

Music and Biography

Joanne Cormac

Musical biography is a topic that is constantly referred to in scholarship but rarely interrogated sufficiently critically. However, it has particular relevance to the study of nineteenth-century music. The Romantic construction of a genius-composer figure and the transcendence of the musical work are powerful and enduring concepts that are grounded in nineteenth-century musical biography. Perhaps more significantly, both nineteenth-century music and biography take the exploration of the subjectivity of the individual as a point of creative departure, encouraging readers and listeners to conceive of life and work as related. Yet this relationship has been a source of contention as much as fascination to musicologists and biographers.¹ The last decade or so has seen a revived interest among scholars in tackling the unique problems and opportunities presented by musical biography: the focus of this special issue.

The fascination with the self as a literary subject, or rather the emergence of modern autobiography, began in the later eighteenth century. It coincided with the rise of romanticism, and the related concerns of the exaltation of genius, the development of modern individualism, and the newfound importance placed on subjective experience.² These aesthetic concerns also affected ways of listening to music in the first half of the nineteenth century. Listeners began to hear music as a form of autobiographical expression, and writings about music began to read life into work and vice versa.³ At the same time, composers experimented with strategies that still entice us into attempting autobiographical interpretations. Programmatic titles or accompanying notes often point to a protagonist who is closely associated with the composer's image within the contemporary press or in their own writings;⁴ characteristic recurring motifs,

¹ For an introduction to some of the issues presented by biographical approaches to the relationship between life and work see Jim Samson, 'Myth and reality: a biographical introduction' in *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin* ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 1-8.

² See Roy Pascal, *Design and Truth in Autobiography* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960), 51 for a discussion of the relationship between Romanticism and the emergence of autobiography. See Eugene Stelzig, *The Romantic Subject in Autobiography* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 2000) for an excellent discussion of some of the impulses in Romantic autobiography.

³ Mark Evan Bonds', *The Beethoven Syndrome: Hearing Music as Autobiography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), examines these issues and the philosophical, cultural, and economic changes around 1830 that led to a rise in "autobiographical" listening and composing.

⁴ For an example of this see Laura Tunbridge, 'Schumann's as *Manfred*,' *The Musical Quarterly* 87 (2004), 546-569. Tunbridge examines the different meanings arising from Schumann's contemporaries' association of Schumann with the character of Byron's *Manfred*.

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topics, or rhetorical features might depict subjects and their actions within various pictorial settings, and intertextual references might be read as veiled allusions to other individuals.⁵

Undoubtedly, the concept of subjectivity is closely intertwined with nineteenth-century aesthetics. Life-writing opens up fruitful avenues for understanding its representation in music. Subjectivity is constructed in many ways in nineteenth-century life-writing. It can be aligned with the broader social and political ideals of its age, representing a kind of collective subjectivity, or it can be determinedly unique, displaying its individuality. At times it appears to be unified, coherent and knowable, at others it is fragmented, shifting and multivalent. Take, for example, Berlioz's *Mémoires*: a complex and fascinating essay in Romantic subjectivity.⁶ Drawing on multiple genres of life writing, from the Romantic "Confession" as popularized by Rousseau to the travelogue, and presenting a unique blend of fact and fiction, the *Mémoires* represents an attempt to construct and re-construct the self in manifold ways. Equally, Berlioz's program notes and comments on the *Symphonie Fantastique*, *Lélio*, *Harold en Italie*, and *Roméo et Juliette* invite autobiographical interpretations of his music, as do particular features of the music itself. An understanding of the techniques and contexts of nineteenth-century life-writing can help to uncover compositional approach and to nuance hermeneutic interpretations of the musical work.⁷

By the time Berlioz decided to write his *Mémoires* in 1848⁸ autobiography had flowered into a full-fledged literary genre. The numerous biographies and autobiographies of composers that appeared in the first half of the nineteenth-century not only reflect creative and philosophical Romantic experiments in exploring individuality and the concept of the self, but also the public

⁵ For a discussion of the relationship between intertextuality and subjectivity in nineteenth-century piano music see Joanne Cormac, 'Intertextuality, Subjectivity, and Meaning in Liszt's *Deux Polonaises*,' *The Musical Quarterly* (2019). It is no coincidence that the majority of research on subjectivity in music has focused on nineteenth century repertoire. The classic text is Edward T. Cone, *The Composer's Voice* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1974). See also Michael P. Steinberg, *Listening to Reason: Culture, Subjectivity, and Nineteenth-Century Music* (Princeton, N.J. and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004) and Benedict Taylor and Ceri Owen's special issue, 'Subjectivity in European Song: Time, Place and Identity' *19th-Century Music* 40 (2017), 185-305.

⁶ Peter Bloom (ed.), *Mémoires d'Hector Berlioz de 1803 À 1865* (Paris: Vrin, 2019).

⁷ Francesca Brittan, for example, has probed the *Mémoires'* dissection of emotional experience, and its layering of imaginary and real selves, to offer not only a contextualisation, but also a new interpretation of the self-referentiality of the Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*. Francesca Brittan, 'Berlioz and the Pathological Fantastic: Melancholy, Monomania, and Romantic Autobiography,' *19th-Century Music* 24 (2006), 211-39.

⁸ The *Mémoires* contained some material published earlier as stand-alone fragments, but the majority of the text was written in 1848. See Pierre Citron, 'The *Mémoires*' in *The Cambridge Companion to Berlioz* ed. Peter Bloom (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 125-145 (especially 128-30) for details of these fragments and for an overview of the chronology of the book as a whole. Berlioz published a number of autobiographical fragments. Berlioz wrote the majority the book between 1848 and 1854, but continued working on it until 1865. For full details of sources and chronology see the Introduction of Peter Bloom's new critical edition, *Mémoires d'Hector Berlioz de 1803 À 1865* (Paris: Vrin, 2019), particularly 29-52.

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appetite for details about the lives of extraordinary individuals.⁹ Autobiography developed a more commercial strand from around 1830, as composers felt compelled to fashion their own image at a time when celebrity culture was emerging into a multimedia phenomenon.¹⁰

Accordingly, biographies such as Franz Liszt's influential *F. Chopin* (1852) reflected on intimate aspects of Chopin's life, whetting public curiosity about Chopin's relationship with George Sand, and also enabled Liszt to capitalize on the celebrity of his friend.¹¹ Biography also helped crystallize the figure of the composer-genius in the popular imagination, creating a compelling image that continues to infiltrate our understanding of creative individuals and the creative process itself.¹²

At the same time, musical biography developed hand in hand with music history, as the two genres shared the same authors.¹³ Although the hagiographical tendencies of nineteenth-century biography later came under fire, many of the biographical texts published at this time formed the backbone of modern musicology. Even now, their powerful historiographical narratives, and their cultural and political assumptions, continue to influence not only the narrative structures of modern biographies, but also the image we have of particular composers, the way we understand their music, and the position of composers and works within the canon. In many cases, these early biographies contain a level of biographical detail, including extracts from letters and eyewitness accounts, that it is difficult to find elsewhere.

⁹ For an interdisciplinary discussion about the development of celebrity culture during the Romantic period see Tom Mole (ed.), *Romanticism and Celebrity Culture, 1750-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

¹⁰ The period also saw the proliferation of composer iconography, including death-bed scenes in which viewers were allowed a glimpse of a famous individual at their most private, intimate moments. Alan Davison has conducted significant research into composer iconography of the nineteenth century. For an introduction to this area see Davison, 'The Musician in Iconography from the 1830s and 1840s: the Formation of New Visual Types,' *Music in Art* 28 (2003), 174-62. For a discussion of deathbed scenes, see Davison, 'Painting for a Requiem: Mihály Munkácsy's *The last moments of Mozart* (1885),' *Early Music* 39 (2011), 79-92.

¹¹ See Meirion Hughes (ed.), *Liszt's Chopin: A New Edition* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2010) for a translation of and critical commentary on this fascinating text.

¹² See Keith Sawyer, *Explaining Creativity: the Science of Human Innovation* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 23-5 for a discussion of the Romantic conception of creativity. This view of creativity still informs popular biographical depictions. See Joanne Cormac, 'Cinematic Depictions of Music Creative Processes in Classical and Popular Music,' in *The Oxford Handbook of the Creative Process in Music* ed. Nicolas Donin (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), citing advance online publication: DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190636197.013.31 and John Tibbetts, *Composers in the Movies: Studies in Musical Biography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

¹³ For example, Johann Nicolaus Forkel worked on his comprehensive music history: *Allgemeine Geschichte* (1788-1801) alongside his seminal biography, *Über Johann Sebastian Bachs Leben, Kunst und Kunstwerke* (1802). Similarly, Fétis completed two biographical dictionaries: the *Biographie universelle des musiciens* (1835-44 and 1860-65), and later also worked on a broader history of music: *Histoire générale de la musique* (Paris, 1869-76).

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On the other hand, myth-making is never far from view, and this has shaped the relationship that has since evolved between the disciplines of musicology and biography.¹⁴ Some composers have been more subject to processes of biographical mythologization than others. Biographical work on Mozart in the second half of the twentieth century, for example, has prioritized the collecting of new facts and the correcting of errors and embellishments. This has been a reaction to the powerful hold that early biographers, such as Friedrich Schlichtegroll, Franz Xaver Niemetschek, and Johann Friedrich Rochlitz have had on the public imagination, in constructing a seductive image of Mozart as an eternal child and in popularizing the mystery of the circumstances surrounding his death.¹⁵ Chopin has inspired a similar level of biographical mythologization, causing one frustrated biographer to make a study of the existing biographies, interrogating those that generated myth and legend.¹⁶ More recently, the zealousness with which biographers of the second half of the twentieth century attempted to separate fact from fiction in musical biographies has been criticized for its underlying assumption: that it is possible to achieve a definitive interpretation of a life.¹⁷

Debunking myths represents one of the main ways in which musicologists have engaged critically with musical biography. Another is to interrogate the impact biographical interpretations have had on reception: sometimes arguing that this has led to a limited, one-sided interpretation, or even neglect, of particular musical works.¹⁸ Together, these two impulses reveal the ways in which musicologists have generally approached biography: as something misleading and problematic, if not suspect. However, since the turn of the century, musicologists have also begun to acknowledge biography's potential as a barometer of cultural and social values and tastes, which can help explain the reception fortunes of particular individuals and processes of canon formation.¹⁹

¹⁴ An excellent introduction to mythologizing motifs in biographies of artists is Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz, *Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist: A Historical Experiment* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979). As regards the mythologization of composers in biography see Christopher Wiley, 'Mythological Motifs in the Biographical Accounts of Haydn's Later Life' in *The Land of Opportunity: Joseph Haydn in Britain* ed. Richard Chesser and David Wyn Jones (London: The British Library, 2013), 195–211 and K. M. Knittel, 'The Construction of Beethoven,' in *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music* ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 118–150.

¹⁵ For a useful overview of early Mozart biography and the emergence of Mozart myths see William Stafford, 'The evolution of Mozartian biography' in *The Cambridge Companion to Mozart* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 200–211.

¹⁶ See Adam Harasowski, *The Skein of Legends around Chopin* (Glasgow: William MacLellan, 1967).

¹⁷ See Jolanta T. Pekacz 'Memory, History and Meaning: Musical Biography and its Discontents,' *Journal of Musicological Research* 23 (2004), 39–80 (at p. 44).

¹⁸ For example, Laura Tunbridge has argued for a re-evaluation of Schumann's late works, demonstrating that excessive focus on Schumann's mental illness has led to the late works being dismissed and misunderstood. See Tunbridge, *Schumann's Late Style* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

¹⁹ For example, see Christopher Wiley, "'A Relic of an Age Still Capable of a Romantic Outlook': Musical Biography and The Master Musicians Series, 1899–1906', *Comparative Criticism*, 25 (2003), 161–202. Wiley's article places the original twelve volumes of the *Master Musicians* series within their late

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In recognition of both the pitfalls, and the unmined potential of musical biography, Jolanta T. Pekacz called for a reconsideration of the 'premises, boundaries, and objectives' of the discipline in the wake of the upheavals in the epistemological foundations of historical writing in the last decades of the twentieth century.²⁰ In particular, she called for new musical biographies to be written that are skeptical of positivist, linear, causal, teleological narratives. Pekacz's criticisms of musical biography were predicated on the assumption that historical biography is a subfield of history, and therefore it is necessary for it to keep step with changes in the broader discipline.²¹ This perception mirrors the increased scholarly interest which biography has enjoyed over the past couple of decades, leading to a 'biographical turn' in the humanities and social sciences. This has seen scholars advocating biographical methods as a research methodology to emphasize the relationship of individual agency to broader social and political forces, and to stress the ways that individuals (including forgotten individuals) can influence historical change.²²

This focus on forgotten individuals has offered one of the most important contributions of biography to musicology in recent years. It represents yet another way in which the two disciplines are closely connected, developing in similar directions with shared concerns. The last few decades have seen biographers engaging with new subjects, particularly women. This began with biographies of the lives of the sisters, wives, and mothers of prominent men, but has since broadened to include little-known women of various social standing and occupation. Biographical lives of women often use the life of an individual to illuminate historical patterns, the relationship of women to particular institutions, and the forces of social change. They present unique challenges for the biographer: often these lives are based on fragmented documentary evidence, and the traditional focus of biographies on public life has meant that the lives of women do not fit typical biographical narratives.

These trends are mirrored in musicology. The increased interest in women composers, which has been growing steadily for several decades, has relied heavily on biographical work. Often new audiences access women composers through various forms of biographical writing before they hear their music. In parallel to life-writing of women in other disciplines, feminist musicology has used biography to understand obstacles to social change and the impact of

Victorian historical context, noting the ways in which the series' writers constructed their subjects to appeal to prevalent values of the day.

²⁰ See Pekacz 'Memory, History and Meaning...', 39-80.

²¹ An excellent introduction to the relationship between the disciplines of biography and history is Barbara Caine's *Biography and History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

²² For a recent overview of the ways in which the biographical turn is changing the humanities, see Hans Renders, Binne de Haan, and Jonne Harmsma (eds), *The Biographical Turn: Lives in History* (London and New York: Routledge, 2017).

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gender on women's musical opportunities and ambitions.²³ Biography is also closely intertwined with other impulses in musicology, particularly the study of sexuality in music.²⁴

Over the past decade or so, biography has increasingly claimed the attention of musicologists as a field demanding greater theoretical reflection, and one that offers new methodological approaches to the study of music history.²⁵ We have also seen musicologists applying new, experimental approaches to the writing of biography.²⁶ The nineteenth century is a particularly fruitful period for the study of musical biography. It saw the appearance of the first musicians' autobiographies, representing both a profound fascination with subjectivity in both musical and biographical realms and a growing appetite for self-commodification to satisfy the expanding market for music and the emerging culture of celebrity. Meanwhile, the period saw the cementation of biographical practices and approaches that persist to this day.

This special issue attempts to capture some of the richness and diversity of biographical activity during this period, as well as the current state of scholarship addressing the complex relationship between musicology and biography. Together the articles aim to further our understanding of how we might use musical biography as a research tool. Rather than attempt to vindicate the genre, we embrace the issues that have marred its reputation, such as its use of gossip and rumor, and its tendency to mythologize, as fascinating areas of enquiry that shed useful light on historiographical issues and methods. But the articles in this issue also encourage greater reflection on how we should approach writing musical biography in the future.

Each article explores a group of interrelated themes: namely, the influence of biography and biographical ideas on the reception of composers and their music, the relationship, at a macro level, between biography and musicology as discipline, and at a micro level between author and subject, the role of biography in constructing subjectivities and identities, and the use of anecdote and the blurring of fact and fiction as a biographical approach. Each article takes its

²³ Marian Wilson Kimber has argued that feminist musicologists often invent or embellish obstacles in order to heighten the impression of women composers as suffering artists. See Wilson Kimber, 'The "Suppression" of Fanny Mendelssohn: Rethinking Feminist Biography,' *19th-Century Music* 26 (2002), 113-129. The article caused some controversy. For responses to it see Marcia J. Citron, 'Feminist Waves and Classical Music: Pedagogy, Performance, Research,' *Women and Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture* 8 (2004), 47-60 and Citron, 'A Bi-centennial Reflection: Twenty-Five Years with Fanny Hensel,' *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* 4 (2007), 7-20 to which Wilson Kimber responded with 'Of "Bumps" and Biography: A Response to Marcia Citron,' *19th-Century Music Review* 5 (2008), 171-76.

²⁴ Pekacz positions musical biography as a 'site of struggle over the control of cultural memory,' pointing to the role biography has played in "outing" composers including Schubert and Handel. See 'Memory, History and Meaning...,' 60.

²⁵ Jolanta T. Pekacz's edited volume *Musical Biography: Towards New Paradigms* (Oxford and New York: Ashgate, 2006) brings together musicologists and historians to offer a critical reassessment of older biographies and helps forge new approaches to musical biography.

²⁶ For example, see the creative approach taken by Paul Kildea in *Chopin's Piano: A Journey through Romanticism* (London: Penguin Books, 2018), which traces the history of Chopin's *Preludes* through the instruments on which they were played.

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own direction: the issue includes investigations of biographical work relating to a range of musical figures, from Mozart to Marie Lloyd, and of biographical writing from across the long nineteenth century and beyond.

The issue begins chronologically with Simon Keefe's article on Mozart and Haydn biographies written during the 1820s and 30s. Keefe highlights the intertwined nature of the composers' reception during this period by analyzing the influence of Mozart biographies on those of Haydn. He reveals how existing narratives converged and diverged during this time, and how the popularity of anecdotes blurred the boundaries between biography and fiction.

Joanne Cormac's article takes up the themes of reception, identity construction, and fiction within the context of the London musical press in the 1840s and 50s. It contextualizes London critics' biographical constructions of Berlioz against historical musical debates taking place in England at mid-century. Cormac argues that the "Berlioz" that emerges is a paradoxical figure, adaptable to suit competing needs. The images of Berlioz circulating in the press shed new light on the agendas of a small group of influential critics, and reveal the fluidity of the power relationships between Berlioz and his biographers.

Kristin Franseen's article further interrogates the motives and practices of the biographer. Franseen examines the relationship between biography and queer musicology in her discussion of Rosa Newmarch's and Edward Prime Stevenson's early twentieth-century readings of queer subjectivities in nineteenth-century repertoire: namely Tchaikovsky's instrumental music. Franseen argues that the very aspects of life-writing that make it appear suspect to scholars—its use of anecdotes and rumors—offered rare spaces for addressing issues of sexuality in symphonic music and enabled a queer musicology to develop.

Finally, Paul Watt takes up the theme of the relationship between biography and music history in his article on the music hall singer, Marie Lloyd. Watt argues that the vocal style of Lloyd offers a missing dimension to our historical understanding of operatic vocal styles. Biographical constructions of Lloyd have contributed to this neglect and to the position of music hall within the discipline, as they tend to focus on Lloyd's physicality in contrast to constructions of opera singers that lay greater emphasis on their voices. Watt confronts the problem of how to combine life and music in biography, and interrogates the musical absences that occur when life takes priority.

ABSTRACTS

“No kind of reading is so generally interesting as biography”: Establishing Narratives for Haydn and Mozart in the Second and Third Decades of the Nineteenth Century

Simon P. Keefe

Very little critical attention has been directed towards biographical writings on Haydn and Mozart in the second and third decades of the nineteenth century, following the first wave of work by Friedrich Schlichtegroll and Franz Niemetschek (for Mozart, 1793, 1798) and Georg August Griesinger and Albert Dies (for Haydn, 1809, 1810). Examining varied biographically-oriented materials in books, short profiles, anecdotes and fiction, this article establishes contrasting narratives for the two composers during this period: Mozart was regarded as thoroughly immersed in music from beginning to end, born into it as an infant prodigy and dying in the act of writing it for the Requiem, encapsulating a unified life and oeuvre; and Haydn embraced a rags-to-riches, triumph-over-adversity story – poor at birth and in his youth but eventually feted as one of western music’s greatest figures – with full-fledged life-work alignment at death potentially compromised by a perceived decline in compositional powers towards the end. The article also traces influences of one narrative on the other, especially Mozart’s on Haydn, including through accounts of Haydn’s *Creation* and death. By explaining the diverging and converging narratives associated with Haydn and Mozart, I identify the second and third decades of the nineteenth century not as a protracted biographical cold spot but rather as a springboard and inspiration for future scholarly endeavor, including the serious, extended studies of Georg von Nissen, Alexandre Oulibicheff and Otto Jahn (1828, 1843 and 1856 respectively).

Biographical Note

Simon P. Keefe is J.R. Hoyle Chair of Music at the University of Sheffield. He is author or editor of twelve books, including the monographs *Mozart’s Requiem: Reception, Work, Completion* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), which won the Marjorie Weston Emerson award from the Mozart Society of America, and the 700-page musical biography *Mozart in Vienna: the Final Decade* (Cambridge University Press, 2017). He was elected a life member of the Academy for Mozart Research at the Internationale Stiftung Mozarteum, Salzburg, in 2005.

Between Beethoven and Mendelssohn: Biographical Constructions of Berlioz in the London Press

Joanne Cormac

In 1853 a writer for the London-based periodical, *Fraser’s Magazine* remarked that Berlioz’s ‘heroic temperament’ could be ‘read legibly in the noble style of his compositions. His own life forms to these works the most interesting accompaniment and commentary.’ The linking of life

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and work in Berlioz's case is nothing unusual. However, a particular set of circumstances unique to London meant that critics based in that city persistently used Berlioz's biography to further their own agendas while also promoting his music. In this article, I argue that, when writing about Berlioz's London performances, critics employed biographical ideas and narratives that enabled them to use the composer as a means to shape local debates about the future of London's orchestral institutions: the Philharmonic Society and its latest 'rival': the New Philharmonic Society.

Biography proved a powerful rhetorical device from which Berlioz profited, and is central to our understanding of his critical reception in London. It was used to introduce, to persuade, to simplify, to generate sympathy, admiration and outrage. However, I reveal that in later visits biographical narratives overshadowed the coverage of Berlioz's music. In some articles, Berlioz was reduced to a rhetorical device to be employed to give strength to criticisms of either the old Philharmonic or the new, with the critic offering little insight into Berlioz's music. Biography had given Berlioz a foothold in musical London, but it could not win him the lasting success he craved.

Biographical Note

Joanne Cormac is Leverhulme Early Career Fellow at the University of Nottingham. She is the author of *Liszt and the Symphonic Poem* (Cambridge University Press, 2017) and editor of *Liszt in Context* (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming). Her research has appeared in *19th-Century Music*, *19th-Century Music Review*, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, *The Musical Quarterly* and *The Journal of Musicological Research*. A member of the Oxford Centre for Life-writing, she was a Visiting Scholar at Wolfson College, University of Oxford from 2017 to 2018.

“Homosexual Hearers” and “Universal Sentiments”: Reading Queer Musical Biography in the Works of Rosa Newmarch and Edward Prime-Stevenson

Kristin Franseen

Beginning with the “open secret” of Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears's relationship and continuing through debates over Handel's and Schubert's sexuality and analyses of Ethel Smyth's memoirs, biography has played a central role in the development of queer musicology. At the same time, life-writing's focus on extramusical details and engagement with difficult-to-substantiate anecdotes and rumors often seem suspect to scholars. In the case of early twentieth-century music research, however, these very gaps and ambiguities paradoxically offered some authors and readers at the time rare spaces for approaching questions of sexuality in music. Issues of subjectivity in

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instrumental music aligned well with rumors about autobiographical confession within Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 6 (*Pathétique*) for those who knew how to listen and read between the lines. This article considers the different ways in which the framing of biographical anecdotes and gossip in scholarship by music critic-turned-amateur sexologist Edward Prime-Stevenson and Tchaikovsky scholar Rosa Newmarch allowed for queer readings of symphonic music. It evaluates Prime-Stevenson's discussions of musical biography and interpretation in *The Intersexes* (1908/9) and Newmarch's *Tchaikovsky: His Life and Works* (1900), translation of Modest Tchaikovsky's biography, and article on the composer in *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians* to explore how they addressed potentially taboo topics, engaged with formal and informal sources of biographical knowledge (including one another's work), and found their scholarly voices in the absence of academic frameworks for addressing gender and sexuality. While their overt goals were quite different—Newmarch sought to dismiss “sensationalist” rumors about Tchaikovsky's death for a broad readership, while Prime-Stevenson used queer musical gossip as a primary source in his self-published history of homosexuality—both grappled with questions of what can and cannot be read into a composer's life and works and how to relate to possible queer meanings in symphonic music. The very aspects of biography that place it in a precarious position as scholarship ultimately reveal a great deal about the history of musicology and those who write it.

Biographical Note

Kristin Franseen is a PhD candidate in musicology at McGill University's Schulich School of Music. Her dissertation, supervised by Lloyd Whitesell, is entitled “Ghosts in the Archives: The Queer Knowledge and Public Musicology of Vernon Lee, Rosa Newmarch, and Edward Prime-Stevenson.” She has presented her work at meetings of the American Musicological Society, the Société québécoise de recherche en musique (SQRM), and the Society for American Music, as well as at themed conferences on biography, British queer history, public music discourse, and music and sexuality. Her research has been published in *Keyboard Perspectives* and *Musique et pédagogie*, and her article on Rosa Newmarch's Tchaikovsky research and poetry is forthcoming in *Ars Lyrica*. Kristin's other research interests include Enlightenment philosophy in the operas of Antonio Salieri and the early development and promotion of the metronome.

Biographical Constructions and Reconstructions of Music-Hall Star, Marie Lloyd (1870–1922)

Paul Watt

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Marie Lloyd (1870–1922) was a vocal superstar of the late nineteenth century. With tens of thousands of ardent followers in Britain and America—and an income that eclipsed even what Adele Patti and Nellie Melba earned—Lloyd was an international sensation. Biographers of the prima donna, the female vocal celebrity, are often quick to affix a label to their subjects' voices, such as 'The Swedish Nightingale' (for Jenny Lind), 'The Queen of Song' (Adelina Patti), and 'The Voice of Australia', in the case of Nellie Melba. Marie Lloyd was also bestowed a title, 'Queen of the Music Hall', but this did not describe her voice, rather the institution for which she worked. This article thus probes the varied reasons—and ambiguities—of this appellation in biographical constructions of Lloyd and attempts to explain why Lloyd's biographers have virtually nothing to say about the extraordinary range and versatility of her voice.

The article argues that biographers have depicted Lloyd as a representation of Britishness or womanhood, but now the time has come to give voice not only to her place in music-hall history and politics, but to the way that her dexterous, multi-faceted and versatile voice functioned. Recordings reveal that despite what has been said and written about her, Lloyd's voice was versatile and she was a dexterous singer. They also provide us with evidence that a style of singing once thought to be the preserve of opera, the *diseuse* style, was in fact a style sung in various theaters in England and France. This suggests that our very notions of what constitutes operatic style and, indeed, who makes the cut to be called a "diva" deserve further biographical—and musicological—consideration.

Biographical Note

Paul Watt is senior lecturer in musicology in the Sir Zelman School of Music at Monash. His research interests include musical criticism, historiography and aesthetics, popular music and biography. He is the author of *The Regulation and Reform of Music Criticism in Nineteenth-Century England* (Royal Musical Association Monographs/Routledge, 2018) and *Ernest Newman: A Critical Biography* (Boydell Press, 2017). Paul is currently writing a book on music, morality and citizenship in the nineteenth century, which is a comparative study involving educational institutions and music-making in Britain, Australia and the USA. With Michael Allis and Sarah Collins, he is the editor of the forthcoming *Oxford Handbook of Music and Intellectual Culture in the Nineteenth Century*.