Introduction

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On the first of January 1894, the artist Max Klinger presented Johannes Brahms with a publication titled *Brahms-Fantasie*, Opus XII, which contained a collection of the composer's scores printed alongside images depicting mythic figures and dramatic landscapes inspired by the music.[1] Klinger insisted that these were not 'illustrations', but something more introspective and interpretive; he explained, 'I wanted to move outward from the judgments into which we are led – led blindly – by poetry and above all music.'[2] The first image in the score, *Accorde* (Chords), depicts a fantastical scene illustrating music's power to transport the listener and performer (Figure 0.1). On the right edge of the print, in the corner of a bourgeois parlour, Klinger himself sits in profile, playing the piano. To his left, the room's walls have disappeared and a curtain has been pulled back, revealing a stormy seascape and craggy island terrain. In the way it emerges behind the domestic interior as though from the back of the pianist's mind, this dramatic space appears to be a depiction of the mental representation conjured in Klinger's imagination by Brahms's music. At the right edge of the water and below Klinger's parlour floor, a nereid plays the harp – a reminder, perhaps, of Orpheus's lyre, a common allegory of music in the visual arts – as a triton holds firmly to the body of the instrument. On the treacherous waters, a small, vulnerable ship sails towards the island, approaching a cove set amid the rocks. The boat appears to stand in for the listener, navigating across the virtual musical landscape.

Brahms was fascinated by Klinger's score, and approved of the artist's renderings of the mythical figures and landscapes that the music inspired in his imagination. Brahms wrote to Klinger that when he looked through the book:

> I see the music, together with the nice words – and then your splendid engravings carry me away unawares. Beholding them, it is as if the music resounds farther into the infinite and everything expresses what I wanted to say more clearly than would be possible in music, and yet still in a manner full of mystery and foreboding … I must conclude that all art is the same and speaks the same language.[3]

In Brahms's description, his music and Klinger's prints evoke the same ideas, though the images do so with more precision than the sounds; visual and musical arts speak the same 'language', but the former with greater clarity than the latter.

Figure 0.1 Max Klinger, *Accorde* from *Brahms-Phantasie*, *c.*1894. Courtesy Davison Art Center, Wesleyan University. Photo Credit: John Wareham.

Klinger's score and Brahms's enthusiastic response bring to the fore a number of important questions about the nature of musical representation. How does music convey meaning, and in what ways are its processes of doing so different from and similar to those of other art forms? How can music be conceived of as a language, and why might this language be less clear than literature or visual representation? How, as listeners and performers, do we interpret music, forming mental representations of what we hear and play, and what is the relationship between our impressions and the composer's own ideas of what he or she aimed to evoke in the music? The question at the centre of this volume is how music operates as a representational art. The concept of representation in the study of music refers to the relationship between musical sounds and the meanings that listeners derive from them. The term 'representation' is typically understood in three principal ways in discussions of music. First, and most simply, it has been used to denote mimesis, the process by which a composer creates the resemblance of recognizable sounds in a work of music – musical references to birdsong and flowing water, or quotations of pre-existing melodies, might be examples of this sort of representation. Second, it is often employed to explain the manifestations of music in performances and texts. For example, 'representation' is sometimes invoked to explain the relationship of a performance to the sheet music;

of a musical score to the composer's ideas; of a transcription to a performance; or of critical, scholarly, and literary discussions of music to the sounds they describe. And third, it is used in a broader sense to characterize the ways listeners interpret more abstract meanings from music, such as emotion, narrative, values, place, and identity. These uses of the term 'representation' are also the subject of debate, as a number of the chapters in this book will show.

Perhaps not surprisingly, scholars have addressed the concept of representation more frequently in connection with literature and the visual arts than with music, because questions of resemblance and meaning have seemed more straightforward in these art forms. In the nineteenth century, the concept of instrumental music as an 'absolute' art form made the notion of music's representational capacities a subject of contention among some musicians and commentators. Such an understanding of music's autonomy, of its abstraction from the social worlds of its listeners, has by today lost most of its adherents; composing and performing music and attending concerts are commonly understood to be social activities in which people communicate through and interpret music, respond to it emotionally, or contemplate it in relation to other works of music.[4] In recent years, there has been increasing academic interest in these modes of interpretation and the ways music conveys meaning, subjects explored in studies of music's reception, interactions between music and other art forms, music's social and cultural functions, and the uses of music in identity construction and political movements.

These trends underscore the importance of the study of representation in music. This book shows how representation can be understood to operate in musical composition, performance, and listening from the early nineteenth century to the present, and identifies the key terms in the debate over the concept in the field of musicology. Some chapters approach elements of music commonly associated with representation – for example, the leitmotif, the programme, or the semiotic properties of musical topics (gestures, figures, and styles considered to signify particular references or characteristics) – to explore new ways of understanding how these systems operate. Among other important issues that arise in a number of the book's chapters is the question of authorial intention, and how it should enter into discussions of how and what music represents. A few chapters also challenge the notion of representation, searching for other explanations of musical meaning.

The five chapters in Part I address topics related to 'Representation and the interpretation of musical meaning'. Interpretation can involve listening, performance, analysis, and other forms of activity, and, of course, these modes of

interpretation often overlap with one another. These chapters ask what roles representation plays when we interpret music and derive meanings and expression from its structures and sounds. Matthew Gelbart's chapter opens Part I with a consideration of one of the fundamental ways by which musicians and listeners interpret compositions: through the expectations and meanings associated with musical genres. Gelbart argues that in the nineteenth century, the larger generic categories of art, folk, and popular music, as well as lower-level genres such as those defined by instrumentation, form, or programme, were increasingly thought to represent their intended audiences, by revealing characteristics about the values and tastes of groups of people differentiated by nationality, social class, and other attributes. In an investigation of the genre of the *ballade*, and in particular of Johannes Brahms's 1856 *Ballade* Op. 10, no. 1, Gelbart shows that contemporary listeners interpreted the work to convey meanings not simply through the mimetic effects of its implied programme, but by virtue of the more complex representational conventions of the relatively new genre of the *ballade* and the broader overarching genres of which it was a component, including art music.

In the following chapter, Roger Parker pursues another association between representation and interpretation in the nineteenth century that is similarly linked to issues of audience and genre, in a study of writings about musical aesthetics and meaning in journalism and criticism. Parker explores documents from the early decades of the century to view what they reveal about the burgeoning of concert life and developments in audiences' musical tastes in London in the 1830s. Parker tracks the ways cultural commentators described the emergence of an 'elite' musical audience, the expansion of interest in new concert repertoire, and the growth of middle-class music-making in the home, particularly with the increasing availability of the domestic piano. The chapter views how these journalistic voices interpreted the meanings and values they saw represented in these changes. Parker also addresses a related anxiety of the age that resulted from the association of musical genres and their audiences (as described in Gelbart's chapter): some audiences expressed a growing sense of alarm about the new popularity of instrumental music among the lower social classes, because of the difficulty of controlling and censoring music lacking in text and, thus, in clear meanings. This concern led many to attempt to further stratify musical participation by reserving vocal music for the working classes and instrumental music only for the 'elite'.

The third chapter similarly addresses anxiety over what instrumental music represents to its listeners and how external control can be exerted over its reception, here in the context of musical sponsorship, censorship, and aesthetics in the Soviet Union. Marina Frolova-Walker considers

instances of the Soviet government's attachment of particular interpretations to instrumental works, often without regard for the intentions of their composers. State officials developed what Frolova-Walker calls 'phantom programmes' for textless compositions, publicizing these interpretations by printing them in journalistic reviews and deliberately spreading rumours about the works' putative nicknames, sources, and subject matter. The attribution of meaning to instrumental works often involved the retroactive identification in their scores of musical topics – gestures, figures, and styles considered to signify particular meanings or characteristics – that were typically nationalist in nature and often related to the theme of war. Frolova-Walker considers music criticism and minutes from official meetings to examine the history of this interpretive practice.

The final two chapters of Part I turn from the question of meaning in instrumental music to consider the role of representation in interpretations of twentieth-century popular song in performances, recordings, film, and video. In Chapter 4, Walter Frisch examines the contribution of Harold Arlen during the period known as the Golden Age of American popular song, to address how Arlen and the singers with whom he worked, particularly Judy Garland and Barbra Streisand, represented his music in their performances and recordings through the nuanced interpretation of his scores. Frisch analyses what Alec Wilder has called Arlen's 'thoroughness' – his unique ability to write out his songs and accompaniments in full detail without the help of an arranger – by examining 'The Man That Got Away' and 'A Sleepin' Bee' from their initial conception, through their notation, and finally to their performance. By exploring the history and content of these songs, Frisch shows how Arlen's repertoire can be understood to represent Arlen himself, by containing in their intricate formal structures evidence of the 'thoroughness' of his activity as a collaborator, composer, and performer.

The chapter that follows also investigates the roles of representation in the field of popular song: focusing on Queen's 'Bohemian Rhapsody', Nicholas Cook considers how the iconic status of the original music video has influenced the subsequent interpretation of the song. Cook approaches the question of representation from multiple perspectives. He first examines how the video's visual component operates as an extension of the music, blurring the distinction between presentation and representation. From here, he asks how the song is visualized in the film *Wayne's World*, in a passage in which the music retains a dominant position over the filmic accompaniment, becoming a representation of the values of the protagonists. Finally, he asks what this case study can tell us about how musicologists represent their subject matter.

He sorts through the numerous video remakes of the song, both professional and amateur, that can be found on the internet, viewing how the music has inspired a participatory culture in which fans produce their own personal multimedia interpretations, sharing them with others in order to carve a role for themselves in the song's history. Cook concludes by asking how musicology, a discipline that has traditionally privileged original, canonical works, might be expanded to account for such instances of the reception, interpretation, and appropriation of music.

In Part II, 'Sound and visual representation: music, painting, and dance', three chapters address overlaps and interactions between aural and visual modes of artistic representation. Thomas Grey investigates nineteenth-century conceptions of the medium of music, looking at representations of music in painting, poetry, and, finally, music itself. Grey employs the term 'representation' to refer to the concept of 'mental representations', imagined perceptions of objects in the mind. He argues that whereas before the nineteenth century music was typically represented through allegory – for example, in the figure of Orpheus or St Cecilia – during the period he considers there was a move away from allegory towards imagining music's effects on listeners, its agency. Representations of music during this time invoked a trope of song as transcendent, capable of disembodying, lifting, and transporting immaterial objects such as feelings, prayers, or souls. Grey examines scenes representing this sort of musical apotheosis in theatrical works including Wagner's *Tristan* and late nineteenth-century productions of Goethe's *Faust*. Finally, he examines instances of the merging of these standard modes of representing music – through musical allegory and the evocation of music's agency – in multiple works of visual art as well as in the third movement of Robert Schumann's Fantasy Op. 17. Grey explains how Schumann composes figures in his Fantasy that aim self-reflexively to represent the medium of music, signifying harmony, melody, and its other attributes.

In my chapter, I consider the ways in which music can represent itself and other art forms to be a question of central importance to the investigation of recent works of musical portraiture. My chapter explores compositions in this genre that represent contemporary artists and musicians, including Philip Glass's 'A Musical Portrait of Chuck Close' and György Ligeti's 'Selbstportrait mit Reich und Riley (und Chopin ist auch dabei)'. These works represent their subjects not only by capturing aspects of their characters and biographies, but more importantly by evoking their artistic styles and techniques. The titles of these works indicate that the music represents aspects of particular individuals, and invite listeners to consider the portraits' subjects, imagining aspects of their identities and artistry as depicted in musical notes. In keeping with the convention in portrait painting of depicting artists with the tools of their

trade – such as brushes, paints, and easels – these musical portraits evoke the materials and styles their subjects employ in creating their art. In the case of Glass's portrait, brief melodic building blocks that form the work imitate the repeating patterns of Close's large-scale portraits; and in Ligeti's work, compositional techniques associated with all four composers are combined in a group portrait that reflects the oeuvres and techniques of each musician.

The final chapter in Part II addresses the question of music's relation to another form of visual art, one that incorporates music's temporal element: dance. Davinia Caddy explores contrasting ways three dancers and choreographers at the turn of the twentieth century – Jean d'Udine, Loie Fuller, and Valentine de Saint-Point – conceived of how their art should respond to, reflect, or contradict the sounds and structures of music. These three choreographers found innovative ways to engage with the compositions to which they designed their dances, exploring contrasting modes of the physical and visual representation of music. They also represented their conceptions of the association between dance and music in their aesthetic writings. By mining this textual legacy, Caddy investigates how these artists articulated their views of the rich and nuanced interrelation between music and dance. In her chapter, she reveals what they contributed to early twentieth-century notions of musical representation, and extends the discussion begun in the previous two chapters about artistic modes of representing music, here through the movement of the dancing body.

Part III explores the subject of musical representation in opera and cinema. The first three chapters address questions of musical meaning in leitmotif and orchestration, and the fourth turns to address an example of reflexive musical self-representation in the genre of meta-opera. In the opening chapter, a study of homoerotic friendship in Richard Wagner's *Tristan*, Laurence Dreyfus offers an opportunity to question how music produces meaning in dramatic forms. Dreyfus contends that the complex relationship between music and meaning is better served by the notion of musical metaphor than by representation, which he considers too narrowly associated with the simple processes of mimesis. Dreyfus shows how Brangäne's declaration of her affection for her mistress Isolde and King Marke's and Kurwenal's expressions of devotion to Tristan allude to a form of homoerotic love that reflects Wagner's own support of the concept of *Freundesliebe*, or romantic friendship, and his close relationship with his male followers. Through analyses of two leitmotifs he calls the *Freundesliebe* and Silken Longing motifs, Dreyfus argues that these gestures act as musical metaphors, as allusions to homoerotic love that enable the listener to achieve a richer understanding and experience of the music.

In the chapter that follows, Karol Berger further pursues questions of operatic meaning, returning to the concept of representation to contemplate the role of the orchestra in Wagner's music. Berger explores how we might understand the orchestra's music as another voice in the opera's texture. He asks whose voice it is – in other words, whose point of view is being represented through the orchestral writing and leitmotifs? To pursue this question, Berger turns to *Parsifal*. Berger concludes that orchestral leitmotifs can generally be heard as representations of the 'inner world', the conscious and unconscious thoughts and subjectivities, of the characters onstage. In some rare instances such as the 'Good Friday Spell' in Act III, however, the orchestra's music can be attributed to an invisible narrator, the composer himself. Through an intricate analysis of this scene and its place in the opera, Berger shows why the extended orchestral melody represents a narrator's voice, not the characters' inner thoughts, emerging from the orchestra pit as Wagner's gloss on the dramatic action. And like Dreyfus, Berger shows how an understanding of Wagner's values and beliefs, as revealed in his writings, letters, and earlier works, can inspire the listener's interpretation of the meanings conveyed by his orchestral leitmotifs.

The subsequent chapter further pursues the question of how leitmotifs work, in this case in the context of the cinematic soundtrack. Giorgio Biancorosso reconsiders prevalent explanations of the ways leitmotifs come to identify particular characters and ideas in film scores, seeking to move beyond the understanding of leitmotifs as musical signifiers of fixed meaning. With particular attention to Jerry Goldsmith's music for Roman Polanski's film *Chinatown*, Biancorosso examines the complex processes by which leitmotifs are introduced, and seeks to show how their meanings can change over the course of a film. Rather than being associated with meanings in a process akin to the way people acquire proper names, cinematic leitmotifs come to represent characters, ideas, places, or events through a dynamic process in which memory plays a crucial role. Biancorosso explains that the representational function of a leitmotif depends on the listener's recognition of the gesture's earlier iterations in the soundtrack, including its first appearances, before its referent could be recognized. The leitmotif, he shows, typically achieves meaning in retrospect, and through experience and recollection.

The final chapter in Part III turns from leitmotif and orchestration to the question of musical self-representation in opera, in an investigation of operatic borrowing in meta-opera. Hermann Danuser opens his chapter with a discussion of musical representation that addresses the four media in which music can be represented: sound, notation, words, and images. In

addition to representing music, these media can also represent one another, or stand for music 'as a whole' (a phenomenon explored in the chapters in Part II). All four of these media are present in opera, and their combination is particularly visible in meta-opera – operatic works in which multiple levels of narrative weave together in a way that reflexively foregrounds the genre of opera. Danuser illustrates his arguments about musical self-representation and meta-opera with a study of the revised version of Paul Hindemith's *Cardillac*. When he returned to the opera almost three decades after he first composed it, Hindemith incorporated a scene of *mise en abyme* in which the characters perform passages of Jean-Baptiste Lully's opera *Phaëton*, whose narrative and music intertwine in complex ways with those of Hindemith's work.

The final section of the book in Part IV addresses representation's roles in the construction of concepts of East and West through music. In a chapter about historical writings on music in Ottoman and British Mandate Palestine, Rachel Beckles Willson describes the problematic nature of the term 'western', and the role that the traditional understanding of representation has played in the development of the opposing notions of 'westernness' and 'non-westernness' in music. Seeking to find a remedy to the one-dimensionality that can result from traditional readings of music as representational, Beckles Willson follows Hayden Lorimer in adopting the understanding of historical sources as 'more-than-representational', allowing her to address the roles of representation while looking beyond them for a richer understanding of history. By focusing on Palestine, Beckles Willson can re-examine European visitors' written descriptions of music-making in the Middle East and also explore how the category of 'western music' was conceived of in colonized communities, with the ultimate goal of breaking from a notional rigid binary of the 'west' and its others, through an expanded understanding of representation.

In the final chapter, W. Anthony Sheppard further pursues the roles of representation in the construction of 'western' and 'eastern' identities and cultures and the displacement of 'others' in music through an examination of exoticist representation in recent works of opera. Although some composers and musicologists alike have described the end of operatic exoticism in the postmodern era, Sheppard argues, the style is still in common use to mark characters, places, and on-stage musical performances occurring within the narrative as different and separate from the world of the spectator. Sheppard looks particularly at four works by John Adams and Peter Sellars – *Nixon in China, A Flowering Tree, The Death of Klinghoffer*, and *Doctor Atomic* – to identify examples of the persistence of older musical techniques of exoticism. He contrasts Adams and Sellars's statements about contemporary

multiculturalism and their belief that they have transcended exoticizing representation with examples of traditional techniques for marking ethnic 'others' in their music, librettos, and staging.

In his Afterword, Richard Taruskin recalls scholarship on musical representation from recent decades, to map out new strategies for understanding the roles representation plays in musical composition, performance, listening, and historiography. Taruskin examines a wide variety of forms of musical representation, surveying issues from mimetic tone painting in the choral works of J.S. Bach and Handel and the signification of topics in eighteenth-century composition to the uses of music to represent identities in the contexts of nationalism and political organizations. Finally, Taruskin suggests an understanding of artistic representation in music that depends on the concept of affordance as described by philosopher and musician Charles O. Nussbaum. When we listen to music, we form an internal mental representation of virtual musical space through which we move, as we interpret meanings and experience emotional responses. Different musical passages afford different sorts of actions within this imagined space: we move quickly through some and step back in others. This is a description of how we understand music through representation that perhaps returns us to Max Klinger's depictions of the experience of listening to Brahms. Through the study of affordance and representation, writes Taruskin, we can better understand how we are moved by music, and are inspired to move along with it, as we negotiate our way across these virtual musical landscapes.

Notes

1 For a detailed study of Klinger's *Brahms-Fantasie*, see Walter Frisch, *German Modernism: Music and the Arts* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), 93–106. See also Leon Botstein, 'Brahms and Nineteenth-Century Painting', *19th-Century Music*, 14.2 (Autumn 1990), 154–68 (166–8). The full document, with high-resolution images of each page, can be viewed at www.wesleyan.edu/dac/view/brahmsphantasie/index.html (accessed 2 May 2012).
2 Frisch, *German Modernism*, 95.
3 *Ibid.*, 96.
4 On the history of philosophies of musical meaning and contemporary notions of musical meaning in social and cultural contexts, see Ian Cross and Elizabeth Tolbert, 'Music and Meaning' in Susan Hallam, Ian Cross, and Michael Thaut (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Music Psychology* (Oxford University Press, 2011). On musical representation in relation to cultural and social contexts, particularly as understood in the field of ethnomusicology, see Philip V. Bohlman, 'Music as Representation', *Journal of Musicological Research*, 24.3–4 (2005), 205–26.