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This comprehensive overview of music in the nineteenth century draws on the most recent scholarship in the field. It avoids mere repertory surveys, focusing instead on issues which illuminate the subject in novel and interesting ways. The book is divided into two parts (1800–1850 and 1850–1900), each of which approaches the major repertory of the period by way of essays investigating the intellectual and socio-political history of the time. The music itself is discussed in five central chapters within each part, amplified by essays on topics such as popular culture, nationalism, genius, and the emergent concept of an avant-garde. The book concludes with an examination of musical styles and languages around the turn of the century. The addition of a detailed chronology and extensive glossaries makes this the most informed reference book on nineteenth-century music currently available.

JIM SAMSON has been a Professor of Music at the Universities of Exeter and Bristol and is now Professor of Music at Royal Holloway, University of London. He has published several books on Chopin including *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin* (1992), as well as books on Szymanowski, late Romantic music, and music of the early twentieth century.

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Notes on contributors

ANDREW BOWIE is Professor of German at Royal Holloway, University of London. He is the author of *Aesthetics and Subjectivity: from Kant to Nietzsche* (1990; rev. edn 2000), *Schelling and Modern European Philosophy* (1993) and *From Romanticism to Critical Theory: The Philosophy of German Literary Theory* (1997). He has also made editions and translations of Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy* (1994), Manfred Frank, *The Subject and the Text* (1997) and Schleiermacher, *'Hermeneutics and Criticism' and Other Texts* (1998). He is at present writing a book on *Music, Meaning and Modernity*.

JOHN BUTT is author or editor of four books for Cambridge University Press, including *The Cambridge Companion to Bach* (1997) and *Music Education and the Art of Performance in the German Baroque* (1994). His latest monograph, *Playing with History: The Historical Approach to Musical Performance* will be published by Cambridge University Press in 2002. He is also active as a performer, having released more than ten discs on organ and harpsichord for *Harmonia Mundi France*. Having been an Associate Professor at the University of California at Berkeley and a Lecturer at Cambridge, he took up the Gardiner Chair of Music at the University of Glasgow in 2001.

DEREK CAREW is Lecturer in Music at Cardiff University. His principal interests are keyboard music, the long nineteenth century, analysis, and music in its social and cultural setting. He has contributed to the *Mozart Compendium* (1990) and *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin* (1992), and is currently preparing a book on piano music in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

JONATHAN DUNSBY has been the Professor of Music at the University of Reading since 1985. A prize-winner in international piano competitions, he became founding editor of the journal *Music Analysis*, and has written extensively on the history and theory of nineteenth- and twentieth-century music.

KATHARINE ELLIS is Lecturer in Music at Royal Holloway, University of London. She is the author of *Music Criticism in Nineteenth-Century France: 'La revue et gazette musicale de Paris', 1834–1880* (1995) and articles on Berlioz, the French Palestrina revival, and the careers and reception of women performers. She is currently preparing a book on early music in nineteenth-century France.

JAMES HEPOKOSKI teaches at Yale University and is the co-editor of the journal *19th Century Music*. In collaboration with Warren Darcy he has completed a book on Classical musical structure, *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late-Eighteenth-Century Sonata*, forthcoming from Oxford University Press.

THOMAS GREY is Associate Professor of Music at Stanford University. He is author of *Wagner's Musical Prose: Texts and Contexts* (1995) and contributing editor of *Richard Wagner: 'Der fliegende Holländer'* (2000) and the *Cambridge Companion to Wagner* (forthcoming). Recent articles and chapters on opera and other topics in nineteenth-century music have appeared in *The Arts Entwined: Music and Painting in the Nineteenth Century* (2000), *Music and German National Identity* (2000), and *The Mendelssohn Companion* (2001).

SARAH HIBBERD is a Research Fellow at Royal Holloway, University of London. She has been an editor for the *New Grove* and has published articles on opera and theatre in early nineteenth-century Paris. She is currently working on historical representation on the Parisian stage in the 1830s.

JOHN IRVING is Senior Lecturer in Music at the University of Bristol. His publications include *Mozart's Piano Sonatas: Contexts, Sources, Style* (1997), *Mozart: the 'Haydn' Quartets* (1998), the Musica Britannica edition of Tomkins's Consort Music (1991) and the CEKM edition of the Anders von Dueben Organ Tablature (2000).

K. M. KNITTEL recently joined the music history faculty at the University of Texas at Austin. In addition to her work on Beethoven, she has published on Mahler and is currently completing a book, *Seeing Mahler, Hearing Mahler: Mahler and Antisemitism in fin-de-siècle Vienna*.

MAX PADDISON is Professor of Music at the University of Durham. He studied musicology at the University of Exeter and philosophy and sociology at the Johann Wolfgang von Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main. His research

specialisms are in the aesthetics and sociology of music, music of the *fin de siècle*, and popular music, with a focus on Adorno. His publications include *Adorno's Aesthetics of Music* (1993) and *Adorno, Modernism and Mass Culture: Essays on Critical Theory and Music* (1996).

ROGER PARKER teaches at Cambridge University. He was founding co-editor of the *Cambridge Opera Journal* and is general editor (with Gabriele Dotto) of the Donizetti Critical Edition. *Leonora's Last Act*, a book of essays on Verdi, came out with Princeton University Press in 1997.

ANTHONY POPLÉ has been a Professor of Music at the Universities of Lancaster and Southampton and is now Professor of Music at the University of Nottingham. He was editor of *Music Analysis* from 1995 to 1999. He is the author of books on Berg, Messiaen, Scriabin and Stravinsky, and is currently writing a book which studies types of tonality in music from the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

JOHN RINK is Professor of Music at Royal Holloway, University of London. He works in the fields of performance studies, nineteenth-century studies, and theory and analysis. His books include *Musical Performance* (2002) *Chopin: The Piano Concertos* (1997) and *The Practice of Performance: Studies in Musical Interpretation* (1995).

JULIAN RUSHTON is West Riding Professor of Music at the University of Leeds. His books include three on Berlioz (1983, 1994, 2001), *Classical Music: A Concise History* (1986), and Cambridge Opera Handbooks on *Don Giovanni* (1991) and *Idomeneo* (1993). He is General Editor of Cambridge Music Handbooks, Chairman of Musica Britannica, and was President of the Royal Musical Association from 1994 to 1999.

JIM SAMSON has been a Professor of Music at the Universities of Exeter and Bristol and is now Professor of Music at Royal Holloway, University of London. He has published widely on the music of Chopin and on analytical and aesthetic topics in nineteenth- and twentieth-century music. His current projects include a book on Liszt's *Transcendental Studies*.

DEREK B. SCOTT is Professor of Music at the University of Salford, Greater Manchester. He is the author of *The Singing Bourgeois* (1989; rev. edn 2000) and editor of *Music, Culture, and Society* (2000). His articles have appeared in the *Musical Quarterly*, the *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* and other scholarly journals.

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Notes on the contributors

JOHN WILLIAMSON is Reader in Music at the University of Liverpool. His publications include *The Music of Hans Pfitzner* (1992), *Richard Strauss: 'Also sprach Zarathustra'* (1993), and essays on Mahler and his contemporaries. He is currently writing a book on d'Albert's *Tiefland* and editing *The Cambridge Companion to Bruckner*.

SUSAN YOUENS is Professor of Music at the University of Notre Dame. She is the author of *Retracing a Winter Journey: Schubert's Winterreise* (1991); *Schubert – Die schöne Müllerin* (1992); *Hugo Wolf: The Vocal Music* (1992); *Schubert's Poets and the Making of Lieder* (1996); *Schubert, Müller, and Die schöne Müllerin* (1997); and *Hugo Wolf and his Mörike Songs* (2000).

Editor's preface

Single-author histories of nineteenth-century music are probably no longer tenable in light of today's specialised knowledge. The last credible contender may well turn out to be the challenging study by Carl Dahlhaus, frequently cited in our volume. Yet existing multi-authored histories present their own problems. Putting it baldly, they tend either to define their subject-matter too narrowly in terms of genres and styles, or to sacrifice thematic penetration to geography. Of course it is easy to criticise. However you approach a task like this, you will be wrong. But we hope to be wrong in the right sort of way. In general our approach is thematic, or topical. We try to offer explanations rather than assemble information, and that usually means focusing selectively on key areas that seem to illuminate our subjects rather than presenting straightforward repertory surveys. How, anyway, can such surveys be anything other than partial and arbitrary? More to the point, what do they really say about music history? So we are moderately (though not completely) relaxed about our coverage of repertory. Lacunae will not be hard to find for those who seek. But then what is the framework of certainties that allows them to be identified as lacunae in the first place?

To evaluate just how topics might be selected is the task of our first chapter, which reflects generally on historiography and on the competing claims made on us as historians of music within the Western tradition. In the process two very broad issues are raised, and they in turn feed into the structure of the book as a whole. One is the relationship between the components of music's 'double history', compositional and contextual: between, in other words, works and practices. Our hope is that aesthetic values are properly respected in this volume, but that they are at the same time integrated within broader social and intellectual contexts. That is easily said. In practice it amounts to a perilous balancing act between the demands of the text – 'the music itself' – and the claims of its context. The second issue concerns periodisation. And here (for reasons that will be argued out in the first chapter) we feel that a history of nineteenth-century music has some obligation to bring into focus the caesura separating the two halves of the century, since this is obscured by conventional

periodisation. (Paradoxically a history of eighteenth-century music should arguably do the reverse, i.e. highlight continuities between late Baroque and Classical periods.) Hence, at some risk of overstating the case, we have divided our volume into two parts, with parallel structures in each part. This layout bears some of the marks of a structural history, except that we make no easy assumptions about the 'spirit of the age', nor about the interconnectedness of its constitutive activities, events and products. Nor do we deny the explanatory power of chronology.

Very broadly, the tendency within each part is to proceed from context to music, though it need hardly be said that this separation of function is anything but watertight; contextual chapters occasionally discuss notes, and repertory chapters frequently invoke context. Thus there are two accounts of music and intellectual history: chapter 2, which looks at the changing status of music within German Idealist and Romantic aesthetics, and in particular at its liberation from an integral association with language; and chapter 12, which extends this to debate understandings of the 'autonomy character' of music in the later nineteenth century, embracing Schopenhauer reception, the influential position established by Hanslick, and the watershed between Idealism and Positivism. Likewise there are two social-historical commentaries: chapter 3, which examines the several professions of music associated with the emergence of a middle-class musical culture; and chapter 13, which documents the consolidation of the practices and institutions associated with that culture during the second half of the century. The repertory itself is then examined in central blocks within each part – chapters 4–8 and 14–18 respectively. But it should be emphasised that even in these chapters none of the authors is involved in mere survey; each of them, without exception, takes an angle on their repertory, elaborating positions which at times overlap with, and even occasionally contradict, the positions adopted by other authors.

These chapters provide central information on the 'great music' of the period, a focus which is entirely defensible, not least because this was an age which thought of itself in precisely these terms. At the same time we remain alive to the ideological dimension of that perception, and we foreground it explicitly in chapter 10, which addresses the nineteenth-century preoccupation with genius, while at the same time relativising that concept by discussing the development of what would later be called the culture industry. We are mindful, after all, that most of the music enjoyed in the nineteenth century was by no means 'great', and that point is usefully developed in chapters 9 and 19, which examine music in the marketplace, including what might loosely be called the 'popular music' of the time. Chapter 11, in contrast, turns to the debates of the 1850s: debates about the new, about absolute music, and about

music and the poetic. These debates, centred on Weimar, were of major importance. Not only did they set the compass reading for a great deal of later nineteenth-century thinking about music; they fed directly into compositional praxes. Then, as the new century loomed, they made room for insistent questions concerning the musical expression of a prevailing nationalist ideology. Our penultimate chapter addresses these questions, but it closes by arguing that the differences promoted by nations and nationalism were ultimately subordinate to those generated by the major shifts in musical syntax that took place around the turn of the century. These shifts are addressed in our final chapter.

Our hope is that this constellation of contrasted approaches will light up the history of nineteenth-century music in novel and interesting ways. At the same time, we are aware of our obligation to provide a source of basic and necessary information – to allow the Cambridge History to serve as a major work of reference. Hence the balancing act referred to earlier. We hope that the central chapters on repertory can pass muster in this respect. But given the general thrust of the volume, it has seemed to us important to provide unusually full and ambitious reference material, comprising a chronology (offering a kind of skeletal ‘narrative’ history of music), a select list of institutions (publishing houses, conservatories, opera companies, music societies, and the like), and a personalia (including composers, performers, patrons and publishers). In contrast, we have been more sparing with bibliographical information. In general, the bibliographies for individual chapters record the major sources used in the preparation of the chapter, though in most cases they extend beyond that role to provide a modest indication of useful further reading.

I am grateful to the British Academy for financial assistance in the preparation of this book.