PART I

BEGINNINGS

1

PROLOGUE: *EXEMPLI GRATIA* . . .

PRINT CULTURE, CYBER CULTURE, AND "READING" MUSIC

In conferences, lectures, and day-to-day conversations about music, we routinely employ sounding music examples as an integral part of our discourse *about* music. Such sounds may include anything from the humming of a phrase or line, to a partial rendition at the keyboard, to live or recorded performances of entire works. Traditionally, when such oral/aural events are transformed for the medium of print, sounding words and sounding music are replaced by written text and notated examples. In the late 1990s the advent of hypermedia – CD-ROMs and the promulgation of electronic journals – holds the promise, if not yet the actuality, of transforming the way we present our published discourse about music. Readily apparent – perhaps facile – parallels between the so-called "print revolution" and the "cyber revolution" abound. Yet the similarities provide a particularly appropriate point of departure for this book. Thus I begin a book broadly concerning the nature of exemplarity in theoretical writing with my own (textual) example in the form of an anecdote that highlights the broader resonance of the study undertaken here.

I have been engaged over the last few years with a pedagogical initiative that attempts to take advantage of the possibilities of hypermedia for undergraduate instruction in music theory. During the same time, I worked on this book – a book that assumes a traditional printed form in its pursuit of the ways in which sixteenth-century music theorizing shaped and was shaped by possibilities intimately linked to the emergence of a music print culture. The two projects have far more in common than I initially realized. While beginning the study of the examples in Pietro Aron's *Trattato della natura et cognitione di tutti gli tuoni* (1525), I was also undertaking an experimental design of materials for an undergraduate theory course that supplemented the printed examples of a standard theory textbook with a point and click web interface of matching audio excerpts for the hundreds of short excerpts. The motivation for the web experiment grew out of the difficulties of addressing the needs of students with an extraordinarily wide range of abilities in day-to-day music classes. What most characterized these students' ability to engage their textbook were the different levels of their "music-reading" abilities. At one end of the spectrum were "musically literate" students, those capable of imagining or

recollecting the sounds represented by the frequent examples in their theory textbook. More common were students who had greater difficulty when confronted by examples, but who realized the notation (albeit imperfectly) through a combination of singing and working the examples out at the piano, even though many of the examples were pianistically quite challenging and beyond most of these students' skills. And then there were the students who openly rejoiced with the appearance of each music example; their response to the difficult, even forbidding, notation was simply . . . to skip it. The web project was an attempt to mediate the notation, to provide at least a minimal means of "hearing" the music and in the best case scenario to help students develop the skills to conceptualize such examples without the crutch of audio files. Ultimately it led toward a format which attempted to focus on the skills related to hearing sounds in real time which were contrasted with the very different visual and atemporal possibilities offered by notational representations in which students could "see" relationships that they often were not capable of perceiving aurally.

As I explained the purpose of this endeavor to a well-meaning reporter from an alumni periodical, she exclaimed with real excitement, "Oh, this is just what I need! I just finished reading Charles Rosen's *The Romantic Generation* and I loved it, but I don't read music." My first reaction was to wonder how anyone could read such a book without even the possibility of comprehending its copious examples. Indeed of all the music books to read without being able to read music, Rosen's struck me on first thought as the least likely candidate. Figure 1.1, an opening from *The Romantic Generation*, was chosen more or less at random. Not every page has this much music, but many do. How, I wondered, could anyone who didn't read music read a book like Rosen's? As it turns out, *The Romantic Generation*, is extraordinarily idiosyncratic in its manipulation of music examples. The book includes a compact disc of Rosen performing, but it is not specifically keyed to the examples of the book. Rather it creates for the listener/reader the musical world of the Romantic generation, or more to the point, it allows the reader/listener to partake of Charles Rosen's communion with the Romantic generation. The same is true of the notated examples. Although they are often couched in service of a technical point, and even included within sentences, the prose survives remarkably well without them. Rosen has made a point of including first editions wherever possible, and if that was not possible, the example is reproduced from a near-contemporary edition. That these have not been reset is no mere economizing on the publisher's part: Rosen is deliberately using the visual image as a material connection to the Romantic generation. We are intended to *see* (and by implication hear) *their* music. Ironically, the originals of some of these examples have deteriorated so severely that actually reading them as they appear in the text with any assurance of accuracy is difficult if not impossible. But I was left to wonder in what sense this reporter and I had read the same book, in what sense we formed part of a community of readers. We had read the same words, but only one of us had "read" the music.

During this same period of pedagogical experimentation with sound files on web pages for theory courses, I came back to work on Pietro Aron's *Trattato*, a treatise on modes in polyphonic music from 1525. Aron's treatise was one that I felt I knew rather well. Like many before me, I think I expected Aron to act in some sense as a kind of tour guide to a repertory and way of thinking about it as I began rereading him with facsimiles of various Petrucci music prints in hand. Instead, I began to have some sense of his interaction with the world of printed music books. The implications of that interaction forced me to stand back and begin to think about the significance of music-theoretical treatises as material objects, as books which partake of a whole host of conventions and contexts that we overlook when we focus solely on the immaterial content of their abstract theorizing.

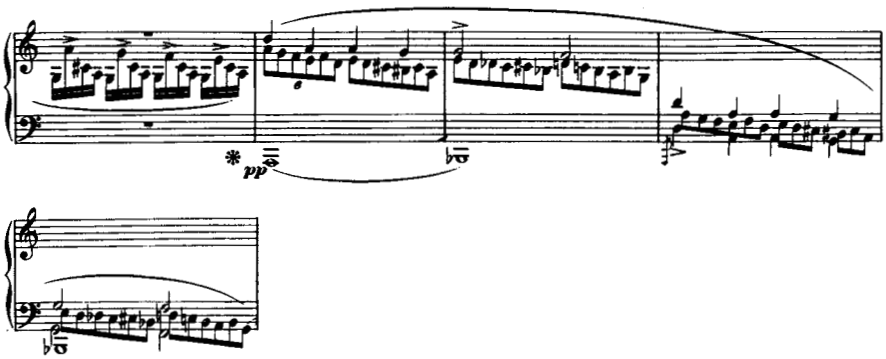
When musical sources from the first half of the sixteenth century have entered the realm of discussions of the "history of the book" and "print culture," they have been primarily music books, not hybrid volumes like theory treatises that integrate words and music. The argument has normally been advanced that musical sources stand apart from the usual considerations of other printed materials. By and large, scholars of other disciplines have by a sort of tacit agreement avoided musical sources, while musicologists entering the interdisciplinary fray have tended to reinforce the "otherness" of musical sources, linking them closely to an intended performing market. But music and writing *about* music confront and confound all sorts of assumptions in the orality–literacy debates that have been a central feature of studies of the history of the book and the history of reading. At the same time, theory treatises, the central texts of this book, demonstrate how fragile an argument separating musical sources from other sorts can be.

HEARING WITH THE EYES: THE NATURE OF MUSICAL EXEMPLARITY

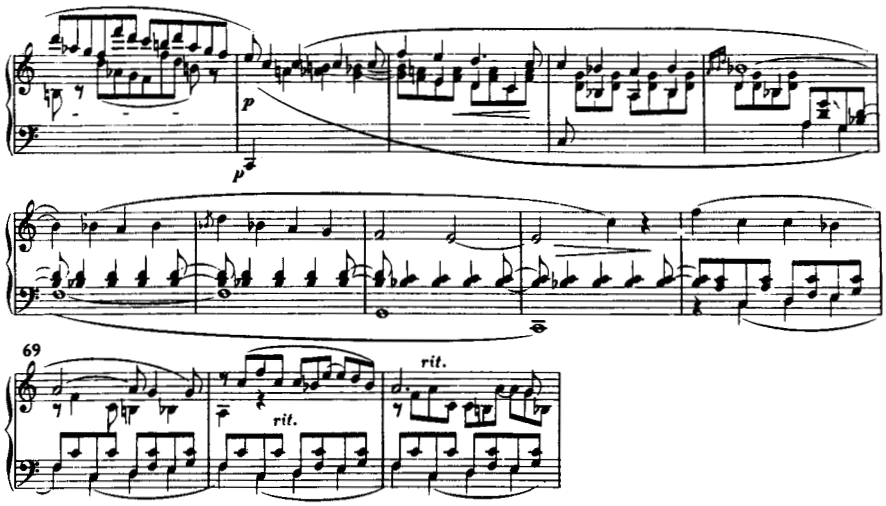
The oxymoron "aural image" highlights the special nature of musical exemplarity and notational representation. The notated music example is doubly distant from the aural phenomenon that it ultimately represents: the notation stands for sound, but, excised and framed as an example, points both back to a presumed whole that it represents (synecdoche) and also forward from the new discourse of which it becomes part. In Gelley's words, "the function of example is precisely to divert us from the two limiting terms – the whole *from which* and the whole *toward which* – and disclose an *in between*, an opening for picturing, for illustrative realization."[1] In moving from an analogical mode to an iconic, the example itself becomes exemplar, inducing an imitative realization on the part of the audience.

[1] Alexander Gelley, "Introduction," *Unruly Examples: On the Rhetoric of Exemplarity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 3.

Still another version (I^b), even closer to the Beethoven song, continues the D minor:

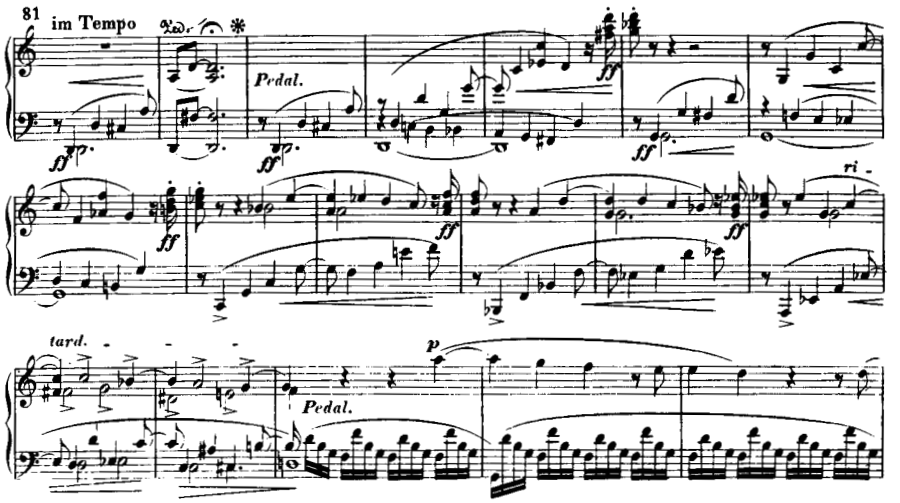


This leads to a second playing of the lyrical versions I^a and I^b now in the subdominant major, F, the relative major of D minor:

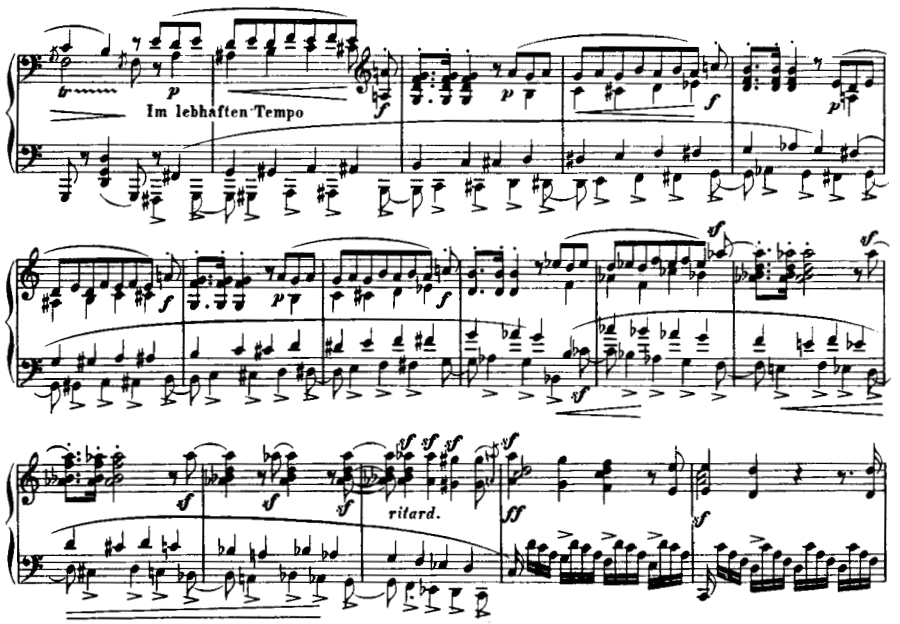


As a secondary tonality of an exposition, the subdominant is very rare and absolutely unclassical. It is, however, established directly out of the harmony of the opening bass, and it leads directly to the chord of its own supertonic (G minor) and back to D minor in a series of broken phrases. We return to C major and the opening theme by a simple sequence of rising subdominants: D minor, G minor, C minor.

1.1 Rosen, *The Romantic Generation*, 106–07



As I have observed, the chord of the tonic major in root position is evaded by Schumann until the end of the piece. After a short stretto in faster tempo, the opening theme reappears on a tonic pedal, but still unresolved, with the dissonant harmony of D minor insistently present; and it is rounded off with a half cadence and a fermata, which serve to prolong the tension of the "exposition":



1.1 (*cont.*)

Rhetorical exemplarity has a richly complicated history that extends to modern and postmodern philosophy.[2] Words reconstitute "things" in their own mold by encompassing them as examples. Examples are necessarily dependent texts that occur in the context of another text – hierarchically superior – which systematizes them. They must be recognizable, whether the recognition relies on tradition and memory, or reference to a commonly accepted textual world. The example brings that which is outside within the text. Simultaneously, it is marked by discontinuity, on which it depends for its recognition.[3]

Non-discursive examples display an inborn resistance to the frame of the text, perhaps none more so than music. Music disrupts the discourse, halts its progression, interrupts the rhythm of words. There are times when notation serves a purely iconic function – we are meant to *see* notation, but not hear it. At other times, the notation serves as a generalized reminder of music as sounding phenomenon, and at still other times, the notation is meant to be "read" and "heard," although the reading and hearing may take many forms. By means of the visual representation, the reader takes control of the sounds represented. They may be imagined or actualized in or out of real time, completely or partially. The meaning of the example may be apprehended through a synoptic reading or by means of a glance. Notation allows the writer to speak of music as "sound" within the confines of the printed page, offering a specific point of reference which serves as the only potential guarantee of the possibility of shared understanding of abstractions of sounding moments in the context of music both as it sounds and as it is written about.

Music examples pose a particularly interesting challenge precisely because of their ability to function simultaneously as visual image and aural trace. Some examples from Thomas Morley's *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke* (1597), a treatise that stands at the very end of the century with which I am most directly concerned, highlight these possibilities.

By the time Morley wrote, music printing and music print culture were no novelties; his treatise reflects certain traditions of music-theoretic discourse that

[2] A concise summary is supplied in Gelley, *Unruly Examples*. In particular he contrasts the following passages from Kant and Derrida:

> How to take an *Exempel* and how to cite a *Beispiel* for clarification of an expression involve quite separate concepts. The *Exempel* is a special case of a *practical* rule, insofar as it conceives the practicality or impracticality of an action. Whereas a *Beispiel* is only the notion of the particular (concretum) standing within the concept of the general (abstractum), and merely the theoretical presentation of a concept. (Immanuel Kant, *Metaphysik der Sitten*, ed. W. Weischedel (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1977), cited in Buck "Kants Lehre vom Exempel," 150–51, cited in Gelley, p. 8.)

> What is at stake is exemplarity and its whole *enigma* – in other words, as the word enigma indicates, exemplarity and the *récit* which works through the logic of the example . . . The trait that marks membership inevitably divides, the boundary of the set comes to form, by invagination, an internal pocket larger than the whole; and the outcome of this division and of this abounding remains as singular as it is limitless. (Jacques Derrida, "The Law of Genre," *Glyph: Textual Studies* 7 (1988), 206, cited in Gelley, p. 10.)

[3] This discussion has been shaped by John D. Lyons, *Exemplum: The Rhetoric of Example in Early Modern France and Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989) and Gelley, *Unruly Examples*.

became well established in the course of the sixteenth century – traditions that we as modern readers take for granted. The first series of examples from Morley (Fig. 1.2) comes early in the dialogue.[4] This example is useful for understanding how a theorist manipulates notation and the printed page in an attempt at creating verisimilitude. So the master says: "Here is one: sing it." We are intended to *see*, but not yet *hear* the example that follows on from the master's words. The master is presenting the notation to the student, Philomathes, who is to realize it. Morley then attaches solmization syllables to the excerpt when it is repeated, so we know that Philomathes has sung it. Not only do we know that he has sung it, but the dialogue tells us that he has sung it well! By extension, the conventions of dialogue suggest that *we*, the readers, know to sing it because we recognize Morley as the director who simultaneously stands outside the dialogue, but who is embodied within as the "master." Similarly, we are outside the dialogue, but participate vicariously through the voice of the students. Through aural and active reference – to sing, peruse, see, hear – Morley's language frames his examples, even as the treatise remains a visual object manipulated by its reader. Its careful spatial organization supports the illusion of simultaneity between the dialogue and its visual representation.

Polyphonic examples are more problematic, particularly in the context of a dialogue, especially those moments when Morley puts the polyphony in the mouth of an individual, as he is wont to do. Frequently, format becomes a clue for understanding how the example is to be read. We know from the layout and placement at the end of the treatise that the examples are to be performed by a group, not imagined by an individual (Fig. 1.3). Other examples in score or pseudo-score pose no challenge to the modern reader; there is no doubt that by the end of the sixteenth century, score was a format associated with music for study.[5] What then of the examples notated in parts? Figure 1.4 reproduces one three-part example from the copy of Morley's treatise held by the Library of Congress. This copy contains annotations in an early seventeenth-century hand. In this instance, the letters provide points of reference for guiding the eye in relating the parts. The relative infrequency of such annotations in surviving sources suggests that earlier in the century such a reading together of disparate parts was a skill assumed on the part of least some readers and writers of treatises. Morley's treatise highlights in striking ways the two foci of this study: the material means by which music (notation) is transmitted and the ways in which such notation is read.

[4] It is worth noting that monophony poses far fewer problems than polyphony in terms of reading music examples. The question of how the individual realizes such notation is not a particularly interesting one, given the range of possibilities. (See the discussion of silent reading and silent listening pp. 11–16.)

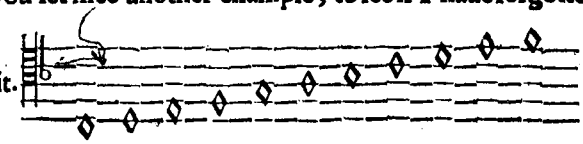
[5] For a concise overview of the formats associated with music theory treatises, see Jessie Ann Owens, *Composers at Work: The Craft of Musical Composition 1450–1600* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 34–63. For more general descriptions of formats, see Donald Krummel and Stanley Sadie, eds., *Music Printing and Publishing* (New York: Norton, 1990), especially the glossary by Stanley Boorman, 489–551.

6 **The firſt part.**

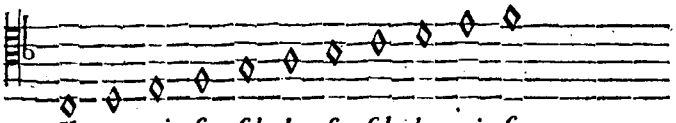
Ma. How then muſt you ſing it when there is no ſigne?

Phi. I crie you mercie, it muſt be ſharpe: but I had forgotten the rule you gaue mee, and therefore I pray you ſet mee another example, to ſee if I haue forgotten any more?

Ma. Here is one: ſing it.

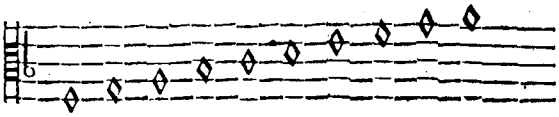


Phi.

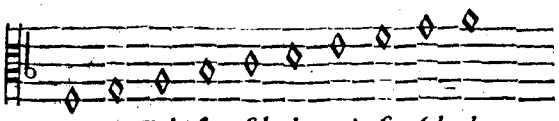


Vt re mi fa ſol la fa ſol la mi fa.

Ma. This is well ſong: Now ſing this other.



Phi.



vt re mi fa ſol la mi fa ſol la

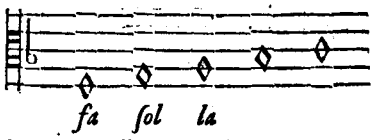
Ma. This is right: but could you ſing it no other wiſe?

Phi. No otherwiſe in tune, though I might alter the names of the notes.

Ma. Of which, and how?

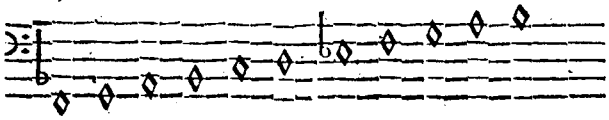
Phi. Of the three firſt, thus and ſo foorth of their eyghtes.

The three firſt notes may be altered in name though not in tune.



fa ſol la &c.

Ma. You do well. Now for the laſt tryall of your ſinging in continuall deduction ſing this perfectly, and I will ſaie you vnderſtand plainſong well enough.



Phi. I know not how to beginne.

Ma. Why?

Phi. Becauſe, beneath *Gam vt* there is nothing: and the firſt note ſtandeth beneath *Gam vt*.

1.2 Morley, *A Plaine and Easie Introduction*, 6, music examples within the dialogue

EXCURSUS: SILENT READING, SILENT LISTENING

Multi-faceted notions of what is signaled by the phrase "reading music" exist both within and without the musicological community. There does appear to be some level of consensus among musicologists and historians of the book who work in early print culture that musical notation implies realization in performance. As Stanley Boorman most succinctly phrased it:

> [The arrangement of printed volumes of polyphony in partbook format] means that the titles were useless to anyone except a complete set of performers. The act of silently studying the music from such books was, if not impossible, very tedious . . . This makes implicit what is implied by format, that the sort of use-for-reference that characterizes, say, legal printing, is an impossibility for almost all printed music. Thus until the appearance of these volumes in score, one cannot say that there was a *reading* public for musical printing but only a *using* public.[6]

Boorman was addressing a non-musicological audience and he may have deliberately simplified his claim. He ties the ability to "read" (as opposed to perform) music to the format in which it was transmitted. For his audience (a conference on print culture), Boorman's focus on format would have had resonances with the ongoing debate in print culture circles about "silent reading" and the relationship of the phenomena to visual cues such as word demarcation that were regulated both in changing habits of manuscript production as well as through the medium of printed books.[7] More than that, it stood entirely to reason that Boorman would be the scholar addressing this audience about printed music. His extensive studies of the output of Ottaviano Petrucci were among the first to embrace the importance of print history and analytical bibliography in the study of musical sources.[8]

Boorman's statement about the silent study of such sources may seem self-evident in relation to modern music-reading habits. While the primary use for books like Petrucci's undoubtedly *was* performance or as a means to a performance (when partbooks served as the sources for material copied into manuscript choirbooks), the later appearance of score format and its association with music for study need not necessarily be taken as evidence of the impossibility of studying the music of such books silently (what Boorman seems to mean by "reading"). The format

[6] Stanley Boorman, "Early Music Printing: Working for a Specialized Market," in *Print and Culture in the Renaissance: Essays on the Advent of Printing in Europe*, ed. Gerald P. Tyson and Sylvia S. Wagonheim (Newark DE: University of Delaware Press, 1986), 222.

[7] Paul Saenger, "Silent Reading: Its Impact on Late Medieval Script and Society," *Viator* 13 (1982), 367–414.

[8] Of Boorman's extensive writings on Petrucci, see especially, "Petrucci at Fossombrone: A Study of Early Music Printing, with Special Reference to the Motetti de la Corona (1514–19)," Ph.D. dissertation, King's College, University of London (1976); "The 'First' Edition of the *Odhecaton A*," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 30 (1977), 183–207; "Limitations and Extensions of Filiation Technique," in *Music in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Patronage, Sources and Texts*, ed. Iain Fenlon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 319–46; "Petrucci's Type-setters and the Process of Stemmatics," in *Formen und Probleme der Überlieferung mehrstimmiger Musik im Zeitalter Josquins Desprez*, ed. Ludwig Finscher (Munich: Kraus International Publications, 1981), 245–80; "The Uses of Filiation in Early Music," *Text: Transactions of the Society for Textual Scholarship* 1 (1984), 167–84, and his contributions, including the glossary, in *Music Printing and Publishing*, ed. Krummel and Sadie.