approach has usually steered clear of music-technical talk and close readings of the internal processes of

individual compositions. In part this reflects a broader, interdisciplinary effort to address concerns and audiences outside of the field of music, to enter into a conversation with colleagues in the humanities and social sciences who might react negatively to or feel excluded by the professionalized terms associated with descriptions of musical processes and genres. On the other hand, adhering to its anti-analytical stance can become a sign of membership. A standard doctrinal point, for instance, is that prior generations’ emphasis on the technical aspect of composition – now decried as “formalism” (putting that term’s historically loaded charge to work) or an advancing of “absolute music” – was an act of underinterrogated mystification, pursued apart from a consideration of the historical processes that gave rise to such a work in the first place.

As a result, close analyses of the musical language are discouraged (banished to a schismatic and quarantined realm of “music theory”), such close attentions within “music history” perhaps being regarded as unwelcome signifiers of the narrow routines of Old Believers clinging to the fading hope of a transhistorical aesthetic presence. Thus the production of the taboo within some subsectors of this group: to analyze closely – too closely – is to risk being identified by those *dans le savoir* with the complacencies of earlier generations: ideological impurities, telltale lapses of an insufficiently committed backslider. Ironically, ritual purity and fear of contamination are as much doctrinal concerns as they had been with the aesthetic traditionalists, only now with the criteria of assessment reversed. To the extent that musical practice is dealt with at all, one more commonly isolates and identifies culturally coded markers of this or that strategy, style, or technique: reading late Beethoven’s *stile antico* obsession (imitative counterpoint, fugato, and fugue), for instance, not as a dialectical-aesthetic synthesis of musical past and present but rather as a cultural signifier of what may be the composer’s correlation with the reactionary artistic movements of political romanticism;²⁸ or resuscitating Beethoven’s politically affirmative *Gelegenheitsstücke* of the mid-1810s (the more obviously public *Wellingtons Sieg* and *Der glorreiche Augenblick*) in order to suggest that they might be called upon as Rosetta stones that can encourage us (as A. B. Marx himself had once suggested about *Wellington*) to decipher some of the real-world implications of the composer’s only presumably more absolute or spiritualized works.²⁹ The interest has thus lain in locating and decoding politically charged generic topics, programs, or topoi, as opposed to a hermeneutics of the role that this or that signifier is called upon to perform in its placement within the internal processes of any individual work.

2. A second alternative strategy is to explore more seriously those musical genres and works that Dahlhaus asserted do not belong to “the emphatic concept of art.” This mode of approach reconsiders those repertoires that traditional musicology had once ignored as unworthy of intellectual attention. It seeks to treat exemplars from the “event” side of Dahlhaus’s binary as texts to explicate in their own right: Mediterranean opera, for instance, or performer-centered compositions and virtuosity, or nationalist potboilers, or genres of popular or commercial music. This strategy is normally interested in dissolving the exclusionary boundaries of the Austro-Germanic canon to welcome other, differing types of music into academic study as legitimate texts (and as such it owes much to ethnomusicology and the study of world music). By moving beyond those once-confining boundaries, it subjects the earlier, narrower disciplinary interests to an implicit critique, not infrequently with the larger purpose of lobbying on behalf of the value of the musical repertoires now being introduced into the field.³⁰ Notwithstanding this expansionary impulse, the text/work-event binary is typically retained as an underlying motivator, a community-shared subtext illuminating one’s writing. Within “music history” or “music theory” the disciplinary *éclat* of the study of such music is to call attention to what one is now urging for inclusion (and, hence, to call attention to what one is no longer studying), often through the deployment of the academic tone and research techniques initially devised for the study of a more limited selection of honored classics.

The practice is particularly salient when it goes beyond a purely cultural or historical study of such works (the only type of study that Dahlhaus would apparently have sanctioned for them) to proceed also into close readings of their musical and textual details. Here one treats instances of such music as genuine texts, individual works in dialog with musical traditions that are capable of being described and analyzed. From this perspective, why not apply close analysis, employing the insider-awareness of a professionalized music-technical language, to the individual compositions of, say, Rossini, Bellini, Paganini, Verdi, Johann Strauss Jr., Irving Berlin, Duke Ellington, or Stephen Sondheim – or to the recorded performances of John Coltrane, Jimi Hendrix, Madonna, or whomever? Why not explore the specifics and dramatic purposes of their musical madeness, their *poiesis*, their internal musical anatomies and strategies, as texts to be explicated? To resist such possibilities through one’s allegiance to the anti-analytical postures within much recent musicology, after all, is only to reaffirm the most blinkered proscriptions of Dahlhaus’s text-event dualism, albeit on different terms. If Dahlhaus and

others have declared that no supposed event-music calls for attentive analysis and careful reflection, why, then, the proponents of this strategy aim to show them that it does.

But this endeavor leads us into larger questions of purpose, intention, and analytical methodology. To what ends do we wish to analyze anything at all? Dahlhaus appears to have regarded analysis as something to be productively used only to explicate “greatness in music” as construed by the art-music tradition over the last two centuries. This suggests that the problem accompanying all types of analytical practices, including the technical analyses of once-noncanonical pieces, is that of either explicitly or implicitly promoting an insider-group attitude of partisan affirmation. Does not the mere fact of close attention to any individual text imply the worth of doing so – demonstrating one’s own values and exhorting others to share in one’s enthusiasm? It is just such affirmation, especially of the elite canons of Western art music, that newer strains of musicology – and sometimes music theory – have often found ideologically burdensome.

What can be said about the utility (or not) of close readings of repertoires that lie (or once lay) outside the narrowest streams of the traditional art-music canon? By no means is it necessary that such an analytical exploration be caught once again in the trap of an uncritical admiration. This is the familiar musicological or music-theoretical public-relations game on behalf of Rossini Hero; Verdi Hero; Irving Berlin Hero; Bob Dylan Hero; John Lennon Hero; Jay-Z Hero – relative newcomers to the music-historical table, now to be lionized as truth-tellers or praised, within bracketed sectors of commercial music, as bold resistance-fighters. The rosy boosterism decried in Beethoven analysis can wind up being naively translated into a different repertory, so long as commentators can stage themselves as outsiders locked in a cultural struggle against what they still manage to construe as the persisting lines of the music-historical tradition and its limited, sclerotic modes of inquiry.

Still, more adequate and problematized intersections with all kinds of music both as cultural discourse and as manipulations of specifically musical language are possible, and producing them remains a central challenge for the discipline. The essential task may be to devise a style of analytical discussion that is not simultaneously read as an avowal of personal identification or a well-hyped act of in-group publicity. An analysis can also be a demonstration of how the thing was put together for certain audiences at certain times for certain ideological purposes. Nor should any such analyses be content (as has been widely observed) merely to reinscribe the shopworn analytical postures once manufactured for Beethoven study. Orthodox

Schenkerian, Schoenbergian, or Toveyan hammers may not be the right tools for these musical nails, but that such pieces might respond compellingly to other tools need not be dismissed out of hand. By this point, for instance, the analysis of popular music, a thriving industry, has developed a number of alternative procedures – contested political and musical positions – and reductively to describe all such practices as “analytical” in any traditional sense can be misleading.³¹ The principal caveat is that such analyses should proceed in awareness of their own limitations, seeking especially to refrain from any claim of the “unitary” or “totalizing” perfection of the work at hand, much less implying that the technical world of music analysis alone is sufficient to encompass the completeness of the cultural experience in which such music (or any music) participates.

But the question might still persist: of what interest is technical analysis – even of, say, Beethoven and his successors – to current strains of music-historical orthodoxy, which have often scorned the analytical enterprise, even as they have expanded the types of music to be examined under more purely cultural or sociological lenses? Within literary studies of the past decade there has been some discussion of the rise of a “new formalism” that seeks to restore (or at least to detoxify) the analytical study of texts, following the near exhaustion of a zealously jacobinic period in which literariness per se had been suppressed, even denounced, in favor of culture-critical, historical/contextual, and sociological studies. Not surprisingly, the restorers divide along left-right lines, with the former (“activist formalists”) still committed to a historical and materialist critique of literature and its contexts and the latter (“normative formalists”) more interested in calling attention once again to aspects of aesthetic experience, beauty, and pleasure.³² Nonetheless, as Marjorie Levinson noted in a 2007 summary-study of this multifaceted movement:

Both kinds of new formalism seek to reinstate close reading both at the curricular center of our discipline and as the opening move, preliminary to any kind of critical consideration. Reading, understood in traditional terms as multilayered and integrative responsiveness to every element of the textual dimension, quite simply produces the basic materials that form the subject matter of even the most historical of investigations. Absent this, we are reading something of our own untrammelled invention, inevitably less complex than the products of reading. That complexity (a leitmotif throughout new formalism), which is attributed to the artwork and recoverable only through a learned submission to its myriad textual prompts, explains the deep challenge that the artwork poses to ideology, or to the flattening, routinizing, absorptive effects associated with ideological regimes.³³

From one perspective this might be heard as the call of conscience, reminding us that just as literary texts manifest a quality of literariness that is an essential part of what they are, musical texts, too – of all kinds and registers – inhabit (as one of their several worlds of implication) a world of music-specific *poiesis* that is amateurish to ignore, at least on a regular basis or, worse, as a point of principle. The labor of both composers and performers is deeply involved with that craft-oriented musical world, one in which moment-to-moment internal processes and close details are of signal importance. There are fundamental aspects of individual compositions that resist their reductive collapse into mere exemplars or exchangeable representatives of the social or cultural genres with which they are in dialogue. Since that is the case, we might be advised to consider as a methodological axiom within our own work that the cultural or critical/interpretive concerns and the music-specific or analytical concerns should be kept at a roughly equivalent level of professional sophistication. Consistently to develop (or overdevelop) only the one side at the expense of the other – particularly if this is a conscious choice or the dutiful product of an ideological faction – is to turn away from the fuller problematics of the musical experience and the unsettling challenges that they present to us.

3. Another way to bolster the event-side of the dichotomy is to treat individual performances of a score – surely the clearest examples of Dahlhausian “events” – as legitimate works or display-objects in their own right. The interest lies not so much in “Una voce poco fa” or *Il barbiere di Siviglia* as relatively stable works somehow captured permanently in notation – even supposing that Dahlhaus, at some level, might be willing to concede this – but rather in the individualized performances of “Una voce poco fa” and *Il barbiere* as the actual texts under examination.³⁴ Performances as carefully planned, physically embodied events elapsing in real time and in immediate dialog with real audiences: these are now to be commented upon as genuine works, albeit of a second order. The first-order text, the original score to be reactivated in successive performances, is accepted as a premise. But the main interest lies in the particularities of its realizations, now regarded as equally open to study and exegetical interpretation, not to mention its implications for any new dramaturgical mounting of a production – “reading a staging/staging a reading,” in the words of David J. Levin.³⁵ (To use terms more specifically: one might distinguish between a *production* – a conceptually planned staging or interpretation of a work, such as an opera, concert, or recital – and its actual *performance*, that is, the details of the production’s execution at any given time.) This approach overturns at a stroke the work-event *Stildualismus* that Dahlhaus had in mind. Additionally, it can resituate

Beethoven and Rossini – and every other notated (or non-notated) piece – on equal ground: what is performed can be subordinated to an investigation of the discourse of performativity as an object in its own right.

Scholarship along these lines may be regarded as a third cluster of alternative strategies, now turning their attentions to studies of specific productions or performances, practical musicians, stagings, sets, sound recordings, film adaptations, background-music usages, transcriptions, medleys, arrangements, and so on, as social texts open to strong inquiry. Approaches vary widely, appealing now to concerns of performance theory, now to ritual theory, or to the projection of social identity, or to ideology critique, or to some other interpretive construct. Some writers – such as Levin, with his practical background in opera and dramaturgy – are concerned not only with close readings of relatively current productions but also with advancing criteria for the aesthetic success or failure of the “performance text,” the background concept underpinning any single production.³⁶ But it is also possible historically to investigate the cultural discourse of (for instance) operatic production – as in the work of Gundula Kreuzer – apart from any imperative to rank it in this way.

Under the influence of new critical approaches and the so-called performative turn in cultural studies, “produceritis” on stage has been accompanied by a growing scholarly interest in opera as a live multimedia event, rather than a timeless work codified in words and notes . . . What can such random sources [as sketches, photos, reviews, production manuals, and so on] disclose about gestures, choreography, lighting, facial and vocal expression, musical style – in short, the materiality of a specific performance at a particular moment in history?³⁷

What we encounter in such approaches is a critical sociology of significant performances articulated through exegetical readings of individual productions. The text to be explicated, the work, is either the isolated conceptual production or the performance-event proper, the ritual re-enactment – or, more broadly, the history of performances and performance traditions. These are to be either studied as aesthetic objects on their own terms (subjected to analysis and hermeneutics) or interrogated as politicized interventions into an ongoing social situation. The original score is cut loose from its original complex of signification and led out into the wider sea of repackaging and reinterpretation. It is regarded as an incomplete script pervaded by gaps to be filled in – generously, inventively – by the personality and style of live performance: a sleeping script, now awakened or recalled to life in particular cultural and historical circumstances and, one presumes, for particular cultural and historical purposes. Isolating and

analyzing the fixed text of the score in search of strata of immanent meaning or implication – Dahlhaus's hermeneutic injunction for Beethoven and his worthy successors – may not disappear completely but it does fade into the background in pursuit of the corporeal vitality encountered in performative realities. Once again, a self-avowed newness of scholarly purpose, coupled with a shift of focus away from the internal organization of the original composition per se (not to mention its analysis in the abstract), sets itself in opposition to the veneration of the “timeless work” that preoccupied past generations of musicology. While the academic procedure of close reading is often retained, its object has been displaced to an uncovering of the conceptions (one might even say the “subthematic” structure) generating the production or performance-event.

Although the illustrations cited above dealt with operatic production, similar inquiries can be and have been made into related areas: styles and impacts of notable singers, instrumentalists, or ballet performers; the theatrical presentation of historical performers' stage gestures or movements (projections of motion, pose, gender, and the body); the public-display aspects of the nineteenth-century concept of virtuosity (Paganini, Liszt, and others); orchestral or conducting practice within individual institutions or traditions; and the like. Such studies are typically concerned with establishing what is recoverable from long-past actual experiences. To what extent, and on what evidence, can one historically re-imagine the dialogics of artist-audience interaction within what had once been palpably vivid but transient encounters? What were the larger cultural functions of these events?

In the twentieth century, individual performances or their simulacra were often turned into marketable commodities through the technology of sound recording and film. The once-ephemeral event was captured as a fixed object (in Sousa's famous words from 1906, “canned music”),³⁸ a second-order work with varying cultural purposes: social document, commercial product, culture-industry advertisement, sonic demonstration, on-demand aesthetic experience or entertainment, prestige-token, educational tool, collector's item, nostalgic souvenir of *temps perdu*. Historical inquiry into performance has thus been extendable into recordings of, say, Beethoven's or Rossini's (or anyone's) music – now-fixed but once-fluid performance-events, unalterable and repeatable things capable of being started, stopped, and repeated at will – that may themselves be regarded as texts inviting explication. The same, of course, may be said of music within films or filmed versions of musical events, DVDs of concerts and operas, and the like.³⁹

In all considerations of such media discourses the problem of technology and its effects is inescapable. Whether or not one wishes to claim as much

as, say, Friedrich A. Kittler in his antihumanistic pronouncements (“Media determine our situation . . . The dominant information technologies of the day control all understanding and its illusions . . . What remains of people is what media can store and communicate”),⁴⁰ it is clear that the experience of music mediated by a technological apparatus wedded to mass-production and commercial marketing ushered in a profound transformation in the manner that music communicates. And even while the work-event binary is retained, though reconstrued, in all of its clarity, any such investigation into these matters is far removed from Dahlhaus’s concern with the explication of notated texts whose internal logic and presumed greatness can be conceptually isolated from the specific, social conditions of the ways that they are mediated to real listeners.

4. A more absolute extension of this line of thought is so emphatic, and so much noticed of late as a rising challenge within musicology, that it should be regarded not merely as a fourth alternative strategy with regard to the work-event binary but also as the most provocative alternative. Here one encounters what amounts to a reversal of the Dahlhausian position – the sleeve pulled inside-out. This is the approach that prizes the spontaneity of the performance situation, the experience of *being there* (or of performing oneself). It is less concerned with the work’s later analysis by means of abstracted study in search of a “meaning” to be decoded. Valued here are the bodily, the physical, the rapturous *jouissance* of the ephemeral instant – what Roger W. H. Savage, adapting Paul Ricoeur’s term, calls music’s “ontological vehemence” at the moment of its experience.⁴¹ To the extent that the notated work *qua* work is construed as something to be rationally explicated from a cool distance, it is either dismissed as beside the point or radically subordinated to the skill and bliss of the actuality of performance. There is typically a “truth-telling” aspect (or at least a peak experience) claimed to be in play here, but in contrast with the reverential modes mentioned earlier in this essay – indeed, in contrast with all of the preceding approaches – this experiential mode minimizes the role of verbalized hermeneutics, in some cases urging the dispensing with the subsequent act of interpretation altogether. The challenge provided here can be disturbingly confrontational for exegetically minded analysts and historians, who from this perspective regularly run the risk (or can give the impression of running the risk) of appearing to minimize the fact that music as performed has a directness of intensity in a here and now whose plenitude can seem, for some, to bypass any further need for prose explanations and analytical deciphering. “*Von Herzen – möge es wieder – zu Herzen gehn!*”: for music devotees it is not difficult to grasp what Beethoven had in mind when

he penned those words into the manuscript of the *Missa Solemnis*. Yet the injunction seems free of any concomitant imperative for a soberly pursued exegesis. From this standpoint our proper response to music is gratefully to accept and love it, to be filled by it as a freely bestowed gift of presence, analogous to an act of grace.⁴²

We draw near here to what may be a widely shared view of “intuitive” performers living for the act of performance, the moment of connection. But within the academy its more recent advocacy has been perhaps most completely laid out by a number of writers both outside and inside the discipline of music. Among several other offerings in the field of literature and philosophy we encounter such writings as Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht’s 2004 manifesto, *Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey*, the reading of which has made its way into academic music circles as well. Needless to say, the concept of “presence” (or its lack) is a complex topic within philosophy, but Gumbrecht fixes his postmodern *cri de cœur* on a single point: reinstating the value of the materialities of experiential presence, nonhermeneutic “presence effects,” as a corrective to the long-standing academic predominance of exegetical “meaning effects.”⁴³ Presence effects are primarily bodily, not mental. They participate in the material substance of what is being experienced spatially and temporally. In this respect they command a different kind of attention than that promoted by Dahlhaus. Gumbrecht describes presence effects in terms recalling Heidegger, as “moments of intensity” or “magic”-like flashes of “revelation and unconcealment” that “just happen” beyond any need to transform such “epiphanies” into rationalized interpretations of what they signify beyond the “world-appropriation” experiences that they provide.⁴⁴

Driving much of the argument is the familiar postmodern attack on Cartesian rationalism and its mind-body split. “This Cartesian dimension does not cover (and should never cover) the full complexity of our existence, although we are led to believe that it does with probably more overwhelming pressure than ever before.” Gumbrecht couples his anti-Cartesianism with an unrelenting critique of what he calls the reigning academic “metaphysics” of interpretation. “Metaphysics” in this context refers to the modern hermeneutic urge to explain the larger meaning of signs, the impulse to probe for meaning *beyond* (“meta-”) the physical materiality or the presence-effect of the sign – in other words, precisely the sorts of things that Dahlhaus and others strive for in their searches within musical scores for “subthematicism” and implicit meanings, ideological or otherwise. (Resisted, therefore, would be such claims as Dahlhaus’s that “the new insight that Beethoven thrust upon the aesthetic consciousness of his age was that a musical text, like a literary or

a philosophical text, harbors a meaning which is made manifest but not entirely subsumed in its acoustic presentation – that a musical creation can exist as an ‘art work of ideas’ transcending its various interpretations.”⁴⁵ Instead, what is needed is to go “beyond meaning” to welcome also a “non-interpretative” mode of experience. “Parliamentary discussions are a ritual that fits for meaning cultures, whereas the Eucharist is a prototypical ritual for presence cultures.” While on several occasions Gumbrecht concedes that in the practical world of interpretation what is needed is an “oscillation [or “productive tension”] between meaning effects and presence effects,” his polemic lobbies far more ardently on behalf of the rehabilitation of the latter.⁴⁶ As such, it promotes an intellectualized anti-intellectualism, encouraged by secularized correlates of such postliberal or postmodern theological thought as is found in “radical orthodoxy.”⁴⁷

Within musicology proper, the same year (2004) saw the publication of Carolyn Abbate’s widely read essay, “Music – Drastic or Gnostic?”⁴⁸ Abbate’s argument is similar to that of Gumbrecht. Indeed, perhaps coincidentally, its terms match almost point for point with his, though Abbate filters her approach more through French than German sources. (She is translator and advocate of Vladimir Jankélévitch’s *Music and the Ineffable*, in which the “drastic/gnostic” distinction was originally made, and of which Abbate’s 2004 article may be read as an expanded paraphrase.)⁴⁹ Once again, what is of value is not the work to be explicated “gnostically” through analysis and hermeneutics. Both of these interests are discarded (as in Gumbrecht) as “metaphysical mania” or a mistaken passion for a “deciphering” of “the cryptographic sublime,” a “retreat from real music to the abstraction of the work.” Instead, we have the opposite concept of “real music,” a music that can only exist, “drastically,” in the physicality of the evanescent moment of performance, Jankélévitch’s *mystère de l’instant* (a significant part of whose grounding lies in the Bergsonian concept of pure duration, *la durée*). Gnostic vs. drastic is of course another *Stildualismus* correlatable almost precisely with work and event. Both rely on the same definitions and are grounded in the mind-body dichotomy in its various historical guises. But now the terms of valuation are reversed. Dahlhaus’s positives are turned negative and vice versa.⁵⁰ The deconstruction of the hierarchically opposed binaries is rendered complete, and the once-supposedly superior term is overturned by the lower one. Hence Abbate’s question, which makes the turnaround of *Stildualismus* values explicit: “Why not take intellectual pleasure from music not as a work but as an event?”⁵¹

But why would such a pleasure be an “intellectual” one? Advanced throughout the essay, more than any abstract “intellectual pleasure,” is a

prizing of an intuitive immediacy or the ecstasy of physical production – an insistence that “real music [is] music-as-performed,” “the event itself,” “the carnal and the material,” that is, embodied music (as a number of other scholars have also argued in different ways). And yet in its curt dismissal of the “gnostic” metaphysics attributed to work-analysts we find here more than a touch of its own style of metaphysics as well, not to mention a stunningly ahistorical, perhaps universalized view of music and its purposes. What matters most in this mode of apprehension is an advocacy of instantaneous music’s “spiritual” effects and “ineffability,” a poststructuralist-informed analog to Jankélévitch’s *mystère* (or *charme*), a quality suggesting an immediate, virtually mystical transmission of substance and value beyond mere words or compartmentalized intellection.⁵² “Jankélévitch defines music’s ineffability (for some, an uncomfortable word) at times rather neutrally as music’s indeterminacy, its mutability when submitted for contemplation, its range of effects, which include seeming to be strange or beautiful noise as well as firing up social or poetic or visual or other associations. It is this that frees us.”⁵³

“Frees us”: but from what? And into what? Nearly everything that Dahlhaus and traditional musicology had attributed to the gnostic-text side of “great music” (its subthematic reality, its revelatory epiphanies) has been imported and reconfigured, now in poststructuralist guise, into the drastic-performance side. As in Gumbrecht, we approach a nontheological metaphysics of ontological corporeality, in which the ineffable being of music is released not through its later synoptic re-creation in the mind but rather by the epiphany of its spontaneous presentness, in the thrilling nowness of performance-risk and physicality, borne forward by an embrace of the transfixing power of music and its sweeping, in-the-moment imprint. Implicitly reinscribed within the materiality of such physical disclosure is yet another *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* – a “real music” that leaves gnostic decipherings and the limitations of rational reflection behind in the dust. One’s approach to music again locks into the worshipful, into the language of belief, this time in the service of a noncritical submission to a different kind of inscrutable authority.⁵⁴

Historical inquiry as a constellation of tensions

Where do these variants of the work-event dualism, progeny of the supposed Beethoven-Rossini dichotomies, leave us? One might argue that, despite all of the ways in which we might wish to reconfigure it, the dualism

remains ineradicable. It is as though in its many mutations it were an inescapable meme for which we are fated to be the evolutionary carriers or as though it were part of a variant strand of DNA inscribed into the cells of those who have grown up with an attraction to European art music – however much we also confess that this music’s once-confident day has declined into dusk, that we perceive all too clearly its ideological blindnesses and once-concealed dark sides, its nervously exclusionary absolutes. In 1977, in his *Grundlagen der Musikgeschichte (Foundations of Music History)*, Dahlhaus felt able to declare that “No-one had a burden to bear because Beethoven wielded authority in music.” Few of us today would be eager to argue on behalf of any such claim.⁵⁵ We live in a different world. And it is difficult not to suspect that, even for Dahlhaus, writing within his own historically haunted context, it may have been little more than a melancholy hope, a wearied attempt to keep alive the flickering flame of aesthetic presence before that light is put out once and for all. One is left to wonder whether its proposed academic restoration under the auspices of poststructuralist thought – revived advocacies on behalf of presence, ineffability, and epiphany – carries with it any possibility of success, at least within the continually skeptical currents of scholarly practice, where any sustained reanimations of affirmative depth or the unquestioned value of aesthetic experience seem ever more out of reach, receding in the rear-view mirror.

As for ourselves, whatever positions we might wish to take on this contested field of possibilities, we might be advised to recognize the frailty and incompleteness of each of them when promoted singly. Given the generous plurality of discourses, it can be naive to stand firm on behalf of any single faction, dismissing other modes of scholarship, other questions that might be asked of music. Professionalized inquiry should be more than a politicized struggle for a transient predominance. Self-reflexivity and internal critique are essential: regular confrontations with the real possibility that one’s own work is skewed in ways that one is not choosing to interrogate. It is a salutary thing to be aware of the smallness and historical determination of one’s own position within the larger field of musicological discourse. (How will later generations of scholars historicize ours? Into which nexus of historical contingencies or fashions will each of us be collapsed – and then dismissed?)

Thus the idea emerges that under such circumstances it might be more productive not to take up arms exclusively on behalf of any of the single positions but rather to dwell in the uneasy, self-doubting constellation of tensions that they generate among themselves. One might seek to get on with one’s work not by locating oneself exclusively on any single position-node but

rather by negotiating the contradictions found in the tense interstices among them all. This is not merely an advocacy of keeping available a more diverse toolbox of approaches (something like Dahlhaus’s “methodological ‘pluralism’”), though that stance, construed in certain ways, has much to recommend it.⁵⁶ Nor is it a straightforward call to fashion a composite, methodological blending, which can be read – perhaps inaccurately – as an all-too-comfortable ecumenism. On the contrary, maintaining a serene satisfaction with one’s own preferences is what I seek to caution against. Better, then, not to reside within only one of the partial positions, each with its support-group providing the desired reassurances, but rather to be caught uneasily, agonistically, in the corridors of tension that separate them. These, too, are musical cultures to cross, back and forth, as we tenuously negotiate our way among them for our own performative purposes.

Notes

- 1 Dahlhaus, *NCM*, 8–9; for a revised translation of parts of this passage, see Chapter 2.
- 2 Dahlhaus, *Die Musik des 19. Jahrhunderts* [1980], repr. in Dahlhaus, *Gesammelte Schriften in 10 Bänden*, vol. v, ed. Hermann Danuser *et al.* (Laaber: Laaber, 2003), 20.
- 3 While Dahlhaus might not have endorsed all of the arguments in Roman Ingarden’s *The Work of Music and the Problem of its Identity*, trans. Adam Czerniawski, ed. Jean G. Harrell (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), it is likely (given his attractions to aspects of phenomenology and the concept of intentionality elsewhere) that he would have generally concurred with the proposition that a work of music, ontologically, is “a purely intentional object” (Ingarden, *The Work of Music*, 117, 119, 120–121, and elsewhere) and that its notation – the text as received by us – is an “incomplete, schematic prescription for performance” (116) that leads to a certain sonorous identity in all of its re-presentations (so that we know, for example, when we are hearing Beethoven’s Op. 130, that we are not hearing Op. 132).
- 4 More broadly, the text-event binary may be regarded as a subsidiary offshoot of the more fundamental binary that was emerging ever more concretely and with ever further ramifications in the age of Beethoven and beyond: on the one hand, the claim of the emancipation of instrumental music from social reality – the rise of the concept of the *opus perfectum et absolutum* (the transcendent, autonomous artwork considered as an alternative world, a realm of emancipation, capable of being set free from its immediate contexts of production); on the other hand, the more traditional concept(s) of music as an aspect of either tasteful diversion or social affirmation – or, in more current, critical readings, a doxological

- appurtenance of cultural power and institutional discipline. This binary has been recently explored – and led to differing, Gadamer-Ricoeur-inflected alternatives – in Roger W. H. Savage, *Hermeneutics and Music Criticism* (New York: Routledge, 2010). Similarly to the aims of the present essay, Savage argues, among other things, that both the ardent proponents of autonomy and those who equally ardently seek to collapse that belief in favor of flushing out concealed social power systems continue, often unwittingly, to reinscribe that fundamental binary, albeit with opposing conclusions.
- 5 Kiesewetter, *Geschichte*, xvii, “Epoche.”
 - 6 Dahlhaus, *NCM*, 12–13: “The only expectation aroused by [Meyerbeer’s musical] idea is that it be repeated . . . The aim of [this] melodic idea does not lie in the consequences to be drawn from it, thereby revealing its potential; instead, the interpolations that interrupt the actual melody merely function as vehicles to present that melody in a new light.”
 - 7 See Chapter 2.
 - 8 J. Bradford Robinson’s translation of this passage fails to convey this allusion. Dahlhaus did not write that these dichotomous styles were twinned. Compounding the introduced implications, Robinson retitled Dahlhaus’s sub-heading for this discussion, *Stildualismus*, with the phrase “The Twin Styles,” thereby framing the ensuing discussion in differently nuanced terms, though ones that have had their own afterlife in subsequent Anglophone writing.
 - 9 Halm, *Von zwei Kulturen der Musik* (Munich: Müller, 1913).
 - 10 A non-Dahlhausian correlate might be found in, say, Foucauldian *epistèmes* or in any posited ideational or material substructure (e.g., orthodox Marxism’s *die Basis*) that is posited as foundational, the master-key to historical interpretation.
 - 11 Dahlhaus, *NCM*, 84. The same (obviously Schoenbergian) argument is presented in the “Subthematicism” and “Late Works” portions of his *Ludwig van Beethoven: Approaches to his Music*, trans. Mary Whittall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 202–218, 219–237.
 - 12 See n. 3 above and n. 45 below.
 - 13 The English-language Dahlhaus sources for what follows in this and the immediately following notes are “On the Decline of the Concept of the Musical Work” in *Schoenberg and the New Music: Essays by Carl Dahlhaus*, trans. Derrick Puffett and Alfred Clayton (Cambridge University Press, 1987), 220–233 (henceforth *DWC*); *Esthetics of Music*, trans. William W. Austin (Cambridge University Press, 1982) (henceforth *EM*); *Foundations of Music History*, trans. J. B. Robinson (Cambridge University Press, 1982) (henceforth *FMH*); *Ludwig van Beethoven: Approaches to his Music* (see n. 11 above) (henceforth *LvB*); *NCM*; “Plea for a Romantic Category: The Concept of the Work of Art in the Newest Music” in *Schoenberg and the New Music*, 210–219 (henceforth *PRC*). Thus the citations in this note: “aesthetic object,” *PRC*, 213; “keeps the listener,” *DWC*, 224; “aesthetic presence,” *FMH*, 3–4; “cut away,” *EM*, 70 (cf. *LvB*, 219).

- 14 “Aesthetic . . . political,” *FMH*, 8–9; “arrangements . . . scenarios,” *NCM*, 138; “nothing to ‘understand’” and “calls neither for,” *NCM*, 11.
- 15 One recognizes here a recycled variant of Kant’s famous charge about the ideational emptiness of all music, even while granting the heightened presence of its emotional affect in the moment. This is the old-world indictment that Beethoven and others, we might presume, sought to counter by means of earnest example, leading to a hermeneutic tradition of exploring, among other things, the “subthematicism” and implicit concepts below this music’s surface. See, e.g., Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment* [1790], trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987). The touchstone line: “For though [the art of music] speaks through nothing but sensations without concepts, so that unlike poetry it leaves us with nothing to meditate about, it nevertheless does agitate the mind more diversely and intensely, even if merely temporarily” (198; from Part 1, section 53, “Comparison of the Aesthetic Value of the Various Fine Arts”; original German *Akademie* edition, 328). For one recent discussion of this now-familiar topic, see, e.g., Mark Evan Bonds, *Music as Thought: Listening to the Symphony in the Age of Beethoven* (Princeton University Press, 2006), Ch. 1.
- 16 Presentness, *EM*, 68 (“only the present counts; this is one of the laws of operatic music”); expires, *DWC*, 225 (“exhaust[s] itself in mere performance”); “perfection” and “greatness,” *EM*, 88–90.
- 17 Hans Robert Jauss, “Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory” in Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. Timothy Bahti (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 21, 32.
- 18 This is one of the burdens of *FMH*.
- 19 Examples of this by-now-formulaic trope are too numerous to cite at length, though one might mention such characteristic writings as Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992); Holly Watkins, *Metaphors of Depth in German Musical Thought: From E. T. A. Hoffmann to Arnold Schoenberg* (Cambridge University Press, 2012); and samples from Richard Taruskin’s chapters, “The First Romantics: Late Eighteenth-Century Musical Esthetics; Beethoven’s Career and his Posthumous Legend” and “Real Worlds, and Better Ones: Beethoven vs. Rossini; Bel Canto Romanticism,” from *The Oxford History of Western Music*, vol. 11: *The Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 641–739, and vol. 111: *The Nineteenth Century*, 1–14 (which also confronts the Beethoven-Rossini dichotomy as recently posed by Dahlhaus as “the dialectical antithesis” [7–8]). Cf. also the issues raised in Gary Tomlinson, “Monumental Musicology,” review of Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music* in *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 132/2 (2007), 349–374; and in Savage, *Hermeneutics and Music Criticism*.
- 20 Rosen, *The Classical Style: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven*, expanded edition (New York: Norton, 1997 [original edition 1971]), for example, 409 n. 2

- ("[In Op. 106/i] the progressive revelation of the material is the basis for the musical drama") or 434–435, *passim*.
- 21 Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, ed. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann, newly trans. and ed. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 176.
 - 22 The *locus classicus* of Adorno's discussion of the work and its processual nature is to be found in the "Toward a Theory of the Artwork" section of *Aesthetic Theory*, 175–199. Cf. the summary in Max Paddison, *Adorno's Aesthetics of Music* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), 188–192, which in an encapsulated format provides more dialectical nuance than space allows here, e.g.: "The outcome of the interaction between composer and musical material is the musical work, understood both as *autonomous object* and as *process*. The work is not merely a fixed object, a closed system as text and as artefact; it is also a process, being in a state of constant flux and 'becoming' . . . Adorno sees the musical work as 'a force-field [*Kraftfeld*] organized around a problem.' Musical analysis is thus regarded as an aspect of the work itself . . . Its task is to uncover and understand the 'problem' around which the work is organized." Despite its dialectical nature and internal problematics of self-identity, "there is also a sense in which the autonomous musical work is a 'congealed object' at standstill" (188–189).
 - 23 Daniel K. L. Chua, "Believing in Beethoven" [review of Adorno, *Beethoven: The Philosophy of Music*], *Music Analysis*, 19/3 (2000), 409–421.
 - 24 Daniel K. L. Chua, *The "Galitzin" Quartets of Beethoven: Opp. 127, 132, 130* (Princeton University Press, 1995), 6.
 - 25 In Chua's initial book from over a decade ago, *The "Galitzin" Quartets of Beethoven, ibid.*, the theological backdrop is only partially veiled. (The book is framed at its beginning and end with the affirmational initials I. S. D. G., whose first occurrence is followed a page later with a citation of Acts 17: 22–23. The biblical reference is subsequently re-embraced and explained in the book's final paragraphs, 247.) It is clearer in his second book, *Absolute Music and the Construction of Meaning* (Cambridge University Press, 1999). And it is overt in his more recent essays, including, esp., "Beethoven's Other Humanism," *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 62/3 (2009), 571–645, from which the above quotations were taken: "suffering gaze" (636–637); "fellowship of suffering," "Christ incognito" (630); "Or, as Adorno puts it" (632); "To come back to Adorno's phrase" (634). See also n. 42 below.
 - 26 Spitzer, *Music as Philosophy: Adorno and Beethoven's Late Style* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 17 ("a composer," "astral singularity," "arresting feature"), 280 ("mediation"), and 275 ("truth of Adorno"). See also the similar avowals on 16, and on 284, the book's closing lines.
 - 27 As articulated in, e.g., Pierre Bourdieu, "The Production of Belief: Contribution to an Economy of Symbolic Goods" in Randal Johnson (ed.), *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 74–111 [original essay in French, 1977].

- 28 As in Stephen Rumph, *Beethoven after Napoleon: Political Romanticism in the Late Works* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 99–103: "The political connotations of learned counterpoint were quite plain. The *stile antico* had stood as a bulwark of conservatism and orthodoxy ever since J. J. Fux published his Habsburg-funded *Gradus ad Parnassum* (1725) as a corrective to a decadent age" (99).
- 29 As in Nicholas Mathew's parsing of Marx, "History under Erasure: *Wellingtons Sieg*, the Congress of Vienna, and the Ruination of Beethoven's Heroic Style," *The Musical Quarterly*, 89/1 (2006), 17–61: "By turning the *Eroica* toward the world – by providing a concrete realization of its guiding poetic idea, as Marx would have it – *Wellingtons Sieg* becomes a hermeneutic key, a kind of musical exegesis . . . Instead of being a debased version of the *Eroica*, *Wellingtons Sieg* appears to tell us what the *Eroica* really means" (49–50). See also Mathew's uncovering of Habsburgian, neo-Handelian political implications in the choral textures of some of Beethoven's late works, "Beethoven's Political Music, the Handelian Sublime, and the Aesthetics of Prostration," *19th-Century Music*, 33/2 (2009), 110–150. Revised versions of these essays also appear in Mathew, *Political Beethoven* (Cambridge University Press, 2013). Cf. the different argument regarding *Wellingtons Sieg* – though one still subjecting the exclusionary canon to a critique – in Nicholas Cook, "The Other Beethoven: Heroism, the Canon, and the Works of 1813–14," *19th-Century Music*, 27/1 (2003), 3–24.
- 30 Dahlhaus's dismissals of such enterprises could be short and blunt: "Granted the necessary degree of aesthetic insensitivity [*bei genügender ästhetischer Unempfindlichkeit*] it is possible to analyse a piece of juke-box music [*einen Gassenhauer*] in terms of its intrinsic value as a work or, alternatively, to reduce a Bach cantata to its role in the liturgy, i.e. to insist that the one represents a musical text and the other served a function . . . [Yet the question would remain] whether a particular result is interesting and relevant or weak and misguided" (*FMH*, 9); *Grundlagen der Musikgeschichte* (Cologne: Hans Gerig, 1977), 20.
- 31 A brief overview of some of the issues may be found, e.g., in Allan F. Moore, "Introduction" in Moore (ed.), *Analyzing Popular Music* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 1–15. The book itself samples a number of analytical possibilities, in the broadest sense of the term. Cf. also such collections as John Covach and Graeme M. Boone, eds., *Understanding Rock: Essays in Musical Analysis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).
- 32 For a summary of this movement along with a strong bibliography of references, see Marjorie Levinson, "What is New Formalism?," *Proceedings of the Modern Language Association*, 122/2 (2007), 558–569. (I have accepted Levinson's left-right classifications along with her [and Susan J. Wolfson's] terms "activist formalism" and "normative formalism," 559). The *PMLA* special issue from which the above is cited has been reprinted in full as Susan J. Wolfson and Marshall Brown (eds.), *Reading for Form* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007). A recent issue of *Representations* (104/1 [2008]) was devoted to publishing a series of essays

- on the topic from different perspectives. See also *Modern Language Quarterly*, 61/1 (2000), which included essays by Wolfson, "Reading for Form," 1–16; Heather Dubrow, "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner? Reinterpreting Formalism and the Country House Poem," 59–77; and several others. Cf. Mark David Rasmussen (ed.), *Renaissance Literature and its Formal Engagements* (New York: Palgrave, 2002); and Jonathan Loesberg, *A Return to Aesthetics: Autonomy, Indifference, and Postmodernism* (Stanford University Press, 2005).
- 33 Levinson, "What is New Formalism?," 560.
- 34 On the particular example of "Una voce poco fa," see Mary Ann Smart, "The Queen and the Flirt," *Representations*, 104/1 (2008), 126–136, which also charts her view of "the rise and fall" of musical "formalism" in operatic studies (declared to be increasingly assessed in the 1980s and 1990s as "self-indulgent, esoteric, and hopelessly out of touch with the ways that opera mattered historically and socially" [129]).
- 35 Levin, "Reading a Staging/Staging a Reading," *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 9/1 (1997), 47–71. Cf. Levin's recent *Unsettling Opera: Staging Mozart, Verdi, Wagner, and Zemlinsky* (Princeton University Press, 2007). Cf. also Levin, "Response to James Treadwell," *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 10/3 (1998), 308: "I am intent on having us read productions, not intentions. In my conception, the production functions as a *signifying network*: the stage director's intentions contribute to that network, constitute one of its discursive channels, if you will, but those intentions are by no means controlling. We are free, of course, to be guided by statements of intention (say, in the program book or the press) or to attempt to decipher them; but I would have us engage a production – in the theater, in real time – on its own dramatic and dramaturgical terms, which is to say, in terms of what it signifies and how it does so."
- 36 Thus Levin's close in "Reading a Staging": "What I am asking of a production is not that it stage the work in one way or the other, but that it arrive at an interpretation through a process of rigorous dramaturgical analysis . . . And until we learn to recognize and demand a reasoned staging, an inventive staging, one that engages our interpretative faculties as well as our musical and dramatic sensibilities – until then we will be stuck with too many ostensibly 'discrete' and undoubtedly familiar readings that are, in fact, the weakest of readings, virtually no readings at all" (69–71). On the term "performance text" see Levin, *Unsettling Opera*, Ch. 1.
- 37 Kreuzer, "Voices from Beyond: Verdi's *Don Carlos* and the Modern Stage," *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 18/2 (2006), 152.
- 38 "Sousa's Protest against 'Canned' Music," *Current Literature*, 41 (Oct. 1906), 426–428 (quoting and discussing material originally published by John Philip Sousa in *Appleton's Magazine*, Sept. 1906 – a vehement argument directed to the Congressional Committee on Patents, fearing the decline and death, especially, of music education and amateur performances of music). "But even now the invasion of the north has begun, and the ingenious purveyor of canned music is urging the sportsman, on his way to the silent places with gun and rod, tent and canoe, to take with him some disks, cranks, and cogs to sing to him as he sits by the

- firelight, a thought as unhappy and incongruous as canned salmon by a trout brook" (428).
- 39 Another analog would be a study of the readings provided by analysts of Beethoven or Rossini (or others) – a study of the studies and commentaries on these works. This blends into the reception-history interests already mentioned, even as it also recalls Jauss's reminder that every reading of the text is an event. Hermeneutic events in print, that is, also become fixed objects open to second-order exegesis and analysis.
- 40 Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, trans. Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz (Stanford University Press, 1999), xxxix, xl.
- 41 Savage, *Hermeneutics and Music Criticism, passim* (e.g., x, 5, 84, 87, 93, 123, 138). Cf., for example, Paul Ricoeur, "On Interpretation" in *From Text to Action: Essays in Hermeneutics, II*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and John B. Thompson (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1991), 19–20.
- 42 Again, the similarities with the position of Chua, "Beethoven's Other Humanism" (n. 25 above), are striking, particularly in the concept of the submissive participation in a freely given gift – for Chua and others the theology (and the aesthetics) of the donation. Nonetheless, Chua's concern, apart from its theological underpinnings and related conceptual apparatus, is still much committed to hermeneutic interpretation and, in several instances, to analytical commentary. Cf., however, Chua's recent discussion of "doxological listening" in "Listening to the Other: A Counter-Cultural Ear in iPodic Times: Response to Bernd Wannewetsch," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 135 (2010), 103–108. The aesthetics of donation are sometimes in dialog with influential explications of the gift and the experience of radical otherness as found in both secular and religious writing, for example in Jacques Derrida, *Given Time: 1. Counterfeit Money*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (University of Chicago Press, 1992) or Jean-Luc Marion, *Being Given: Toward a Phenomenology of Givenness*, trans. Jeffrey L. Kosky (Stanford University Press, 2002).
- 43 Gumbrecht, *Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey* (Stanford University Press, 2004). The philosophical and aesthetic roots of such claims are deep and multiple – particularly with regard to the concept of "presence" itself (Derrida's argument regarding the "metaphysics of presence" and the like) – and the fundamental issues at hand cannot be explored at length here. Related writings noted by Gumbrecht include such works as George Steiner, *Real Presences* (University of Chicago Press, 1989), and Jean-Luc Nancy, for example *The Birth to Presence* (Stanford University Press, 1994). Of perhaps more direct relevance to music is Nancy, *Listening*, trans. Charlotte Mandell (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007). Postmodern theory is a strong enabling factor in the revival (or recovery) of presence. Among numerous discussions of the postmodern with regard to this issue – including the dismantling of the rational-secular power structures and abstracted thought that have predominated within the modern – particularly helpful is Zygmunt Bauman, *Intimations of Postmodernity* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992) (see especially the

- "Introduction: The Re-enchantment of the World, or, How can One Narrate Postmodernity?," vii–xxviii, and "A Sociological Theory of Postmodernity," 187–204), along with such later writings of Bauman as *Liquid Modernity* (Malden, MA: Polity, 2000) and its many similar successors. See also Vladimir Jankélévitch on the "ineffable," nn. 49 and 53 below.
- 44 Gumbrecht, *Production of Presence*, 81 ("[Heideggerian] revelation and unconcealment"), 82 ("magic"), 86 ("world-appropriation"), 97–99 ("moments of intensity"), 111–114 ("epiphany").
- 45 NCM, 10. Similarly foreign to this mode of thought would be, for example, the phenomenological claim of Ingarden (*The Work of Music and the Problem of its Identity*) that a musical work, as a "purely intentional object," is conceptually distinct from any of its performances, which are regarded as transitory instances of that work's "profiles" or localized "concretizations." Nor is the notated score itself – riddled with "gaps or areas of indeterminateness" (116) – identical with the work. Rather, the score (as a text) is a "schema" that binds together the various "concrete profiles of the work" (150) that one experiences in its successive performances. Cf. nn. 3 and 12 above.
- 46 Gumbrecht, *Production of Presence*, 21–23 ("metaphysics," "beyond"; cf. 25, "to interpret the world means to go beyond its material surface . . . in order to identify a meaning . . . that is supposed to lie behind or beneath it"), 49 ("oscillation"; similarly on xv, 2, 18–19; "productive tension," 19), 51–90 ("beyond meaning"), 52 ("noninterpretative"), 85 ("parliamentary discussions," "Eucharist"; cf. the similar claim, 35), 142 ("this Cartesian dimension").
- 47 Gumbrecht disavows the suspicion of becoming "a religious thinker" in the normative theological sense: his attraction is more toward Heidegger's concept of Being. Nonetheless, he admits to "a strong affinity with the work of a contemporary group of young British theologians whose position has been described as a 'radical orthodoxy'" and singles out in particular the writing of Catherine Pickstock (*Production of Presence*, 146–149, quotation from 146), although the related writing of John Milbank is equally if not more foundational to that movement (*Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* [Oxford: Blackwell, 1990]). Another issue with such arguments – in the eyes of critics – is their reinscription of essentially conservative, anti-modern postures under the guise of a liberating, postmodern mode of language and thought whose initial move is to cast suspicion on secular modernism and its rationalist correlates (see 46, 65, and especially 143–145). Cf. nn. 25 and 42 above for a related but more theologically oriented variant within musicology.
- 48 Abbate, "Music – Drastic or Gnostic?," *Critical Inquiry*, 30 (2004), 505–536.
- 49 Jankélévitch, *Music and the Ineffable*, trans. Carolyn Abbate (Princeton University Press, 2003). The original French edition, *La musique et l'ineffable*, had appeared in 1961.
- 50 To make the point more explicitly, one might note that Dahlhaus had broached the doctrine of "real music" in his rather dismissively worded defense of Rossini

- within the *Stildualismus*: "Thus, Rossini's docile attitude toward his singers was not evidence of aesthetic spinelessness [*keine ästhetische Charakterlosigkeit*], of a willingness to sacrifice the 'authenticity' of his 'text' to the 'effect' of a performance, but rather a direct consequence of the view that the reality of music resides in its performance" [*daß die Realität der Musik im Ereignis der Aufführung besteht*] (NCM, 10; *Die Musik des 19. Jahrhunderts*, 20). The whole question of the presumed site of music's "reality," coupled with the necessity of performance as its quasi-ritualistic vehicle, is of course a highly complex one. A perhaps unlikely ally (or near-ally) of Abbate and Gumbrecht in this dispute might be found in Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd (rev.) edn., trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 116: "Rather, it is in the performance and only in it – as we see most clearly in the case of music – that we encounter the work itself, as the divine is encountered in the religious rite." Cf. Gumbrecht on Gadamer, *Production of Presence*, 64.
- 51 Abbate, "Music – Drastic or Gnostic?," 505 ("metaphysical mania," "retreat from real music," Jankélévitch on drastic/gnostic), 512–515 and 525–529 ("deciphering," "decipherment," etc.), 524–525, 529 ("cryptographic sublime"), 533 ("Why not take").
- 52 Abbate, "Music – Drastic or Gnostic?," 529 ("carnal" and "spiritual"), 532 ("spiritual," "real music, music-as-performed," "the event itself"). Within philosophy, "ineffability," that which is believed to be beyond words or rational explanation, has a long tradition as one of the central "attributes of mystical experience." See, e.g., Jerome Gellman's entry "Mysticism" in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2004, 2005), at <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/mysticism/> (accessed January 1, 2010); or David E. Cooper's entry, "Ineffability" in Cooper (ed.), *A Companion to Aesthetics* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1992), 221–225. Savage, *Hermeneutics and Music Criticism*, 36–37, associates the term with nineteenth-century Romantic aesthetics: "As a 'language beyond language,' music's ineffability was the emblematic sign of absolute music's metaphysical transcendence of the world . . . [calling forth] the sense of speechless wonderment (*thaumazein*) that for the Greeks was the beginning and end of the love of wisdom . . . unspeakable otherness."
- 53 Abbate, "Music – Drastic or Gnostic?," 516. Abbate's paraphrase refers to Jankélévitch, *Music and the Ineffable* (n. 49 above). Jankélévitch's extravagant claims are intertwined with culturally situated Bergsonian roots (Bergson, too, considered pure duration, *la durée*, to be "ineffable" and distinct from later, spatialized reconfigurations or rational explications) and strongly politicized, pro-French rejections of the nineteenth-century Austro-Germanic tradition in music. Historicizing these claims is a project to be undertaken elsewhere. One might only note here that Jankélévitch's appeals to ineffability were also shot through with florid, though probably metaphorical, references to religion and mysticism. One sample among many, from 72: "the fertile inexplicability of life, freedom, or love. In brief, the musical mystery is not 'what cannot be spoken of,'

the untellable, but the *ineffable* . . . And the ineffable . . . cannot be explained because there are infinite and interminable things to be said of it: such is the mystery of God, whose depths cannot be sounded, the inexhaustible mystery of love, both Eros and Caritas, the poetic mystery par excellence." On *mystère*, see also Jankélévitch, *Debussy et le mystère de l'instant* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1976). Cf. also the preceding note.

- 54 I pursue these reflections in "Ineffable Immersion: Contextualizing the Call for Silence," an essay that participates in a colloquy, "Vladimir Jankélévitch's Philosophy of Music," ed. Michael Gallope and Brian Kane, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 65/1 (2012), 223–230.
- 55 Dahlhaus, *FMH*, 9; *Grundlagen*, 19–20: "Niemand brauchte, weil von Beethoven musikalische Autorität ausging, eine Last zu tragen."
- 56 Dahlhaus, *FMH*, 116, where this "pluralism" ("Pluralismus," *Grundlagen*, 186 – the word in distancing quotation marks) is presented as the most viable current alternative to the reductive "hierarchy thesis" involved in Marxist-oriented (or schematically sociological, event-oriented) modes of explanation. Whether Dahlhaus himself followed this pluralism of methodologies – a problematic question, along with those of the historical roots and lurking agendas behind such convictions as articulated in his argument – is pursued in my "The Dahlhaus Project and its Extra-Musicological Sources," *19th-Century Music*, 14/3 (1991), 221–246, repr. in Hepokoski, *Music, Structure, Thought: Selected Essays* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), 3–28.

2 | Beethoven, Rossini – and others

JAMES WEBSTER

This brief study focuses on the notion of "two cultures" of music in the nineteenth century; specifically, the formulations of this concept in two foundational texts: Raphael Georg Kiesewetter's *Geschichte der europäisch-abendländische oder unsrer heutigen Musik* and Carl Dahlhaus's *Die Musik des 19. Jahrhunderts*.¹ The effort is worth making: the significance of Kiesewetter's pairing of Beethoven and Rossini is distinctly different from what it became in Dahlhaus's historiography 150 years later, and therefore from what it has been supposed to be in subsequent writing. In turn, English-language reception of Dahlhaus has been compromised by inaccuracies in the published translation.

In order to understand Kiesewetter's interpretation, it is necessary not only to read his text closely, but to place it in context – which means, first of all, the immediate context in which it appears in his volume. The table of contents ([vii]) is translated in Table 1.

Kiesewetter organizes the history of Western music from the tenth century through 1832 into seventeen periods (*Epochen*),² whereby the entire first millennium of the common era is treated summarily in an introductory chapter, "outside" the periodization proper. His earliest periods are the longest (a century each), the middle ones of medium length (forty or fifty years), and the most recent ones the shortest (twenty, twenty, and thirty-two years respectively, whereby the non-conforming number "32" reflects merely the date of completion [the preface is dated December 1832]). Such foreshortenings are common in general histories; for example, in Richard Taruskin's recent multivolume history, the five relevant volumes cover: through the sixteenth century, the seventeenth and eighteenth, the nineteenth, the early twentieth, and the later twentieth.³ Each of Kiesewetter's periods is identified only by one or two names. Through Period 5 these are theorists (with the amusing exception of the anonymous Period 3); the first composer named here is DuFay, although in the detailed lists of composers given elsewhere "Adam de la Hale" is mentioned in the fourth period, and "Machaud" and "Franc. Landino" in the fifth. Of course, the "great man" orientation was characteristic of his time, as was a near-total ignorance of the names and careers of individual composers before the fifteenth century.