

**Aesthetics of Music**  
**Musicological Perspectives**

Edited by  
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 **Routledge**  
Taylor & Francis Group  
NEW YORK AND LONDON

First published 2014  
by Routledge  
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

and by Routledge  
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*

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*Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data*  
Ideas in the aesthetics of music: musicological approaches/edited by  
Stephen Downes.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Music – Philosophy and aesthetics. 2. Musicology. I. Downes,  
Stephen C., 1962– editor.

ML3845.I34 2014

781.1'7 – dc23

2014011012

ISBN: 978-0-415-69909-9 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-0-203-13634-8 (ebk)

Typeset in Minion Pro  
by Florence Production Ltd, Stoodleigh, Devon, UK

Senior Editor: Constance Ditzel  
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Cover Design: Jayne Varney

Printed and bound in the United States of America by Publishers Graphics,  
LLC on sustainably sourced paper.

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## 4

## Program music

James Hepokoski

Chess does not tell stories. Mathematics does not evoke emotions. Similarly, from the viewpoint of pure aesthetics, music does not express the extramusical. But from the viewpoint of psychology, our capacity for mental and emotional associations is as unlimited as our capacity for repudiating them is limited. Thus every ordinary object can provoke musical associations, and, conversely, music can evoke associations with extramusical objects.

(Schoenberg 1967, 93)

Schoenberg's declaration in *Fundamentals of Musical Composition* affirmed an article of faith among certain elite sectors of European art-music composition and reception, at least from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. Within that composer's art world, heavy with the burdens of history and the imperative towards greatness, two contrasting ideas about musical content could be held in tension: the supremacy of music as a self-sufficient art (idealizable, pure sound-structure) and music's capability of also calling up sensuous resonances or pictorial things beyond itself – emotions, moods, images, narratives. Here we have a perennial problem in the aesthetics of music: 'formalist' vs. 'expressive' (or sometimes, more controversially, 'representational') constructions. How were these to be reconciled? Was a reconciliation even desirable?

On the one hand, in Schoenberg's day, 'from the viewpoint of pure aesthetics', it seemed axiomatic for many Western art-music initiates to assert that instrumental music was to be revered as a language higher than words, set apart from everyday concerns. This tenet endorsed the aesthetic primacy and self-standing legitimacy of what had come to be regarded as the purely musical (*das rein Musikalische*), the specific tradition-world of the medium. Such was the polemical position of musical autonomy, music's initially Romantic, proud claim to be both autopoietic (self-perpetuating within its own discursive domain) and untranslatable, exempted from any 'corruption into the mundane' or philistinish attempt to collapse its significance into a verbal explication or analytical description (Goehr 1998, 6–47; quotation from p. 30). In the hands of the master composers, it was sometimes believed, pure music, devotionally contemplated, could become an agent of disclosure, granting access to an otherwise ineffable experience. (That such ideological convictions arose in specific historical and cultural circumstances, caught in the swirl of particular interests and agendas, is self-evident.)

On the other hand, the insistence upon music's specialized, internal concerns was countered by an awareness of its broader impacts cross-culturally and across larger stretches of time. Most musical experience, perhaps all of it, is typically intertwined with extramusical (*aussermusikalisch*) factors or impressions: personal or social responses and functions, imaginative construals,

sympathetic affective states, trances and rituals, or representations of non-musical images. For Schoenberg it was 'the viewpoint of psychology' that accounted for such 'mental and emotional associations'. This was the other aspect of its content, the more traditional pole of music's power. 'Many composers have composed', he continued, 'under the urge to express emotional associations. Moreover, program music goes so far as to narrate entire stories with musical symbols. There also exist a great variety of 'characteristic pieces' expressing every conceivable mood.' To be sure, as a latter-day adherent of the metaphysics of music, Schoenberg endorsed music's sufficiency as the main thing, regarding these psychological qualities only as 'secondary effects' (Schoenberg 1967, 93).

Within the European art-music tradition the terms illustrative music and program music refer to instrumental compositions that invite their listeners to attend to them with the aim of grasping their correspondences with (normally) pre-given external images, texts, sounds, situations, ideas, or narratives of varying degrees of specificity. Into such categories fall Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, Beethoven's *Egmont Overture*, Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*, Strauss's *Don Quixote*, Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht*, and thousands of other analogously titled compositions. In its most restrictive sense, the term 'program music' is historical. From the mid-1850s onwards it was promoted by the Liszt Circle – the New German School – as what Carl Dahlhaus characterized as a 'catchword for a thought-complex' (*ein Stichwort für einen Gedankenkomplex*) accompanied by rebellious assertions of artistic progress, the merger of instrumental music with poetic images, and the right to bold, non-traditional musical and structural experimentation (Dahlhaus 1988, 372). While broader understandings of the term have been advanced to include all illustrative music, program music is most scrupulously regarded as that subset of representational music whose otherwise idiosyncratic formal structures or musical materials are most readily grasped by mapping the details of the music onto a governing external narrative or temporal sequence of images. A piece's backdrop storyline, that is, plays a vital role in helping one to understand its ongoing musical processes and intended representational content. This is a distinction made influentially, among many others, by Otto Klauwell and his generation early in the twentieth century and insisted upon more recently, for instance, by Roger Scruton in the *New Grove Dictionary* (Klauwell 1910; Scruton 2001).<sup>1</sup>

Such issues vaulted into prominence in the nineteenth century, when exalted claims about the transcendental capacities of music were reaching their apogee. Contested versions of the claim split into the well-known partisan controversies that pitted the flamboyant Lisztians and Wagnerians against the Brahms Circle's stern proponents of pure music, with their doctrinaire 'crusade against musical infidelity'.<sup>2</sup> Famously sympathetic with the Brahmsians was the critic Eduard Hanslick, promulgating his formalist view of music as essentially 'sounding forms in motion', a purist conviction downplaying the roles of emotion, expression, or representation. Those familiar battles need not be rehearsed here – Kant, Schopenhauer, Marx, Berlioz, Liszt, Ambros, Hanslick, Gurney, and all the rest. Musicologically oriented accounts of the issues once thought to be at stake are legion, and in this essay my interests will take different directions.<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, current considerations of these topics, found especially within philosophical aesthetics, proliferate in the aftermath of those once-towering controversies, fortified by the lingering status claims and academic perpetuation of the now-commercialized 'great-music' repertoires.

When one peers into the voluminous literature on the history, aesthetics, and practice of illustrative claims within Western art music (and for practical reasons the present discussion

is limited to that repertory), one is immediately entangled in knotted debates and terminological tussles. 'For one reason or another,' Peter Kivy noted, 'musical representation has been problematic ever since there has been musical representation at all' (Kivy 1984, 123). Not only are the most basic terms vigorously interrogated—'imitation', 'representation', 'depiction', 'evocation', 'denotation', 'expression', 'image', 'program', 'metaphor', 'symbol', 'topic', 'iconicity', 'indexicality', 'the purely musical' and dozens of others – but they are also often laid out in writings designed to confirm or display pre-assumed aesthetic commitments. As Detlef Altenburg put it, public discourse on this topic has engendered 'a Babylonian confusion of tongues' (*eine babylonische Sprachverwirrung*) (Altenburg 1997, col. 1821).

Nor is it easy to enter the fray neutrally. There has long been a sizeable component of cultivated musicians ready to cast a cold eye on art music that seeks to conjure up external images – battles, storms, bird-calls, sunrises, and so on. For some, such a practice was at best a symptom of the childish stage of the art, a debased or trivialized music incapable of rising above the level of a mere oddity or diversion. At worst, if taken seriously, it could lead less cultivated audiences away from a deeper regard for nineteenth- and twentieth-century music's more purely expressive or formal claims. Positions along these lines generated persistent attempts to justify or recuperate such characteristic works as Beethoven's *Pastoral* Symphony – the usual touchstone in this debate – by marginalizing their pictorial invitations and appealing instead to their internal musical processes.<sup>4</sup> These views were enhanced in influential sectors of anglophone music theory and history in the mid-to-late twentieth century, when the professionalizing concerns of the subdisciplines aspired to the scientism of positivistic fact or technical, syntactic analysis, regularly sidelining inquiries also into hermeneutics, musical meaning, affective content, or semantic connotation. Today, all of these and many more are restored as areas of intense exploration. The new musicology and music theory of the past two decades – more interpretive, more contextual – is sometimes characterized by its proponents, as Nicholas McKay has put it, as a season of generational renewal and thaw after 'the harsh winter of the twentieth-century's formalist discontent with [what were regarded as] "outmoded" expressive attitudes to music' (McKay 2007, 160). With the thaw, pressing questions about musical representation and program music rise again to the fore.

One aspect of this renewal directs attention toward the important role of the performer or listener in his or her interactions with instrumental music – dialogic acts of perception and construal. As I have elaborated in an earlier, more historical study, program music (like absolute music) is more productively viewed as a *hermeneutic genre* than as a stable, ontological property of any individual work. A hermeneutic genre is a familiar, pre-established category of (actual or anticipated) apprehension concerned with the interpretation of meaning. It is initialized by personal or cultural interests: how one elects to hear a specific work, influenced, as one wishes, by such clues as titles or written programs. As a consequence:

The supposed opposition of absolute and program music is a false dichotomy, one forged in the heat of nineteenth-century polemics. . . . The seemingly mutually exclusive extremes—absolute versus programmatic understandings—are not our only choices. Between them lies a flexible middle ground, a vast zone of nuanced implication that may be tapped in various ways, depending on the desired point of view. Consequently, what we encounter is a spectrum of possibilities under which any single piece might be framed for understanding. . . . Nevertheless, in their interactions with the public, composers sometimes highlighted one or

two of these meaning-strata while downplaying the others. Some works do invite richer speculation about representational allusion than do others.

(Hepokoski 2001, 434–5)

Considerations along these lines lead one to conclude that the traditional, philosophically posed question 'is pure music (or this or that piece) actually *capable* of expressing or representing things outside of itself?' is unproductive. In part, this is because of the record of historical evidence: much music of the past has been created and listened to under the belief that it can. (Schoenberg's remark quoted at the outset of this chapter underscores that conviction.) The traditional question's narrow framing can imply a search for a hardened, essential nature for 'music alone' – to draw upon Kivy's term – an abstraction to be thrown onto the examination table and considered largely apart from issues of the historicity of such questions or the differing affective and imaginative experiences of those who interact compellingly, and in multiple ways, with individual works (Kivy 1990). Some discussions along these lines can strike musicians as disorientingly unmusical, caught up in a skein of philosophically in-house argumentation, where concerns to preserve a disciplinarily sterilized wording seem distant from a more imaginatively attuned musical knowledge and experience.

The many varieties of art music, however, are typically engaged with by performers and listeners under variable social roles and conditions made available by broader cultural matrices. We may regard these experiences as *total listening situations* in which music is never experienced as isolated or alone – never heard free from the force-fields of expectation, habit, knowledge or external association. Nicholas Cook has made the same point, adding, 'It is through the interaction of music and interpreter, text and context, that meaning is constructed. . . . It is wrong to speak of music *having* particular meanings; rather it has the potential for specific meanings to emerge under specific circumstances' (Cook 2001: 180). Within the art-music culture of listening being considered here, aesthetic absorption and knowledgeable commitment (fired in part by Schoenberg's 'mental associations') are familiar components of adequate participation. Listeners set these into motion by sympathetic acts of projection, identification and imagination. These are the terms in which the program-music question is most productively addressed.

No brief treatment of such topics can do justice to the labyrinthine problems at hand. One is obliged to simplify, to filter out much that is relevant. What follows are mere glances at three of the many issues currently in play: titles and other paratexts; topic families; signs, metaphors and blended spaces. These issues are not conceptually separate. They intersect as complements, different ways of approaching the same theoretical problem. I conclude by touching on some practical problems of extramusical implication as confronted within the disciplines of music history and analysis.

### Titles and other paratexts

Sometimes amplified by written programs or other verbal commentaries, evocative titles are regular features of illustrative music: Haydn's 'Representation of Chaos' in *The Creation*, Mendelssohn's *Hebrides* Overture, Debussy's 'La cathédrale engloutie' or 'Reflets dans l'eau'. (Here we shall suppose that such verbal descriptors are ones sanctioned by the composer.) Defending the expressivity and charm of music *qua* music against the potentially delimiting aspects of this intermixture, advocates for the non-translatibility of purely musical processes – formalists and anti-representationalists – downplay or disregard the aesthetic functions of these

things. The standard observation is that music, unlike language or painting, is intransitive, incapable of unequivocally denoting non-musical objects or images, much less asserting propositions. In Suzanne K. Langer's once-influential terms, music is an 'unconsummated symbol', lacking an unambiguous referent (Langer 1957, 240–1).<sup>5</sup> One could not know from the music alone what its putative illustrative intent, if any, might have been. What if the piece had been given a different title? Or none at all?

On this familiar view, while one cannot rule out the background sway or secondary effect of titles on our perception, aesthetically it is only the music's inner coherence and expressivity that matter. In the final analysis, the title is not an essential part of the work, much less the key to a crass decoding of what the music really means. Instead, the poetic idea suggested by a title is at best an initial motivator for the composer, a point of departure or perhaps something fancifully concocted after the event of composition. One finds such convictions, for instance, in Wagner's idea of the verbal, ultimately transcendible 'form motive', a conceptual forerunner of Mahler's concept of an external program as only a set of descriptive 'signposts' or 'milestones' of service mostly to the otherwise mystified, naive beginner, unable to follow the higher reality of his music's form, sequence of moods, and verbally inexpressible 'inner program'.<sup>6</sup>

Dahlhaus's discussion of programmaticism with regard to Beethoven's *Egmont* Overture provides an ingenious (neo-Schoenbergian) suggestion along these lines. Quite apart from the piece's potential associative references to the narrative storyline in either Goethe's play or the political-historical background to it, Dahlhaus asserts that the music's motivic logic effects an 'aesthetic transformation' in which extramusical connotations are transmuted into purely musical thought, leaving behind only minimal, perhaps negligible, residues of the original, literary subject. 'Abstract musical processes gradually force the programmatic aspect into the background – admittedly without extinguishing it entirely. . . . [This is] the transformation of content into form ['formal process as formalization']' (Dahlhaus 1991, 15).<sup>7</sup> Similarly (though argued from a thought-world utterly separate from Dahlhaus's), Scruton's analytic-philosophical concept of musical understanding is limited to 'its meaning as *music*'. He puts the matter point-blank: 'We can have a considerable, even perfect, understanding of a piece like [Debussy's] *La Mer* while being ignorant of, or dismissive towards, its representational claims' (Scruton 1997, 131).<sup>8</sup> This declaration seeks to strike at the heart of program music, whose grounding conceit is that of associative hearing – inviting experiences of intermedial delight or amazement by asking the listener to blend the ongoing musical ideas with pre-given external images or narratives.

Such views tilt the scales in favour of a 'musical purism', postulated a priori, that belittles or brackets out non-musical aspects of the total listening situation, including the interpretive psychologies and historical knowledge deployed by style-competent performers or listeners. More sympathetic to exploring the workings of musical representation, Kivy, in *Sound and Semblance* (1984), crafts an appealing explanation for the persistent appeal of this stark 'antirepresentational thesis'. Confessing that he too is 'drawn strongly' to the latter by his 'musical nature' – clearly, one that savours the wonders of the musical medium – he nonetheless concludes that, at bottom, it remains

an extremely useful falsehood. For so strong is the urge, in the West, to give music a subject, a literary content, a philosophical message, that a proper mean can only be struck, it would seem, by aiming at the opposite, formalist extreme. Whatever its usefulness, however, a falsehood it remains.

(Kivy 1984, 216)<sup>9</sup>

Those willing to move beyond that falsehood will engage the important play of associative imagination and psychology as participatory aspects of the total musical experience. Kendall Walton puts his finger on the central issue: 'Mere titles often suffice to make music patently representational; indeed I cannot imagine music which an appropriate title could not render representational. Music stands ready to take on an explicit representational function at the slightest provocation' (Walton 1994, 47). Walton alludes here to the framing functions that, within literary theory, we can associate with Gérard Genette's study of *paratexts*, features of presentation ancillary to the otherwise unadorned text: titles, intertitles, epigraphs, separate explanatory notes, dedications, and much more – conditioning mediations between the text and its readers (Genette 1997). Paratexts are also central to the repertory of music presently under consideration and particularly to the experience invited by illustrative or program music. Here the unadorned text is the bare notation (or its acoustic realization), though that text is surrounded and inflected by a panoply of 'non-sounding elements' – paratextual and cultural – necessary for a rich, historically adequate construal.<sup>10</sup> In Lawrence Kramer's terms, most musical texts (including seemingly non-illustrative ones) are accompanied by textual and citational inclusions, two types of 'hermeneutic windows' inviting robust interpretations from those who are drawn to pursue them (Kramer 1990, 9–10).

Within the field of philosophical aesthetics Jerrold Levinson (1985) has laid out the case for titles with admirable clarity:

Titles of artworks are often *integral parts* of them, constitutive of what such works are. . . . [They] are plausibly *essential properties* of them, in many cases. . . . The *title slot* for a work of art is never devoid of *aesthetic potential*; how it is filled, or that it is *not* filled, is always aesthetically relevant. (A work differently titled will invariably be aesthetically different.) . . . [Titles] serve as presumptive guides to perception of a certain sort.

Most instances of explicitly illustrative music bear what Levinson designated as either a 'focusing' or 'disambiguating' title-type. The former guides the listener towards the leading conceptual idea of the work; the latter 'can serve to fix or endorse one perceptual reading rather than another', important 'if the body of the work is representationally ambiguous [as often within musical works]' (Levinson 1985, 23, 24, 35, 36; Kivy 1984, 40 also endorses the disambiguation function of titles). To this we need only add the obvious, namely, that all relatable paratexts may be considered under the same line of thought. These include: a composer's (or authorized proxy's) separate, sometimes detailed programmatic explanation of the music (as with Weber's *Concertstück*, Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*, or the composer-approved, published *Musikführer* that lead us through the illustrative details of Richard Strauss's tone poems); ongoing intertitles distributed throughout the score to indicate what is being currently represented here or there (as with Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, with its 'demonstration-sonnet' lines intercalated at relevant locations within the individual string parts, Liszt's Schiller-based *Die Ideale*, Smetana's *Vltava* or Bartók's *Kossuth*); and suppressed programs that are later discovered and made public (as with Berg's *Lyric Suite*).

As I have written elsewhere, a titled character-piece for keyboard or a titled concerto, overture or symphonic poem participates in a tradition wherein the implicit game of intermedial association is presupposed to be aesthetically significant (Hepokoski 1992). In declining to play the associative game proposed by the composer one would be – following Levinson's argument – listening to an 'aesthetically different' composition, even though it would 'sound the same'.<sup>11</sup>

Bracketing out the historically conditioned title of *La mer* in quest only of its 'meaning as music [alone]' is certainly possible and may be gratifying on its own terms. But it is nonetheless to construe the work in an aesthetically different sense from that of the more complete conception offered by the composer. Some listeners may not be troubled by this. From the standpoint of an enriched hermeneutics, though, titles and composer-intended paratexts – however we might learn of them – are essential for more thoughtful explorations of the layers of connotational and cultural implication that such works invite us to consider.

### Topic families

Beyond verbal paratexts the question of musical representation extends into the individualized content and processes of the programmatic work – its succession of musical modules, most of which, while highly characterized, will not carry explicit labels. How might we interpret their potentially representational roles? When considering the possible semantic implications within Western instrumental music, philosophers have typically sought to elucidate the musical sign or figure not by examining concrete situations of historical practice but rather by interrogating the logic and persuasiveness of the various theoretical possibilities. Typical is the approach taken by Stephen Davies, hauling the program-music claim before the analytic-philosophical tribunal. 'If music is representational,' we are told, 'it must satisfy the general conditions for representation.' Davies posits four that are 'necessary': (1) the composer's intention to illustrate; (2) a medium/content distinction (the music should represent something other than music); (3) some sense of resemblance between the music and what is represented (possibly adapted from Richard Wollheim's 'seeing-in' theory for pictorial art); and (4) the potentially clarifying role of conventions. Following an exhaustive review of philosophical positions and their complications, Davies pronounces the verdict:

For the most part, the richness of music does not arise from its depictive powers. . . . [though] I allowed that there may be a degree of depiction in music . . . based on natural (but conventionally structured) resemblances. . . . Music's power lies more with its expressive than with its limited representational possibilities.

(Davies 1994, 51–121; quotations from pp. 52–3 and 121)<sup>12</sup>

A cleaner, more provocative path through all of this has been cleared in the past three decades within the discipline of music study proper, particularly (though by no means exclusively) in the subfields concerned with the historical identification and interpretation of musical 'topics'. These are recurring, 'conventional musical signs, or 'commonplaces' of style . . . familiar, expressive, rhetorical gestures encoded in referential musical patterns' (McKay 2007, 160). None of this is news to music scholars, well aware that the study of musical topoi was proposed in 1980 by Leonard G. Ratner, who documented several late eighteenth-century types and subdivided them into topics and styles (Ratner 1980, 9–29).<sup>13</sup> Most of them are readily recognizable: dance-rhythm identifiers (gavotte, minuet, passepied, gigue, bourrée, contredanse), march, fanfare, musette, pastoral, hunt, *Sturm und Drang*, *Empfindsamkeit*, singing style, brilliant style, learned style, mechanistic clockwork, French Overture, and others as well. One of several strategies of that decade to encourage the legitimation of a historically responsible hermeneutics, topic theory helped the discipline, in Hatten's words, to begin 'to recover from the [midcentury] repression of expressive discourse fostered by a formalist aesthetics' (Hatten 1994, 228; also quoted in McKay 2007, 161).

Ratner's original list of connotative signifiers opened the door not only to inquiries into the associative connotations and registers of such topics (Allanbrook 1983) or to a tabulation and modest expansion of the accepted eighteenth-century 'universe of topic[s]' (Agawu 1991, 30) but also to a broader array of shared, readily understood musical signs within the tradition, however creatively individualized these commonly shared signs (or types) might have been realized in any particular work (or token). One might imagine the vast set of such signs to be arranged on a continuum of musical ostension, ranging, on the one end, from more or less obvious or onomatopoeic instances ('sounds like') to, on the other end, less obvious figures of conventional or arbitrary association.<sup>14</sup> (Zones within this continuous span might be regarded as correlates to Peirce's famous distinctions between the icon, index and symbol.) The easy cases are the most obviously mimetic ones, musical analogues of actual sounds that in turn call up associated images: thunderstorms, rushing water, hunting horns, bagpipe drones, bells, bird calls, animal cries, battle-clashes. All such are the stock-in-trade of the seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century aesthetic of 'imitation': Farina's *Capriccio stravagante* of 1627 (imitating cat, dog and hen); Biber's *Sonata violino solo rappresentativa* for violin of (c.1669: nightingale, cuckoo, frog, hen, quail and cat) and militaristic *Battalia* (1673); various storm interludes (*symphonies*) in French *tragédies lyriques* – and in Vivaldi's 'Spring' (along with birds and a barking dog); and so on.

Moving along the continuum, one finds analogues of slow- or fast-moving actions or motions: light breezes, sunrises, rippling brooks, spinning wheels, pictorial ascents or descents, sunrises, rapid, energetic bustle, glistening sparkle, sudden surprises, bucolic placidity, and so on.<sup>15</sup> Further along, these blend into motion- or contour-analogues of human emotions or affects, more or less standardized in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: jubilant fanfare-like effects; ascending or descending contours with characteristic affective connotations; the major–minor, slow–fast dichotomies and their emotive implications; in minor, the well-documented lament or grieving figure (a descending-tetrachord bassline from tonic to dominant, sometimes chromatically filled in – a type of *passus duriusculus* – and produced as an ostinato bass); various standardized depictions of the demonic (or dance of death); accepted folkloric signs or other national style-identifiers of a people, nation or *Volk*; and many others. And on the far end, less unequivocally, one encounters characteristic signs of triumph or defeat, exultation or manic fear, struggle, despair, breakthrough, the heroic, the learned, the hymnic, the lyric, the ineffable, rapturous love, divine grace, and dozens, perhaps hundreds, of others – all standard topical effects of nineteenth-century music. Far from remaining semantically mute or ineffably cryptic, asking only for our rapt and reverent silence, much of the instrumental music within the European tradition is bursting with connotative implication historically inlaid into the style and waiting to be explored hermeneutically by the imaginative and responsible interpreter.

Individualized topics have musical and cultural histories, spanning the centuries. These may be considered as *topic families* extended through historical time, within which they are subject to social and individual ramifications and modifications. One may trace the tradition of battle-depictions, for instance, from Janequin's program chanson, *La Bataille de Marignan; La guerre* (c.1520s) and William Byrd's 'The Battle' (1591, from *My Ladye Nevell's Booke*) through many dozens of subsequent works including Beethoven's *Wellington's Victory* and Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture*, along with several pieces from the twentieth century. Or the topic family of bird-calls from Janequin through Biber, Vivaldi, Haydn, Beethoven, Wagner, Ravel, Delius, Respighi, Messiaen, Rautavaara (*Cantus arcticus*, 1972), and beyond; or storms; or bells; or mechanical clocks and other gear-and-lever gizmos; or the sea; or dreamlike or enchanted travel by boat

(siciliana? barcarole?, e.g. Edgecombe 2001). Large-scale historical studies have been made of the musical signs of the pastoral (Jung 1980); of the structural and varied affective connotations of *The Chromatic Fourth during Four Centuries of Music* (Williams 1997); and even of musical depictions of such human gestures as questions (Jessulat 2000). In addition to providing sophisticated discussions of the historical background and intellectual structure underpinning topic theory, Raymond Monelle has produced historical and cultural studies of several topic families and their near-relatives. These include the 6/8, 9/8 or 12/8 galloping gait of the 'noble horse' from c.1800 through such exemplifications as Schubert's 'Erlkönig', Wagner's *Ride of the Valkyries* and Sousa's march, *The Washington Post*; the descending half-step *pianto* (the figure of tears, grief or wearied sigh); and a book-length historical study of 'hunt, military, and pastoral' (Monelle 2000, 41–80 and 2006). The potential list of such inquiries seems endless.

Several points follow – and not a few caveats. First, it is clear that much, perhaps even most, Western instrumental music participates in a historically conditioned, shared semantic network, a significant portion of which is at least approachable by topic-family theory, broadly and flexibly construed. Even though irreducible factors of pure music's systematic procedures and regulated traditions are also very much in play, the now stale argument that untexted music – much less program music or music with titles – is *ipso facto* incapable of pointing toward recognizable external referents or affects with cultural connotations is no longer tenable. Conversely, though, one needs to realize that topic theory, still in its raw and rudimentary phases, by no means answers all of our interpretive questions. Overplaying its cards can lead to breathtakingly naïve hermeneutic claims. Second, the universe of topic families, including their many shades and variants, is far larger and more varied than anyone has yet described. It also includes overlapping topics and individual figures capable of more than one topical reference. Third, selecting an appropriate (generalized) topic-label for a given figure is more challenging than might initially appear. A procedural risk of topic theory is that it can tempt the overconfident interpreter, with a presumed master-code-book securely in hand, to leap rashly into a quick, reductive labeling. To do so is to discredit what ought to be a more subtly tinged enterprise. We need to think through our descriptors critically, sceptically, weighing alternatives, problematizing what we might mean with such descriptions. Most of the entailments that follow rely on our initial decisions, and those decisions are often the weak links in the chain. (Let Ratner's designation of the opening of the *Eroica* as a waltz stand as a caution to us all: Ratner 1980, 223.)

Fourth, even when we think that we have identified the proper family of a given figure, we need to be attentive to the nuances and complications that any individual token of it can present. It may be that the manner of its realization is more noteworthy than the topic itself. Fifth, merely identifying a topic or series of topics is not enough. Topic-recognition must never be taken to be a simple translation of music's meaning into words. It is only an initial step prompting further inquiry and careful interpretation, particularly with regard to topical inflection and the narrative journey through arrays of topical successions. Sixth, compositionally to illustrate or connote musically is, more often than not, to activate a pre-existing topical tradition of signification and then to tailor it to one's own cultural and aesthetic purpose. To access a culturally available style is to channel the memory of its historical traditions, to draw on the potential of its past history of connotatively charged accumulations. Any topical study of a single work or set of closely related works should consider the matter both synchronically and diachronically. Individual evocations of birds, water, battles, storms, fanfares, hunts, and all the rest may plug more directly into the topical tradition than into the external referent itself.

This last point questions the extent to which extramusical references are, in fact, extramusical at all. Monelle deals with the issue from the standpoint of a hard-line semiotics. 'The status of a . . . semiotic entity [such as a musical topic] is not guaranteed by its relation to a real state of affairs, but by its interpretability within a code.' Ultimately, the verbal designation for a topic (storm, pastoral, lament, and so on) can be best grasped as what Peirce called an 'interpretant', a conventional mode of connecting the signifier (or, for Peirce, the 'representamen') to the signified (or 'object'). In short, musical topics, while codelike, 'need not refer [directly] to a 'world' of extension' [objective things in the world 'out there'], and their meaning is not 'referential'. On the contrary, they must refer to semantic values, defined and implied by the signs themselves. . . . The meaning of the musical sign is not to be sought in the world at all. It is to be sought within the [signifying] system' (Monelle 2006, 20–32; quotations from 21 and 22). This is an aggressive claim. Encountering a historically advanced instance of the tempest topic – Beethoven's 'Gewitter, Sturm' movement from the *Pastoral* Symphony, say, or Wagner's Prelude to Act 1 of *Die Walküre* – need not be regarded as an ad hoc, individual illustration of any particular, external storm, nor even of essential storminess, as grounded in the composer's personal experience. Rather, on Monelle's semiotic-absolutist terms, what would be conjured up is a new realization of the craft-inherited 'musical storm': a traditional, vividly imaginative convention available within the historical codes of music.<sup>16</sup>

#### Signs, metaphors, blended spaces

What if, cutting free from turgid philosophical snarls, we were to take the obvious for granted, either observationally or on the basis of personal experience? What if we were to concede that the total listening situations of different listeners and different historical eras have experienced instrumental music as rich in a multitude of different connotations? Presupposing that we have an interest more advanced than that of projecting subjective cloud pictures on to the music, the more trenchant question, beyond the disambiguating functions of titles and topic families, becomes one of enquiring into the phenomenological or cognitive factors that enable associative listening in the first place: Schoenberg's 'viewpoint of psychology'. That question, too, has been of growing interest in the past three decades, both inside and outside the professional field of music study.

Fundamental to all associative listening and relatable to the general, though somewhat different, question of musical signification is the operation of metaphor: one thing is heard as being like, or otherwise equated with, another, different thing. This is typically the situation claimed to be engineered by the musical signs encountered in illustrative music, one that was already an acknowledged experiential curiosity, a source of wonder, by the mid-eighteenth century: this stretch of musical sounds 'is' a storm (we are urged to hear it as a storm or even, cross-sensorily, to see it as one in an act of 'pictorial listening'), even while its musical significance is by no means reducible only to a storm); another a love-declaration; a third an image of mourning; another a heroic countenance.<sup>17</sup> Metaphor theory is currently a burgeoning field, one that is anything but settled. Consequently, one should speak rather of recent metaphor theories, in contestation not only with each other but also with other modes of approach to such issues. A number of these theories recast earlier concepts of metaphor and also claim to be informed, to a greater or lesser degree, by ongoing research in cognitive science, with its interest in the physiological embodiment of the mind. Only a small number of its relevant aspects (and even fewer of its intersubjective variants) can be touched upon here.



George Lakoff's influential 'contemporary theory of metaphor', developed also with Mark Johnson around 1980, marked an important early stage in this inquiry. Lakoff notes, for instance, that 'metaphor is fundamentally conceptual, not [merely] linguistic, in nature'. 'The locus of metaphor is not in language at all, but in the way we conceptualize one mental domain in terms of another.' One can investigate metaphorical expressions in terms of mental processes that normally operate below the linguistic threshold, 'mostly unconscious, automatic, and used with no noticeable effort'. Lakoff and Johnson write of a 'source domain' being mapped onto a 'target domain', now-familiar terms in metaphor theory. In one of their paradigmatic metaphorical expressions, 'LOVE is [or as] a JOURNEY' (as in 'It's been a long, bumpy road'), 'ontological' and 'epistemic' characteristics of the richly furnished source domain, JOURNEY, are being mapped on to the equally rich target domain, LOVE – which in turn is being understood in terms of sharable features from JOURNEY: 'mapping knowledge' about the one, journeys, onto knowledge about the other, love. Their study, then, deals with the common psychological activity of 'cross-domain mapping' (Lakoff 1993, 202–51; quotations from, in order, 244, 203, 245, and 206–12).<sup>18</sup> For our purposes this is what happens when the domain of music is associated with that of the different domain of either a sung text (as with word-painting) or an external, verbalized image, narrative or other paratext.

In *The Way We Think* (2002), Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner developed further their concept of 'conceptual blending', another way of construing this quasi-automatic cognitive-metaphorical process. Rather than being restricted to a two-domain model, Fauconnier and Turner propose a model capable of incorporating, then merging, four or more 'mental spaces', the final one of which is a 'blended space' of 'conceptual integration'. ('Mental spaces are small conceptual packets constructed as we think and talk, for purposes of local understanding and action . . . connected to long-term schematic knowledge [that structure them] called 'frames'') (2002, 40).<sup>19</sup> Figure 4.1, adapted from their work, presents a diagrammatic 'conceptual integration network' (CIN) of a generalized, elementary (four-space) version of their proposal. Partial, corresponding, and relevant structural aspects of two different *input spaces* (love and journey, perhaps; or a purely musical figure and an associatable verbal paratext) are to be blended into a third – represented below them – as a new, *blended space* of 'formal integration', 'emergent structure' or 'meaning. In order to arrive at the blended space, the *generic space* deploys a system of selection that can capture or identify attributes, features, or structure that the two input spaces have in common and on to which it mapped. Additionally, the whole CIN process of metaphor production can be governed or organized externally, so to speak, by the application of a *frame* or set of general principles, accepted as relevant and appropriate, that govern the interests or procedures of the conceptual blend.<sup>20</sup> Such a model has proven attractive to musicological and music-theoretical work on musical meaning and metaphor. Discussions and applications of it to music are found, for instance, in interdisciplinary studies by Nicholas Cook and Lawrence M. Zbikowski.<sup>21</sup>

The relevance of such a concept to music that seeks to be representational – as only one of its multiple facets – is clear. A pictorial or literary title or other paratext signals that a work is in dialogue with a historically situated genre (concert overture? programmatic symphony or concerto? characteristic piece for keyboard? symphonic poem?) within which, traditionally, we are invited to pursue various degrees of intermedial blending, even while few, if any, would be so narrow as to claim that that blending alone exhausts the aesthetic interest or meaning of the piece. Our awareness of the ramifications of the genre – above all, its historical placement,

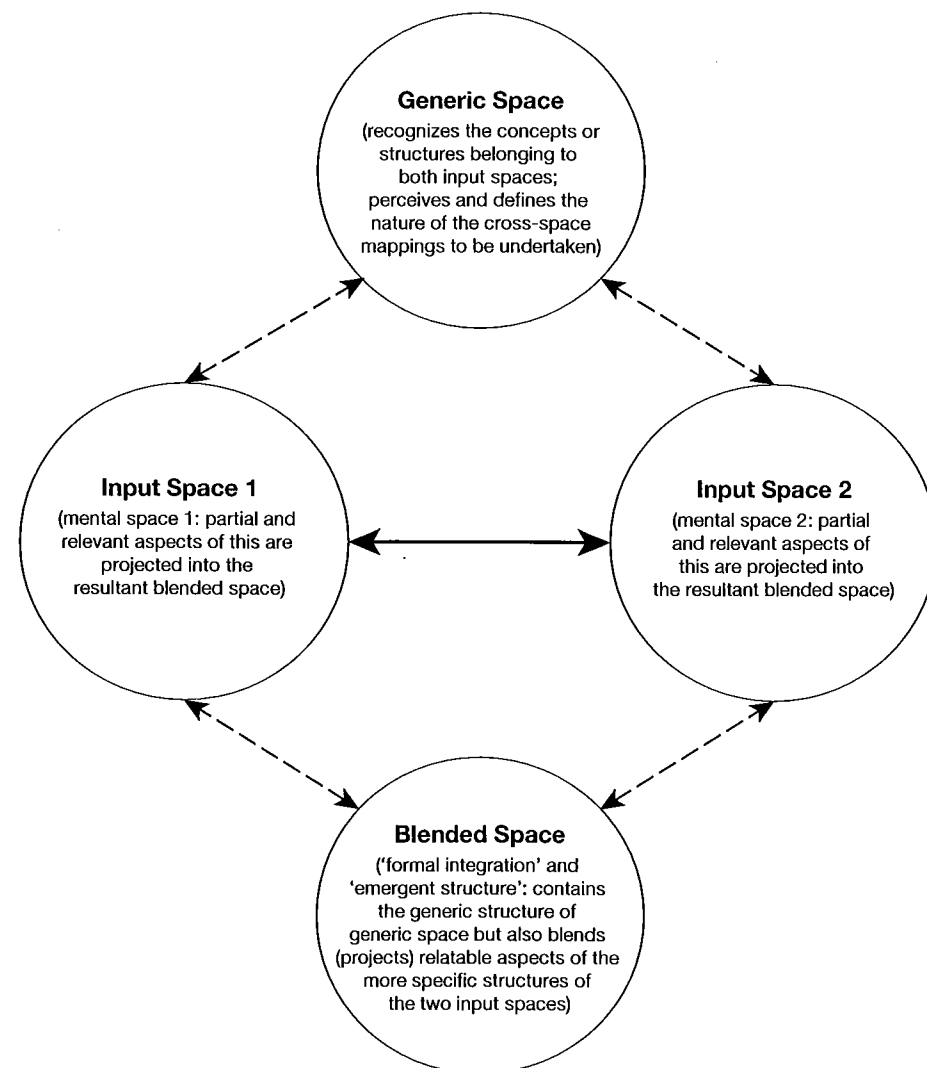


Figure 4.1 Generalized conceptual integration network (adapted from Fauconnier and Turner 1998, 142–4)

its traditions, its community-shared directives for reception – can be regarded as providing a regulative frame for the enterprise.

Conceptual acuity within the generic space realizes that we are invited to locate similar attributes within the two input spaces. We are then asked to correlate aspects of the 'music alone' – phrase-to-phrase modular content and longer range structure – with the implications of the work's evocative title (or other paratext) through an imaginative recognition of those topological or structural attributes that both input spaces are imagined to have in common. Cook refers to these as 'enabling similarities' or 'homologies'. They can include shared specifics of motion, speed, repetitive gestures, precision, intensity, clash, turbulence, calm, affective posture, high or low cultural register, and many others.<sup>22</sup>

Here is where the deployment of topic families or appropriately individualized, ad hoc gestures renders the situation more complex. From this perspective the 'music alone' (what one hears, the acoustic surface) can be recognized as pre-loaded with historically conditioned significations: hunt, march, storm, prayer, minor- or major-mode connotations, or any of a vast number of expressive or representational possibilities. Like dead or frozen metaphors, these seemingly natural associations of topic are long-established cultural products of earlier metaphorical blends. Hatten refers to them as immediate, stable and near-literal 'correlations' or 'shared general meanings', conventions that are 'inherited from earlier styles' and can encompass accrued expressive meanings ('expressive genres') broader than topics per se.<sup>23</sup>

What one might at first naively imagine to be a simple input of 'music alone' is not 'music alone' at all. It never is. Instead, even while we may not be cognizant of the underlying factors at work in these fluid moments of immediacy and transience, we experience music as a richly complex, affective space that is always already the outcome of several earlier, assimilative blends that can be (or have been) automatically set into motion in our own acts of listening. Held up to inspection, the 'music alone' turns out to be a generous aggregate of ready-made, previously blended spaces, historical accretions, standardized connotations – hyperblends of newer metaphors grounded in multiply accumulated layers of more elemental, prior metaphors – that are each themselves open to historical and stylistic inquiry. Bristling with interpretive potential, the rippling thicknesses of these connotative features afford a near-immediate cross-space mapping of the 'music alone' onto the non-musical implications suggested, in yet another stage of assimilation, by the provided programmatic title or paratext. The result of the mapping is a new entity, a conceptual hyperblend, understood as an emergent meaning made possible through the listener's individualized, performative acts of absorption and imagination. The mutually correlatable tensions of the music and the analogue-image are brought together into a differing, unitary mental space of new signification, a newly created metaphorical meaning.<sup>24</sup>

An additional aspect of the encounter with any piece of music is the experience of its sonic/modular change through linear time: attending to the musical process in motion. This stream-of-change carves out a singular temporal space of affect and image. Changing from moment to moment as the piece scrolls through time, the processual flow of enacted blends can be construed, with the help of memory and anticipation (phenomenological retention and protention), as an impression of coherent, expanding spatiality. Enabling that impression is a cross-space mapping, in Lakoffian terms, of the common TEMPORALITY as SPACE metaphor, perhaps inflected also with such schemata as CONTAINER merged with JOURNEY (or even STORY). With such a realization (while I do not seek to oversimplify a complex matter) the problematics typically associated with the issue of musical narrative can be recast. When the impression of narrativity occurs in music, it is the result of the production of a different mode of conceptual integration. And again, it is one typically invited by the program-music composer.<sup>25</sup> (I revisit the question of linearity in the final section of this chapter.)

The common, spatial impression of the blended-space end-product has been noted in differing ways. For philosopher Kendall Walton, the 'representational arts' in general are characterized as fictional 'work worlds' built upon 'props' in 'games of make-believe'. Even non-representational music is experienced as having 'spatial perspectives' construable as engrossingly subjective, intimate 'game worlds' of 'imagined feelings' (Walton 1990; 1994, 56, 59). For musicologist and cognitive theorist Eric F. Clarke, the final experiential product is a 'virtual object that I hear as having a bodily character', one with 'virtual agency' and 'virtual motion' readily attributed to it. The performer's or listener's willing absorption into an 'environment' of 'virtual reality'

encourages and rewards a close personal identification with these musical blends and processes (Clarke 2005, 182–8). Even more broadly, all of this resonates synergistically with music theorist Robert Hatten's extended semiotic studies of the embodied nature and communicative potential, for style-competent listeners, of 'musical gesture', defined as an 'energetic shaping through time' and a '*movement (implied, virtual, actualized) interpretable as a [conventionalized] sign . . . [and] marked as meaningful . . . biologically and/or culturally*' (Hatten 2004, 1, 93, 125).<sup>26</sup> And much of this, with some allowance for flexibility, can also be read as compatible with Lawrence Kramer's recent insistence on the mutual, deeply subjective interaction of music and listener, with the latter 'hearkening' to the call of music and, in effect, lighting the music up (*Aufleuchtung*) with a sympathetic response, hearing music under an aspect. For the humanist Kramer, however, the semiotic route, aspiring to science and objectivity, misses the point: 'Semiotic models suggest that expressions signify or symbolize feelings without requiring their presence in either sender or receiver.' Instead, Kramer insists that we need to realize instead the indispensable role of participatory subjectivity, to understand that it is only 'that openness, which coincides with the necessary mutuality of the expressive act and the reply that reexpresses it, [that] marks the point of theoretical sufficiency' (Kramer 2012, 156).<sup>27</sup>

#### Beyond cloud pictures: historically aware hermeneutics

Topic and metaphor theories remind us that music, as encountered in total listening situations, harbors a richness of potential implication that can be experienced and reflected upon in a variety of ways. The question of whether instrumental art music can be legitimately associated with cross-sensory images or deeply felt personal responses has been eclipsed by larger questions of how such commonly intuited associations happen and what we are to make of them. At first glance, the ease with which such associations can arise might suggest that the process is inevitably random or casual, uncontainable, merely personalized and arbitrary. But listeners vary in terms of interests and interpretive expertise. They differ in what they bring to the place of encounter and for which larger purposes that encounter is sought. For a more professionalized sector of listeners, particularly, though not exclusively, those invested in the disciplines of music history and music theory, the interpretation of musical texts in a historically and analytically responsible way is an issue of paramount concern.

The interpretation of such texts is a fraught and multilayered affair. It involves attending to the problematics of negotiating between our own, limited horizons and the contrasting ones that, for specific purposes, produced the historical texts under examination. It can entail the generation of potentially persuasive reconstructions of an imagined compositional intention, itself a complex and methodologically charged issue. And it demands the adducing of reasoned arguments on behalf of the latent implications within the text, setting forth a proposed meaning beyond a work's merely personalized significance-for-me. Even while we might be attracted to topic and metaphor theory as helping to bolster or legitimize our willingness to embrace the enterprise of hermeneutics, we also confront professionalized constraints that challenge our natural tendency to believe our first impressions of the recognizable pictures (emergent meanings, blended spaces) that we think that we see in the clouds. To get a sense of some of these issues within the question of illustrative music, we might do well to revisit some basic concepts, ones that will, in the end, drive us back into the realm of historical musical structures and technical processes: a necessary, disciplinary grasp of how compositions are crafted in the workshop.

We recall that the term 'program music' can be restricted to those works with defensible narrative claims, to those pieces that invite us to map their presented temporal successions, with varying degrees of specificity, on to a presumed or given external narrative. Program music, that is, is a subset of the broader category of illustrative music. To be sure, all such distinctions are blurry, in part because several types of seemingly abstract works within a tradition – perhaps most notably, the sonata tradition – can also be construed as implicitly narrative in their pursuits of generic, cadential goals and, in most cases, of eventual resolutions (Hepokoski and Darcy 2006, especially 250–4, 306–7, 312–16, 336–42). This was emphatically the case in the nineteenth century, when issues of illustration, program and structure were inflated into grand subjects of aesthetic debate, and when partisan compositional agendas increasingly claimed to be allied with musical progress.

Most discussions of musical representation (or emotional resonance, for that matter) center on what I call the *vertical* dimension of an isolatable musical module: a single passage's immediately experienced connotative significance, the illustrative moment considered apart from the role of its placement(s) within the larger composition. But program music additionally invites the listener to consider the narrative implications in the context of its *horizontal* placement within an environment of situational change from module to module. What is that moment's role among the work's formal processes? What does it mean to have *this* musical module situated *there* (as opposed to elsewhere) – and following, say, *that* module? In the case of sonata-based works, what is the way in which that or that module has been placed into a dialogue with that structure's generic action-spaces?

One complicating factor is that, quite apart from its representational ambitions, such music also has its own traditions and norms *qua* music to unfold within its own domain. With paratexted music we are asked to navigate between (at least) two sets of often-complex relational networks: (1) the music's external framing under extramusical concepts (poetic ideas, implied representations, topic families, potential analogical narratives) and (2) the music's simultaneous relation to the historical tradition of how this or that genre of music is to be crafted (the work's dwelling within an ongoing, definable and relatively autopoietic musical world). The nineteenth-century program-music game explored the interaction of these two networks. While either can be conceptually isolated for heuristic purposes, the game's larger purpose was to engage both of them dialogically and to encourage the listener to do so as well. The temptation to avoid is to overweigh either the one network or the other – or worse, imprudently to discard one of them illegitimate or negligible. Instead, we should strive to keep both sides of the binary continually in play – and in tension – even as we temporarily tip the balance this way or that, depending on the stretch of music that we are considering and the interpretive concerns at hand. This demands a constant nuancing, seeking always imaginatively to grasp a historically viable concept that could have been capable of generating a ground-plan for the details of what one hears within a musical work. This is a fundamental hermeneutic challenge: we need responsibly to imagine what broader network of ideas might have lain behind the compositional impulse that could account for everything that one encounters in the final product. Close music-technical analysis matters – a great deal.

In cases where paratextual evidence is absent or incomplete, and where there is nonetheless a reasonable implication of a background poetic idea steering important aspects of the composer's musical choices, we might put forward the cautious (albeit fallible) suggestion of a *viable rhetorical analogue* that functions productively, metaphorically, at the core of the music. Such an imaginative analogue proposes a generalizable concept under which what is presented to us on the acoustic

surface would make sense – would cohere as a whole. Always challengeable and provisional in its status as a proposed reading (not an objective discovery), a viable rhetorical analogue is subject to a number of heuristic limitations. The analogue should be: (1) historically plausible (one could make a case that the conceptual analogue, broadly construed, was indeed part of the generalized culture and life-world of the composer; one could imagine the composer to have been aware of such ideas); (2) apt or relevant with regard to the work at hand (more locally, a reasonable connection might be found between this specific work's range of concerns and the larger cultural world available at the time); and (3) homologous in close detail to the work's musical processes (phrase-by-phrase mappable on to the work; supported by the local, ongoing musical details at virtually all points of close reading).

While music and its claims inhabit a domain separate from words or images, in paratexted music we are asked to set up a topical or metaphorical relationship between them. One must be clear: music does not (and cannot) present ideas or images in the manner that words do. What it can do within its own domain, though, is to cultivate expressive musical analogues to those ideas or images. But how? Setting aside in this discussion the equally important issues of music's political roles of affirmation or resistance – its ideological and social functions – music is a sensuous and temporal medium historically bound up with elemental human gesture and colorations of mood. As also noted by others, the sense of 'mood' suggested here may be relatable to such existential aspects of consciousness as Heideggerian *Stimmungen* ('attunements' of mood), which are not yet attached to intentional objects, as are emotions (Heidegger 1996, 126–34, 312–17).<sup>28</sup>

While any adequate consideration of music and mood would take us far afield, we might at least propose that what music *can* do (or at least what it was claimed to be able to do) is to light up the successive affects of a generalized or verbal paratext. It can do this by means of its own potential for being interpreted analogically, a potential that we as historical listeners are typically willing to project upon it in search of communicative wholeness and gestalt coherence – all as part of playing the game properly. Music can provide an experiential analogue to an implicit or explicit paratext. In turn this can be experienced as a heightened, interiorized richness accessible only within the domain of music. It remains an analogue to experience that nonetheless, and on its own terms, asks also to be grounded within the network of relations that it establishes with accepted musical practice. In Mendelssohn's Overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, for instance (where both Marx and the later Mendelssohn provided us with a guide to what each section of the piece had sought to illustrate – 'the dance of the elves', the court of Theseus, the hunting party, the wanderings of the young lovers, Bottom and the rude mechanicals, and so on),<sup>29</sup> one is to imagine that the affective and topical experiences of the relevant programmatic concepts are lit up sensuously by extended paragraphs of music – by a succession of discrete musical tableaux that also operate dialogically (make sense) within their historical traditions of sonata-structure, harmony, form, orchestration, and so on. They remain experiential, representative analogues within an essentially musical experience, and it is only through that musical experience, historically grasped, that they can be adequately interpreted.

So where does this leave us? Music can be relatable to an accompanying or implicit paratext in any number of ways. A composer's musical choices are invariably made in dialogue with established musical traditions. These choices are not only piece-specific but also relational, since they put to work individualized tokens of readily recognizable families of community-shared signs, patterns, topics, expectations, and the like. A composer's choices reach into the history of his or her materials, and as we explore a work's acoustic content that history should be

thematized, not bracketed out. Reflecting on a composer's choice of musical material, we need to be aware of how and why, within a concrete historical situation that also bears exploration, the composer is accessing, inflecting, and sometimes even exceeding commonly encountered generic norms to produce particular expressive or illustrative effects.

Among the musical strategies through which an impression of adequacy can be enabled and constrained are those that we have considered earlier, along with a few others: titles, topic or affect families (established historically and culturally within the tradition, and including such aspects as tempo, orchestration, harmony, counterpoint, dynamics and articulation), intertextual allusions to individual moments (or sounds) of past esteemed or canonic works within the tradition (such as Tchaikovsky's rewriting in *Francesca da Rimini* of the mid-nineteenth-century 'inferno' topic – not to mention the contrasting love music – initially encountered in Liszt's earlier *Dante Symphony*), ad hoc thematic identifiers (the contrasting Max and Agathe themes of Weber's *Freischütz* Overture) and leitmotifs. All of these strategies are vertical in their immediate connotations. They ask for a sympathetic recognition of representation within the ongoing flash of the now. As such, they function as musical lightings-up of that now and its paratextual implications. For analytic and hermeneutic purposes we should construe these aspects not exclusively as individualized or unique expressions but rather as emplotted arrangements of generically standardized postures or conventions. When the eventual sonic product as a whole (the work) is allied to a complex paratext (as with the extreme case, say, of Strauss's *Also sprach Zarathustra*), all of this can become extraordinarily dense in its moment-to-moment layers of implication.

This brings us once again to the final complicating factor: the sophisticated, 'purely musical' aspect of the horizontal; the linear and generic implications provided by the composer's temporal arrangement of the vertical nows into a coherent musical shape – or form – usually construable as unfolding in dialogue, however loosely, with the flexible norms of a historically familiar musical genre. What is required of us here is an informed, historical knowledge of the generic conventions within which the individual work asks to be interpreted (or, in ambiguous cases, at least seems to ask to be interpreted). This implicates the basic principle of reading form dialogically, within the flexible norms and established models appropriate to the composition's time and place. One needs to be aware of each potential genre's acceptable range of conventions and deviations. In difficult cases we are obliged to decide what the relevant genre (or set of genres?) is with which the given work is most likely to be in dialogue.<sup>30</sup> It seems clear, for instance, that sonata-form conventions, however loosely construed, are still ones operative in the backgrounds of such deformational works as the first movement of Berlioz's *Harold en Italie* or Wagner's Overture to *Der Fliegende Holländer*, while the ritornello- or rondo-like aspects of the episodic successions of Smetana's *Vltava* declare early on in the piece that they are unfolding outside of the interpretive guidelines of sonata form.

In sum: in all programmatic or illustrative works there is also, within the historical tradition, a purely musical dimension – horizontally. There is a dialogical musical narrative to be read within its own domain: forms, pattern-types, arrangements, resolutions, standard realizations or deformations thereof, and so on. In dialogue with historical genres that provide guidelines for interpretation, these narratives can be grasped only horizontally, in terms of strictly musical conventions. The analyst or commentator is then to place that musically illuminated horizontal process into a metaphorical dialogue with determinative features of the relevant paratext (or, as it is often characterized, the 'description under which' we are invited to apprehend it). Ultimately, both vertical and horizontal implications need to be merged with sensitivity and

flexibility to produce a *reading* (not a solution once and for all) that is, at bottom, a viable rhetorical analogue to what is presented within any such individual piece.<sup>31</sup>

That said, the question of the specificity of one's reading (not to mention its degree of certainty) still looms large. The practice of interpreting the connotations of illustrative music is not one in which the scientific-proof approach is applicable. Rather, it is an area for historically informed hermeneutics and analysis – individual readings of works, not discoveries of facts embedded in the fabric of the work. In such inquiries, where interpretive stumbles are all too frequent, one might do well to keep in mind the admonition of Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (book 1, chapter 3):

Our discussion will be adequate if it has as much clearness as the subject-matter admits of, for precision is not to be sought for alike in all discussions, any more than in all the products of the crafts. . . . We must be content, then, in speaking of such subjects and with such premises to indicate the truth roughly and in outline. . . . It is the mark of an educated [person] to look for precision in each class of things just so far as the nature of the subject admits.

#### Notes

- 1 Klauwell 1910, v–vi: While other construals are defensible, program music, 'in the strict[est] sense', is that in which the form and content of the piece, in purely musical terms, would be 'an unsolvable puzzle' without the supplied program. Scruton 2001, 397: 'Properly speaking . . . programme music is . . . music that seeks to be understood in terms of its programme; it derives its movement and its logic from the subject it attempts to describe.' The all-too-familiar, negative variant of this construal asserts that a program is often offered to cover up defects in purely musical structure or logic.
  - 2 The characterization is that of Hatten 1994, 232.
  - 3 The opposing nineteenth-century arguments were more complicated and nuanced than might initially be imagined. For German-language readers, the extended historical summary of the whole question of program music in Altenburg 1997 is magisterial, providing a commanding overview of the changing concepts of the attendant issues and complications. See also Dahlhaus 1988, 365–85. For English-language readers, among the numerous brief treatments of the debate over music and representation in the nineteenth century are Dahlhaus 1982, 52–63 and 1989, 128–40; Goehr 1998, 6–47; and Hepokoski 2001.
  - 4 On this point (here considering Tovey's defence of Beethoven's *Pastoral*) Richard Will's remarks are on the mark: 'Like many of his contemporaries, [Tovey] assumes that programmatic music is based on 'extramusical' considerations such as the narrative structure of programs rather than the 'musical' principles that underpin absolute music, whose presence in the *Pastoral*, conversely, reveals that it is not an unusual mixture of music and language but a 'perfect classical symphony'. . . . [But this leads to the position that] any work using a sonata or other familiar form . . . is [to be] considered absolute music with an irrelevant text. The works are thereby defended from the accusations of formal incoherence leveled at programmatic works by writers like Eduard Hanslick, Edward Dannreuther, or Tovey . . . but they are also put decisively in the realm of the ineffable' (Will 2002, 19–20). (See again Klauwell 1910 and Scruton 2001.)
  - 5 Summaries of Langer are also readily located. See, for example, Åhlberg 1994.
  - 6 Foundational for any discussion of this issue, Mahler's famous – and conflicted – comments from 1896, 1897 and 1902 on the utility of printed programs for his early symphonies may be found in Martner 1979, 177–81, 212–14 and 262. 'Inner-program' claims, insisting that his music's ultimate content resides in a quasi-spiritual 'mood' or 'residue of mystery', are made in letters to Max Marschalk (20 March 1896) and Max Kalbeck (January 1902). Verbal 'signposts' and 'milestones' (preliminary aids within what is more truly a musical sphere of 'obscure' feelings, at the gate that opens into the 'other world') are adduced in a letter to Marschalk on 26 March 1896 and compared with 'a map of the heavens, so that [the listener] can get a picture of the night sky with all its luminous worlds. But any such [programmatic] exposition cannot offer more. People have to have something *already known* to refer to if they are not to lose their way.'
- A contextualized précis of Mahler's views, along with a discussion of the term 'form motive' (from Wagner's 1857 essay, 'Über Franz Liszt's Symphonische Dichtungen'), may be found in Dahlhaus 1989, 90–1. On Liszt, Wagner and the form motive, see Hepokoski 2001, 433–4. For similar historical issues and recent discussions, see also Hepokoski 1998. A helpful pathway leading beyond some of the program- and/or absolute-music snares in Mahler is provided in Micznik 2007.

- 7 For a discussion interrelating the *Egmont* story's implied narrative action with the work's musical structure, see Hepokoski 2002.
- 8 Scruton's anti-representationalist argument was initially laid out in his frequently cited, earlier essay, 'Representation in Music', *Philosophy* 51 (1976), 273–87. A telling reply to any such assertion about 'musical understanding' may be found in Kivy 1984, 148.
- 9 'Musical purism' is also a term associated with Kivy. Kivy's book is a strong, extended defense of musical representation. See also the useful reply to it in Dempster 1994.
- 10 Cf. Roman Ingarden's argument that some 'nonsounding elements' belong to the ontology of the musical work: 1986, 83–115.
- 11 This position is exploratory through the classic philosophical question of the identity of indiscernibles: things are not identical if they do not have all of their properties in common. Cf. the famous exemplification of a different case of non-identical indiscernibles in Jose Luis Borges's 1944 short story, 'Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*'.
- 12 Scruton 1976 had postulated five similar conditions, one of which is particularly stringent and on whose terms, on Scruton's view, music fails: 'A representational work of art must express thoughts about its subject, and an interest in the work should involve an understanding of those thoughts . . . Sometimes we feel that a work of art is filled with thought, but that the thought cannot be detached from the work. It is impossible to put it into words (or into other words). Such cases, I should like to say, are cases not of representation but of expression' (273–4). Or: 'Thoughts have structure: they refer to objects, and predicate properties of them', Scruton 1997, 127). For Wollheim's influential 'seeing-in' theory – now discussed by most philosophers of music aesthetics – see Wollheim 1980.
- 13 Also relevant are standard figures of rhetoric, potentially fruitful but not considered in the present essay. Ratner's pioneering work is both acknowledged and subjected to a much-needed critique in Monelle 2000, 24–33.
- 14 See also the similar 'typology of musical illustrations' laid out in Kivy 1984, 28–60.
- 15 Richard Will's close study of *The Characteristic Symphony in the Age of Haydn and Beethoven* (2002) – of which Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony* is the most noted example – documents that that genre 'is first and foremost a genre of pastoral idylls, thunderstorms, military conflicts, hunts, and political identities', p. 2). In terms of tabulation: 'Titles consisting of only one or a few words identify over 70 examples as pastoral . . . 15 as military, 15 as hunts, 10 as storms, and more than 30 as expressions of national or regional characters – in sum, nearly 150 symphonies or movements as representations of [these] five subject categories' (p. 1). For a recent identification of the 'sunrise topos' in music, see Sisman 2013.
- 16 Monelle's example (2006, 28) is not a storm but the signification of a 'noble horse', previously discussed in Monelle 2000.
- 17 See, for example, the recent discussion of the mid- to late-eighteenth century's astonishment at the ready ability of the mind to visualize things within musical experiences as laid out in Loughridge 2011. One of several telling examples is provided on p. 214: 'For the German composer Adam Hiller [in 1754] . . . the ability of musical imitations to bring to mind visual images seemed inexplicable – magical.' Loughridge goes on to note that in that year Hiller wrote: 'We often let one sense give the illusion of another or we let hearing represent things that otherwise would not be at all suitable for it. Things that should be grasped by means of an entirely different sense organ seem suddenly to have changed their nature: we believe we find them in tones, and we really do find them there, as vastly different as they otherwise are. Is this not a kind of magic?' Here the translation is taken from Lippman 1992, 118. I take the term 'pictorial listening' in the decades around 1800 from the important comments on musical pictorialism, tableaux and 'visual or quasi-visual experiences' in Mathew 2013, 89–101.
- 18 The article updates and summarizes the theory initially presented in Lakoff and Johnson 1980 and elaborated in numerous other studies of each author. More recently, Lakoff has welded his project to cognitive-science research – neural flows and pathways of the brain, cross-synapse firing, and so on, all of which led him to an even more emphatically 'embodied' concept of the mind – and has updated and redubbed his theory as 'The Neural Theory of Metaphor' (Lakoff 2008).
- 19 For a summary, see Fauconnier and Turner 1995, 183–204, esp. 184. A related term associated with Lakoff is 'image-schema' (with an 'image-schema structure' characterized by a 'cognitive topology': Lakoff 1993, 214. Lakoff's synoptic 'Neural Theory of Metaphor' (2008, 30) understands Fauconnier's and Turner's term 'mental space' as 'a mental simulation characterizing an understanding of a situation, real or imagined' and 'blending' as 'neural binding'.
- 20 The model in Figure 4.1, and the quotations in the text above, are derived from Fauconnier and Turner 2002, *passim*, and 1998, 133–87, from which I adapt wordings found on 134, 142–4.
- 21 Cook 2001 takes us through many of the complicating issues at hand in helpful ways. Zbikowski has been interested in the applications of Fauconnier, Turner and recent metaphor theories to vocal music. Among his several discussions see Zbikowski 1999, 2002, 2008, 2009. Sceptical of the utility of applying language-grounded concepts of metaphor to the different conceptual world of music, Spitzer (2004) is concerned with developing historical, aesthetic and phenomenological constructions of the issue, calling upon the metaphor-theory frameworks, for instance, of Paul Ricoeur (itself indebted to that of Max Black) and several others.
- 22 Cook 2001, e.g. 172–4, 181. Some of the attribute types listed here are taken also from Hatten 1994. Cook's homologies and enabling similarities are what Lakoff would call the 'ontological' or 'epistemological correspondences' between the 'image-schema structure[s]' of each domain (Lakoff 1993, e.g. 214).

- 23 Hatten 1994, 67–90 (expressive genres, topics, 'frozen' metaphors), 162–72 ('The Role of Metaphor'), 255, 289; 2004, 12. From the latter, see also p. 297, n. 1, comments on Lakoff and Johnson, Fauconnier and Turner (judged to be 'a richer model') and Zbikowski. Monelle 2006, 22–3, also summarizes Hatten's concept of correlation vis-à-vis topic theory.
- 24 Here I have inflected Fauconnier and Turner with language from the tension-metaphor theory of Max Black, particularly as summarized and inflected by Paul Ricoeur in, e.g. Ricoeur 1976, 46–52, and 1981, 165–81.
- 25 Within historical practice the multiplication of metaphors or hyperblends is typically extended beyond the individual work to be broadly applicable as grounding aesthetic axioms of certain types or schools of composition. Such metaphors may be understood as foundational guidelines for both composition and subsequent reception: compose works and invite performances and listenings to them as if such-and-such were the case. See Watkins's recent provocative study of depth metaphors (2013).
- 26 The importance placed on embodiment reaches back to Johnson 1987 and to Lidov 1987. For other issues of subjective identification within the world of music construed as signs, see Cumming 2000.
- 27 *Aufleuchtung*, aspect and 'hearkening' occur repeatedly as central ideas throughout the book.
- 28 Subsequent discussions of music and 'mood' (as opposed to object-directed 'emotion') are numerous. Some engaging samples include Berger 2000, 200–1; Savage 2009, 93–5, 101–2, 104, embedded within a Ricoeur-inflected approach; Carroll 2003, 521–5, and Kivy's response to Carroll (Kivy 2009, 79–99), insisting that while music, contra Carroll, does not 'arouse' moods, it can be (in Kivy's characteristic wording) 'expressive of' them.
- 29 The programmatic intentions are laid out in Todd 1993, 12–13, 72.
- 30 On the importance of this problem, see my discussions throughout Caplin *et al.* 2009, especially 'Sonata Theory and Dialogic Form', 71–89.
- 31 I have sought to do this with such studies as Hepokoski 2006 and – extending the procedure to a composition with more 'abstract' claims – Hepokoski 2012.

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