Picturing Music in Victorian England

A Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

This thesis analyses musical imagery created by Victorian artists. It considers paintings, decorative arts and photography, as well as contemporary art criticism and poetry. Focusing on artists associated with Pre-Raphaelitism and aestheticism, it shows how they used musical subjects to sidestep narrative conventions and concentrate instead on explorations of femininity, colour, mood and sensuality.

This thesis begins by considering the musical experience of four artists – Frederic Leighton, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Edward Burne-Jones and James Whistler - and the influence of personal taste on their musical subjects. It then looks at the depiction of non-Western performance, including images of dancing girls. The third chapter explores the links between music and worship, and the subversion of traditional religious iconography by aestheticist artists. Chapter four analyses images of musical women, and especially the late-Victorian interest in mermaids and sirens. The theme of sensuality continues with an investigation of the connections between music and colour, by assessing the influence of Renaissance Venice, Wagner and French theories of synaesthesia on the Victorian art-world. The final chapter looks at the interconnectedness of music, nostalgia and bereavement in aestheticist painting.

Although this study approaches the subject of music-in-art from a number of different directions, there are two key themes that underpin the interpretation of musical images. The first is that musical symbolism was malleable: music could signify both religious devotion and sexual passion. The second is that, in the Victorian imagination, music was oppositional and unstable. It was linked with femininity, emotion, colour, desire and the supernatural.

This thesis demonstrates that the idea of music was a key component in the emergence of anti-Establishment art in Victorian England.

Acknowledgments

Any thesis is a collaborative process, but this one has had a particularly long gestation. It grew out of an MA dissertation completed nearly a decade ago, supervised by Caroline Arscott at the Courtauld Institute. Since then my research has been helped – and made much more pleasurable - by many colleagues and friends who have shaped my ideas and opened up new lines of enquiry. I know that it will be hard to thank them all personally, but I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisors, Reg Winfield and Greg Votolato, for their support, and also to Paul Springer and Juliet Simpson at BCUC.

My research has been made possible by a fellowship based at the Victoria and Albert Museum. I have been given access to the outstanding 19th century collections, thanks to the staff in the National Art Library and the Print Room. I have also benefited from the wisdom of my V&A colleagues, especially Martin Barnes, Charles Newton, Stephen Calloway, Flora Dennis, and Anna Fletcher. The good humour of the Exhibitions team, led by Linda Lloyd-Jones, has kept my spirits up. Jennifer Taylor and Claire Longworth, working as volunteers at the V&A, have helped me track down some of the objects in this study, and Amy Hibbert assisted with the illustrations. I have been supported throughout by the Research Department, especially Paul Greenhalgh, Carolyn Sargentson and Christopher Breward.

In the early stages, I learnt a great deal from musicologists, especially those I met through Bennett Zon at the Music in 19th century Britain conference held in Durham in 1999. Phyllis Weliver offered numerous insights into the connections between music and literature in Victorian England, and Sophie Fuller helped me to understand the nature of women's performance. Paul Banks and Michael Musgrave also offered information and encouragement, and Oliver Davies told me about A.J. Hipkins's analysis of Rossetti's musical paintings. John Lowerson introduced me to the I.H.R. seminar run by Cyril Ehrlich, and I was grateful for the chance to discuss my work with this group.

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My family and friends have been a constant support. They have borne with my enthusiasms and my anxieties, and listened to me as I wrestled with sections of my argument. This thesis could not have been written without their help. I am grateful to the Kirkman family, Frances Button, Fiona Mackintosh and the choir of St. Barnabas Church, Oxford for teaching me about music. Matthew Grimley, Clare Griffiths and Susan Skedd have given me invaluable friendship, as well as sound scholarly advice, over many years. As for Julia Yates and Elizabeth Player, we are 'ever the best of friends'. My parents have made this thesis happen. They have offered IT support, childcare, a listening ear, cups of tea and a bed for the night. They

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Introduction

Prelude

The Musical Instruments gallery in the Victoria and Albert Museum is quiet and shadowy. Adrift under a dimly-lit dome, it floats above the buzz of the Costume Courts. On the edge of the gallery, a small painted piano is pushed up against the parapet [figure 1].[1] In the twilight the decoration is hard to see; it is low down, near the pedals. The soft reds, browns and golds resolve themselves into a macabre image of young girls making music in a garden, with Death about to enter and shatter their world. Concealed under the cover of the keyboard is a second image of an organ, an angel and a girl who seems to be St. Cecilia [figure 2]. Most visitors never see her, as the keyboard lid is always kept locked during museum opening hours. These two pictures show the two faces of music. For music is both a sign of mortality, and a means of transcending it. The lower image is a 19th century Dance of Death, where music acts as a symbol of short-lived pleasure.[2] Yet through music we can catch a glimpse of heaven. When the piano is opened, the performer and her audience can contemplate the guardian angel who watches over St. Cecilia. Through her music, Cecilia attains communion with God.

My journey begins with this painted piano because it embodies the ideas that shaped Victorian music-in-art. Not only does it demonstrate the doubleness that lies at the heart of musical imagery, it was also created by one of the major players in this story, at a moment when the London art-world was in a state of flux. The piano was given to the artist Edward Burne-Jones (1833-1898) and his wife Georgiana as a wedding gift in 1860 and was decorated by Burne-Jones soon afterwards. That Georgie, in her husband's biography, described the image under the lid as a Chant d'Amour rather than a Cecilia underlines the slippery nature of musical pictures. Should we read it as an image of devotion or desire? This

[1] The piano (1860, American walnut, paint, and gilded gesso) was decorated by Edward Burne-Jones and given to the Museum by the artist's daughter, Margaret Mackail.
[2] Edward Burne-Jones knew the 14th Century Triumph of Death in the Campo Santo, Pisa from engravings published by Lasinio (Florence, 1812).

thesis argues that it is precisely the malleability of music symbolism that appealed to radical Victorian artists.

The Scope of the Thesis

This thesis looks at musical images created by four major figures in the Victorian art-world: Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882), Edward Burne-Jones, Frederic Leighton (1830–1896) and James McNeill Whistler (1834-1903). It demonstrates the pervasive nature of musical themes and ideas in their work. Moreover, through a close reading of their art-productions, it argues that music transformed artistic style and discourse in London in the 1860s. This period of transition, from Pre-Raphaelitism to aestheticism, has been the focus of considerable debate since the early 1990s.[3] This shift in style and substance in British art and writing has been read in a variety of ways. Some art-historians point to the impact of Japanese art on London and Paris, some to a mid-Victorian enthusiasm for the Venetian Renaissance, while others suggest that upheavals in gender relations can account for the new and controversial art-productions. This thesis acknowledges that all these ways of looking are valuable. However, it proposes that there is another explanation: in the 1860s, art in England moved from being literary to being musical. The idea of music offers a prism through which visible changes in the art of Rossetti and his contemporaries can be better understood. It also highlights the points of similarity between seemingly disparate artists like Leighton and Whistler.

Leighton, Whistler, Rossetti and Burne-Jones loom large in this thesis because they were the most prominent figures in the generation of artists associated with aestheticism. Unfortunately there is still no better way to

[3] See, for example, the major centenary exhibitions held in the 1990s of work by Frederic Leighton (Royal Academy of Arts, 1996) and Edward Burne-Jones (Metropolitan Museum, New York and Birmingham City Art Gallery, 1998); smaller exhibitions at Nottingham (Heaven and Earth: the Religion of Beauty, Djanogly Art Gallery, 1994), Birmingham (The Blue Bower: Rossetti in the 1860s, Barber Institute of Fine Arts, 2000) and Newcastle (The Grosvenor Gallery: A Palace of Art in Victorian England, Laing Art Gallery, 1996); the collection of essays edited by Elizabeth Prettejohn, After the Pre-Raphaelites, (Manchester: Manchester University Press) 1999, and J.B. Bullen's work on the development of aestheticism in The Pre-Raphaelite Body: Fear and Desire in Painting, Poetry and Criticism, (Oxford: Clarendon Press) 1998.

describe this disparate group. The phrase 'Aesthetic Movement' carries with it the pejorative associations of Gilbert and Sullivan's comic opera Patience (1881) – it conjures up images of effete young men who 'walk down Piccadilly with a poppy or a lily'.[4] However it is a contemporary term, and less cumbersome than 'post-Pre-Raphaelite'. It might just be possible to refer to these artists as 'avant-garde', but this is also a loaded phrase, reminding us of the dominance of French painting in traditional histories of modern art. It also seems inappropriate to label Leighton as 'avant-garde' as, despite his unconventional musical subjects, he rose to become President of the Royal Academy. So 'aestheticism' will have to do. And as it does refer to a specific time (1860s-1890s) and place (London) it allows these artists to be dealt with under a single heading.

This thesis demonstrates the centrality of music in the Victorian visual arts by concentrating on the work of four key figures. It sets the role of music in their art in context by making comparisons with works by their contemporaries, colleagues and friends. These include Albert Moore, William Holman Hunt and John Frederick Lewis, and the photographers Julia Margaret Cameron and Roger Fenton. The prevalence of musical imagery in Victorian art has meant that it has not been possible to create a comprehensive catalogue of music-in-art, even for the four main artists. That would form the basis of a different, though equally complex, study. Instead, this thesis offers a close analysis of representative images, to give an insight into the meaning of music for Rossetti, Burne-Jones, Leighton, Whistler and their audiences. Some of these objects are large-scale oil paintings, but often they are small-scale or decorative works. This is partly a reflection of the range of media in which these artists worked, and partly the result of the persistent use of musical motifs: music could be seen everywhere in their art.

This thesis analyses music-in-art at several levels. At its heart, it is a study of four men's work, so it begins by documenting their personal engagement with musical performance. Then it identifies key examples

[4] Gilbert and Sullivan, Patience (1881), quoted by Colin Cruise, 'Versions of the Annunciation: Wilde's Aestheticism and the Message of Beauty', in ed. Elizabeth Prettejohn, After the Pre-Raphaelites, p.170.

of music in their art, and offers interpretations of the significance of this musical imagery. By working outwards from the objects, these case-studies help to expose the artists' attitude to music. They also demonstrate how music could influence style as well as content. This thesis argues that, until the early 1860s, music appeared as a concrete symbol: it was represented by musical instruments as props, or by dancing or singing figures. At the outset of their careers, music symbolism for Rossetti, Burne-Jones, Leighton and Whistler was visible, conventional and transparent. During the 1860s, the idea or theory of 'Music' became more important than this conventional symbolism. It was less obvious, but, paradoxically, more influential in shaping their art. This was because music was increasingly treated as the ideal art from which all the other arts should learn.

Work in Progress: the Development of the Thesis

Burne-Jones's painted piano is displayed in an obscure corner of the V&A Museum, perched between the bright lights of the Metalwork gallery and the bustle of the Dress collection. This thesis occupies a similar liminal space between the established disciplines of art-history, literary criticism and musicology. But this study highlights the valuable lessons to be learnt from awkward objects found in unexpected places. It demonstrates that it is precisely at the points of overlap, where one discipline engages with another, that we can expand the boundaries of our mental world. Victorian culture was not neatly compartmentalised. The visual arts, music, literature, religion, empire, and industry all fed off each other. Taking this into account, this thesis engages with a range of approaches to Victorian art, all of which are valid, but which are seldom deployed together. These include biography, analysis of contemporary art-criticism and poetry, gender studies, imperial and religious history, musicology and the close reading of individual objects ranging from book illustrations to stained-glass windows.

This thesis also recognises the multiple strands of music symbolism and the way in which, through music, artists could critique their complex and

shifting cultural environment. Each chapter approaches music-in-art from a different direction but, in doing so, it shows up both the areas of common ground and the inherent contradictions in the subject. We have already seen, in Burne-Jones's piano, how music signified both death and the transcendence of death. In the same way, music symbolised both religious worship and erotic passion, depending on the context. This duality in music symbolism opened up exciting possibilities for slippage and subversion.

In order to understand how musical motifs and analogies transformed the Victorian art-world, this thesis also addresses consumption as well as production. The use of musical terms by art critics shaped the reception of works of art. Audiences started to look for colour-chords, and the melody of line. And as reviewers highlighted the liberating effects of music-in-art, so artists responded by seeking out musical subjects.

This thesis grew out of an MA dissertation, supervised by Dr. Caroline Arscott at the Courtauld Insititute. In its first incarnation, it was intended that a study of musical instruments in the art of Rossetti and Burne-Jones would be a new, and relatively manageable, way of addressing their work. It soon became a much larger, and potentially much more interesting project, beyond simply logging the appearance and symbolism of musical performance. Even at this early stage, the importance of music's multiple meanings became clear.

Some of the initial findings were published in Apollo magazine, and were presented at the 1999 'Music in 19th Century Britain' conference, held at Durham University.[5] During and after the Durham conference, the scope of the Ph.D. thesis was discussed with a number of musicologists and historians. The insights offered by participants in the areas of gender and

[5] Suzanne Fagence Cooper, 'Representations of Music in the Art of Burne-Jones', Apollo, (London) May 1998, pp.9-14, and Suzanne Fagence Cooper, 'Aspiring to the Condition of Music: Painting in Britain 1860-1900', ed. Jeremy Dibble and Bennett Zon, Nineteenth Century British Music Studies vol.2, (Aldershot: Ashgate Press) 2002, pp.251-177

literature were particularly helpful. Sophie Fuller's research on women performers, and Phyllis Weliver's work on women and music in Victorian literature showed that there were opportunities for engaging with the visual arts in similar ways. This conference also provided a clearer understanding of the musical life of Victorian Britain, especially the role of hymn-singing in the musical education of church-goers, and the influence of Wagner and Beethoven.

From 1999 to 2001, research for the thesis continued in tandem with research for a major exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum, 'Inventing New Britain: the Victorian Vision'. This exhibition opened up new lines of enquiry including the Victorian perception of non-Western cultures. This was addressed, in the exhibition displays, through a diverse selection of contemporary figures, including the designer Christopher Dresser, the military leader General Gordon, and the explorer Mary Kingsley. It demonstrated that the Victorian experience of non-European cultures was never monolithic. In addition, it provided an opportunity to develop research on gender roles and the place of spirituality (both orthodox and alternative) in Victorian culture.[6]

Alongside the 2001 V&A exhibition, the Science Museum held an international conference, 'Locating the Victorians'. As one strand of the thesis research, I presented a paper on 'Female Musicians and the Art of Display', addressing the theme of women's musical performance, and its depiction in D.G. Rossetti's work. In particular it dealt with the binary classification of female music-making, being either domestic or seductive. This paper generated useful discussion, especially concerning more nuanced readings of contemporary written sources.

A conference on 'The Rossettis: Cosmopolitans in London' (Cambridge, July 2001) offered the opportunity for a collaboration with Phyllis Weliver. This jointly-authored paper analysed the idea of music in D.G. Rossetti's parallel pictures and poems, known as 'double works of art'. In particular,

[6] Suzanne Fagence Cooper, The Victorian Woman, (London: V&A Museum) 2001 and Suzanne Fagence Cooper and Paul Atterbury, 'Religion and Doubt' in John Mackenzie, The Victorian Vision: Inventing New Britain, (London: V&A Museum) 2001, pp.125-146.

it focused on Rossetti's interest in the art of Renaissance Venice, and his treatment of loss and sensuality through musical motifs in his pictures of the 1860s and 1870s, and the House of Life poem cycle. Researching this paper, it became clear that music never overtook literature as a driving-force in Rossetti's art, but that it added another layer of intertextuality. Other papers at this conference drew attention to the significance of the 'Fleshly School of Poetry' review by 'Thomas Maitland' (The Contemporary Review, 1871), highlighting the importance of sexuality in 19th century responses to Rossetti's works.

From 2001-2003, the thesis was prepared in parallel with the book Pre-Raphaelite Art in the Victoria and Albert Museum.[7] This book argued for the centrality of the decorative arts in any account of work by Pre-Raphaelite artists. In particular, it involved close analysis of the V&A Museum's holdings of works by D.G. Rossetti and Burne-Jones. The collection of Burne-Jones's sketchbooks demonstrated this artist's eclectic sources and his working-methods.

The issue of gender again became the focus of a paper for 'The Victorian Interior' conference held at the V&A Museum in September 2003. This paper, 'Separate Spheres?: Women and the Ideal Home' addressed issues of domesticity, and female art production and consumption. These debates formed the backdrop for the writing of Chapter Four of this thesis. Sections of this chapter were also presented at the 'Music in Britain: a social history' seminar series, held at the IHR (March 2004). On that occasion, musicologists and music historians responded to, and supported, the outline argument that music was gendered female in Victorian society. At this seminar, the importance of the distinction between portative and positive organs as musical symbols also became clear. This distinction and its significance in the treatment of the St.

[7] Suzanne Fagence Cooper, Pre-Raphaelite Art in the Victoria and Albert Museum, (London: V&A Museum) 2003.

Cecilia story by Rossetti and Burne-Jones, was developed in an article published in 2005 in Music in Art.[8]

In 2004 two other papers were prepared, in order to focus on different aspects of the research. The first was 'Music, Memory and Loss in Victorian Painting', presented at the 'Music in 19th century Britain' seminar at Durham University. This raised questions about the experience and expression of nostalgia and bereavement, which needed to be revised in the published version.[9] The second paper, given to the Pre-Raphaelite Society in Birmingham, tackled the linked themes of music, colour and synaesthesia. This formed the basis of Chapter Five of the thesis.

During the course of this research, several questions have arisen which have proved difficult to answer within the thesis. The first is the issue of authenticity in the depiction of musical instruments. This is a problem that is dear to the heart of musicologists. In fact, the identification of instruments and their place in a symbolic system is often the beginning and end-point for many musicological encounters with the visual arts. This approach is endorsed by the 'bible of musical iconography', Emanuel Winternitz's Musical Instruments and their Symbolism in Western Art (1967) which includes chapters on 'The Visual Arts as a Source for the Historian of Music'.[10] However, it has not always been possible to identify whether the instruments pictured by aestheticist artists were accurate. In some cases, such as Rossetti's A Christmas Carol (1857-8, watercolour on panel, Fogg Museum of Art, Harvard) [figure 69] it is obvious that they are fictions. In others, it is less clear. Burne-Jones regularly depicted a straight-sided stringed instrument, something between a psaltery and a monochord. It appears, for example in Parnassus (1871, watercolour,

[8] Suzanne Fagence Cooper, 'Playing the Organ in Pre-Raphaelite Paintings', Music in Art: International Journal of Music Iconography, (New York: Research Center for Music Iconography, CUNY) Vol.XXIX, no.1-2, Spring-Fall 2004, pp.151-170.
[9] Suzanne Fagence Cooper, 'Music, Memory and Loss in Victorian Painting', Nineteenth Century Music Review, (Aldershot: Ashgate) 2/1, 2005, pp.23-56
[10] Emanuel Winternitz's Musical Instruments and their Symbolism in Western Art, (London: Faber) 1967. Of course, Winternitz's treatment of musical imagery was sophisticated and ground-breaking, but his admirers have not always seen the potential for moving beyond a purely archaeological reading of music-in-art. See Leslie Hansen, 'Music Forgotten and Remembered: The Life and Times of Emanuel Winternitz', Music in Art: International Journal for Music Iconography, (New York: Research Center for Music Iconography, CUNY) vol.XXIX, no.1-2, Spring-Fall 2004, pp.7-13.

bodycolour and gold paint, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery) [figure 114], and seems to be transferable between archaic and medieval settings. However, even with the help of curators at the Bate Collection in Oxford, I have not yet been able to identify the source of this distinctive shape.

A seminar paper given at the University of Sussex in October 2001 raised another issue. This thesis deals predominantly with elite art-forms, both in the visual arts and music, although it does extend to book illustration and music-making in the middle-class household. At the Sussex seminar, the question was asked: 'What about the workers?'. The musical culture of the Victorian working-classes was vibrant and burgeoning. From the mid-century, magnificent music halls grew and flourished. Musical women were visible on posters in the street and in illustrated newspapers. The spectacle of music was part of working-class life. But it has proved hard to deal with both high and low culture in a single study. A decision was made, early on, that this thesis would focus on four named artists and their audiences in the gallery-going public. Analysis of images of music in the street and music halls will have to wait for another occasion.

Finally, this thesis does not attempt to tell the story of music itself in the 19th century. It looks directly at composers or performers only when they come directly into contact with artists or critics. In many ways, this is a study of the idea of 'Music', rather than its reality. This thesis offers readings of music's symbolic value for artists, critics and audiences. At times it describes an artist's response to music, but not a musician's response to the visual arts. As a result, this thesis engages with Wagner, but not with Mendelssohn or Parry. Perhaps a musicologist could offer a different account of the changes in Victorian visual culture after 1860.

Music and the Emergence of Aestheticism

In the 1850s mainstream British art was dominated by literary responses to painting. Works like W. P. Frith's Derby Day (1856-8, oil on canvas, Tate Britain) caused a sensation at the Royal Academy exhibitions because they could be read like triple-decker novels: each character was analysed and accounted for. The art of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was also self-consciously literary, looking to Dante and Keats for inspiration. Music never entirely superseded this Victorian love of literature, but it did offer an alternative source of subjects and approaches. It also made the Pre-Raphaelites and their friends think differently about their art. In the early 1860s, Rossetti, Burne-Jones, Leighton and Whistler discovered that, through music, they could sidestep the conventions of narrative painting. By picturing music they created ambiguous images that refused to conform to the literary expectations of their audience. Since the Renaissance, poetry had been held up as the ideal art, which the other arts should emulate: *ut pictura poesis.* By taking music as their model, Burne-Jones and his contemporaries could challenge this principle.[11]

Using Burne-Jones's piano as a starting-point, how can this domestic object help us to understand the new visual vocabulary offered by music? Firstly it exposes the biographical context of Burne-Jones's musical paintings. Georgie's performances at this piano shaped Burne-Jones's experience of music at a critical time in his career, when music itself emerged as an autonomous subject. An appreciation of biography is essential to my attempt to define how and why music was woven into mid 19th century painting. In Chapter One I unravel the musical education of the four key figures – Leighton, Rossetti, Whistler and Burne-Jones - to show the diversity of musical experience in the Victorian period. It is a warning against making sweeping generalisations about how the Victorians engaged with music. It also shows how the personal taste of

[11] Philippe Junod's 'The New *Paragone*: Paradoxes and Contradictions of Pictorial Musicalism' traces the development of theories about the relative status of the arts, in ed. Marsha L. Morton and Peter L. Schmunk, The Arts Entwined: Music and Painting in the Nineteenth Century, (New York and London: Garland) 2000.

these artists was echoed in their choice of musical subjects for their pictures.

The four aestheticist artists at the heart of this study would never have seen themselves as a coherent 'school'. In fact, their careers and creations often appeared contradictory. They had high profile differences of opinion, notably at the Whistler vs. Ruskin libel trial in 1878.[12] They also favoured different subjects. Leighton's speciality was the ancient world, but he also painted Renaissance Italy. Rossetti's first love was Dante's Florence. Burne-Jones's images, like his Cecilia / Chant d'Amour, suggested multiple readings that were hard to resolve. His settings were a synthesis of classical and medieval motifs but, like Leighton and Rossetti, he avoided overt references to contemporary Britain. Whistler, on the other hand, was resolutely modern. He painted the smoggy Thames and the slag-heaps of Battersea.

However, these artists also had much in common. In the 1850s Burne-Jones had trained in Rossetti's studio, and they remained friends until Rossetti's death in 1882. Leighton, Whistler and Burne-Jones exhibited together at the Grosvenor Gallery in the 1870s, so they shared an audience, both among the public and the critics. These artists also shared patrons, like the Ionides family and the industrialist Frederick Leyland. And, as this thesis demonstrates, they all wove music into their art because it freed them from the constraints of story-telling. Aesthetic musical subjects denied the gallery-goer the pleasure of constructing a narrative. Instead, musical paintings forced the viewer to focus on the manner in which the work was painted. Colour, composition and mood took precedence over realism or incident.

Aestheticism was also consistently associated with femininity or effeminacy. It was criticised for its suspect sexuality; it seemed to prefer

[12] For a full account of the court-case, see Linda Merrill, A Pot of Paint: Aesthetics on Trial in Whistler vs. Ruskin, (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institute) 1992.

languor to virility.[13] The drooping girls painted by Burne-Jones on his piano conform to this stereotype. This piano is also a tangible symbol of the interweaving of music and femininity in the Victorian imagination. Chapters Two, Three and Four of this thesis consider the implications of the relationship between women and music. Music was generally defined by Victorian commentators as different from the masculine norm: it was imagined as irrational, sensual, other-worldly. Chapter Two focuses on the connection between music and otherness in Orientalist images, analysing the depiction of Egyptian dancing-girls, and the emergence of an alternative Other in 1862, when British artists encountered Japanese objects.

The assumption that music is gendered female underpins the Orientalist images analysed in Chapter Two. In fact, it shapes the majority of musical images created in the mid 19th century. This assumption is played out in Burne-Jones's piano, both in the painted panels which show women making music, and in the performance of Georgie herself. Her relationship with the paintings was different from her husband's. She could consume the image of Cecilia / Chant d'Amour as she played, but she also became part of the sensory experience of her audience. Like the painted women, she made music and could be looked at without restraint, having her back to the listeners/viewers. By hiding part of the decorative scheme under the lid of the keyboard, Burne-Jones ensured that the full effect would only be appreciated when Georgie took her seat at the piano. So this object draws attention to a fundamental question. Are musical images (or female performers) intended to be seen or heard? In other words, does visual pleasure take precedence over real or imagined music? In the case of this piano, Burne-Jones expected his wife's preference for Early and esoteric music to chime with the mood of his painted panels. Sound and image would work together to create a harmonious experience. However, it seems that Burne-Jones was trying to mould his wife's performance. She would be unlikely to play music that

[13] This aspect of aestheticism is dealt with thoroughly by J.B. Bullen, The Pre-Raphaelite Body: Fear and Desire in Painting, Poetry and Criticism, (Oxford: Clarendon Press), 1998 especially in the chapter 'Burne-Jones and the Aesthetic Body', pp.149-216.

would undermine the quiet melancholy of the Ladies and Death panel, or the yearning of Cecilia.

Burne-Jones's attempts to circumscribe his wife's musical expression demonstrate a further dilemma. Music, femininity and emotion were intimately linked in the minds of mid 19th century commentators. But music was dangerously double. It could be sublime or sensual depending on the context in which it was performed or heard. Chapter Three considers how music became increasingly important in Victorian religious life; it encouraged communication between earth and heaven. In Gothic Revival churches, the music of the spheres was made visible in Morris and Company stained glass windows, and celebrated in the new hymnals. But this spiritual aspect of musical experience was open to abuse. Musical trances made young women vulnerable, and artists like Rossetti played on the popular fascination with mesmerism and spiritualism, creating images that subverted their ostensible subjects. Burne-Jones's transformation of St. Cecilia into a Chant d'Amour demonstrated his own awareness of the potential for music to slide into sensuality.

In 1860, when Burne-Jones painted his piano, the British art world was shifting. The Pre-Raphaelite Brothers had hoped to transform the Royal Academy with their high-minded, hard-edged pictures. Now they had drifted apart. Rossetti's study of female beauty, Bocca Baciata (1859, oil on panel, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston), was denounced by his former friend William Holman Hunt as nothing more than 'mere gratification of the eye'.[14] While Hunt attempted to improve the British public with his morality tales and religious allegories, Rossetti pursued a different path. He moved away from his fascination with Florence, and was drawn into a love-affair with Venice. The art of Titian and Giorgione seemed to offer a new colour-palette, sumptuous textures, and seductive glimpses of the female body. The tension between spirituality and sensuality, played out in the break-up of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, also lies at the heart

[14] William Holman Hunt, letter to Thomas Combe, 12th February 1860, quoted by Paul Spencer-Longhurst, The Blue Bower: Rossetti in the 1860s, (London: Scala Publications and Barber Institute of Fine Arts) 2000, p.36.

of music. Music can be either Apollonian or Dionysian: it veers between the calm of the lyre and the ecstasy of the pan-pipes.

Chapter Four deals with the sensual aspect of music. It shows how artists, including women like the Birmingham painter Kate Bunce, tried to negotiate the minefield of depicting musical women. Like music itself, female performers could be categorised as either chaste or fallen. This chapter shows how the domestic discipline of music-making broke down once performance became public. It also considers alternative visions of sexuality offered by the myths of mermaids and sirens, and how they were interpreted by Burne-Jones and Leighton. Their musical women refused to conform to the binary discourse that framed conventional Victorian readings of femininity. This thesis argues that, through a combination of music, water and androgynous sexuality, Burne-Jones and Leighton presented a new, fluid account of desire.

Rossetti was also intrigued by the siren myth, drafting a libretto for an opera, The Doom of the Sirens, in 1869. Rossetti's persistent desire to create parallel works of art in different media – poems and paintings that spoke to each other – drove this attempt to weave music, words and drama together with a deliberately Wagnerian flourish. The influence of Wagner pervaded the British art-world from the 1860s. In Rossetti's circle it was encouraged by the poet Algernon Swinburne. His enthusiasm was shaped by a review of Richard Wagner and Tannhäuser in Paris written by the French critic Charles Baudelaire (1861). Chapter Five assesses the impact of Baudelaire's theory of *correspondances* – the synaesthetic relationship between different senses or art-forms – on the emergence of aestheticism. In the wake of Wagner, artists and writers tried to put the idea of interchange between the senses into practice. This thesis analyses the Tannhäuser motif in painting and poetry to show how synaesthesia was invoked in different media. One of the writers who wove Tannhäuser into his work was the essayist Walter Pater. Fascinated by the theory of *correspondances*, his reviews described paintings as if they were pieces of music, turning criticism into a work of

art in itself. This thesis places Pater and his writing in context, and assesses the impact of his interest in music-in-art.

This thesis also reminds us that we must look beyond Wagner. Despite his dominant position in 19th century culture, his is not the only voice that needs to be heard. For Burne-Jones and his friends, the art critic John Ruskin was equally important. So Chapter Five also considers other factors that encouraged artists to create musical pictures. These included Rossetti's shift from line to colour, from religion to sensuality, which coincided with Ruskin's decision to embrace the flesh-painting of Veronese in 1858. The re-engagement with Venetian art had a transformative effect on British painting. This thesis argues that Venice's passion for colour and sensuality was linked with music and femininity to conjure up a new approach to depicting the human body. The touchstone against which musical paintings could be measured was the Louvre's Concert Champêtre (1510-11 or later, oil on canvas) [figure 3]. Variously ascribed to Giorgione and Titian, its uncertain origins only served to heighten the aesthetic pleasure in its depiction of ambiguous sensuality and musical experience.

The results can be seen in Burne-Jones's piano decoration. Although the subject of The Ladies and Death is derived from a Tuscan wall-painting, the colour effects are Venetian. Compared with Rossetti's fleshy beauties or the nudes of the Concert Champêtre, these girls are modestly dressed. Yet they demonstrate Burne-Jones's attempt to create an image based on the interconnected experiences of music, colour harmonies, and mood. The colours are rich but subdued; they remind us of autumn leaves, and the end of summer. We may even describe this as a painting in a minor key. Burne-Jones's choice of colours is both a tribute to the ruddy, gilded palette of the Venetian masters, and an attempt to enhance the melancholy inherent in the subject. Death is inevitable. He has been summoned by the girls' singing, or perhaps he is held briefly at bay by the music.

Burne-Jones makes the links between music and death explicit in his painted panel. Other artists were more subtle. This thesis demonstrates that music's association with bereavement and nostalgia was a thread that ran through many aestheticist pictures. This was partly because of the connections between music and the supernatural, discussed in Chapter Three. But it was also a response to music's fleeting nature. As Rousseau had written, 'the domain of music is time, while that of painting is space'.[15] Paintings which invoked music seemed to be a way to bridge that gap. They could suggest the onward movement of time, and invest the painted surface with a sense of memory. This is the subject of Chapter Six.

The connections between music and mortality were not new. Victorian artists had a long tradition of musical paintings on which to draw. This thesis argues that there were three conventional models of music-in-painting that underpinned the Victorian understanding of music and mortality: these were the idyll, the *vanitas* subject and the myth of Orpheus. Victorian artists could back look to Venetian idylls, which reminded audiences of a Golden Age that had been lost. Or they could study the *vanitas* imagery of 17th century Dutch still-lives, which showed the relentless decay of all worldly things. Music was included in the catalogue of *vanitas* symbols because it evaporated into thin air, and because the instruments required to make it were luxury objects. Going further back, the legend of Orpheus offered a wide range of subjects that linked music, memory and bereavement. As the son of Apollo, Orpheus inherited his father's ability to play the lyre. But the aspect of his myth that most appealed to the Victorians was his attempt to reclaim his bride Eurydice from the clutches of Death. This tale of thwarted love, culminating in the second loss of Eurydice as she falls back into the Underworld, was a favourite among Victorian artists. It suggested that, through music, the lost beloved could be regained, even if only for a short space. Sometimes Orpheus's struggle was overtly portrayed. But at other times it was the merest hint or recollection of the myth that

[15] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, '*Essai sur l'Origine des Langues*' (1817) quoted by Philippe Junod, 'The New *Paragone*', p.25.

surfaced. This thesis demonstrates that in Whistler's work, in particular, the references to earlier musical conventions were implied rather than outspoken. Whistler wove suggestions of bereavement or nostalgia into his figure studies, relying on his audience's familiarity with the traditions of music symbolism to give his images an emotional charge.

Whistler's Symphonies in White may at first glance seem a world away from Burne-Jones's painted piano. However, if we look through the prism of music, we see connections that have often gone unnoticed. Both Whistler and Burne-Jones make use of music's association with female sexuality. They also play on the belief that music allows communication between this world and the next. Both artists enjoy the pliable nature of musical symbolism. Above all, they offer their audiences the opportunity to consume these works of art as if they were pieces of music: in Pater's words, 'the end is not distinct from the means...the subject from the expression'.[16] We can try to impose a narrative on Whistler's The White Girl (1862, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Washington) [figure 4] or Burne-Jones's Ladies and Death but that rather misses the point. Their deliberate ambiguities force us to focus on the manner in which they are painted and the mood they evoke.

Literature Review

Other art-historians and musicologists have been attracted by the interconnectedness of music and painting in the 19th century. Edward Lockspeiser, for example, has written about colour from the composer's point of view, and traced the musical world of Baudelaire.[17] Richard Leppert, in his stimulating study of The Sight of Sound (1993), even looked directly at Burne-Jones's painted piano.[18] He analysed it in terms of binaries – male vs. female, light vs. dark, mortals vs. angels. This thesis, like Leppert's research, engages with the central issue of gender.

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[16] Walter Pater, 'The School of Giorgione', The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry, (London: Macmillan) 1877, 3rd edition 1888, revised and reprinted 1935, p.128.
[17] Edward Lockspeiser, Music and Painting: a Study in Comparative Ideas from Turner to Schoenberg, (London: Cassell) 1973, esp. pp.9-19.
[18] Richard Leppert, The Sight of Sound: Music, Representation and the History of the Body, (Los Angeles and London: University of California Press) 1993, pp.145-148.

It shows how artists used music to depict the Feminine, and other Others – the exotic, the supernatural. But this study also highlights the innovation of the 1860s: through music, artists could explore the boundaries of their own art. Music is non-mimetic: unlike conventional painting, sculpture and even poetry, it does not attempt to replicate the real world. By appropriating music, visual artists began to transcend realism.

Unlike the accounts of painted music by Leppert or Lockspeiser, this thesis deals with a very particular time and place: English art and criticism from 1860 to 1900. Leppert's wider sweep takes in 18th century harpsichords and 19th century pianos, while Lockspeiser looks back as far as Turner, and forward to the Modernists of the 20th century. The remit of this thesis is much tighter. By concentrating on a small group of connected artists and their treatment of musical subjects, it traces the emergence of an art-historical phenomenon: aestheticism. It compares like with like, bringing together objects created for a known audience in mid-Victorian London, and analysing works by artists who were all, in their own day, labelled as aesthetic.

My belief that music underpinned the development of aestheticism has been informed by two studies in particular. Jonathan Freedman's Professions of Taste (1990) offers an account of aestheticism based on his study of poetry, criticism and novels which can also be applied to the visual arts. He proposes that 'the defining quality of British aestheticism...is the desire to embrace contradictions'.[19] In musical paintings, the central contradiction is that artists try to capture or evoke a transient, non-physical art form in a physical and static medium. Elizabeth Prettejohn's analysis is equally incisive. In her essay 'Walter Pater and Aesthetic Painting' (1999) she suggests that aestheticism was dependent on intertextuality – the circulation and recognition of favoured texts.[20] I agree that written texts like Baudelaire's *Correspondances* or

[19] Jonathan Freedman, Professions of Taste: Henry James, British Aestheticism and Commodity Culture, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press) 1990, p.6.
[20] Elizabeth Prettejohn, 'Walter Pater and Aesthetic Painting' in ed. E. Prettejohn, After the Pre-Raphaelites, p.37.

his review of Tannhäuser did act as key referents. But I would go further, and suggest that intertextuality is also manifested by one art form (painting) referring to another (music). Art becomes concerned only with art. In addition, the use of musical motifs becomes signifier of radical intent, a knowing nod towards shared interests. So music fits both models of aestheticism: the embracing of contradictions, and intertextuality.

Primary Texts

At one level, this thesis began as a critique of Walter Pater's suggestion that 'all art constantly aspires towards the condition of music'.[21] So the research defines Pater's relationship with the other key figures in the British aesthetic movement, and his connections with French writers like Charles Baudelaire. Billie Andrew Inman's work on Pater's sources is an invaluable source in reconstructing these links. One of the tasks of this thesis is to uncover the networks through which ideas about music-in-art were transmitted.

So, the reception and impact of Baudelaire's synaesthetic theories in Britain forms a central element in the study. The role of Whistler and Swinburne as interlocutors between France and England is particularly important. Although this research focuses on the London art-world, British artists also responded to developments in Paris, and this has to be written into any account of changes in the visual arts after 1860

Algernon Swinburne's poems and reviews have been analysed by J.B.Bullen and Jerome McGann. This thesis develops their findings both about sexuality and the interconnectedness of Swinburne's poetry with other arts, by concentrating on the role of musical vocabulary in Swinburne's work. This is particularly noticeable in his treatment of the Tannhäuser story in Laus Veneris, a subject that he shared with his friend Burne-Jones. In attempting to reconstruct the complex interplay between literature, music and visual sources in Burne-Jones's work I

[21] Walter Pater, 'The School of Giorgione', p.124.

have, like every student in this field, had to rely on Georgie's biography of her husband. Her Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones (1904) are an invaluable resource. They are based on letters to friends, and the written records of conversations kept by Burne-Jones's studio assistant Thomas Rooke. However, Georgie had her own agenda in presenting her husband as an artist-dreamer. We know that she removed every reference to Burne-Jones's infidelities from her account of his life. So, although it is a superbly detailed document, it does have its drawbacks. Similarly, Mrs. Sarah Ellis's handbooks for The Daughters of England (1842) and The Wives of England (1843) offer an insight into the responsibilities and expectations of Victorian women, but they need to be treated with caution. They present an ideal of leisured womanhood, rather than its reality. However, they do address the problems inherent in domestic music-making head-on.

Secondary Texts

This thesis is a product of the revival in 19th century scholarship in the last two decades. It relies on the biographical and curatorial research undertaken to support major exhibitions about the key players in the Victorian art-world. Catalogues produced by the Tate (The Pre-Raphaelites 1984, James McNeill Whistler 1994 and Symbolism in Britain: the Age of Rossetti, Burne-Jones and Watts 1997), the Royal Academy (Frederic Leighton 1996), the Metropolitan Museum, New York (Edward Burne-Jones 1998), the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool (Dante Gabriel Rossetti 2004) and the National Gallery of Art, Washington (The Photographs of Roger Fenton, 2004) laid the groundwork for closer studies of aspects of the artists' careers. Smaller scale exhibitions, including Heaven on Earth: the Religion of Beauty in Late Victorian Art (Djanogly Art Gallery, Nottingham ,1994) and The Blue Bower: Rossetti in the 1860s (Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham, 2001) tried to account for the development of aestheticism. Some, like the Symbolism in Britain catalogue, drew attention to the importance of musical images, and especially their role in linking British artists with their Continental counterparts. But none attempted to analyse the

transformative effect of musical discourse on aestheticist art. This is the distinctive contribution of this thesis. It overlays new dimensions of sound and music-theory onto interpretations of Victorian art.

Some art-historians and musicologists have begun to expose connections between music and individual artists. Scholars have especially been drawn to the subject of Rossetti and music, probably because he is already well-known for his interest in creating parallel works of art in painting and poetry. Dianne Sachko Macleod and Kirsten Powell have tried to unravel the musical symbolism in Rossetti's art, and they both offer useful readings of a number of his musical pictures.[22] However, neither article places these musical motifs in the wider context of aestheticism. Other historians, like Michael Musgrave, have approached the subject from the musical side. Musgrave has demonstrated the high degree of musical literacy that Leighton enjoyed and shared with his friends. His detailed study of 'Leighton and Music' describes the musical experience of the artist.[23] But it barely touches on how that experience impacted on the development of his artistic style.

Music-historians like Musgrave, David Russell and Derek Hyde have produced illuminating studies of the musical world of the Victorians, and their findings underpin this thesis. Russell in Popular Music in England 1840-1914: A Social History (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987) reveals increasingly high levels of musical sophistication among the Victorian public. He demonstrates the effectiveness of music-teaching, both for children and adults, and the popularity of singing-classes. His account reminds us that we should not underestimate the musical awareness of the gallery-going public. Victorian audiences were sensitive to musical references, partly through their own performances,

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[22] D.S. Macleod, 'Rossetti's Two Ligeias: Their Relationship to Visual Art, Music and Poetry', Victorian Poetry, (Morgantown, West Virginia: West Virginia University) 20, Autumn-Winter 1982, pp.89-102 and Kirsten H. Powell, 'Object, Symbol and Metaphor: Rossetti's Musical Imagery', Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies, (Pennsylvania: Arizona State University and Kutztown University of Pennsylvania) n.s.II, 1, Spring 1993, pp.16-29.

[23] Michael Musgrave, 'Leighton and Music', in ed. Tim Barringer and Elizabeth Prettejohn, Frederic Leighton: Antiquity Renaissance Modernity, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press) 1999.

and partly through their enjoyment of public and private musical entertainment. Hyde's study, New-Found Voices: Women in 19th Century Music (Aldershot: Ashgate, 3rd edition 1998) has also influenced the arguments put forward in this thesis. Hyde demonstrates the problems associated with female musical performance, but he also shows that large numbers of women chose to perform in public from the mid-19th century. He explains the strategies adopted by female performers, and analyses the critical response to these women. His research has informed the account of femininity and music presented in this thesis.

The treatment of gender has also been influenced by the work of art-historians. Jan Marsh and Pamela Gerrish Nunn's exhibition of Pre-Raphaelite Women Artists (Manchester Art Gallery, 1997) provided essential background information about the life and work of several women who painted musical subjects. Thanks to their research, this thesis is able to compare the presentation of musical women in the work of male and female artists. This is only one among many studies of women in the Victorian art-world, an area of scholarship that has developed dramatically since the 1980s. Some writers have focused on women as producers of art; Deborah Cherry, Lynda Nead, Griselda Pollock and Clarissa Campbell Orr have all made significant contributions to this growing area for debate.[24] Others, like Alison Smith and Bram Dijkstra, have analysed the representation of women by male artists.[25] Dijkstra's work, in particular, has proved useful for this thesis as it demonstrates the potential pitfalls of misinterpretation. His account of the images of women at the *fin-de-siècle* conflates and confuses works of art created for different audiences. He fails to take into account the specific contexts for the production, display and criticism of individual objects. By setting clear parameters – comparing four artists working in the London

[24] Deborah Cherry, Painting Women: Victorian Women Artists, (London: Routledge) 1993; Lynda Nead, Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell) 1988; Griselda Pollock, Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art, (London: Routledge) 1988; ed. Clarissa Campbell Orr, Women in the Victorian Art World, (Manchester: Manchester University Press) 1995.

[25] Alison Smith, The Victorian Nude: Sexuality, Morality and Art, (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press) 1996; Bram Dijkstra, Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-siècle Culture, (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 1986.

between 1860 to 1900 – it is hoped that this thesis will not fall into the same trap.

Of course there are occasions when broader studies can be informative and challenging. James Parakilas's edited volume, Piano Roles: A New History of the Piano (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002) offers new ways of linking music, art and their cultural contexts from the early 18th century to the late 20th century. This work offers a model for weaving case-studies of production and consumption into a chronological framework. In a similar way, although on a smaller scale, it is hoped that this thesis will demonstrate the shift from Pre-Raphaelitism to aestheticism by looking at representative works of art from different angles.

This thesis has also been shaped by Simon Shaw-Miller's work on the development of modernist art in Visible Deeds of Music (2002).[26] His research highlights the centrality of musical theory, including Wagner's proposed *Gesamtkunstwerk* (total work of art), in the journey towards abstraction. Breaking down barriers between the arts was intended to produce a more total sensory experience, freed from the demands of realism. Shaw-Miller's focus on the early 20th century, and especially artists like Kandinsky, Kupka and Klee, was echoed in two exhibitions, one held in Madrid in 2003 and the other in the USA in 2005. Analogias Musicales: Kandinksy y sus Contemporaneous (Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza) and Visual Music: Synaesthesia in Art since 1900 (Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institute, Washington D.C.) both demonstrated the ways in which modernist painters made music visible. Some artists created colour-scales as visual equivalents of musical scales. Others tried to reproduce the passage of time, the onward movement that is an essential characteristic of music. Taken together, Shaw-Miller and the exhibition catalogues persuasively argue for the importance of music in the emergence of modernism.

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[26] Simon Shaw-Miller, Visible Deeds of Music: Art and Music from Wagner to Cage, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press) 2002 especially the chapter '"Deeds of Music made Visible": Wagner, the *Gesamtkunstwerk* and the Birth of the Modern', pp.36-88.

Conclusion

But why confine our attention to the 20th century? My research shows that, fifty years before Kandinsky, British artists wove music into their paintings, creating experimental and often controversial works of art. Music encouraged new modes of expression. It is true that aestheticist art never fully escaped the demands of realism; even Whistler's landscapes always had an acknowledged subject. But, with musical motifs, the pleasure of the picture's surface became paramount.

The view of aestheticism proposed in this thesis reinscribes British art in the history of modernism. Victorian painting need no longer be seen as a cultural cul-de-sac. Instead, by picturing music, Victorian artists were finding alternative routes towards non-narrative, non-naturalistic painting. A collection of essays edited by Marsha Morton and Peter Schmunk, The Arts Entwined (2000), has presented music as a potent force in the development of French 19th century art. However, in France, music was specifically associated with landscape art. In fact, according to Kermit Swiler Champa, French landscape artists appropriated musical discourse so that their new genre would be taken seriously. He argues that, like music, landscape paintings were presented and consumed as 'sites of reverie'.[27] Champa's account criticises British artists like Burne-Jones for refusing to engage fully with the demands of music-in-painting. Burne-Jones's desire to produce figurative art meant that he retained 'a connection both to something like pure musical feeling, and a dramatically flat form of narrative.'[28] But why should we read Burne-Jones's resistance to abstraction as a defeat? If we do, we fail to recognise the sophistication of his art. We also deny the possibilities of multiple strands of art-history. After all, this ability to be both figurative and musical is what makes aestheticist art distinctive. We can see the music: it informs the colour, the mood, the sexuality of aestheticist images. Yet it never engulfs the painted subject. Painting learns from

[27] Kermit Swiler Champa, 'Painted Responses to Music: the Landscapes of Corot and Manet', in ed. M. L. Morton and P. L. Schmunk, The Arts Entwined, p.104.
[28] Ibid., p.102.

music, but, in Victorian London at least, it never becomes 'sheer form'.[29] This thesis challenges the version of history that privileges Corot over Burne-Jones, canvases over painted furniture, form over content. It is all a question, as Ruskin would say, of seeing clearly.[30]

[29] Frederich von Schiller's description of music 'at its most sublime' from On the Aesthetic Education of man, quoted by Billie Inman, Walter Pater and his Reading 1874-77, (London and New York: Garland Publishing) 1990, p.102.

[30] 'To see clearly is poetry, prophecy and religion – all in one'. Ed. E.T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, The Works of John Ruskin, (London: George Allen) 1903-1912, Vol.5, p.333.

Chapter One

Music in the studio

Introduction

'Are you fond of Classical Music? On Friday the 25th at 3 o'clock Joachim and Mme. Schumann will be at my studio'.[1]

When Frederic Leighton began his musical 'At Homes' in 1867 he created a sensation among his friends. The painting studio of his Holland Park house was transformed into a multi-sensory space where music, pictures and lighting combined to create a *Gesamtkunstwerk* (total work of art). These gatherings celebrated the intimate relationship between music and contemporary painting. They were the most elegant expression of a broader development in the Victorian art world, as young painters reimagined their work in the light of musical experience.

But this musical experience was not monolithic. Each artist had their own encounter with music and this shaped the way in which sound was woven into their pictures. We need to acknowledge the varying levels of musical engagement among the young British artists of the 1850s and 1860s. This chapter will consider four artists – Frederic Leighton, Edward Burne-Jones, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and James Whistler – and their personal interest in music. These artists have been chosen for a variety of reasons, not least because they are among the most prominent painters of the period. We are also able to piece together their musical experience from biographical records, while other artists, like William Holman Hunt, elude us.[2] Furthermore, their case studies show the widely differing experience of music within a small artistic circle. Burne-Jones and Rossetti were close friends during the late 1850s and 1860s, but while Burne-Jones pursued an

[1] Michael Musgrave, 'Leighton and Music', in ed. Tim Barringer and Elizabeth Prettejohn, Frederic Leighton: Antiquity Renaissance Modernity, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press) 1999, p.297.

[2] In private correspondence (May 2005), Judith Bronkhurst wrote that 'I cannot recall coming across anything to suggest that Hunt was particularly fond of music, nor, from photographs

avant-garde interest in Early Music, Rossetti was ambivalent about most musical performances. Finally, all four artists put music at the heart of their paintings. Reconstructing their musical encounters will help us to understand what music meant to them, and then we can start to unravel the peculiar appeal of musical subjects to the artists and their audiences.

Leighton and the Aesthetic Interior

Frederic Leighton was undoubtedly the most musically sophisticated artist of his generation. This accomplishment was just one of the attributes that made him an extraordinary figure in the Victorian art world. He was described by John Everett Millais, his successor as President of the Royal Academy, as 'our admirable Leighton – painter, sculptor, orator, linguist, musician, soldier, and above all, a dear good fellow'.[3] He was a welcome guest at house parties, singing 'very heartily the tenor parts of the old madrigals', and was encouraged by his friend, the soprano Adelaide Sartoris (1814-79).[4] She included a description of his performance in her autobiographical novel: he sang 'quite charmingly, with a sweet little impertinent tenor voice, great sentiment and the most perfect Italian accent'.[5]

Like many of his friends, Leighton was an enthusiastic supporter of the Monday Popular Concerts held at St. James's Hall from 1859.[6] However, as Michael Musgrave has shown, Leighton was far more musically aware than most Victorian men. Partly this was the result of his peripatetic upbringing on the Continent, but it was yet another area in which he departed from the 19th century masculine norm. Leighton's personality is a puzzle. He constructed a deliberately 'manly' public face as President of the Royal Academy, and Commanding Officer of the Artists' Rifles, yet his 'strangely sensuous nature' would have been categorised by most Victorians as leaning towards the feminine. The painter Val Prinsep, who knew him better than most, described how he 'loved beautiful things, he delighted in scents and was

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of the interiors of his homes, do I recall that there were musical instruments around as part of the furniture'.

[3] The Times, (London), Monday 27th January 1896.

[4] Mrs. Watts Hughes, quoted by M. Musgrave, 'Leighton and Music', p.298.

[5] Adelaide Sartoris, A Week in a French Country House, (1867), ibid., p.297.

[6] Other subscribers included G.F. Watts, Swinburne, Burne-Jones and the Rossetti family.

devoted to music'.[7] Leighton's studio-home was equally hard to read. On one level, Leighton was a private man who usually dined alone and had no guest bedrooms in his substantial house in Holland Park.[8] But this house could also present a carefully stage-managed public face, as the backdrop to exquisite entertainments. The famed Arab Hall (1877), lined with tiles brought from Turkey by Leighton's friend Sir Richard Burton, was an ideal fantasy-space for evening parties.

For visitors to Leighton's house, the sense of distance from contemporary urban reality created by the immersion into the gold-and-blue Orientalist dream of the Arab Hall extended to Leighton's studio. This was both a working environment, and a place for visual and musical public performance. Once a year, just before the Royal Academy exhibition, his latest paintings would be unveiled and presented to his guests as one element in a sensory feast. From 1867 to 1895, Leighton's annual musical evenings were a highpoint in the social calendar. His first biographer described the combination of paintings, architecture and sound at the

> last 'Music', when Lachrymae and Flaming June stood on the easels, ...[and] through all the beautiful strains from Joachim and the rest, a tragic note rang out to tell, as it seemed of the waning life at the centre of it all...A voice sang with emotion Charles Kingsley's soul-stirring verse 'When all the world is old, lad, and all the trees are brown.[9]

While the choice of song echoed the melancholy of Leighton's Lachrymae (c.1895, oil on canvas, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York), the intense sensuality of Flaming June (c.1895, oil on canvas, Museo de Arte de Ponce, Puerto Rico) demonstrated that, to the last, Leighton retained his ability to translate the rhythms and moods of musical experience onto the painted surface of his canvases.

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[7] Val Prinsep, Academy Addresses, 1902, quoted by Kate Bailey, 'Leighton – Public and Private lives', in ed. Robin Simon, Lord Leighton and Leighton House : A Centenary Celebration, (London: Apollo Magazine) 1996, p.23.

[8] Leighton's house was designed by the architect George Aitchison from 1864, and was regularly remodelled and updated until the artist's death in 1896. The Renaissance-style exterior belies the ostentatious Orientalist space of the Arab Hall.

Leighton had the confidence to invite the most celebrated soloists of his day because he knew that the acoustics in his studio were ideally suited to chamber music. Joseph Joachim (violinist), Charles Hallé (pianist), Alfredo Piatti (cellist), Mme. Wilma Norman Neruda (violinist), Pauline Viardot Garcia (alto) and George Henschel (baritone) all entertained Leighton's guests over the years. The musical programmes presented on these occasions were as idiosyncratic as their surroundings. Leighton disliked the contemporary fashion for pianists' 'eternal jingle-tingles at the top of the piano, their drops of dew, their sources, their fairies, their bells and the vapid runs and futile conceits'.[10] He favoured classical works but, through Joachim, he also developed a taste for the 'strange, fiery, stirring composition... [and] extraordinary power of Brahms'.[11] He was less convinced by Wagner, whose work he felt was 'unfinished', but he did attend the Bayreuth festival in 1894.[12]

His friends' performances were exquisitely choreographed. At one end of his studio, Leighton had installed a decorative wooden screen, so that his models could undress or disappear discreetly down the back stairs, avoiding Society ladies and gentlemen.[13] At the musical soirées, this screen doubled as a minstrels' gallery. In April 1871 Leighton wrote to his sister, describing how the studio-space could be transformed by music:

> to me perhaps the most striking thing of the evening was Joachim's playing of the Bach 'Chaconne' up in my gallery. I was at the other end of the room, and the effect from the distance of the dark figure in the uncertain light up there, and barely relieved from the gold background and dark recess, struck me as one of the most poetic and fascinating things that I remember. At the opposite end of the room in the apse was a blazing rhododendron tree, which looked glorious where it reached up into the golden semi-dome.[14]

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[9] Mrs. Russell Barrington, quoted by M. Musgrave, 'Leighton and Music', p.306.
[10] Frederic Leighton, quoted ibid., p.297.
[11] Frederic Leighton to Joachim, quoted ibid., p.302.
[12] William Blake Richmond, quoted ibid., p.308.
[13] A replica of this screen has recently been reinstated at Leighton House Museum.
[14] Frederic Leighton, quoted by M. Musgrave, 'Leighton and Music', p.301.

The pressure of the commercial art-world was forgotten in the reverie induced by Joachim's performance. The 'uncertain light' meant that only the outline of the violinist could be seen, and as the music floated above them, the audience were encouraged to contemplate the rich combinations of gold and pink. For Leighton at least, the experience was as much about colour as sound.

Leighton's flair for integrating music, painting and interior design was recognised by his clients as well as by his fellow-artists. In 1869 he painted three dancing figures for the staircase of Percy Wyndham's house at 44 Belgrave Square, London.[15] Then in 1886 he was commissioned to decorate a music room in the New York home of Henry Marquand. This space was intended to accommodate a massive suite of furniture, including an ornamented piano in a Greek style designed by Lawrence Alma-Tadema. Leighton was the ideal collaborator, as his musical murals in London had already demonstrated the effectiveness of the classical style in embodying musical forms. In his New York designs, Leighton created ceiling and wall panels that included references to Ancient Greece in the draperies worn by his dancing figures and the instruments they played. But the effect was ideal rather than archaeological. The impact of this interior is difficult to imagine, as the contents were dispersed when Marquand died, and the house was demolished. The ceiling paintings have not been seen since they were last sold at auction in 1927. A similar scheme, designed in 1881-3 for the drawing room of the financier Stewart Hodgson at No.1 South Audley Street is also hard to reconstruct, but two massive friezes of Music and Dance (oil on canvas) have been preserved at Leighton House Museum [figure 5 & 6]. As in the New York project, Leighton implies a classical setting, but again archaeological details have been reduced to a minimum. The draperies, distant landscape backgrounds and the inclusion of a classical lyre suggest a location and historical context. However Leighton seems just as interested in creating a visual equivalent for music in the rhythm and colour-combinations of his composition. In each scheme, Leighton follows a similar model, setting dancing and playing figures against a blank background so that the viewer

focuses on the pattern-making of their limbs and draperies. In the South Audley Street friezes, in particular, the images are constructed as a sequence of flowing lines, punctuated by pauses as the eye rests on a passive figure. The arrangement of colours is concerned with harmony rather than with realism.

For Leighton, music was more than just a convenient excuse for depicting the body in motion. It provides a conceptual key to his images. In 1881, while he was working on these friezes, he talked to students at the Royal Academy about his idea of music. He believed it was 'a channel of purest emotion, and Art divine'.[16] Leighton knew that music had the ability to transcend the mundane and the modern; after all, he experienced a moment of transcendence when he listened to Joachim's performance. As this thesis will demonstrate, the assumption that music allowed communication with worlds beyond the natural and the physical helped to shape Victorian attitudes to musical performance. In particular, this assumption underpinned artists' use of music as a symbol of spirituality. (This aspect of music will be considered more fully in Chapter Three.) Leighton's response to the idea of transcendence was to encourage his students to find ways to incorporate the musical in their paintings. And in his own work, from the 1860s he strove to evade the narrative readings that had characterised his earliest pictures. Instead, by using musical subjects and musical traits, like rhythm and harmony, his paintings could evoke the same response in his audience as he had felt when listening to Bach or Brahms. He was trying to emulate the 'power of intensification and a suggestiveness through association' which he found in music.[17]

This 'suggestiveness through association' was played out in his treatment of the Music frieze in South Audley Street. As we have seen, the accessories and background of his moving figures hinted at a classical setting, without telling a particular story. However, the use of the lyre would remind the

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[15] The architectural drawing by George Aitchison, showing Leighton's designs, is illustrated in Richard Ormond, 'Leighton and Mural Painting', ed. Robin Simon, Lord Leighton and Leighton House, p.54.
[16] Frederic Leighton quoted by M. Musgrave, 'Leighton and Music', p.307.
[17] Frederic Leighton, from 'Sir Frederic Leighton on Art and Ethics', The Musical Times, (1882), p.23, ibid., p.307.

viewer of the ancient myths of Apollo and Orpheus: it was the attribute associated with both figures in classical art. The stories of Apollo and Orpheus are particularly important as they demonstrate the dual aspects of music in the Western imagination. Music can symbolise both reason and chaos, discipline and sensuality. Music made by stringed instruments, especially the lyre, is traditionally a symbol of order: the numerical relationship underpinning the harmonies produced by plucked strings suggests a rational framework for musical sound. On the other hand, wind instruments represent the irrational, sensual aspect of music, as the body's own breath blows through the pipes. In addition, the phallic form of flutes and recorders connected them with the baser instincts, so they are usually associated with satyrs or the mischief-making god Pan.

Music's duality – the battle between plucking and blowing - is expressed through the Apollonian and Orphic myths. In the legend of Apollo, the satyr Marsyas challenged the god to a musical contest. Apollo's lyre triumphed over Marsyas's pipes, and he was tortured to death for his impudence. In the Orpheus myth, the musician calmed wild beasts with his lyre: again, orderly string music overcame the passions of Nature. However, at the end of the tale, bestial Nature took its revenge, as the maenads tore Orpheus limb from limb, until only his head remained intact, singing as it floated downstream. Victorian artists drew on the tension between reason and sensuality inherent in music. Leighton's own work demonstrated how the apparent order of his compositions could be undermined by the sensual subtext of a musical performance. So the decorous interplay of male and female figures in his Music and Dance friezes can be read both as a carefully choreographed pattern of limbs and drapery, or as a courtship ritual with exchanged glances and erotic potential. This double meaning is made more transparent in a design for the Marquand ceiling which survives as a colour sketch (c.1886, oil on canvas, Private Collection) [figure 7].[18] In the central panel a contemplative allegorical figure of Music listens to the sound of a tortoiseshell lyre. This stable composition is contrasted with the abandoned semi-naked women in the outer panels. Here Muses perform a frenzied

[18] Illustrated in Richard Ormond, 'Leighton and Mural Painting', p.53.

dance to the music of a double-pipe while a cherub struggles to lift Orpheus' lyre. Perhaps it was left behind when the women attacked him.

It seems that Leighton was aware of the inherent duality that underlies all interpretations of musical imagery. His decorative schemes implied that musical performance could lead to decadence, instead of transcendence, if it was not carefully controlled. In his designs for music rooms, as in his own studio concerts, he kept music on a tight rein. Each element was minutely planned, so that there was no room for wildness to creep in. The smooth surfaces of his pictures were underpinned by multitudes of sketches and life-studies, while his soirées were choreographed with the same attention to detail that he showed in his drilling of the Artists' Rifles. This was why Leighton shied away from Wagner: his music 'was too strenuous, too busy in the changes of key, too incomplete in the finish and development of phrases'. In his own work he strove to make pictures that were 'finished, consistent, perfect'.[19]

Leighton's musical tastes had an impact on his pictures. Firstly his delight in music encouraged him to explore musical subjects. More significantly, the style of his paintings, in both their composition and handling, reflected his preference for Bach over Wagner. His pictures embodied classical completeness, rather than passionate drama. In the same way, Burne-Jones' fascination with Early Music chimed with his enthusiasm for picturing pre-modern idylls: they enabled Burne-Jones to regain something lost.

Burne-Jones and the Early Music Revival

For Burne-Jones, music was bound up with spiritual experience. It allowed him to transcend the contemporary world. Music connected heaven and earth; the past, present and future. As a young man in 1855, Burne-Jones visited Beauvais cathedral where sacred music combined with the ritual of the Mass and the glorious Gothic space. The experience resonated with him until the end of his life. It became a kind of touchstone, showing music's transformative power: 'It is thirty-seven years since I saw it and I remember it

[19] William Blake Richmond, quoted by M. Musgrave, 'Leighton and Music', p.308.

all – and the processions – and the trombones – and the ancient singing – more beautiful than anything I had ever heard and I think I have never heard the like since. And the great organ that made the air tremble – and the greater organ that pealed out suddenly and I thought the Day of Judgement had come'.[20] Burne-Jones spent the rest of his career trying to recreate the multi-sensory experience that he had found at Beauvais, because it had shown him that through Art he could glimpse the divine.

Burne-Jones's interest in Early Music was bound up with his youthful 'crusade and Holy Warfare against the age'.[21] As a student he often sang plain-song with his friend William Morris (1834-1896) at St. Thomas's Church, Oxford. His wife described how they both belonged to the Plain-Song Society, which practised regularly in the Music Room in Holywell. There they would have met William Dyce, an established artist and early supporter of the Pre-Raphaelites.[22] Dyce was a leading plainsong revivalist, who wrote a Preface and Appendix to the Book of Common Prayer complete with musical notation. Until this was published in 1844, church choirs had to rely on fragmentary and harmonized versions of the ancient chants. (As the Musical Times noted in 1849, 'the Gregorian tones [were] ...almost entirely disused in the choral services of the Church'.[23]) So Burne-Jones and Morris were involved in the earliest stages of the revival of medieval forms of music in Britain, learning the range and rhythm of the liturgical chants. Although by modern standards these performances were hardly authentic, they allowed Burne-Jones a rare personal experience of medieval music. The singing of plain-song is evidence of Burne-Jones's enthusiasm for music as an art-form, especially when that music could give him a new way of connecting with the past, and of adding an extra dimension of sound to his pictures.

Burne-Jones's enjoyment of Early Music was reinforced by his marriage to Georgiana Macdonald in 1860. Georgie was a fine pianist and singer, who

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[20] Georgiana Burne-Jones, Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones, (London: Macmillan) 1904, new edition, (London: Lund Humphries) 1993, vol.1, p.113.
[21] I am defining Early Music as music composed before 1750. Georgiana Burne-Jones, Memorials, vol.2, p.84.
[22] J.W. Mackail, The Life of William Morris, (London: Longmans, Green and Co.) 1899, vol.1, p.66.
[23] Quoted by Percy A. Scholes, The Mirror of Music 1844-1944: A century of musical life in Britain as reflected in the pages of the Musical Times, (Oxford: Novello) 1947, p.553.

preferred 'older English airs and French chansons' to showy contemporary songs.[24] Among their favourite pieces were the Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border collected by Walter Scott. A sketch reprinted in Burne-Jones's biography captures Georgie playing the little upright piano that the couple were given as a wedding present [figure 8].[25]

Burne-Jones recognised the importance of the piano in the respectable household, but he felt that, all too often, the instrument was ugly in itself. As he explained to his colleague Kate Faulkner, 'I have been wanting for years to reform pianos, since they are as it were the very altar of homes and a second hearth to people'.[26] His idea was to return to the shape of the 18th century harpsichord, with a trestle stand instead of bulbous legs, 'reshaping the curved side into the older and more graceful outline'.[27] Together with W.A.S. Benson, he produced a design that was manufactured by Messrs. Broadwood, who in 1880 'built a beautifully toned instrument in an oak case of the desired shape, stained a good green' for Georgie to play.[28] This project attracted the attention of his patrons, including the Ionides family. In 1883 Alexander Ionides commissioned a Broadwood piano that would ornament his house at 1 Holland Park (Grand Piano, 1884-5, oak, stained and decorated with silvered and gilt gesso, Victoria and Albert Museum) [figure 9]. The inspiration for the gesso work created by Kate Faulkner came from musical instruments in the South Kensington Museum which Burne-Jones had suggested she should study.

At the same time that Burne-Jones was addressing the problem of the piano, he was also becoming aware of the revived music of earlier keyboard instruments. Thanks to the efforts of Arnold Dolmetsch (1858-1940) he was able to enjoy the 'sharp metallic tinkle' of the harpsichord: 'it's a pretty

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[24] Edith Macdonald, Annals of the Macdonald Family, 1928, quoted by John Christian, in Georgiana Burne-Jones, Memorials, vol.1, p.xi.
[25] Ibid., vol.1 p.218.
[26] Ibid., vol.2, p.112. This section of the argument was first put forward in Suzanne Fagence Cooper, Pre-Raphaelite Art in the Victoria and Albert Museum, (London: V&A Museum), 2003, p.163. For a full discussion of the development of the piano, both technically and socially, see ed. James Parakilas, Piano Roles: a New History of the Piano, (New Haven: Yale University Press) 2002.
[27] Michael Wilson, 'The Case of the Victorian piano', Victoria and Albert Museum Yearbook (London: V&A Museum) 1972, p.141.
[28] Georgiana Burne-Jones, Memorials, vol.2. p.112.

change on the muffled tones of modern instruments, and it recalls the ancient times...and then I like its clean sharp twang.'[29] Burne-Jones was so entranced by his encounters with Dolmetsch that in 1897 he commissioned a replica clavichord from his workshop (painted and gilded wood, Private Collection) [figure 10]. The clavichord was a gift for his daughter Margaret, so Burne-Jones designed an image of her patron saint to decorate the lid. Unfortunately Dolmetsch heartily disapproved of Burne-Jones's intervention, as he felt that the design was unsympathetic to the function of the instrument: 'he has made an *awful hash* of the clavichord...it made me quite sick to see it on Monday.' Dolmetsch believed the painting on the lid was ill-conceived as 'when folded, it mutilates the figures and when opened makes them stand on their heads'.[30] But this disparity between the decoration and the underlying form was typical of the approach of Burne-Jones and his friends to painted furniture throughout their careers. The clavichord was just the latest in a series of projects, like Morris's St. George's Cabinet (1862, oil on wood, Victoria and Albert Museum), where the relationship between the pictures and the structure of the furniture was apparently arbitrary. In each case, the symbolic or narrative element in the decoration overtook any attempt to create a harmonious whole.

In 1894 Burne-Jones introduced Dolmetsch to William Morris. Both men hoped to transform the present by reinvigorating the art of the past, and they talked enthusiastically about the Kelmscott Press reprinting an album of Tudor songs. This collaboration never came to fruition, but their mutual sympathy continued and was played out during Morris's last illness. Dolmetsch brought a pair of virginals to Kelmscott House and performed some of Morris's favourite 16th century pieces: 'A pavan and galliard by Byrd were what Morris liked most'.[31]

Although Burne-Jones and Morris were only able to hear these reconstructed sounds towards the ends of their lives, their involvement with the Dolmetsch workshop reflected a continuous interest in Early Music, which began during

[29] Ed. Mary Lago, Burne-Jones Talking: His Conversations 1865-1898, Preserved By His Studio Assistant Thomas Rooke, (London: Murray) 1982, p.12.
[30] Arnold Dolmetsch, quoted by Margaret Campbell, Dolmetsch: the Man and his Work, (London: Hamish Hamilton) 1975, p.122.

their undergraduate days. It meant that Burne-Jones was unusually sensitive to the quality of music produced by some of the archaic instruments which he drew, and his own experience of singing plainchant enabled him to appreciate the subtle and steady music sung by the choirs of carved angels. When Burne-Jones began his career, the medieval and Renaissance instruments that he painted had been silent for centuries. Even after Dolmetsch's arrival in London in 1883, Burne-Jones's exposure to original Early instruments was limited. Dolmetsch and his colleagues started to recreate the instruments that Burne-Jones had seen in manuscripts and altar pieces, miserichords and carved capitals. They salvaged instruments that had been treated, at best as curios; at worst, as junk. But the Early Music movement was still in its infancy. According to the Musical Times, the recorder was not reconstructed until 1926, and the lute had a 'difficult rebirth'. Although Dolmetsch was able to reconstruct the instrument, he could not play it. His admirers waited until 1929 to hear the first modern performance of a fantasia by Dowland.[32]

Burne-Jones had to find other sources for his musical props. He certainly knew the collections belonging to Carl Engel which were included in a Special Exhibition of Ancient Musical Instruments at the South Kensington Museum in 1872. Many of the instruments were later acquired by the Museum, and Burne-Jones's sketchbook (after 1867, pencil, Victoria and Albert Museum) shows that he worked directly from these objects. His drawings of a bell-cittern, a crwth and a viola d'amore are all closely related to examples in the South Kensington collections [figure 11].[33] The distinctive rounded profile of the bell-cittern resurfaced in his painting of Music (1876, oil on canvas, collection of Lord Lloyd-Webber) [figure 12].

But Burne-Jones could not rely on extant or replica instruments to fuel his fascination with Early Music. He also worked from printed and painted sources. He discovered musical angels while looking at the manuscripts in the Bodleian library with William Morris, and brought home reproductions of

[31] J.W. Mackail, The Life of William Morris, vol.2, p.334.
[32] The Musical Times, April 1940, quoted by ed. Percy A. Scholes, The Mirror of Music 1844-1944, p.777.

Northern Renaissance masterpieces from his holidays in France and Belgium.[34] Music was an integral part of the vision of heaven presented by Burne-Jones's heroes, van Eyck and Memling. The central panel of the Adoration of the Lamb altarpiece in Ghent (Hubert and Jan van Eyck, 1425-1432, oil on wood, Cathedral of St. Bravo, Ghent) was flanked by angels singing and making music, while Memling's St. John altarpiece (1474-79, oil on oak panel, Memlingmuseum, Sint-Janshospitaal, Bruges) showed the mystic marriage of St. Catherine accompanied by an angel playing a portative organ. Burne-Jones was so moved by these images that he wanted to bring them home: Georgie described the photographs of Memling's work as 'the glory of our sitting room in Great Russell Street'.[35] In Rossetti's studio, he was able to study a wider range of sources: collections of classical and medieval costumes by Carlo Vecellio, Roccheggiani and Thomas Hope, and Lasinio's engravings of the Campo Santo, Pisa.[36] Here he also learnt to love Bonnard's Costumes Historiques (1829), and tracings of his favourite plates were stuck into a sketchbook now in the Fitzwilliam Museum (no.1083). These included the Girl with a portative organ reproduced as plate 69 in Bonnard, a figure who reappeared in many of Burne-Jones's musical images, from King's Daughters (1858-60, pen and ink, Private Collection) to designs for tiles and stained glass [figures 13 and 14].

Alongside Bonnard, works by Mrs. Anna Jameson were a frequent source of medieval and early-Renaissance detail. Gail-Nina Anderson and Joanne Wright have shown that the Pre-Raphaelite circle were familiar with her studies of Sacred and Legendary Art (1848) and the Legends of the Madonna (1852).[37] However, more often than not, the musical angels who attended the Virgin in Mrs. Jameson's illustrations were transformed by Burne-Jones into companions of Venus. His Bath of Venus (1873-88, oil on

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[33] See for example a crwth (V&A no. 175-1882), a bell-cittern (V&A no.201.1882) and a viola d'amore (V&A no.161.1882).
[34] Georgiana Burne-Jones, Memorials, vol.2, p.104.
[35] Ibid., vol.1, p.289.
[36] These books were included in Rossetti's studio sale, lots 457, 462, 471, 478, 486, 508 and 595. See Dante G. Rossetti (deceased). Catalogue of the Household and Decorative Furniture of the Above Famous Artist and Poet. Weds. July 5th 1882 and Two Following Days, (London: T.G. Wharton, Martin and Co.)
[37] Gail-Nina Anderson and Joanne Wright, Heaven on Earth: the Religion of Beauty in Late Victorian Art, (Nottingham; Djanogly Art Gallery) 1994, pp.17-24.

canvas, Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon) [figure 15] took the traditional compositional structure associated with musical images of the Madonna and subverted it. Now it is the naked Goddess of Love who is surrounded by musicians playing psalteries and flutes.

This transformation of sources is typical of Burne-Jones's approach. His sketchbooks are bursting with decorative details from antique or medieval works of art: the lacing of sandals, the plaiting of hair, the arrangement of bed-hangings. He wanted to unravel the secrets of his predecessors. But having understood their art, he remade it on his own terms. In this way, the landscape of his imagination became tangible – filled with precisely studied objects - but it was never intended to be real.

We can see how this process worked if we look at one of Burne-Jones's favourite musical props. On the extreme right edge of his Bath of Venus there is the distinctive outline of a bell-harp. This same instrument was repeated in numerous paintings from the mid-1860s including The Lament (1866, watercolour, William Morris Gallery, Walthamstow) [figure 130], The Mill (1870-82, oil on canvas, Victoria and Albert Museum) [figure 126], The Golden Stairs (1866-80, oil on canvas, Tate Britain) [figure 112] and twice in The Sleep of Arthur in Avalon (1881-98, oil on canvas, Museo de Arte de Ponce, Puerto Rico). In 1883 the critic A.J. Hipkin described the instrument in The Musical Review as 'the well-known bell-harp from the beginning of the last century...a stringed instrument without bells, was swung when played, whence undoubtedly the name...The swinging business is useless in a musical sense but...it attracts and may gratify the eye'.[38] Evidently, for Hipkin the bell-harp was neither archaic nor exotic. But despite its humble origins, Burne-Jones was fascinated by its form, and had one purpose-built for his studio, described by Georgie as 'a dummy musical instrument of the dulcimer kind, made of common deal by a carpenter'.[39] It was based on an example in the South Kensington collections (V&A no. 240-1882) [figure 16]. With this three-dimensional prop, he could establish an accurate relationship

[38] A.J. Hipkins, 'The Musical Instruments in Rossetti's Pictures', The Musical Review, (London) January 13th 1883, p.27.

between the figure and the object. However, this attempt at realism was only superficial. Burne-Jones's bell-harp could not produce music. It had been made without the front-sound board which was needed to amplify the reverberations of the plucked strings. The decorative pattern made by the strings across the front of the instrument was more important to the artist than a working instrument, or indeed an accurate record of an historical object. Burne-Jones had managed to create an instrument that was both real and artificial at the same time. Musical subjects helped him to satisfy his desire to paint pictures that trod the 'borderland between the world of work and the world of dreams'. [40]

Rossetti and the Sirens

Burne-Jones's interest in the bell-harp as a decorative prop seems to have been sparked by Rossetti. It was in Rossetti's Seed of David (1858-1864, oil on canvas, Llandaff Cathedral) [figure 17] that the instrument first appeared in the Pre-Raphaelite circle. In the hands of King David, this bell-harp seems to be a visual joke. Rossetti deliberately misinterpreted the name of the object, and added a row of golden bells that David strikes with a dainty hammer. This misunderstanding suggests that Rossetti was addressing the object linguistically rather than visually or historically. This approach tallies with his self-projection as poet as well as painter. Although bell-harps were not commonplace in 19th century Britain, Rossetti surely knew that such a modern instrument was inappropriate for an Old Testament subject. As we shall see, anachronistic musical props were used by aestheticist artists like Albert Moore to signify their rejection of narrative conventions. It seems that Rossetti was anticipating this shift in attitude by depicting the musician-king David with an 18th century instrument.

All his friends and biographers agree that Rossetti was less sensitive to music than fellow-artists like Burne-Jones and Leighton. Yet the centrality of music to Rossetti's art should not be dismissed. Certainly his taste lacked

[39] Georgiana Burne-Jones, Memorials, vol.2, p61. This studio prop was illustrated by Aymer Vallance in 'The Decorative Art of Sir Edward Burne-Jones, Bart.', Easter Art Annual (Art Journal), (London) 1900, pp.30-31.
[40] Malcolm Bell, The Studio, (London) XVI, 1899, p.178.

their refinement, but he did share Burne-Jones's appreciation for Border Ballads, and enjoyed his friends' renditions of The Three Ravens.[41] The supernatural subjects, medieval setting and distinctive metre of these Border Ballads informed a number of Rossetti's own verses, including Sister Helen (1851-2). The musical element in his poems was recognised and reciprocated by friends and admirers, from Georgie Burne-Jones, who set his Song of the Bower to a waltz, to Claude Debussy, who created the cantata La Damoiselle Elue (1887-8) from The Blessed Damozel.[42]

Rossetti's family were subscribers to the 'Monday Pops' concerts held in St. James's Hall, where audiences could hear Bach and Handel, Corelli and Elizabethan ballads as well as the more conventional repertoire of Beethoven, Schubert or Chopin. But Rossetti's letters show that he preferred the musical theatre and the opera, particularly the overblown performances of sopranos like Giulia Grisi. He wrote to his brother

> I went the other night to see Lucrezia at Covent Garden, Grisi is most tremendous,...[she] screamed continuously for about two minutes, and was immense. We must go and see it together.[43]

Rossetti seems to have responded both to the presentation of strong female characters (a motif echoed in his own painting) and also to the interdisciplinary aspect of operatic productions. Many of his most personal works were attempts to weave together painting and poetry in complementary double works of art. In opera, the additional medium of sound was added to literary and visual display. This seems the most likely reason for Rossetti's attempt in 1869 to write an operatic libretto.

The Doom of the Sirens was never performed, but a draft text outlining the complete narrative was published posthumously by his brother William Michael in 1886. It was clearly intended to be sung. In Act 2, Scene 2

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[41] Georgiana Burne-Jones, Memorials, vol.2, p.224.
[42] Penelope Fitzgerald, Edward Burne-Jones, (London: Michael Joseph Ltd.) 1975, new edition, (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing Ltd) 2003, p.64.
[43] Ed. Oswald Doughty and John Robert Wahl, Letters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 1965, vol.1, p.42. See also William Michael Rossetti diary entry for

Rossetti describes the effect of overlapping voices on-stage: 'Throughout the scene the prayers of the bride are fitfully wafted from the hermitage between the pauses of the Sirens' songs'.[44] Rossetti's story is set in the last days of the Roman Empire, at the very moment of transition from Paganism to Christianity when demons still have power over men. This point in history, when the classical and medieval worlds collide, appealed to Rossetti and his circle as it allowed them to address the conflicts between sensual and sacred, desire and duty. Burne-Jones and Swinburne looked back to this moment in their reworkings of the Tannhäuser legend, and Pater used it as the setting for his novel Marius the Epicurean (1885).

As Dianne Sachko Macleod has shown, Rossetti's libretto is also clearly a response to Wagner.[45] Although Wagner himself did not make an impact in London until 1877, his works were heard as piano and orchestral transcriptions in the 1860s. One of his champions in the London art-world was Francis Hueffer, music critic for the Times and the son-in-law of Rossetti's old friend, Ford Madox Brown. It seems appropriate that Rossetti wanted Hueffer as his collaborator and composer, but the project was never finished. However, the Wagnerian parallels are clear in the text. Like Wagner's own version of Tannhäuser (1845), in Rossetti's opera the struggle between Christianity and Paganism was pivotal. And, as will be demonstrated in Chapter Five of this thesis, Wagner's Tannhäuser was certainly discussed in the Rossetti-Swinburne circle.

In addition, the climax of The Doom of the Sirens uses the device of lovers separated by death singing across the divide. This was one of Rossetti's favourite motifs: it lies at the heart of his poem The Blessed Damozel and underpins his fascination with Edgar Allan Poe's The Raven. But it also has strong parallels with Wagner's Tristan und Isolde (1865), when Isolde is 'transfigured' and reunited with her dead lover. Rossetti's words echo Wagner's presentation of Isolde's 'love-death':

21st June 1864, ed. William Michael Rossetti, Rossetti Papers 1862-1870, (London: Sands & Co) 1903, p.55.

[44] D.G. Rossetti, The Doom of the Sirens (1869), Duke University manuscript, transcribed at http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/47p-1869.dukems.rad.html

> she then discourses to him, saying many things in gradually increasing ecstasy of love... She ends by answering him in his own words, calling him to come to her, and so dies. Finis.[46]

Yet we never know the name of Rossetti's Bride, nor of her Prince. They are stock characters who fail to develop as personalities. Instead, the psychological twists are provided by the sirens, who are the only characters to be named – Thelxiope, Thelxionë and Ligeia. It is Ligeia who kills the Prince's father with her poisonous breath, and who in turn falls in love with the Prince, 'yielding to the agony of her passion, while the Prince repulses and reviles her'.[47] Eventually, after 'a long chorus', she and her sisters fall to their deaths on the rocks. The contrasting 'love-deaths' of the siren and the Bride are the axis on which the narrative turns. Although the libretto ends with the self-sacrificing action of the Bride, Rossetti is more excited by the siren, who is not simply an embodiment of feminine evil. Rather, she emerges as an ambivalent figure who, like the Bride, risks everything to win the love of the Prince. Rossetti's sympathies were made plain when he returned to the subject in 1873 with his large-scale drawing, Ligeia Siren (chalk, Private Collection) [figure 18]. For Rossetti, this was a rare foray into the depiction of the nude, modelled by 'a singular housemaid of advanced ideas'.[48]

The body of the siren/housemaid was manipulated so that the curve of her breasts could be seen both from the front, and in profile. These curves were accentuated by finding their echo in the exotic musical instrument carried by the siren. Early commentators, including A.J. Hipkins, condemned it as a mute fantasy:

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[45] D. S. Macleod, 'Rossetti's Two Ligeias: Their Relationship to Visual Art, Music and Poetry', Victorian Poetry, (Morgantown, West Virginia: West Virginia University) 20, Autumn-Winter 1982, pp.89-102.
[46] D.G. Rossetti, The Doom of the Sirens (1869), Duke University manuscript, transcribed at http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/47p-1869.dukems.rad.html
[47] Ibid.
[48] Quoted by V. Surtees, The Paintings and Drawings of Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882): A Catalogue Raisonné, (Oxford: Clarendon Press) 1971, vol.1, p134.

> the nude Siren must fail to lure the rowers by her music, as her three-stringed viol has no sound-board. She has no bow, and viols were not known in Hellas.[49]

But Hipkins should have known better. Earlier in the same article Hipkins had defended Rossetti against accusations that his depictions of musical instruments were inaccurate. He argued that 'Rossetti had a real basis of fact for dilineating them...his inaccuracies are venial.' The same is true in this case, although the source for Rossetti's instrument lay outside Hipkin's own experience. It is an Indian sarinda, and Rossetti studied the distinctive shape from a real object.

The South Kensington collections had acquired at least two sarindas in the 1870s, and one of these had the distinctive swan-neck shown in Rossetti's picture. It was given to the Museum in 1875 and was later transferred to the Horniman Museum, South London.[50] However it seems likely that he picked one up for himself as a studio prop as he wrote to his assistant, Henry Treffry Dunn about 'that bird on the Indian instrument you brought here' to Kelmscott Manor.[51] It was Dunn who described how Rossetti's London house was filled with instruments, chosen purely for their visual qualities:

> mandolins, lutes, dulcimers and barbarous things of Chinese fashioning...and yet in all the years that I lived in the house I never heard a note of music.[52]

The sarinda represented in Ligeia Siren possibly corresponds with the 'Indian Musical instrument' included in lot 442 of Rossetti's studio sale, alongside 'an antique lute'. A dulcimer and two small Irish harps were also mentioned in the catalogue (lots 196, 448 and 449).[53] But although Rossetti had these

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[49] A.J. Hipkins, 'The Musical Instruments in Rossetti's Pictures', p.75.
[50] D.S. Macleod traced this distinctive instrument, with the help of the Keeper of Musical Instruments at the Horniman Museum. It was given to the South Kensington collections by Lady Burrard. D.S. Macleod, 'Rossetti's Two Ligeias', p.90, n.3.
[51] D.G. Rossetti, undated letter, quoted ibid., p.90, n.4.
[52] H.T. Dunn quoted by Kirsten H. Powell, 'Object, Symbol and Metaphor: Rossetti's Musical Imagery', Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies, (Pennsylvania: Arizona State University and Kutztown University of Pennsylvania) New Series II, 1, Spring 1993, p.17.
[53] Dante G. Rossetti (deceased). Catalogue of the Household and Decorative Furniture

instruments to copy, he was not necessarily striving for authenticity in his art. We have already seen how Hipkins complained about the inclusion of a viol in a supposedly classical setting. It makes no more sense that the Siren should be playing a Punjabi instrument. But its curvaceous form meant more to Rossetti than the sound it produced, or indeed issues of historical credibility.

Rossetti's indifference to musical performance has led some commentators to believe that music was merely a pretext to study a beautiful woman, or create a sensual environment for love-making. Certainly Rossetti was alive to the metaphorical and symbolic potential of musical subjects. And in works like The Blue Closet (1856-7, watercolour, Tate Britain) or The Tune of Seven Towers (1857, watercolour, Tate Britain) [figure 83] he made no concessions to authenticity, instead imagining hybrid instruments as the decorative centrepieces for his compositions. Yet in other cases Rossetti tried to create links between his model, her musical instrument and historical reality by using real instruments in the studio. Like Burne-Jones, he mixed fact and fancy to produce an ideal vision.

The evolution of this vision can be traced in a series of images in which life studies and classical sources were woven together in a musical subject. The first is a drawing of Elizabeth Siddal playing a stringed instrument (mid-1850s, pencil, Ashmolean Museum) [figure 19]. It was clearly made from life, and shows Lizzie posing with an arched harp. Presumably this was one of Rossetti's studio props. Then Annie Miller was drawn with the same instrument and a tall lyre as The Harp Player (c.1857, watercolour with body colour, Private Collection) [figure 20]. In this study, Annie's pose was intended to replicate a scene from a Greco-Roman fresco at Stabiae (1st century AD, Museo Nazionale, Naples) in which a group of musicians prepare for a concert [figure 21]. The seated central figure is tuning one instrument from the other.[54] Rossetti recreated this composition in his studio using the arched harp that had already featured in the drawing of Lizzie Siddal, and what Hipkins called 'a seven-stringed chelys or tortoise-shell

[54] It is not clear how Rossetti knew of this image, as he never visited Italy, nor was it illustrated in the books which were sold from his studio after his death.

lyre'.[55] In the study of Annie Miller, this lyre was decorated with a rose motif usually associated with later instruments, like psalteries and lutes, indicating that Rossetti's notion of authenticity was flexible. But this flexibility in design was sanctioned by Rossetti's own classical sources. In his copy of Hope's Costumes of the Ancients (1812) he would have found a staggering variety of lyre forms, from the original shell-and-horn shape (no.4, plate 192) to the sophisticated decorations of the phorminx or great lyre (plate 200). So he would have felt justified in tinkering with the shape of his instrument.

The combination of lyre and arched harp, derived from the Stabiae fresco, evidently appealed to Rossetti as it appeared in two very different finished paintings. The first was The Return of Tibullus to Delia (1853, watercolour, Private Collection) [figure 22]. Here, unusually, it is an old woman who makes music while Delia sits on her bed, yearning for her lover. Then in 1874 Rossetti extracted the central musical motif and worked it up as The Roman Widow (oil on canvas, Museo de Arte de Ponce, Puerto Rico) [figure 23]. Like the earlier picture, its central theme is music's ability to encourage contemplation and nostalgia. The female figures in both paintings have a glazed expression that was characteristic of Rossetti's musical images. Entranced by the musical performance, the women are made available for our visual delight; Rossetti shows us the Roman Widow's supple hands and elongated neck as she plucks the strings and listens. The abundance of flowers in this later image is also a recurrent motif in his musical paintings. We see it again in La Ghirlandata (1873, oil on canvas, Guildhall Art Gallery, Corporation of London) [figure 24]; Alexa Wilding was the model for both pictures. The flowers create two sensations in the viewer. Firstly, they imply a visual and moral equivalence between the roses and the female figure. They are both beautiful to look at, but their beauty will wither and fade. Secondly, the mass of blooms implies a heavily scented space. It enhances the feelings of disquiet and suffocating sensuality in the claustrophobic compositions. There is no foreground or background, simply the massive female figure pressed up against the picture plane.

[55] A.J. Hipkins, 'The Musical Instruments in Rossetti's Pictures', p.27.

Rossetti's musical women are ambivalent creatures. They appear as sirens in disguise, luring men by their songs and their bodies, desiring and desired: even a young widow is presented as part of a visual, musical, scented feast. Rossetti's own musical experience seems to reinforce this connection between music and female sexuality. Perhaps we should read Grisi's performance of Lucrezia – a predatory anti-heroine – as a *leitmotif* in Rossetti's works, colouring his expectations of female musicians. He never seems to have shaken off his enthusiasm for that operatic moment.

Whistler: a Wagnerian Painter?

Although Rossetti came closest to Wagner in his overt choice of musical motifs, it was Whistler who was singled out by contemporary critics as a Wagnerian artist. In an article in the Revue Wagnérienne of 1886, Theodor de Wyzewa described Whistler as 'un symphoniste dans la peinture'.[56] This perceived connection between Whistler and Wagner was supported by two factors. Firstly, as a young artist training in Paris, Whistler had been a close friend of Henri Fantin-Latour (1836-1904), and secondly, Whistler, unlike Rossetti, Leighton and Burne-Jones, regularly submitted his work to the Paris Salon.

From 1858 Whistler, Fantin-Latour and Alphonse Legros had been known as the 'Société des trois'. They shared artistic ideals, and appeared together in Fantin-Latour's Hommage à Delacroix (1864, oil on canvas, Musée d'Orsay, Paris). Fantin-Latour had been celebrated for his visual evocations of Wagner, since he exhibited Tannhäuser on the Venusberg in 1864 (oil on canvas, Los Angeles County Museum of Art). In 1886, the year of de Wyzewa's review, the link with Wagner had been rekindled by the inclusion of 14 lithographs by Fantin-Latour in Adolphe Jullien's book, Richard Wagner: sa Vie et ses Oeuvres. So critics were looking for Wagnerian touches in the work of Fantin-Latour and his friends. Whistler's self-conscious use of musical terms in his titles encouraged reviewers to approach his works in this way, although they were often irritated rather than

[56] Theodor de Wyzewa, 'Notes sur la Peinture Wagnérienne et le salon de 1886', Revue Wagnérienne, (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints) vol.2, May 8th 1886, p.112.

enlightened by Whistler's musical references. Even this potentially sympathetic critic suggested that his Symphony was 'une étude' rather than a finished work of art.[57]

Although Whistler had lived mostly in London since 1860, he was also more visible on the Paris art-scene than his British contemporaries. As a result, his work came to the attention of both the British and the French press. The cult of Wagner hit Paris sooner than London, with a controversial performance of Tannhäuser in 1861, and remained a dominant cultural force until the end of the century. It reached its peak in the mid-1880s with the publication of the Revue Wagnérienne. But how real were Whistler's Wagnerian credentials? Was it just wishful thinking on de Wyzewa's part?

Whistler came from a musical background. His father played the flute and piano, and his half-sister Deborah 'was an accomplished musician'.[58] When he moved to London, Whistler lived with Deborah and her husband, Francis Seymour Haden. His etching of The Music Room (1858, Hunterian Museum and Art Gallery, University of Glasgow) and Harmony in Green and Rose: The Music Room (1860-61, oil on canvas, Freer Gallery of Art, Washington) both depict a potentially musical space in her house. But they do not show music being performed. Only Whistler's choice of title hints that we should look for the music in these images. It is not musical performance that interests Whistler, but the idea of 'Music' in the rhythm of the composition and the balance of the colours.

We know that he was aware of music and its social function, because when he rented his own house in Lindsey Row, he hired a piano to entertain his guests. (In 1877, this was one of the many bills that went unpaid.) At home, Whistler's house-guest Horace Gee acted as resident musician, providing music for evening parties.[59] He recognised the value of music as a tool of self-promotion, encouraging friends and critics to attend a musical evening at Frederick Leyland's house, so that they could see his re-designed Peacock

[57] Ibid., p.112
[58] E.R and J. Pennell, The Life of James McNeill Whistler, (London and Philadelphia: William Heinemann and J.B. Lippincott and Co.) 1908, vol.1, p.109.
[59] ibid., p.182.

Room. Both the singer Mlle. Nita Gaetano and the violinist Lady Blanche Lindsay, founder of the Grosvenor Gallery, would be performing.[60] Music acted as a social lubricant, and created an appropriate environment in which Whistler's art could be appreciated.

The summer of 1877 was a busy season for London's art-public. Not only could they enjoy Lady Lindsay's violin performance, and visit her brand-new gallery in Bond Street, they were also able to gaze upon Wagner for the first time since 1855. In May Wagner and Hans Richter conducted a series of eight concerts at the Royal Albert Hall. We would expect Whistler to have seized the chance to show himself at the Wagner Festival, but there does not appear to be any evidence that he attended. He seems to have had other things on his mind. He was in financial difficulties, and had fallen out with Frederick Leyland over the cost of redecorating the house in Princes Gate. And, although Whistler did hear Wagner's operas in later life, it was at other people's invitation.[61]

Whistler's own taste seems to have been more robust. He kept up with the latest hit tunes, asking a friend to send him a piano transcription of Offenbach's Quadrille from Orphée aux enfers (1st Paris performance 1858).[62] He spent more time in cabarets than in opera houses. When he did perform himself, he chose to sing songs from the Parisian music-halls, delighting his friends with his argot French.[63] This fascination with the popular music of dance-halls and bandstands was reflected in his depictions of Cremorne Gardens in London [Figure 110]. Here, under cover of darkness, musical performance went hand in hand with vulgarity and vice.

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[60] James Whistler to Stephen Tucker, 30th June 1877, Glasgow University Library, MS Whistler T209, On-line edition, Centre for Whistler Studies, University of Glasgow.
[61] He had two invitations in Paris in 1892. The first was to hear Lohengrin with the writer Comte Robert de Montesquieu-Fezensac in January, and the second was from the poet Stéphane Mallarmé in February. Mallarmé 'insisted upon my going to a Matinée at the Vaudeville where they are going [to] play away a whole hurrah of Wagner'. James Whistler to Beatrix Whistler, 19th January 1892, Glasgow University Library, MS Whistler W600 and James Whistler to Beatrix Whistler, February 1892, Glasgow University Library, MS Whistler W598, On-line edition, Centre for Whistler Studies, University of Glasgow.
[62] James Whistler to Matthew White Ridley, July-September 1859, Glasgow University Library, MS Whistler R90, On-line edition, Centre for Whistler Studies, University of Glasgow.

Given Whistler's preference for popular music, it may seem far-fetched to call him a 'Wagnerian' painter. Yet this thesis demonstrates that Whistler's appropriation of music in his art walked a fine line between affectation and sincerity. On one hand, Whistler used musical titles to provoke the critics: his art did not conform to conventional structures, and could not be unpicked in a literary manner. On the other hand, Whistler knew enough about music to construct a sophisticated interplay between sound and image in his art.

In 1867 Whistler and his sometime patron Frederick Leyland discussed a cycle of pictures, directly linking music and painting. The Six Projects (c.1868-1870, oil on millboard, Freer Gallery of Art, Washington) were never completed. However, at least one picture, a full-size version of The White Symphony: Three Girls (whereabouts unknown), had musical notation painted onto the frame.[64] This suggests that Whistler and Leyland imagined each canvas as a reflection of a different phrase of music. Like Whistler's earlier pictures of the Haden household, the music in these paintings was implied rather than overt. On the surface, the Six Projects were Whistler's attempt to combine Japanese and classical ideas in a series of figure studies. But by invoking the extra dimension of music, Whistler could replace the missing narrative in his pictures. In addition, as these pictures were probably intended to decorate Leyland's music room, Whistler knew that the musical context would be supplied by his patron. The paintings and their setting would work harmoniously together. Although the cycle was never finished, the Six Projects represented a critical moment in Whistler's art. It was not just his encounter with Japanese art and classical sculpture that transformed his art. This thesis argues that his attempts to bring sound and image together in a single space were equally important. Painting music precipitated his shift from naturalism to idealism.

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[63] E.R and J. Pennell, The Life of James McNeill Whistler, (London and Philadelphia: William Heinemann and J.B. Lippincott and Co.) 1908, vol.1, p.103.

[64] The music has been identified as a fragment of Franz Schubert's Moments Musicaux (Allegro Moderato in F Minor, Opus 94). See ed. Richard Dorment and Margaret F. Macdonald, James McNeill Whistler, (Washington and London: Tate Gallery) 1994, p.94

Conclusion

Although Whistler's and Rossetti's taste in music could hardly be more different from Leighton's classical perfection or Burne-Jones's medieval chants, these artists did agree on several things. Firstly, their own musical preferences chimed with their wider artistic aims. Secondly, these artists used musical contexts as a way of displaying the body, in dancing, swaying, singing, or playing. Furthermore, this performance was closely linked with femininity. Whistler used the female body as a pretext for his studies of form and colour with musical titles. In Leighton's music room schemes, the Muses were musicians and dancers. For Burne-Jones, music was often associated with his wife and daughter. Rossetti, by contrast, rejected the domestic aspects of music-making and saw it instead as a feminine tool of seduction. Despite the potential for music to slide into sensuality, all of these artists still regarded music as a means of transcending the mundane and entering the realm of the ideal. Music offered an escape from their contemporary environment. Even Whistler discovered that Victorian industrialisation and morality were obscured when the smoky Thames was reimagined as a Nocturne.

Leighton, Rossetti and Burne-Jones went further in their attempts to escape their 19th century surroundings. Their musical images were resolutely sited in the past, or in some non-specific fantasy space. But their depiction of long-lost instruments relied on the very latest advances in historical research. These artists relied on pioneers like Anna Jameson, Thomas Hope and Arnold Dolmetsch, who catalogued and reconstructed the sound-worlds of earlier generations. The instruments in their paintings were demonstrations of archaeological accuracy. At the same time, they were manipulated to bring out their symbolic undertones. Leighton chose lyres and pipes not just because they looked right in a classical setting, but because they were a shorthand for the two faces of music – reason and abandon. For Burne-Jones and Rossetti, the shape of an instrument was more important than its sound. So one chose the curvaceous outline of a sarinda while the other dwelt on the stringing of a bell-harp, but neither was historically accurate.

Even Whistler, in his visions of contemporary London found that, ultimately, authenticity always played second fiddle to art.

Chapter Two

The Orient and Beyond

Introduction: the Victorian Idea of the Orient

In 1875 Arthur Lazenby Liberty opened his fashionable new store in Regent's Street. Liberty's success in sourcing and selling furnishings from the Middle East and Japan tapped into a passion for the exotic among Victorian consumers. Enthusiasm for the Orient had long been established in the artistic community as they collected non-Western bric-a-brac as props for their paintings. From the ubiquitous Moorish table laden with beaten copper bowls, to the silken rug tossed over the arm of a chair, their studios became shop-windows for the Liberty 'look'. And artists acknowledged that this elegant eclecticism was much easier to achieve once Liberty opened for business. The architect E.W. Godwin, who designed Whistler's house in Tite Street, thought that 'an artist might almost decorate and furnish his rooms from this one shop'.[1]

The decorative aspects of the Orient were explored not just in the studios of Victorian artists, but through their canvases. This chapter considers how artists analysed and displayed non-Western subjects. Sometimes this was part of an attempt to recreate an authentic experience, but often Victorian artists treated the idea of the Orient as a starting-point for meditations on beauty, eroticism or the autonomy of the painted surface. This study argues that music played a central role in these images, as unfamiliar instruments were part of the paraphernalia of the fashionable studio. Firstly, they acted as a visible sign of difference from the Western norm, and, in some cases, reinforced the impression that the artist had done his homework, and was presenting an accurate record of a distant land. Secondly, the introduction of music into an image also implied a more enveloping sensory experience, one that invoked hearing as well as sight. This was particularly important when artists were constructing a fantasy of the East as a mysterious and sensual

[1] E.W. Godwin, quoted by Charlotte Gere and Michael Whiteway, Christopher Dresser: A Design Revolution, (London: V&A Museum) 2004, p.44.

space. Musical performance became a pretext for penetrating the harem, or displaying the bodies of female street-dancers.

Women artists were just as likely as their male colleagues to be complicit in maintaining these stereotypes. Margaret Murray Cookesley's Entertaining in the Harem (1894, oil on canvas, Private Collection) [figure 25] showed lightly-draped harem girls playing and dancing, presumably for the pleasure of the Sultan. Dotted around the picture she displayed her collection of modish accessories: folding screens, animal-skin rugs, pot plants and cushions. The result is unconvincing. Cookesley appears to have raided a local department store both for her props and her models.

In order to discover the distinctive contribution of aestheticism to the Orientalist genre, this chapter begins with two case-studies. It compares the work of two mid-Victorian artists, the watercolourist John Frederick Lewis (1805-1876), and the photographer Roger Fenton (1819-1869). Both produced images of the harem, but while Fenton included musical motifs in his Orientalist fantasies, Lewis did not. This chapter argues that the perceived connection between music-making and sensuality accounts for the silence in Lewis's harem pictures. Having established this mid-Victorian context, the chapter then demonstrates how some artists in the 1860s transformed the Orientalist genre. It considers the emergence of Japan as an alternative East, and argues that musical subjects, when combined with this new Japanese imagery, changed artistic approaches to the Orient. Rossetti and Whistler, and their colleague Albert Moore, moved the focus of Orientalist art. They no longer aimed at creating an authentic experience. Instead they hoped to provoke an aesthetic one.

The Victorian 'Orient' was a shifting concept, both geographically and historically. In the early 19th century, artists and writers were more interested in the Middle East -Turkey, Egypt, the Holy Land - but by the mid-1860s the focus was moving further afield to Japan. Underlying the artistic response to the Orient was the widely-held assumption that non-Western societies were unchanging. They represented the persistence of pre-industrial cultures into the modern era. Of course, 'unchanging' might imply the pejorative term

'regressive'. Linda Nochlin has shown that paradoxically the mid-19th century was a time of dramatic and often violent upheaval within the Ottoman Empire, and that these changes were largely driven by European intervention.[2] Yet for many Victorians, their interest in the East was bound up with nostalgia for traditions that had been lost at home, but which they believed could still be found overseas. The Middle East could represent the Middle Ages. Concepts like hand-craftsmanship and chivalry seemed to live on in the Orient and Japan. Their visual vocabularies overlapped. One early visitor claimed that 'with the Japanese we take a step backward some ten centuries, to live over again the feudal days'.[3]

The conflation of the medieval and the exotic was not as far-fetched as it might first appear. In the case of musical instruments, the relationship between the medieval and the Islamic worlds was grounded, to some extent, in historical reality. The lutes, rebecs, vielles and trumpets drawn in medieval manuscripts, or carved in the Gothic cathedrals of Europe, were all based on Eastern models. As Karl Geiringer has shown, Eastern imports dominated the sound-world of pre-Reformation Europe. The spade-shaped vielles played in 14th century France resembled the 'fiddle still used today in Turkestan and Mongolia'. The lute was 'introduced to Europe by the Moors of Spain. Its very name...shows its kinship to the Arabian instrument *al'ud*'. The rebec was a modification of the Arab *rabâb* or bowed lute and the *buisine* or valveless trumpet was imported into Southern Italy from Arab Sicily.[4] It is no wonder that Victorian visitors to the Middle East encountered instruments that reminded them of the musical props that littered Pre-Raphaelite paintings.

Both the Gothic and the Orient offered an alternative to the unpicturesque surroundings of the contemporary urban environment. But images of the East, as MaryAnne Stevens has suggested, had an advantage over the medieval. An Orientalist painter could claim that he was 'depicting living

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[2] Linda Nochlin, 'The Imaginary Orient', The Politics of Vision: Essays on Nineteenth-Century Art and Society, (London: Thames and Hudson) 1991, p.36.
[3] Rutherford Alcock, quoted by Anna Jackson in 'Art and Design: East Asia', in ed. John MacKenzie, The Victorian Vision: Inventing New Britain, (London: V&A Museum) 2001, p.306.

scenes' but 'in a world sufficiently remote and timeless [that he]... could make a record according to the principles of Realism, and simultaneously intend the result to stand as an example of eternal beauty'.[5] In Orientalist art the past could be elided with the present. As a result, some images of the East could resonate with the anti-Establishment, anti-materialist drive that was at the heart of the Pre-Raphaelite project – what Dennis Porter has described as 'Utopia-seeking'.[6] This is probably the best explanation for John Ruskin's enthusiasm for John Frederick Lewis's watercolours of Cairo: they seemed to offer the clarity of vision that Ruskin desired, and the sensation that the Middle Ages had not utterly passed away.

However, this overlapping of ancient and modern worlds was not confined to the hyper-reality of Lewis's harem scenes. It was also a central feature of the emergent aesthetic movement. James Whistler and Albert Moore invoked the East as one element in a composite idea of beauty. This thesis demonstrates that, unlike Lewis, they did not even feel the need to leave London to discover their new worlds of light and colour. Instead they looked only as far as art itself – the art of Japanese prints, or Greek sculpture, or musical harmonies and arrangements.

How do these diverse responses to the East fit in with readings of Victorian Orientalism based on Edward Said's Orientalist thesis (1978)? At one level they uphold Said's belief that the East is the West's 'deepest and most recurring image of the Other'.[7] However, this does not mean that the Western world was seen as necessarily superior to the East. Not all Victorians represented the Orient in a negative light. As John MacKenzie and others have shown, Said's interpretation of the 19th century's interest in the Islamic world is flawed. It is shaped too much by 'the burden of the present'. Said fails to take into account the 'deep wells of sympathy and respect which

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[4] Karl Geiringer, Instruments in the History of Western Music, (London: George Allen & Unwin) 1943, revised 1978, pp.45-59.
[5] Ed. MaryAnne Stevens, The Orientalists: Delacroix to Matisse. European Painters in North Africa and the Near East, (London: Royal Academy of Arts) 1984, p.21.

[6] Dennis Porter, 'Orientalism and its Problems', in ed. Francis Barker et al, The Politics of Theory, (Colchester) 1983, discussed by John MacKenzie, Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts, (Manchester: Manchester University Press) 1995, p.22.
[7] Edward Said, Orientalism, (London: Vintage) 1978, p.1.

artists of all sorts felt for the East in the nineteenth century' but which were 'expressed in distinctively nineteenth-century ways.' In effect, Said and his followers suggest that 'historical ages themselves can be divided into 'goodies' and 'baddies'.[8] This thesis contends that the Victorian vision of the Orient was mobile, and shifted dramatically between 1850 and 1870 as the Victorians encountered new 'Easts'.

The Orientalist images created by the painter John Frederick Lewis (1805-1876) and the photographer Roger Fenton (1819-1869) demonstrate some of the options open to mid-Victorian artists.[9] These artists have been chosen because their images are superficially similar, although they worked in different media. However, this study demonstrates that an awareness of music-in-art can unlock new interpretations of familiar images. Analysis of the musical references contained within their pictures uncovers subtle gradations of fact and fantasy. Each artist concentrated on a different aspect of music-making, one to evade and the other to engage with the inherent sensuality of their subjects. Lewis's work claimed first-hand knowledge of the Islamic world and implied that his images were authentic. On the other hand, Fenton's voluptuous tableaux were constructed in his London studio, but were also a complex blend of reality and artifice.

John Frederick Lewis and the Silent Harem

Lewis's first experience of the Islamic world was in Spain, where he studied both the architecture of the Alhambra palace, and the costumes and customs of the Spanish people. In 1841 he travelled to Cairo, and settled there for 10 years, 'adapt[ing] himself outwardly...to the Oriental life'.[10] William Makepeace Thackeray visited him in 1844, and was surprised to find Lewis

[8] John MacKenzie, Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts, pp.xvii-xviii.
[9] Roger Fenton has been the subject of significant new research by Gordon Baldwin, which has made possible the critical analysis of his work in this thesis. See Gordon Baldwin, Roger Fenton: Pasha and Bayadère, (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum) 1996 and ed. Gordon Baldwin, Malcolm Daniel and Sarah Greenough, All the Mighty World: The Photographs of Roger Fenton, 1852-1860, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press) 2004.
[10] William Makepeace Thackeray, Notes on a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo, 1846, reprinted (London: John Murray) 1911, Project Gutenberg etext, chapter XV, 'To Cairo', n.p.

'going about with a great beard and dressed up like an odious Turk'.[11] Why would any Englishman choose to wear a 'long yellow gown...with his head shaved ...[a] Damascus scimitar on his thigh'? Evidently Lewis had found a way of life and artistic subject matter that suited him. It is clear from the different reactions of these two men that Victorian attitudes to Islamic culture could range from disdain to enthusiasm. Lewis delighted in the minutiae of Egyptian life, creating detailed and decorative images of his new environment. These pictures dwelt on the intense colours, the dappled light and the ornate costume of his sitters. When he showed his first Egyptian picture in London in 1850, the reviews revelled in the 'inimitable elaboration' of his work, which extended even to

> the most insignificant material – the trellis, the carving, the marble, the silk – every surface is described with a fastidiousness of imitation never before seen.[12]

The 'plethora of authenticating details', to use Nochlin's phrase, implies that this image is a record of a direct, unmediated experience.[13] In fact it conceals the paradox at the heart of Lewis's work. What the critics read as direct representations of real scenes could not be painted from life. Although he could study architecture and costume at first hand, Lewis's most celebrated pictures showed the interiors of Cairo's harems. As a man, Lewis could never step across their threshold; he had to base his images on European women's accounts of their visits to the harem, mixed with conjecture and fantasy.

This thesis argues that Lewis's use of music in his paintings helps us to understand how he tackled the problem of authenticity. None of his harem pictures show music-making. Instead, when he wanted to paint music, he chose male performers in a public space. The Bezestein Bazaar of El Khan

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[11] William Makepeace Thackeray, (1846) quoted by MaryAnne Stevens, The Orientalists p.202.

[12] 'Society of Painters in Water-colours', Art Journal (London), May 1st 1850, p.179. The review of Lewis's The Harem began 'This may be pronounced the most extraordinary production that has ever been executed in watercolour'.

[13] In her analysis of works by the French artist Gérôme, Nochlin tackles the 'realism' or 'pseudo-realism' of his Orientalist images. See Linda Nochlin, 'The Imaginary Orient', pp.37-38.

Khalil, Cairo (1872, oil on panel, private collection) [figure 26] shows a group of men playing and listening. The details of this work suggest an ethnographic as well as a decorative interest in the subject. Lewis studies the faces of the men, as well as their costume and musical instruments. He also lavishes attention on the architectural framework. In this work, as in many others, there is an unnerving sense that this is both a contemporary scene, and yet distanced from the viewer both in time and space. It seems as if medieval sights and sounds have persisted into the modern world. This connection between the past and the present, the Gothic and the Islamic worlds, was identified by a French reviewer of this work. Gérard de Nerval wrote about the 'narrow dark passages, overhung with cage-like windows, like our own streets from the middle-ages'.[14] The inclusion of musical instruments which look like medieval Western lutes reinforces this sensation.

But this does not explain why music should be excluded from Lewis's harem pictures. His French contemporaries revelled in the chance to show harem girls dancing or making music. It was a stock subject for Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780-1867) and Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824-1904). Ingres's Odalisque and Slave (1842, oil on canvas, Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore) [figure 27] demonstrated the erotic potential of a semi-draped figure in a harem-setting, attended by a slave-girl playing the lute. Thoré, for one, discerned that 'the face and the eyes clearly reveal the nonchalance and voluptuousness of a courtesan coming out of the bath'.[15] But Ingres was drawing on Western European traditions and fantasies, rather than personal experience of the Orient. He never travelled beyond Italy, and his composition quoted unapologetically from Titian. The pose of Ingres's nude was lifted from the reclining figure in Titian's The Andrians (c.1523-4, oil on canvas, Museo del Prado, Madrid) and was then combined with Titian's Venus with an Organist (various versions, including c.1555, oil on canvas, Museo del Prado, Madrid) [figure 28]. We see the same use of curtains to separate the foreground from the landscape view; the position of the musicians is identical; we even find echoes of Titian's fountain-statue in the

[14] Gérard de Nerval, Voyage en Orient, quoted by MaryAnne Stevens, The Orientalists, p.208.
[15] Th. Thoré, Salons de 1844-1848, (Paris) 1868, pp.250-251, quoted by MaryAnne Stevens, ibid., p.195.

placing of Ingres's standing servant. Essentially Ingres has clothed a conventional classical subject in Oriental fancy dress.

Gérôme's treatment of Eastern music-making paid more attention to the facts, but even so it played on Western expectations of 'decadence'. In 1864 he exhibited the Dance of the 'Ālmah (1863, oil on panel, The Dayton Art Institute) [figure 29] at the Paris Salon. The manner in which the woman displayed her body, especially her semi-draped torso, in the presence of male musicians and spectators, was deliberately titillating. Gérôme's audiences would have associated the *'ālmah* (professional female entertainer) with the notorious striptease dance known as the 'bee'. In 1834 all Cairo's dancers had been deported to Upper Egypt, but for many Western men, a trip up the Nile to see the girls perform was a highlight of their Middle Eastern tour. The American traveller Charles Leland said that most, 'if given the choice, would rather have seen the dancing than the pyramids'.[16]

Western accounts of these dances combine distaste with desire. One of the earliest writers on the subject, the German Carsten Neibuhr (1762), described how the women

> exposed themselves in front of us in every way, and we found them ugly with their dyed yellow hands and blood-red fingernails...However, little by little we changed our minds and found them beautiful.[17]

The dominant impression was of sensuality. Most of the public dancing girls came from the *Ghawazee* people. They lived on the fringes of respectable society, where performance and prostitution overlapped. For some visitors, like Edward William Lane, their explicit sexuality fascinated him: 'these women are the most abandoned courtesans of Egypt', he wrote in 1836. 'Upon the whole, I think they are the finest women in Egypt'.[18] Harriet Martineau however reacted very differently when she visited Egypt and the

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[16] Wendy Buonaventura, Serpent of the Nile: Women and Dance in the Arab World, (London: Saqi Books), 1989, p.61. The dancing girls were allowed to return to Cairo in 1866.
[17] Ibid., p.56
[18] Edward William Lane, An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians, (London: Ward, Lock and Co.) 1836, new edition 1842, reprinted 1890, p.348.

Holy Land in 1846-7. She thought the street dancers were 'a horrid sight, which we were glad to turn away from.' Martineau condemned the 'hideous creature' and her 'disagreeable and foolish wriggle, without activity of limb or grace of attitude'.[19]

This is the reason why Lewis avoided painting dancing girls: they were associated in the Victorian imagination with prostitution. Lewis's images were extremely decorous. His works tried to equate the female spaces of the harem with the female domestic sphere of the 19th century home. His titles give the game away: The Reception (1873, oil on canvas, Yale Center for British Art) or Indoor Gossip (1874, oil on canvas, Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester). Other images, like Lilium Auratum (1871, oil on canvas, Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery) or In the Bey's Garden (1865, oil on canvas, Harris Museum and Art Gallery), linked women with gardening or flower-arranging, a familiar connection for Victorian viewers. Even when handling the difficult subject of polygamy and harem discipline, Lewis presented the images with a lightness of touch. So the Illustrated London News was happy to report that the adulterous girl in An Intercepted Correspondence, Cairo, (1869, oil on panel, Private Collection, Houston) would receive only 'an apparently mild admonition' although a death sentence might have been more authentic. Visitors to the Royal Academy could indulge their desire to peer inside the harem, without being too shocked by what they found there.

Towards the end of his career, Lewis's work became more overtly sensual. The Siesta (1876, oil on canvas, Tate Britain) [figure 30] shows a reclining female figure with a low-cut blouse in a highly-patterned interior. This image marks a change of direction for Lewis. Most of his women are active. They greet visitors, share conversation, or walk through gardens. Here the woman is passive, asleep and vulnerable to our gaze. This shift in Lewis's approach reflected a wider trend in Victorian painting. Lewis's figure was one of numerous sleeping women who appeared on the walls of the Academy in the 1870s and 1880s. Most artists, like Leighton or Albert Moore, wrapped them

[19] Harriet Martineau, Eastern Life, Present and Past, p.129 quoted by Deborah Anna Logan, Fallenness in Victorian Women's writing: Marry, Stitch, Die or Do Worse (Missouri:

in classical drapery. However, the figure of the sleeping woman was also ideally suited to Orientalist treatment, since it was undeniable that the Orient had been labelled as effeminate, voluptuous and indolent by many Westerners. These attributes coalesced in Lewis's late work. The change in Lewis's attitude towards his subjects can be explained by his increasing distance from Egypt. Lewis returned to London in 1851, but continued to reproduce his experience of the East for the next twenty-five years. So his presentation of the Cairo he had known became increasingly overlaid with Western stereotypes and conventions.

Of course, despite Lewis's claims of authenticity, his work had always been a fiction shaped by Victorian expectations. Views of the harem were his speciality, but he had never seen one with his own eyes. Like all male artists and writers, his knowledge was second-hand. He could study the architectural spaces of Cairo; the patterns and reflections created by pierced wooden screens, tiles and fountains. But he could not paint the women in their own environment, and any female models he could find were themselves inevitably excluded from the harem. Lewis may have tried to immerse himself in Egypt, but the allure of his subjects was still half-hidden from him. This is what made his harem pictures so intriguing.

Lewis's attention to detail suggested that his paintings offered a real glimpse into an enclosed space. But the audience this knew was not possible. His voyeurism was based on the fantasies that framed Western attitudes to Eastern women. As the photographer Roger Fenton discovered in Constantinople, 'the way they cover their faces, letting only their eyes be seen, is very coquettish'.[20] The artist and his audience could embroider the truth. Harem girls were imagined as both repressed and wanton: they were unattainable for most men, yet they indulged every whim of the harem master. The harem imprisoned them, but within its walls they could enjoy sensual pleasures. They ate, drank and smoked opium, they bathed and groomed their bodies. Underpinning this sensuality was the polygamous nature of sexual relations within the harem, which both fascinated and revolted 19th century commentators. The French writer Théophile Gautier

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University of Missouri Press) 1998, p.177.

liked to imagine himself in the position of the Sultan 'whose eye rests only upon forms the most perfect, never sullied by mortal gaze'.[21] Harriet Martineau, by contrast, believed polygamy warped the bodies and souls of the harem girls. For her it was 'hell on earth'[22].

Roger Fenton and the Dancing Girls

It was this troubling aspect of the East – the sensuality of hidden women who were revealed for the sultan's delight – that was recreated by the photographer Roger Fenton. In a series of photographs produced in 1858 Fenton focused on the tension between veiled modesty and erotic performance. Unlike Lewis, who avoided depicting dancing girls because of their connections with prostitution and the striptease performances of the *Ghawazee*, Fenton embraced the theme of music and dance. From the fifty-one Orientalist images he created in his London studio, this thesis concentrates on two works that demonstrate vividly the conflicting claims of authenticity and fantasy that shaped his imagined East. Pasha and Bayadère (1858, albumen print, J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles) [figure 31] and Egyptian Dancing Girl (1858, albumen print, J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles) [figure 32] reproduce Western fantasies of Eastern women, within a musical setting.

By choosing Orientalist subjects, Fenton wanted to show that photography presented a real challenge to painting. His elaborate tableaux matched the details and figures of Lewis's oils and watercolours, but they had the advantage that they must have been studied from life. They could not be purely imaginary, as they existed, for a time at least, in front of Fenton's camera. Other photographers of non-Western subjects, like Francis Frith who exhibited his photographs of the landscape and monuments of the Holy Land in 1858, were praised for the accuracy inherent in their medium: 'his subjects...impress us with a consciousness of truth and power which no

[20] Letter from Roger Fenton, 1855, quoted by Gordon Baldwin in Roger Fenton: Pasha and Bayadère, (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum) 1996, p.75.
[21] Théophile Gautier, Constantinople of Today (1853) quoted by Reina Lewis, Gendering Orientalism: Race, Femininity and Representation, (London: Routledge) 1996, p.112.

other Art-production could produce'.[23] Fenton's work was similarly treated by the critic of the Photographic Journal as 'admirable illustrations of Eastern scenes of actual life'.[24] But Victorian expectations of authenticity were overlaid with artistic and literary stereotypes. So both Fenton and his audience saw the Orient through the lens of the fiction: on his journey to Constantinople, Fenton described how 'the brilliant sunshine, flowers in full bloom and the novel architecture and varied costumes seem like a frieze taken from the Arabian Nights'.[25] As Gordon Baldwin has shown, reviews of Orientalist photographs of this period

> move directly from enumerating the authentic actual objects to invoking the reverie of the fictional world of the Arabian Nights, placing both on an equal footing for the purposes of forming aesthetic judgements.[26]

Critics wanted to believe that these photographs were a true record of Fenton's Eastern experience.

They knew that Fenton passed through Constantinople on his way to the Crimea in 1855, but as he spent only four days there, his images were unlikely to be based on careful personal study. Moreover, the subjects chosen by Fenton – dancers and harem girls – would not have been visible to him in Constantinople. As a man, he was forbidden from entering a harem, and his dancing girls were based on Egyptian, rather than Turkish, examples. Furthermore, as Baldwin has shown, Fenton continually transformed his (Western) model's identity to create a composite female Other. In one photograph she was described as Nubian, in another Egyptian, in a third Turkish. The titles of his images were equally flexible, changing from exhibition to exhibition. This reinforced the sensation that the

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[22] Harriet Martineau, quoted by Deborah Anna Logan, Fallenness in Victorian Women's Writing, p.173.
[23] Gordon Baldwin, Roger Fenton: Pasha and Bayadère, p.53.
[24] Quoted by ed. Gordon Baldwin, Malcolm Daniel and Sarah Greenough, All the Mighty World: The Photographs of Roger Fenton, 1852-1860, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press) 2004, p.88.
[25] Roger Fenton, letter from Malta 1855, quoted by Baldwin, Roger Fenton: Pasha and Bayadère, p.74. Edward William Lane's edition of the Arabian Nights was published in parts from 1838-40.
[26] Ibid., p.66.

narrative framework of his images was mobile. The viewer could shape them to his own desires. [27]

Fenton's Pasha and Bayadère seems to represent one of the dancers who were banished from Cairo because of their wantonness, and who now plied their trade in the towns of the Upper Nile. This choice of subject was probably suggested by the artist Frank Dillon (1823-1909) who visited Egypt in 1854-5. Dillon appears in the photograph as the model for the musician, while the Pasha is a self-portrait of Fenton. The woman who sat for 27 of his Orientalist scenes has not been identified but was probably a professional model. Many of the props in these scenes seem to have been souvenirs brought back by Dillon. Perhaps he had seen the dancing-girls of Aswan while working on his watercolours, and was recreating the experience in front of his friend's camera. Certainly details like the castanets, the girl's costume and the spiked fiddle correspond with other representations of the exiled dancers and their audiences. Two in particular are worth considering.

The first is David Robert's The Ghawazee (1842, lithograph, Victoria and Albert Museum) [figure 33]. This image was well known to the artistic community as it was published as part of Roberts's celebrated series of 247 prints of The Holy Land, Syria, Idumea, Arabia, Egypt and Nubia (1842-9). It was based on drawings made in Cairo on 1838-39. Fenton's photograph borrowed elements from Roberts's composition, like the Moorish table placed to the right of the dancers. However, lack of space (or funds) meant that Fenton reduced the numbers of dancers and musicians, so details like the tambourine were included as silent props, balanced on a shelf above the musician's head alongside a goblet drum.

Fenton's photograph also had much in common with Gérôme's Dance of the 'Ālmah (1863). Although the photograph predates the painting by five years, comparison of the two works suggests that Fenton and Gérôme were working from the same Orientalist repertoire. In both images we find the same combination of instruments, the same pose held by the dancer and the same division of the male onlookers into two classes: musicians and officers for whom the performance is staged. By including an audience, Fenton and

[27] Ibid., p.89.

Gérôme changed the dynamic of the scene. In Roberts's lithograph, the musicians and dancers were self-sufficient; they could be making music for their own pleasure. With the introduction of a lascivious male gaze, both Fenton and Gérôme implied that the girl's performance was a prelude to a more explicit encounter. Moving from two dancers in Roberts's picture to a single dancer in the later works also heightens the sexual tension of the images.

As Fenton had trained as a painter in Paris in the early 1840s, it is understandable that he was willing to explore the more overt eroticism found in French Orientalist images. He would also have seen paintings linking music and exotic female sexuality by Délacroix and Ingres at the 1855 Exposition.[28] MaryAnne Stevens has also suggested that Gérôme's work, which resembles Fenton's photograph at several levels, 'portrays many of the characteristics of the *'ālmah* dances meticulously described by [Gustave] Flaubert' who visited Egypt in 1850.[29] Flaubert's Egyptian experience involved 'music, exhibitions of dancing and sex with the dancers'.[30] The revealed bosom and belly of the dancer in Fenton and Gérôme's images reinforce the eroticism of the subject, encouraging their viewers to imagine what happens next. They seem to be recreating the seductive experience enjoyed by Flaubert.

However, the impression of intimacy and immediacy in Fenton's photograph is undermined in several places. The artificial nature of his work was highlighted by a critic for the Photographic News. He pointed out that the girl's arms were supported by wires during the long exposure: they can clearly be seen towards the top of the print.[31] This glimpse of Fenton's working methods makes us question the whole image. We become aware of a large skylight high up on the left and the curtain that barely disguises a blank wall. Beneath the real Anatolian rug, a flatter British-made carpet is visible. Even the props emerge as oddments from an artist's collection: the

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[28] For an outline of Delacroix's role in the development of 19th century theories linking music, colour and sensuality, see chapter 5.
[29] ed. MaryAnne Stevens, The Orientalists, p.139
[30] William H. Peck, The Detroit Institute of Arts, The Dancer of Esna, http://www.geocities.com/ankhenmut/Esna.htm?20058, p4
[31] Baldwin, Daniel and Greenough, All the Mighty World: The Photographs of Roger Fenton, 1852-1860, p.237

inlaid coffee table reappeared in Dillon's own Orientalist paintings.[32] The veneer of authenticity is stripped away, and Fenton's London studio is revealed as the backdrop for photographs in which European assumptions about Islamic sexuality are the primary subject.

Fenton's photograph of an Egyptian Dancing Girl (1858, albumen print, J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles) [figure 32] showed the same model, but without the distractions of a male audience. When this image was reviewed in the Athenaeum, again the critic oscillated between authenticity and fantasy, and seemed unable to extricate the two conflicting desires. Superficially, this photograph appeared to be an accurate record of an Ottoman scene. The accessories gave it credibility: 'The matting, the lozenged water-jar, the brushes and other stray litter of the room are especially Eastern, and heighten the effect'.[33] But the reviewer was more concerned about whether the girl herself lived up to his expectations. Did she satisfy the stereotypes of a sexualised Orient? He decided she was a

> beautiful example of voluptuous, tranquil beauty, as she stands with... the flower-like castanets pendent from her lithe fingers. The mouth and eyes are of the tenderest and most siren-like grace.

As Baldwin has suggested, this description was a 'virtual catalogue...of Orientalist misperceptions', with even the notorious 'cruelty' of the East implied by the reference to the corrosive sexuality of the sirens.[34]

Looking more closely at the musical element in Fenton's Egyptian Dancing Girl, we discover another level of tension, beyond the debate about the West and the Other. This image shows a confrontation between the stasis of the posed photograph and the essential mobility of music. Sound is implied by the fragment of a musician shown on the far right of the print, but most of his body is out of sight. Clearly Fenton wanted his audience to be aware that this is a musical space, since he could have left the musician out altogether. Sound is also suggested by the blur of the girl's castanets that move as she holds her pose for the three second exposure. Although the dance is frozen,

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[32] ibid., p.88
[33] Gordon Baldwin, Roger Fenton: Pasha and Bayadère, p.86.
[34] Ibid., pp.86-88.

music itself continues through the swaying of the castanets. That is beyond the photographer's control. It was precisely this blurring that Fenton had tried to avoid by stringing up his model's arms for the Pasha and Bayadère scene. It gives away the artificial nature of his medium. If her castanets are moving, then surely her whole body should also be undulating in the erotic dance of the *Ghawazee*. Music makes visible the passage of time within the photograph.

Victorian painters could hide the disjuncture between the sustained pose of the model and the momentary sensation of sound and movement. But a photographer could not. By concentrating on the musical element in these images, this thesis demonstrates that Fenton's photographs were indeed a 'true' and 'immediate' record of an event, just as his audience hoped they would be – the moving castanets show that. But the event itself was not authentic. It was a reconstruction of a half-truth.

While Fenton was trying to beat painters at their own game, some painters decided to sidestep this challenge altogether. If photography could capture every detail of a scene, why should artists bother to compete? They did not have to demonstrate the authenticity of their subjects, but instead could create complex fantasy spaces that would not be undermined by unintentional movements. Music could reinforce the aesthetic coherence of their compositions, rather than contradicting the artist's intention as Fenton had found to his cost.

In addition, there was a new factor influencing the British avant-garde by the mid-1860s. As photographers were colonising the Middle East, both in fact and fancy, painters began to look further afield to Japan. From the mid-17th century until 1854 Japan had been effectively closed to trade with the West, and few Japanese objects had been visible to British artists. So the introduction of musical instruments such as the *koto* or the *shamisen* into works by Rossetti and Whistler signalled their interest in a novel, and dramatically different, artistic vocabulary. This thesis argues that by the late 1860s music and Japonisme came together in the art of Whistler and Albert Moore, creating a new visual language, freed from the demands for authenticity and archaeological detailing. It also underlines the central theory

of intertexuality and synthesis, by showing how Moore went on to weave together elements from classical antiquity and Japan within a musical framework.

Japan and Aestheticism

This chapter demonstrates that the combination of music, Japonisme and classical references resulted in self-conscious images whose 'meaning is beauty, and [their] reason for being is to be.'[35] This description of Moore's work by Algernon Swinburne effectively defined the aesthetic movement in Victorian art.

How did British artists encounter this new Other? The first significant displays of Japanese art were shown at the 1862 International Exhibition, and within a year, Rossetti and his circle were developing a taste for Japanese objects. According to William Michael Rossetti, 'it was through Whistler that my brother and I became acquainted with Japanese woodcuts and colour-prints. This may have been early in 1863.' He went on: 'I hardly know that anyone in London had paid any attention to Japanese design prior to this'.[36] The impact on D.G. Rossetti and Whistler's art was immediate and 1864-5 was to prove a pivotal moment for the London art-world. Rossetti painted The Blue Bower (1865, oil on canvas, Barber Institute, University of Birmingham) [figure 34] and Whistler tried to reconcile Japan and Chelsea in Variations in Flesh Colour and Green: the Balcony (1864-70, oil on canvas, Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington) [figure 35]. Both were musical paintings.

Rossetti's The Blue Bower embodied the cultural shift from the Middle East to Japan. It retained the sensory overload of details – luxurious textiles, tiled surfaces, jewellery – which typified Lewis's exploration of the harem. But Rossetti was not aiming at an authentic reconstruction of an Islamic space. Instead he combined elements from several different cultures, bringing

[35] Algernon Swinburne, Notes on the Royal Academy Exhibition 1868, Part I by W.M. Rossetti, Part II by Algernon C. Swinburne, (London: John Camden Hotten) 1868, p.32.
[36] E.R and J. Pennell, The Life of James McNeill Whistler, (London and Philadelphia: William Heinemann and J.B. Lippincott and Co.) 1908, vol.1, p.118.

together Chinese prunus blossom motifs on Middle Eastern tiles[37] while the model, the very white-skinned Fanny Cornforth, wore a gown inspired by Renaissance portraits. Rossetti topped it off by placing a Japanese instrument in the foreground.

Hipkins described this instrument as a 'small Japanese "goto" sold with [a] mandoline at the sale of Rossetti's effects'[38] but more recently it has been identified by Chuji Ikegami as a *koto*. Traditionally the *koto* was around 182cm long. This example seems closer to 50cm, but smaller versions did become popular 'towards the end of the Edo period [1600-1868] because of [their] portability'.[39] This still does not account for the 14 strings on Rossetti's instrument, instead of the usual 13. The musicologist Henry Johnson has shown that, apart from this anomaly, Rossetti seems to have worked very closely from a real example in his own collection. His painted version includes the movable bridges, marquetry and mother-of-pearl decoration, and silken tassels typical of a *koto* made in the western Kansai region of Japan.[40] In this painting, at least, Rossetti also respected the conventions of Japanese performance, to the extent that the instrument is placed on a table or parapet.[41]

However in The Blue Bower Japanese details represented only one element in an exotic mélange of references. Unlike Lewis or Fenton, Rossetti made no claims to recreate a real event or location. The instrument was a pretext for showing off his model's hands, and enveloping Fanny and her audience in implied music. There is no suggestion that Rossetti was aware of the distinctive sound-world of Japan; he was indifferent to the five-tone system of Japanese music and unaware of the impact it would have on a Western ear. Similarly his interest in Japanese prints had no discernible influence on his

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[37] Elilzabeth Prettejohn has suggested that the decoration of the wall is derived from the octagonal lids of ginger jars.
[38] A.J. Hipkins, 'The Musical Instruments in Rossetti's pictures', The Musical Review (London) January 13th 1883, p.27.
[39] Chuji Ikegami, 'D.G.Rossetti and Japanese Music', Burlington Magazine, (London) CXXVI, 1984, p.699.
[40] Henry Johnson, 'Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Japan: Musical Instrument depicted in The Blue Bower and A Sea Spell', Music in Art (New York: Research Center for Music Iconography, CUNY) XXX/1-2, 2005, pp.5-6.
[41] When the koto reappeared in The Sea Spell (1877, oil on canvas, Fogg Museum of Art, Harvard University) it was hung in a tree, making it completely unplayable.

use of colour and composition. As we shall see, his musical paintings were more Venetian than Far Eastern in conception. But as an unspecific, imaginary environment, The Blue Bower was an ideal site for fantasising. Even more than Fenton's photographs, viewers could overlay the image with their own expectations of exotic female sexuality. The 'voluptuous, tranquil beauty', 'lithe fingers' and 'siren-like grace' that delighted the critic of Fenton's Egyptian Dancer are here represented in colour. Rossetti's model is fleshier, more tactile and even closer to the picture plane. Unlike Fenton's dancer, our pleasure in viewing her is not disrupted by the knowledge that she is, in fact, posed in a studio. There is no tell-tale blurring to show the passage of time.

Whistler and Japan

For Rossetti, Japanese objects formed part of a decorative ensemble but they were effectively interchangeable with other non-Western accessories. This thesis argues that Whistler, on the other hand, became actively engaged with the distinctive features of Japanese design. His exposure to Japanese woodcuts had visible repercussions in his paintings. Like Rossetti, Whistler began by treating Asian objects as ornamental novelties. In Purple and Rose : The Lange Leizen of the Six Marks (1864, oil on canvas, Philadelphia Museum of Art) his European model affected to decorate an 18th century Chinese jar, while wearing an impractical Chinese embroidered robe over a Japanese kimono. In the words of Richard Dorment, the painting has 'the air of...the dressing-up box'.[42] But in the same month, February 1864, Whistler began work on a picture that tried to assimilate West and East, music and painting, in a single composition.

Whistler described Variations in Flesh Colour and Green: the Balcony as 'a group in oriental costume on a balcony, a tea equipage of old china, they look out upon the river, with a town in the distance'.[43] The scene was set on the balcony of his own house in Lindsey Row, and the river behind the figures was the Thames, with the chimneys and slag-heaps of Battersea

[42] Ed. Richard Dorment and Margaret F. Macdonald, James McNeill Whistler, (Washington and London: Tate Gallery) 1994, p.86.

visible on the far bank. Whistler overlaid a prosaic view of contemporary London with an exotic, aesthetic experience by appropriating Japanese pictorial conventions. He quoted directly from prints by Kiyonaga that were in his own collection.[44] In particular, Whistler used the strong horizontal division created by a balcony to bisect his picture and, like Kiyonaga, he included bamboo blinds at the top of the composition. The placing of these blinds was a nod towards the Japanese conventions of asymmetry.

This was one of the very few images in which Whistler explicitly included a musical instrument. His musical references were usually confined to his titles, but here he showed a musician with her instrument, a long-necked lute-like *shamisen*. Again Kiyonaga's prints were the source of this detail. Not only did Whistler lift the distinctive silhouette of the instrument from Kiyonaga, but he also copied the position of the musician within the composition. Unlike Rossetti, who certainly owned at least one Japanese instrument, there is no direct evidence that Whistler had a *shamisen* in his studio. Instead he probably relied on examples taken from Japanese art rather than from life, although he may have seen one in the collection of his neighbour and friend, the diplomat Algernon Mitford.[45]

Why did Whistler paint a *shamisen* into this picture? On one level, it was a clear acknowledgment of his sources for the small band of connoisseurs who were aware of Kiyonaga's prints. But on another level, it exposed the play-acting that underpinned the work of his contemporaries. Only in an artist's studio would a group of girls gather to recline, fan themselves and pretend to play exotic music, with Battersea as a backdrop. Previously artists had created exotic musical spaces that were meant to be read as real. Thus Fenton tried to mask the strings that suspended his model's hands, in the hope that viewers would believe in his Orientalist fantasy. Rossetti adopted a different tactic, by confusing his audience with mixed messages about time

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[43] Ibid., p.89

[44] Whistler owned both Autumn Moon on the Sumida and The Fourth Month from Kiyonaga's Twelve Months in the South (1784). Ed. R. Dorment and M.F. Macdonald, James McNeill Whistler, p.89.

[45] Mitford published Tales of Old Japan in 1871. See Anna Jackson, 'Art and Design: East Asia', in ed. John MacKenzie, The Victorian Vision, p.308. No musical instruments are visible in the most comprehensive view of the Japanese stand at the 1862 exhibition, printed in the Illustrated London News, 20th September 1862, p.320.

and place. But he still expected us to be entranced by his vision and sucked into his sensory space, even though it was purely imaginary. Whistler brought his fascination with the East out into the open, and showed it for what it was: a collection of visual conceits that could be manipulated by the artist.

By painting young women on his balcony, Whistler offered a glimpse of an artist's studio. (To some, this was as exotic and hidden a space as a Turkish harem.) He suggested that the delights of the East – young women, flowers, musical entertainment – could equally be found in London, and indeed, that most contemporary images of Oriental seduction were really constructed in mundane surroundings by his fellow artists. This thesis argues that Whistler's work offered a more accurate record of the Victorian artistic encounter between East and West: he showed how European artists cherry-picked elements of exotic cultures to brighten their canvases. On the one hand, Whistler was presenting a revealed reality. But on the other, he used aspects of Japanese design to create self-reflexive images in which art itself became the subject. Whistler's The Balcony brought together music, Japanese prints and the very act of constructing a painting into a single image. In doing so, he replaced Orientalist fantasy with a consciously aestheticist image.

The idea of synthesis lies at the heart of the aestheticist project. Whistler and his circle sought out beauty in all ages, places and art-forms, and wove these moments into their work. As Whistler's biographers said, 'It was not Japan he wanted to paint but the beautiful colour and form of Japanese detail'.[46] His interest was artistic rather than archaeological. This thesis argues that painting music was part of this synthetic approach as it added another layer of artistic interaction. Painting music also coincided with what Jonathan Freedman has identified as the 'defining quality of British aestheticism...the desire to embrace contradictions'.[47]

[46] E.R and J. Pennell, The Life of James McNeill Whistler, vol.1, p.122. For a fuller discussion of the centrality of intertextual references in aestheticist works of art, see E. Prettejohn, 'Walter Pater and Aesthetic Painting', in After the Pre-Raphaelites, pp.36-58.

The contradictions in Whistler's Balcony are visible on at least two levels. First he offers us an image that is both Western (a view across the river to Battersea) and Eastern (a group of girls in kimonos, carrying a fan and a *shamisen*). Secondly he tries to make a painted object seem like a piece of music. By his use of a musical title and the inclusion of a musical instrument Whistler teases us with the idea that we should be able to listen to this work, as well as look at it. We know this is impossible, but even so we try to approach the picture with the same expectations that we would bring to a musical performance. We concentrate on its formal qualities – colour, line, balance, rhythm, progression - rather than its ability to tell a story.

Art critics colluded with the aestheticist desire to embrace contradiction by creating prose that read like poetry, and treating paintings like passages of music. They found that musical vocabulary also provided a useful shorthand when they tried to describe works that transcended geographical and historical boundaries. So Hiroshige's influence could apparently be seen in Whistler's 'tender chord of colour, and unconventional arrangements'.[48] As a non-mimetic, non-narrative medium, music offered an alternative model for visual artists and their critics. Whistler's treatment of his canvases combined the idea of music with studies in colour and 'arrangements' reminiscent of Japanese prints. As a result his work represented a radical departure from the Victorian norm.

For Whistler, it was not essential for the music to be visible. Unlike Fenton or even Rossetti, he did not feel it necessary to show a musical performance. Instead, it was the evocation of music and its symbolic value that was important. His musical references appeared in his titles, and in his handling of the painted surface: through suggestions of rhythm and harmony. By directing his audience's attention towards the musical element in his art, Whistler evaded narrative readings of his work, and dismissed authenticity in favour of a composite ideal beauty.

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[47] Jonathan Freedman, Professions of Taste: Henry James, British Aestheticism and Commodity Culture, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press) 1990, p.6.

Albert Moore's Formal Beauty

Whistler shared his passion for Japan, and his fascination with music-in-painting, with Albert Moore. Both were excited by the impact of Japanese art on Western traditions. Their artistic partnership was supposed to be memorialised in a large joint portrait, known as The Artist's Studio, that Whistler planned in 1865. It would have shown Whistler and his friend 'surrounded by models dressed in white, with arrangements of Japanese fans and blue and white porcelain on the walls', but unfortunately it was never completed.[49] Like Whistler, Moore adopted elements of Japanese design – the shallow pictorial space, the cherry blossom and butterflies. But he stretched the Orientalist impulse to the limit by interweaving Eastern motifs with quotations from classical Greek art. Moore embraced anachronism. His audience was denied the pleasure of identifying the location or period of his paintings. Instead they were expected to enjoy them as purely artistic constructs, groupings that could never exist beyond the canvas. In doing so, Moore turned the Orientalism of Lewis and Fenton on its head. Their claims of authenticity no longer mattered.

In 1869 Moore exhibited a musical painting that unequivocally demonstrated the aestheticist belief that art was for art's sake alone. A Quartet: a tribute to the art of music, A.D. 1868 (oil on canvas, Private Collection) [figure 36] makes no concessions to historical accuracy. His musicians play on modern instruments – two violins, a viola and a cello – and a double bass lies on a ledge above their heads. But three of the men wear togas, and the fourth is dressed only in a leopard skin. Their audience, three young women who stand with their backs to us, are draped in a light fabric that reveals as much as it conceals. Despite these classical costumes, Moore's title insists that this is a modern painting. Its contemporaneity is reinforced by the Japoniste touches, like the blossom, the lack of spatial recession and the strong horizontals of shelf and bench. These lines across the canvas act as a stave upon which rising and falling notes are traced, in the bodies of the standing girls and the flowing draperies. The men's heads and the vases on the shelf

[48] E.R and J. Pennell, The Life of James McNeill Whistler, vol.1, p.274.
[49] R. Dorment and M.F. MacDonald, James McNeill Whistler, p.17.

are pauses in the progression of the implied music. F.G. Stephens saw in the women's figures 'the suave, long-sustained and fluttering harmonies of the lighter order in music' while 'the graver, more sedate and powerful poses of the men' seemed to him 'the more serious elements of melody'.[50]

Few critics seem to have worried about the anachronism at the heart of the painting. Moore's deliberate confusion of past and present, Western and Eastern, forced them to treat this work as self-sufficient. According to Moore's biographer, Alfred Lys Baldry, A Quartet represented 'the ideal world in which, pictorially, he lived'.[51] Moore's art was inward-looking, despite his awareness of the latest trends in the London art world. He had no qualms about showing a lady in Grecian costume with a vase of azaleas, even though these flowers were unknown to the ancient Greeks because, as William Michael Rossetti pointed out, it was a matter of 'sublime indifference to Mr. Moore'. Such things did not concern him. Instead his time was spent in perfecting 'double-distilled refinement in colour'.[52]

By the early 1870s Moore had moved away from explicitly stating the synthetic nature of his work. His musical references, and his references to Japanese art, whispered rather than shouted. But his pursuit of the ideal in composition and colour continued. He developed a repertoire of quiet young women in classical draperies whose undramatic appearance belied their revolutionary intent. For some viewers 'they were merely harmonies of line and colour, loveliness materialized', but critics who dismissed them as decorative were missing the point.[53] Each one was a formal problem to be solved. The figures and principal props were carefully mapped onto a grid until the composition was exquisitely balanced. And then, as Robyn Asleson has shown, Moore treated each work 'as a separate experiment in the science of colour'.[54]

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[50] F.G. Stephens quoted by Robyn Asleson, Albert Moore, (London: Phaidon) 2000, p.100.
[51] Alfred Lys Baldry, Albert Moore: His Life and Works, (London: George Bell and Sons) 1894, p.36.
[52] W.M. Rossetti, Notes on the Royal Academy Exhibition 1868, p.23.
[53] Mr. J. Rope-Slade, quoted by Alfred Lys Baldry, Albert Moore, p.91.
[54] Robyn Asleson, Albert Moore, p.114.

Moore's colleagues and contemporaries continued to view these works through the prism of music. They wrote extensively in this vein. Sidney Colvin praised

> his power of arranging and combining the lines of the human form into a visible rhythm and symmetry not less delightful than the audible rhythm and symmetry of music.[55]

F.G. Stephens compared Moore's work to

> a sort of pictorial music, drawn as from a lyre of but few strings. Indeed it is very like antique music, which was soft, of narrow compass, apt to be monotonous, and best fitted for the lyre and flute.[56]

But few thought it worthwhile to analyse why musical vocabulary was so apt. In a literary age, when many paintings could be read like novels, it was partly the lack of narrative that forced critics to compare Moore's pictures with a non-verbal medium. This thesis proposes several other reasons.

Firstly, on a personal level, Moore had grown up in a musical household. His family attended concerts and held musical evenings at home. His brother had considered a career as a professional violinist, and friends said that Moore's sister-in-law played Bach, Beethoven and Schumann better than any amateur they had ever heard.[57] With this background, Moore would have been aware of musical forms and sensitive to the effect of music on an audience. His paintings can be likened to the performance of a piano prelude: they are satisfying exercises in local detail and colour, self-contained and on a domestic scale.

Secondly, Moore's training at the School of Design at York encouraged him to consider the fruitful connections between the arts of music and painting. The theories of David Ramsay Hay (1798-1866) were part of the York

[55] Sidney Colvin, quoted ibid., p.96.
[56] F.G. Stephens, quoted ibid., p.94.

curriculum, so Moore would have learnt about Hay's attempts to correlate the wavelengths of sound and light, creating a scale of colours to match the musical scale.[58] Certainly Moore's treatment of colour suggests that he was trying to achieve a visual harmony that was equivalent to a harmonious chord in music. In works like The Shuttlecock (1868-70, oil on canvas, private collection) [figure 37] Moore deployed complementary colours, in this case blue and orange, to create a 'harmony of contrasts'. In part, as Robyn Asleson has shown, this was Moore's response to Eugène Chevreul's The Principles of Harmony and Contrast of Colours (1839). Chevreul had demonstrated that chromatic opposites, like blue and orange, together produce a harmonious grey.

But Moore wanted to go further, and bring musical analogies more visibly into his pictorial scheme. He signalled his intention by painting what the poet Cosmo Monkhouse called 'a little strip of matting or carpet which is at once the proposition and the Q.E.D.' for the colour equation.[59] This carpet resurfaces in many of his works, but each time it is woven of different colours – the complementary colours that underpin Moore's colour-scheme, plus black, white and grey.[60] Monkhouse partially recognised the significance of this motif, but he failed to mention that the colour bands in the carpet, at some level, resemble a piano keyboard. This thesis argues that, like a keyboard, Moore's carpets contain all the notes, or colour combinations, needed to create a visual harmony. Each chromatic equation is the equivalent of a different chord. The keys vary from painting to painting, but all are resolved within the frame. Even though, after The Quartet, Moore never again demonstrated his musical interests explicitly, music was still essential to his project. Rather than showing musical performance, he created musical analogies through colour and line, producing variations on the theme of women with flowers.

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[57] William Blake Richmond, quoted ibid., p.26.
[58] D. R. Hay, The Science of Beauty, as Developed by Nature and as Applied to Art, (Edinburgh and London) 1856, p.78.
[59] Robyn Asleson, Albert Moore, p.114.
[60] See for example Birds of the Air (c.1879, oil on canvas, Manchester City Art Gallery) and A Reader (c.1877, oil on canvas, Manchester City Art Gallery).

Conclusion

Moore's pictures represent an end-point for Orientalism in Britain. Although Victorian artists continued to create images of the East, with varying degrees of accuracy, they added little to the formulae that had been established by Lewis and Fenton. Moore and Whistler looked at non-Western subjects in a different way. They acknowledged that it was impossible, and perhaps unnecessary, for European artists to create authentic records of other cultures. Instead their sympathy for Japan was expressed by weaving elements from *ukiyo-e* prints or blue-and-white porcelain into their paintings. The conventions of Japanese woodcuts enabled Western artists to rethink their reliance on linear perspective. Aestheticist painters could challenge the Victorian desire for realism and story-telling by referring instead to the stylised figures and unfamiliar rituals discovered in works by Hiroshige, Hokusai or Kiyonaga. These images defied interpretation and could be enjoyed for their visual beauty rather than their meaning.

Music was essential to the transformation of Orientalist art. Musical images offered an escape-route from the demands of authenticity. Paintings could emulate musical arrangements or variations, rather than travel-journals or photographs. By the mid-1860s the evocation of music demonstrated the pursuit of synthesis between the arts, as well as between different times and places. The most beautiful elements of classical Greece or 18th century Japan could be 'double-distilled' to create a harmonious whole, with music binding the disparate elements together. Moore's 'exclusive worship of things formally beautiful'[61] revolutionised the Victorian relationship with the East. In this final flourishing of Victorian Orientalism we discover a paradox. The outward-looking impulse that drove artists to discover and consume the exotic produced paintings that refused to engage with the world beyond the frame.

[61] Algernon Charles Swinburne, Notes on the Royal Academy Exhibition 1868, p.38.

Chapter Three

Spirituality

Introduction

On Census Sunday 1851, the Established Church was perplexed. It found that only one quarter of the population of England and Wales attended their parish church. About the same number worshipped in one of the Non-Conformist or Roman Catholic chapels, but half of the country did not go to church at all. Was Anglicanism on the decline? Had the massive church-building project of the 1830s and 1840s failed?[1] Even the colourful, controversial, ritualised religion of the Tractarians was apparently having limited success in boosting congregations.

But there was one weapon in the Church's spiritual armoury that might prove effective: a revival in sacred music. Many Victorians avoided Church on Sunday morning, but they still turned out in their thousands to attend concerts, and join local choral societies. In 1834 when the journalist George Hogarth studied the weaving towns of Yorkshire he found that

> they are religious in spite of the spread of infidelity; and they love their families and friends in spite of the attractions of the beershop...The power to which these effects are... to be ascribed...is SACRED MUSIC.[2]

Some enlightened employers had established music classes at their works: Samuel Greg, a factory owner in Cheshire, for example, boasted of

[1] For a fuller account of mainstream and alternative spiritualities in Victorian Britain, see Paul Atterbury and Suzanne Fagence Cooper, 'Religion and Doubt', in J.MacKenzie, The Victorian Vision: Inventing New Britain, (London: V&A Museum) 2001, pp.125-146. For responses to the 1851 census see H. Mann's analysis, reprinted in ed. James. R. Moore, Religion in Victorian Britain: III Sources, (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press and Open University) 1988, pp.313-321. Mann calculated that 2000 more churches were needed to accommodate the whole potential church-going population. This was despite the 2000 new churches already built since 1831, including many in the new industrial centres of Yorkshire and Lancashire. Mann also addressed the alarming number of non-attendants, claiming that 5,288,294 adults stayed away from church each Sunday.

> a small glee class that meets once a week...[and] another, more numerous, for sacred music, that meets every Wednesday and Saturday during the winter and really performs very well.[3]

Such enterprises demonstrated that morality, music and modern industrial practices could happily co-exist.

This chapter begins by establishing the connection between music and religion in the Victorian imagination. It then explains how the assumption that music allowed communication with the divine was linked to the ancient theory of the music of the spheres. A study of designs by Edward Burne-Jones demonstrates how this assumption was played out in the visual arts. In particular, this case-study underlines the links between music and the veneration of the Virgin Mary. It then explores how Marian music could be transferred to other female figures, including Beatrice, Dante's beloved. The process of slippage between Mary and Beatrice highlights the potential for spiritual musical imagery to be subverted. This section of the thesis considers alternatives to orthodox Christianity. It opens with analysis of Spiritualist imagery in musical pictures by Rossetti and Frank Dicksee (1853-1928). It then considers the connection between music and trance. It shows how aestheticist artists, including Rossetti and Burne-Jones, manipulated the conventions of the legend of St. Cecilia, by blurring the boundaries between *agape* and *eros*, spiritual and sexual love. Sacred subjects were destabilised, so that by the 1880s critics could write about a 'religion of beauty', characterised by a worship of the body rather than the spirit. This chapter concludes that the duality inherent in musical symbolism - the constant struggle between Apollo and Dionysius - contributed to a transformation in the treatment of religious imagery by aestheticist artists.

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[2] Quoted by Dave Russell, Popular Music in England 1840-1914: A Social History, (Manchester: Manchester University Press) 1987, 2nd edition 1997, p.24.

Hymn-singing and the 'Hallelujah Chorus'

In London, the industrial revolution in architecture and travel transformed the presentation of sacred music. When the Great Exhibition of 1851 brought vast crowds to London, many people were able to hear full-scale oratorios for the first time thanks to the Sacred Harmonic Society. Founded in 1836, the Society gave spectacular performances of Handel's Messiah, Elijah or The Creation every week throughout the summer of 1851. When the Crystal Palace moved to south London, the Society embraced the opportunities offered by the unprecedented scale of this venue, and from 1857 held an annual Handel Festival, attracting audiences of up to 18,000. That first year, it was said that 'the Hallelujah Chorus could be distinctly heard nearly half a mile from Norwood'.[4]

The Church of England itself responded to the increasingly literate – and musically aware – public by reforming its own musical life. In 1861 the first edition of Hymns Ancient and Modern was published containing 273 hymns and by 1875, when the second edition was issued, it had been expanded to 779 hymns. Prof. J.R. Watson has estimated that by 1900 over 400,000 hymns were circulating in Britain. From the mid-century congregational hymn-singing became woven into the regular services of churches and cathedrals, as a way of encouraging participation and promoting spiritual education. It was also a response to the Non-Conformists who had long used hymn-singing as an evangelical tool. For the Victorians, music and worship went hand in hand.[5]

The Pre-Raphaelites, like many of their contemporaries, used musical imagery to inform their religious paintings. William Holman Hunt took the

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[3] Ibid., p.27.

[4] See Michael Musgrave, The Musical Life of the Crystal Palace, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 1995, p.36.

[5] For a fuller discussion of changing attitudes to hymn-singing in 19th century Britain, see Ian Bradley, Abide with Me: the World of Victorian Hymns, (London: SCM Press) 1997. His research shows that 'the practice of hymn singing was not officially sanctioned in the Church of England until the 1820s' (p.1). Bradley also demonstrates that Anglican clergy deliberately co-opted techniques, including hymn-singing, that had helped the Non-Conformist churches to win souls in the late 18th century. As John Venn, Rector of Clapham, wrote: 'I am persuaded that the singing has been a great instrument in the

most direct approach, reflecting the revival of interest in hymns and choral singing in several of his works. In the winter of 1859 he exhibited The School-girl's hymn (oil on panel, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford) [figure 38], a study of a girl in the Sussex countryside practising her singing. As she holds a hymn-book we know that this is not a spontaneous outburst of song. Instead it is a spiritual discipline: she is learning the words and tune in readiness for Sunday morning. One thing we should particularly notice is her gaze. The girl looks through and beyond the viewer. This abstracted appearance is repeated in many different images of spiritual music-making. It suggests that the singer can see beyond the material world. This chapter argues that the trance-like state of female musicians became one of the favourite devices of Rossetti and his friends. It helped them to transform and subvert traditional notions of music and the spirit.

Hunt himself expanded on the idea of sacred song as a gateway to heaven in his large painting of May Morning on Magdalen Tower (1888-1890, oil on canvas, Lady Lever Art Gallery, Museums and Galleries on Merseyside) [figure 39]. Dawn breaks and the choristers sing to welcome the summer. Hunt's picture implies that the singers are already half-way to heaven. They are lifted up above the city of Oxford, level with clouds tinted pink with the sunrise. The hallucinatory combination of heightened colour and photographic detail makes the scene appear hyper-real. Wearing white robes, garlanded with wild roses and with a carpet of tulips and irises at their feet, the boys have the attributes of wingless angels; one holds out a lily in a conscious echo of Gabriel's greeting to Mary. Even the older figures, portraits of College staff, are not out of place in this paradise. Their intent bearded faces are reminiscent of prophets and patriarchs. Hunt implies that this ceremony is both contemporary and ancient, combining the late-Victorian love of public ritual with pre-Reformation, perhaps pre-Christian patterns of worship.

Dissenters' hands of drawing persons away from the church, and why should we not take that instrument out of their hands?' (p.15)

The Music of the Spheres

The inclusion of a Parsee on the extreme right of Hunt's painting makes us question the focus of devotion here. Are the choir praising God or the Sun? In both pagan and Christian tradition, sacred music reflects a greater harmony in the universe. By turning their attention towards the rising sun, the most important of the heavenly bodies, the May Morning singers are joining in with the eternal, inaudible music of the spheres. One of the earliest accounts of the music of the spheres is found in Plato. In Book X of Republic he imagines the solar system as a pattern of concentric circles, mapping the paths of the planets in orbit. Each of these paths is coloured, and accompanied by a single note sung by a siren. Together the sirens produce a complete harmony. The rotations of the smaller, slower spheres create the lower notes, while the faster, wider rotations of the outer spheres sound at higher pitches. Conveniently, the seven heavenly bodies known to the ancient world (five planets plus sun and moon) tallied with the seven notes of the octave.

This vision of the musical universe was underpinned by Pythagoras's experiments with vibrating strings. In the 6th century BC he discovered that musical pitches were intimately bound up with numerical ratios. By pressing a string at intervals along its length, Pythagoras could determine the note it would make: the ratios 1:2, 2:3 and 3:4 determined the consonances of the octave, the perfect fifth and fourth. Furthermore, in Plato's account of the creation of the universe (Timaeus 35-36), these same ratios governed the relationship between the orbits of the planets. Musical harmonies offered a way of understanding the circling of the heavens: the mathematical parallels between them demonstrated the coherent ordering of the universe.

Although Victorian audiences may not have been fully aware of these ancient theories when they approached musical paintings, we should not underestimate their significance. Any Englishman who attended university, or indeed was educated at public school, received a solid grounding in the classics, and would have encountered the concept of the music of the spheres. When, for example, Frederic Leighton put music at the heart of his

images of pagan festivals, he was reflecting both ancient traditions and Victorian expectations of the links between music and worship. His depiction of the Daphnephoria (1874-6, oil on canvas, Lady Lever Art Gallery) [figure 40] a Theban procession in honour of Apollo, drew on recent scholarship for the accuracy of its detailing.[6] At the same time, the heroic semi-naked figure conducting the procession played on the 19th century interest in music as spectacle. In some respects the picture resembles a massed choir held together by the charisma of a celebrity conductor. The inclusion of the lyre alludes to the importance of stringed instruments as a parallel to the music of the spheres: the seven strings of the lyre equate to the seven heavenly bodies. It is the vibration of strings, rather than the resonance of wind instruments, that teaches us about heavenly harmonies. In legend, the rational, orderly music of Apollo's strings triumphs over the chaotic, sensual music of Marsyas's pipe. So the conductor's instrument reinforces his position as an authority-figure who can bring order to the musical performance. Indeed he parallels Apollo, musician, Sun-god and the object of worship at this festival.

Music in Heaven

The association of stringed instruments with sacred music persisted into the Christian era. The cliché of the harp-playing angel is the direct descendant of the tradition of Apollonian music and the music of the spheres. However, stringed instruments are also explicitly mentioned in Biblical descriptions of sacred music: the Psalmist, for example, encourages worshippers to 'Praise [God] with the psaltery and harp' (Psalm 150:3). From an artist's point of view, it is also clear that performers look more elegant when plucking or bowing than they do when puffing and blowing. Playing a recorder, trumpet or flute distorts the face and obscures the mouth. According to Greek legend, this is the reason why the goddess Athena threw away her double pipe, 'whereupon Marsyas took it up and was corrupted'.[7] Numerous

[6] According to Mrs. Russell Barrington, Leighton consulted the original source, the Chrestomathia of Proclus, and it is likely he also worked from John Lemprière's Classical Dictionary (1864) and William Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities (1842). See Edward Morris, Victorian and Edwardian Paintings in the Lady Lever Art Gallery: British Artists born after 1810 excluding early Pre-Raphaelites, (London: HMSO) 1994, p.62 n.

[7] For an account of the myth, see William J. Gatens, 'John Ruskin and Music', Victorian Studies, (Indiana: Indiana University Press) vol.30, Autumn 1986, p.89.

stained glass designs by Edward Burne-Jones reflected these various influences.[8] His angels mostly played stringed instruments, partly for aesthetic reasons, and partly to reflect the Christian (and indeed pre-Christian) assumption that heaven would resound to the music of psalteries, dulcimers and harps.

Burne-Jones's stained glass projects were central to his self-perception as an artist. In the early stages of his career, they provided him with an income. They were certainly the most visible element of his artistic output, reaching audiences far beyond the gallery-going public in London.[9] And they enabled him to surround congregations with light, colour and pattern, creating an environment for worship that mirrored the experience of heaven. He dreamt of 'big things to do and vast spaces and for common people to see them and say Oh! – only Oh!'[10] In these windows, he came close to fulfilling that dream, bringing the spiritual world closer to the material world of the Victorians.

Music was essential to Burne-Jones's vision of heaven. Medieval and renaissance artists had shown how angelic musicians could cross the frontiers between this world and the next, bringing the Good News of Christ's birth to the shepherds, and welcoming the Magi to Bethlehem. Burne-Jones would have known, for example, the Adoration of the Kings by Jan Gossaert, owned by his friend Rosalind Howard, Countess of Carlisle (1500-15, oil on wood, now in the National Gallery London) [figure 41] which showed angels moving between heaven and earth. In his own work, Burne-Jones returned regularly to these borderlands, where natural and supernatural intersected. In his stained glass design for the Annunciation to the Shepherds (1864, made by Morris and Company, St.Editha's, Amington, Staffs.) [figure 42] the angelic music of psaltery and organ is joined by the earthly music of the

[8] See for example, the Angeli Laudantes window designed for Salisbury Cathedral (1877-8) and reworked as a tapestry (1894, with borders by Henry Dearle, woven at Merton Abbey, wool, silk and mohair on cotton warp, Victoria and Albert Museum).
[9] A. Charles Sewter's catalogue of Burne-Jones's stained glass collaborations with William Morris demonstrates the extent of their projects. See A. Charles Sewter, The Stained Glass of William Morris: a Catalogue, (New Haven: Yale University Press) 1975
[10] Georgiana Burne-Jones, Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones, (London: Macmillan) 1904, new edition (London: Lund Humphries) 1993, vol.2, p.13.

shepherd's pipes. Musical angels could cross the threshold that divided men from God, offering a glimpse and a whisper of the divine.

If stringed instruments were associated with harmony, horns and trumpets signalled chaos and the overthrow of the old order. In the Christian tradition, the trumpeting of seven angels heralds the end of the world (Revelation 8). In response to these Biblical texts, Burne-Jones introduced wind instruments into his images of the Apocalypse. His Last Judgement window designed for St. Philip's Cathedral, Birmingham (1896, made by Morris and Company) [figure 43], shows an angel shattering the earthly city with the sound of his trumpet. Angels sounding the 'last trump' also dominate Burne-Jones's windows for the church of St. Edward the Confessor, Cheddleton, commemorating the life of Anne Boucher, wife of the Vicar (1869, made by Morris and Company). Three angels with ruby wings and long valveless trumpets were installed in the church's south aisle to illustrate the passage from 1 Corinthians 15: 'the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible'.

Music informed Burne-Jones's images of Creation as well as Judgement. His series of windows in Harris Manchester College, Oxford (1895, made by Morris and Company) [figure 44] showed the sixth day as an angel plucking a psaltery. This musical motif is not taken directly from the Bible. Instead, it corresponds with the tradition of the music of the spheres, and indeed the Platonic account of Creation. This reading is underlined by the choice of a stringed instrument and, coincidentally, by the crystal balls in which the act of creation is made visible.

Hymns to the Virgin

In the medieval world, angelic music was particularly associated with stories of the Virgin Mary. This thesis shows how Burne-Jones followed medieval precedent in his treatment of Marian scenes. He and Morris treasured the stories of her life gathered by Jacobus de Voragine, and in the 1890s they worked together on an edition of Voragine's Golden Legend for the Kelmscott Press. Voraigne's account of the Virgin's musical Assumption into

heaven seems to have coloured Burne-Jones's treatment of images of the Virgin:

> The heavens received this day the Blessed Virgin, the angels were glad, the archangels enjoyed, the thrones sang, the dominations made melody, the principalities harmonised, the potentates harped, cherubim and seraphim sang laudings and praisings.[11]

Burne-Jones was also influenced by contemporary scholarship, particularly Anna Jameson's studies of Sacred and Legendary Art (1849) and Legends of the Madonna (1860). These illustrated books, identified by Gail-Nina Anderson and Joanne Wright as key sources for the Pre-Raphaelites, made the connection between music and Marian imagery explicit. Jameson included descriptions of the Madonna as 'not only queen of the angels, but patroness of music and minstrelsy'.[12] Burne-Jones responded appropriately. His stained glass window celebrating the Life of the Virgin (1873, made by Morris and Company, St. Mary's Church, Nun Monkton, Yorkshire) [figure 45] surrounds Mary with angels making music with an organ, a psaltery, a harp and various other instruments.

In 1859 Burne-Jones chose a Marian story from Chaucer's Canterbury Tales to decorate a wardrobe as a wedding-present for William Morris. In both the medieval text and Burne-Jones's version, music is central to the narrative. Chaucer describes how a boy falls foul of some murderous Jews because of his constant devotion to the Virgin, expressed in his singing of the 'Alma Redemptoris'. The Prioress's tale cabinet (1859, oil on oak and deal, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford) [figure 46] depicts Marian music in three places. In the background, the boy looks out of the school window towards a statue of the Virgin, and the text of his song is inscribed in a cartouche. This motif is then repeated in the foreground where the Virgin places a grain of

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[11] See Jacobus de Voragine, The Golden Legend or Lives of the Saints,1275, translated by William Caxton, 1483, edited by F.S. Ellis, (London: Temple Classics) 1900, reprinted 1922, 1931, vol.4, pp.110-127.

[12] Mrs. Jameson, Legends of the Madonna, 1852, pp.83-4, quoted by Gail-Nina Anderson and Joanne Wright, Heaven on Earth: The Religion of Beauty in Late Victorian Art, (Nottingham: Djanogly Art Gallery) 1994, p.17

wheat on the boy's tongue, so that he begins to sing again. Thanks to this miraculous intervention by the Virgin, his body is discovered.

The boy sings two sacred songs, one in life and the other in death. His posthumous hymn is joined with the music of the angels, who sing the third hymn in honour of Mary. As she descends from heaven to perform the miracle, she is accompanied by a band of musical angels, playing a viol, psaltery, tambourine and lute, and an angelic choir. Burne-Jones shows how sacred music on earth resonates with eternal music in heaven: they are part of the same great hymn of praise. The boy's song can be heard by the angels, and they respond with their own voices and instruments. Like Holman Hunt's May Morning, Burne-Jones implies that music breaks down the barriers between earth and heaven. Sacred song enables mortals to transcend their own mortality.

The connections between Mary and music were also explored in the work of Burne-Jones's contemporaries. Rossetti, for example, brought these themes together in his early painting, The Girlhood of Mary Virgin (1849, oil on canvas, Tate Britain) [figure 47] when he included a small portative organ tucked behind her stool. This prop reflected the Virgin's own spiritual accomplishments – she could make music in praise of God. It also reminded viewers of the early renaissance tradition of depicting the Virgin at the centre of music-making angels. The 'peerless grace and sweetness' of Fra Angelico's The Coronation of the Virgin (1450-53, tempera on panel, Louvre, Paris) [figure 48], for example, made a particularly strong impression on Rossetti and Hunt when they visited Paris in 1849.[13] The combination of Marian devotion and music found in Fra Angelico's image was echoed in Rossetti's picture of the young Virgin. Critics recognised how closely Rossetti had studied such 15th century works, with the Art Journal describing The Girlhood of Mary Virgin as 'the most successful as a pure imitation of early Florentine art that we have seen in this country'.[14]

[13] William Holman Hunt, Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, (London and New York: Macmillan and Co.) 1905, vol.1, p.190.

In 1866 Rossetti came back to the theme, with music as a sign of human devotion rather than angelic joy. Some years earlier Rossetti had begun a large-scale oil painting based on Robert Browning's poem Pippa Passes, but it proved unsatisfactory. He reused a section of this canvas for The Two Mothers (1849, 1866, oil on canvas on panel, Sudley House, National Museums Liverpool) [figure 49]. A woman and a young girl kneel before a statue of the Madonna and Child. The earthly mother has a book open in front of her, with musical notation clearly marked. She is instructing her daughter in her devotion, and the girl's lips are parted as if she is singing. Like Burne-Jones's image from the Prioress's Tale, Rossetti suggests that sacred song enabled communication between the earthly and spiritual realms. The sympathy across the divide is indicated by the way the Christ Child leans out as if to embrace the worshippers.

The Pre-Raphaelites' persistent interest in Marian images was attacked by their critics. Works like Rossetti's Girlhood of Mary Virgin were seen as evidence of their 'crypto-papism'. One reviewer in 1852 objected to their 'paltry affection for middle age ecclesiasticism' and their enthusiasm for depicting 'little girls keeping their chrisom pure against blue backgrounds'.[15] These charges seemed justified when James Collinson, one of the original Brotherhood, converted to Roman Catholicism and gave up painting. Certainly the choice of subjects painted by the Pre-Raphaelite Brothers and their friends seemed deliberately provocative in the wake of Newman's dramatic 'poping' in 1845.[16] Alongside Rossetti's studies of the life of the Virgin, visitors to the London exhibitions in 1849-52 would have seen Pre-Raphaelite pictures of a nun, a domestic altar - derided as an 'idolatrous toilet-table' by Ruskin - and a priest wearing controversial vestments running away from a mob of druids.[17] This was at a time when the Art Journal was running headline articles on 'Romanism and Protestantism in their relation to

[14] 'The Hyde Park Gallery', Art Journal, (London) May 1849, p.147, quoted by Colin Cruise in 'Sincerity and Earnestness': D.G. Rossetti's Early Exhibitions 1849-53', The Burlington Magazine, (London) CXLVI, January 2004, p.7.
[15] British Quarterly Review, (London) vol.xvi, August and November 1852, p.214.
[16] John Henry Newman was a champion of the Oxford Movement for reform in the Church of England in the 1830s and early 1840s. Initially he hoped to remain within the Anglican Church, but he resigned his post as Vicar of St. Mary's, the University Church in Oxford, and in October 1845 was received into the Roman Catholic Church. His action caused alarm and outrage among Anglicans.
[17] John Ruskin, letter to the editor, The Times, (London), 13th May 1851.

painting'.[18] Despite William Michael Rossetti's declaration that 'the notion that the Brotherhood...had anything to do with...Roman Catholicism, Anglican Tractarianism or what not – is totally...even ludicrously erroneous' it is clear that, as young men, the Pre-Raphaelites were attracted by the ritualism of the Oxford Movement. [19] In part, this was just another aspect of their youthful rebellion against the Victorian Establishment. But, as Alastair Grieve has shown, D.G. Rossetti, Millais and Charles Alston Collins all attended notoriously High Church services from time to time[20] and as a student, Burne-Jones was also caught up in the enthusiasm of the Oxford Movement.[21]

The appearance of Marian subjects in the art of Rossetti and his circle was clearly prompted as much by their interest in the decorative aspects of religion as by their admiration for Pre-Reformation art. However it is hard to know how they far they subscribed to the 15th century theology that put Mary at the heart of Fra Angelico's musical heaven. I would suggest that they tried to find a way around the dilemma by concentrating on images of Mary – the statues in the Prioress's Tale Cabinet or The Two Mothers – rather than her person. In this way they conveniently side-stepped the accusation that they were encouraging idolatry. They could claim that their interest was purely artistic.

The Pre-Raphaelite fascination with medieval and early renaissance art was only one facet of a wider appreciation of painting produced before the rise of Raphael. Among the earliest connoisseurs was Albert, the Prince Consort. It was he who persuaded the Queen to buy Frederic Leighton's colossal work celebrating the Rucellai Madonna. Leighton's picture, Cimabue's celebrated Madonna is carried in procession through the streets of Florence (1855, oil on canvas, Royal Collection) [figure50] glorifies an early renaissance altarpiece, and its maker, rather than the Madonna herself. Vying for attention with the 'gold-back' is the artistic genius who created the altarpiece.

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[18] Art Journal, (London) 1st May 1850, pp.133-136.
[19] William Michael Rossetti, D.G.Rossetti: his Family Letters with a Memoir, (London) 1895, vol.1, p.134.
[20] Alastair Grieve, 'The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and the Anglican High Church', Burlington Magazine, (London) CXI, 1969, pp.294-5.
[21] Georgiana Burne-Jones, Memorials, vol.1, pp.89-90.

Leighton depicts Cimabue as a hero, dressed in white and gold and crowned with laurels, reflecting the elevated status to which Victorian artists like Leighton aspired.

Directly in front of Cimabue in the procession is a group of musicians. One plays a psaltery, another a tambourine, while a third tunes a vielle. They are accompanying a lady and gentleman who sing from a long manuscript. The music is an essential part of the celebrations in honour of the Virgin, and her champion, Cimabue. The tempo of the singing determines the pace of the procession, and creates a framework for the ceremony, as the Rucellai Madonna is brought to the Florentine church of S. Maria Novella. During his research, Leighton studied the frescoes in this church. There he found several images of musical instruments, which re-emerged in his own painting: the psaltery, for example, is lifted from the Triumph of St. Thomas Aquinas by Andrea di Buonaiuto (c.1365), and the tambourine appears in the Allegory of the Dominican Order by the same artist. Frescoes in the Spanish Chapel were his source for costume details, and for the portraits of Cimabue and his fellow aritsts, Giotto, Simone Memmi and Taddeo Gaddi.[22] The presence of Cimabue's contemporaries – artists, poets and even Charles of Anjou, King of Sicily - as identifiable figures reinforces the esteem in which this image of the Madonna was held. One of these figures stands apart from the procession; the sharp face and distinctive cap tell us that the onlooker is Dante. He acts as our surrogate in the picture with his detached observation of the scene. He does not join in the celebrations but, like a visitor to the Royal Academy, considers the spectacle of art, religion and music.

Music in Dante: Sacred and Sensual

Leighton's interest in Dante and his world, expressed in this painting and in Dante in Exile (1864, oil on canvas, collection of Lord Lloyd Webber), was evidence of a growing interest in the Florentine writer. Until the mid-century few in Britain had read his works but, partly thanks to the scholarship of the Rossetti family, he became an important source for poets and painters. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, who began his translation of Dante's

autobiographical Vita Nuova in 1845, said 'in those early days all around me partook of the influence of the great Florentine'.[23] In Dante's poetry, music was closely associated with worship. Sacred song manifested the general rejoicing in heaven. So in his description of the circles of heavens in Paradiso Canto X, Dante described the music of the spheres:

> so did I see the glorious wheel revolve and render voice to voice in harmony and sweetness that may not be known except where joy maketh itself eternal.[24]

Unlike Plato's heavenly music which was made by sirens, in Dante's vision, the sound was the singing of the blessed.

In addition to this general hymn of praise, music was also associated with individual saints and blessed souls. The Virgin Mary was surrounded by music at key moments in the vision. Like Fra Angelico in his Coronation of the Virgin, Dante imagined the Queen of Heaven at the centre of a choir of angels. For Dante, the veneration of the Virgin was best expressed through song:

> And at that mid-point, with outstretched wings, I saw more than a thousand Angels making festival...I saw there, smiling to their sports and to their songs, a beauty which was gladness in the eyes of all the other saints.[25]

Angelic music was also associated with Dante's beloved Beatrice. As Mary's messenger, it was appropriate that she should take on some of the attributes of the Virgin. So when Beatrice appeared to Dante in Purgatory, she was accompanied by 'a sweet melody [that] ran through the luminous air'[26] and the singing of 'Veni sponsa de Libano'.[27] This was one of the episodes from

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[22] Royal Academy of Arts, Frederic Leighton, (London and New York: Royal Academy and Harry N. Abrams) 1996, p.107.
[23] 'Shirley', Frasers Magazine, (London) 1870, p.610.
[24] Dante, The Divine Comedy: Paradiso, ed. and transl. by Rev. Philip H Wicksteed and H Oelsner, (London: J.M. Dent and Sons) 1899, reprinted 1910, p.125, l.146-8.
[25] Dante, The Divine Comedy: Paradiso, Canto XXXI, p.383.
[26] Dante, The Divine Comedy: Purgatorio, Canto XXIX, p.365.
[27] Ibid., Canto XXX p.367.

the Divine Comedy that appealed to Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and he produced a watercolour of The Meeting of Dante and Beatrice in Eden (1853-4, Fitzwilliam Museum) [figure 51]. Unlike his hero William Blake, Rossetti did not attempt to reproduce the whole Divine Pageant, complete with griffins and other winged beasts.[28] However, despite reducing the incident to its essentials Rossetti retained the musical setting. In the encounter between Dante and Beatrice, she is flanked by two girls carrying psalteries. Their disdainful expressions and her upright pose check Dante's approach. This image explores the tension in Dante's verse between spiritual and sensual devotion. On earth, Dante wrote of his impassioned love for his lady Beatrice. In heaven, this desire is transformed into sacred quest.

But Dante's language betrays the difficulty in separating the sexual and the spiritual in his relationship with Beatrice. In the Vita Nuova, at times Dante seems to elide Beatrice and the Virgin Mary. The moment of her death is described in terms associated with the Assumption:

> and I seemed to look towards Heaven, and to behold a multitude of angels who were returning upwards...and these angels were singing together gloriously...'Osanna in excelsis.[29]

However on other occasions the troubadour tradition in which Dante wrote his passionate sonnets resurfaced in the courts of heaven. Dante's unrequited love for Beatrice resonates in his descriptions of angelic song. The angels in Paradiso 'unceasingly unwintereth Hosanna with three melodies'.[30] According to the editors of the 1899 edition, the use of the word 'unwintereth' was 'bold almost to audacity' as 'In troubadour poetry the birds are said to 'unwinter' themselves', putting off winter with their spring songs.[31] So Dante's Heaven at times resembles a springtime setting for courtly love and dalliance.

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[28] William Blake's own illustration of the meeting of Dante and Beatrice shows Beatrice Addressing Dante from the Car (1824-7, pen and ink and watercolour on paper, Tate Britain).
[29] Dante, Vita Nuova, translated by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Poems and Translations 1850-1870, (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 1913, reprinted 1968, p.355.
[30] Dante, The Divine Comedy: Paradiso, Canto XXVIII, p.347.
[31] Dante, The Divine Comedy: Paradiso, Canto XXVIII, p.349.

Rossetti's watercolour of The Meeting of Dante and Beatrice in Eden follows Dante's example in mixing spiritual with potentially sensual motifs. The clearing in a wood, in which the figures meet, corresponds with Dante's text. However it is also a conventional setting for trysting lovers. Equally the unveiling of Beatrice's face is a symbol of spiritual revelation, but it could also suggest the action of a bride as she turns to her groom.[32] The ambiguity extends to the musicians who accompany Beatrice. Their looks discourage any romantic encounter but these girls, who lack angels' wings, could provide a musical environment for a passionate reunion. This thesis demonstrates that music is an ambiguous and slippery motif which can allow sensuality to intrude.

In a later treatment of the same subject, Rossetti made the earthly nature of Dante's desire much more explicit. In 1872 he painted a version of Beata Beatrix (oil on canvas, Art Institute of Chicago) [figure 52] with a predella panel showing the Meeting of Dante and Beatrice. Now Dante approaches Beatrice on his knees. He reaches out, his hands almost touching her robe. She bends over him as she unveils, and the musicians crane their necks to see the reunion. The woodland bower, the flock of doves, the fleshy angels, their serenades, even the handling of the oil paint, create an impression of anticipated eroticism which undermines the ostensibly spiritual nature of the encounter.

Music and Spiritualism

Beata Beatrix was a subject which haunted Rossetti. He began work on the first version in the early 1860s, with his wife Elizabeth Siddal as the model. She had already appeared as Beatrice in many of Rossetti's early watercolours. When Siddal died in 1862, the affinity between the 'blessed Beatrice' and his own dead lady became even stronger in Rossetti's imagination. He put the half-finished canvas away for a time, but friends encouraged him to work on it again, and it was finished in 1870 (first version c.1864-1870, oil on canvas, Tate Britain). The idea of lovers separated by death, which lies at the heart of Dante's poetry, had long fascinated Rossetti

[32] George Eliot's short story The Lifted Veil (Blackwoods Edinburgh Magazine) July 1859, used the motif of the veil to suggest clairvoyance and revealed reality.

and now had an extra poignancy. His poem, The Blessed Damozel (first published in 1850) dwelt on the same theme, as did Poe's The Raven which Rossetti illustrated in 1848 (pen and ink with brown wash, Victoria and Albert Museum) [figure 53].

After the death of his wife, Rossetti tried to find ways to transcend the barriers between the living and the dead. His experiments with spiritualism seemed to offer hope.[33] But in his writing he suggested that music also allowed the dead to cross the threshold and be reunited, briefly, with their lovers. In the poem Willowwood, for example, Love plays a lute beside a well. As the lover looks into the water, the music is transformed into the voice of the lost beloved. Love's music brings the dead back to the living:

> As I stooped, her own lips rising there
>
> Bubbled with brimming kisses at my mouth.[34]

Why did the Victorians believe that music opened up channels of communication between this world and the next? This thesis argues that music works on three levels. Firstly, if heaven is imagined as a musical space, sacred songs on earth are a self-conscious echo of this heavenly music. A performer of sacred music tries to recreate the experience of heaven on earth. They deliberately emulate the afterlife. Secondly, by creating or listening to music, mortals can gain a foretaste of paradise. Music offers a glimpse of the spiritual world beyond our everyday experience. By concentrating on musical sound, especially if it is performed in the darkened, hushed environment of a concert hall or church, we are encouraged to imagine non-material forms and sensations. Music gives us space for contemplation and promotes reverie. In the words of the French writer Charles Baudelaire, 'by music and through music, ...the soul dimly descries the splendours beyond the tomb'.[35] Finally, and most strikingly, music can allow the dead to re-enter the world of the living. As we shall see,

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[33] See ed. Andrew Wilton and Robert Upstone, Symbolism in Britain: the Age of Rossetti, Burne-Jones and Watts, (London: Tate Gallery) 1997, p.194.
[34] D.G. Rossetti, 'Willowwood', Poems and Translations 1850-1870, p.119-120.
[35] Charles Baudelaire on Théophile Gautier, published in L'Artiste, March 1859, reprinted in Selected writings, transl. P. E. Charvet, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 1972, p.268.

this is partly the result of the trance-state that music can induce. In this state, the living believe they can communicate with the dead.
The Victorian craze for spiritualism suggested that the dead communicated not just by automatic writing and ectoplasm, but through music.[36] They sounded bells and trumpets, or whispered in the ears of the bereaved. When Robert Browning tried to discredit spiritualism in his poem Mr. Sludge, musical phenomena appeared as part of his false medium's repertoire. Mr. Sludge tried to persuade his patron that the spirits made music in his séances: 'I don't know ...Why the accordion plays a prettier waltz / Than I can pick out on the piano-forte'.[37]

The Victorian music critic and clergyman H.R. Haweis offered a partial explanation for the uncanny effects of musical experience. He described music as a 'kind of borderland upon which internal emotion becomes wedded to external sound'.[38] Music becomes a mechanism for expressing extreme states of mind. Even Eduard Hanslick, a fierce critic of composers who played up the emotional content of their works, recognised the 'power of art to cause...stirrings without earthly cause'.[39] For the bereaved, music acts as a catalyst. When strong emotion, like grief, is combined with the active contemplation of the lost beloved in a musical space, the dead seem to draw near to the living. Some Victorian artists made this explicit in their work. They showed music as a conduit between waking and dreaming, the living and the dead, and men and angels.

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[36] For a full account of the development of spiritualism, see Janet Oppenheim, The Other World: Spiritualism and Psychical Research in England, 1850-1914, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 1985. She describes the séances of one of the most famous mediums of the 1860s, Daniel Douglas Home. They followed a 'standard repertoire' of moving furniture, objects soaring through the air, materialisations of spirit arms and hands, strange lights and voices, and musical instruments, including an accordion, that made music without being touched (p.13).
[37] 'Mr. Sludge, 'the Medium', 1864, The Poetical Works of Robert Browning, (London: Smith, Elder and Co.) 1896, vol.1, p.621.
[38] H. R. Haweis, Music and Morals, (London:Daldy, Ibster & Co.) 1871, p.19. Haweis was also sympathetic to Spiritualist phenomena, becoming a member of the Society for Psychical Research. As he said in a sermon in 1872, 'Spiritualism fitted very nicely into Christianity; it seemed to be a legitimate development, not a contradiction'. Quoted by Oppenheim, The Other World, p.71. According to the New Dictionary of National Biography, (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 2004, Haweis was an accomplished musician, who 'helped to introduce Wagner's music to English audiences' (New DNB). After D.G. Rossetti's death in 1882, Haweis and his family moved into the artist's house in Cheyne Walk, Chelsea.
[39] Eduard Hanslick, 'On the Musically Beautiful' (1854), ed. Bojan Bujic in Music in European Thought 1851-1912, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 1988, p.17.

This thesis has already demonstrated that Burne-Jones conceived of music as a bridge between the earthly and unearthly spheres. His designs for painted furniture and stained-glass make that plain. He shared this conception with Rossetti. In fact it was one of the elements in Rossetti's art that attracted Burne-Jones's attention; he spotted Rossetti's tiny illustration for The Maids of Elfenmere (wood engraving, Dalziel Brothers, 1855, Victoria and Albert Museum) [figure 54] and was determined to meet the designer of this miniature masterpiece. It is a musical subject, with three maids singing quietly and a young man, perplexed by their presence. Burne-Jones described his reaction to this tiny print: 'It is, I think, the most beautiful drawing for an illustration that I have ever seen'. He was enchanted by 'the weirdness of the Maids of Elfen-mere, the musical timed movement of their arms together as they sing, the face of the man'.[40] We should note the qualities in this design that particularly caught Burne-Jones's eye, as they constantly re-emerge in the art of both men. There is an ambiguous relationship between earthly and dream-worlds; are these women real or imagined by the man in the foreground? The location is also uncertain and claustrophobic; the figures seem boxed in between the sloping walls, and the view from the windows suggests a medieval setting. The 'heady mixture of sensuality and disquiet' created by Rossetti was repeated in his images for the next thirty years.[41]

One of the most striking features of The Maids of Elfenmere is the glazed expression of the women. (It reminds us of the abstracted state of Hunt's singing school-girl.) This expression suggests that their music has some power to break down the barriers between the realm of men and the realm of the spirit. The maids seem entranced by the combined rhythm of their singing and spinning. They wear simple shifts which might be night-dresses, implying that they are sleep-walkers.

The connection between music and somnabulism was well-established in the mid-19th century, with both artists and scientists anxious to explore this liminal state. Perhaps the most vivid example of this fascination with sleep-

[40] Georgiana Burne-Jones, Memorials, vol.1, pp.119-120
[41] Paul Goldman, in ed. A. Wilton and R. Upstone, Symbolism in Britain, p.37.

walking was Jenny Lind's appearance in Bellini's opera La Sonnambula. Accounts of her performance suggested that Lind was not merely acting, but that her singing was indeed the result of a trance. In the words of one critic in 1850:

> Not only the look and movements are those of a somnabulist but the singing is that of the dreamy state – internal, addressed to the objects in the dreamy circle of the brain when in the cold ecstasy of the night.

The audience appeared to be witnessing 'powerful phenomena unexplained and bordering on the preternatural'.[42] The boundaries between fact and fiction, natural and supernatural were blurred. It was this sense of ambiguity that Rossetti attempted to create in his design for the Maids of Elfenmere. And in both Bellini's opera and Rossetti's print, music contributed to the trance-state of the somnabulist.

19th century theorists like Arthur Schopenhauer suggested that music offered a glimpse of the 'innermost nature of the world'. Schopenhauer's conception of music is central to the argument of this thesis. He compared music's influence on the mind to the 'clairvoyance' apparently experienced by some sleep-walkers. Both music and somnambulism allowed some people to transcend their normal mental limits. Schopenhauer equated the act of composing music with the ability to step across the threshold and 'express the profoundest wisdom in a language that [the] reasoning faculty does not understand'.[43] He suggested that both composers and sleep-walkers could see beyond the material to the spiritual world.

Schopenhauer's writings had a strong impact on Richard Wagner's approach to composing. In his essay on Beethoven (1870), Wagner repeated Schopenhauer's assertion that the composer was like a clairvoyant sleep-walker who can communicate visions which he sees in his dream-state.

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[42] Quoted by Daniel Pick, Svengali's Web: the Alien Enchanter in Modern Culture, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press) 2000, p.122.
[43] Arthur Schopenhauer, 'Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung' (The World as Will and Representation) vol.1. 1819, reprinted in ed. Edward A Lippman, Musical Aesthetics: A Historical Reader vol.II, The Nineteenth Century, (New York: Pendragon Press) 1986-1993, p.168.

Wagner also suggested that not only the composer, but the listener could be affected by music, experiencing clairvoyance or seeing visions. Wagner wrote that it was

> an undeniable fact that while mentally engaged in listening to music our power of vision is so reduced that we no longer perceive objects with the normal intensity.

The result of our active hearing, and reduced vision, is a

> state aroused by deep interior dreaming which...[makes] possible the appearance of a ghostly figure.[44]

Music is both created by the clairvoyance of the composer, and also triggers a supernatural experience for the listener.

This thesis argues that the idea that music encourages clairvoyance or communication with the dead had an impact on the visual arts. For example, this theme was explored in a large-scale work by Frank Dicksee. Dicksee has been dubbed a 'post Pre-Raphaelite' and the influence of the Brotherhood can be seen in his decorative medievalism and his preference for subjects from Keats: he painted his version of La Belle Dame Sans Merci as late as 1902 (oil on canvas, Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery).[45] His melodramatic Reverie (oil on canvas, 1895, National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside) [figure 55] suggests that music provides a bridge by which a husband's first wife (or former lover) is able to reappear in his drawing room. The ghost of this woman stands beside the new wife, who plays the piano unaware of the effect of her music. The husband seems more shamed than fearful in his encounter with the dead.

This picture like many other musical images raises questions in the viewer. It has evidently perplexed other scholars, including Richard Leppert, who

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[44] Richard Wagner, 'Beethoven', 1870, in Bojan Bujic, Music in European Thought 1851-1912, p.73-73.

[45] See Amanda Kavanagh, 'A Post Pre-Raphaelite', Country Life, (London) January 31st 1985, pp.240-2.

read this as two figures of the same woman.[46] But the original Royal Academy catalogue entry makes it clear that the husband is remembering how his dead wife used to perform the same piece of music that his new wife is now playing: 'In the years fled, / Lips that are dead / Sang me that song'.[47] The apparition has been called up because her favourite song has been appropriated by the new wife. Does the ghost's despairing pose, her hands raised to her head, suggest anger that this personal piece has been taken over by a rival? Her appearance, with loosened hair and wearing a nightgown could suggest several readings. While it clearly refers to the intimate relationship with her husband, when combined with the dramatic tearing of her hair it could signify madness - or perhaps she is covering her ears to stop the noise. Her nightgown also hints at the unexpected arrival of a sleep-walker. Perhaps the overwhelming effect of music was her undoing, as it is the means by which she reappears. Several fundamental questions are left unanswered. Most importantly, can the dead woman be truly seen or is she merely present in the husband's imagination as a response to his own feelings conjured up by the music?

Dicksee's picture is an extreme example of a theme that runs through many late 19th century images: that music allowed listeners to transcend everyday reality and encounter the spirit world. Dicksee subverts the conventional idea of domestic music-making. Rather than soothing or entertaining her husband, the woman's playing has allowed the dead to communicate with the living. Unlike Burne-Jones and Rossetti, Dicksee does not site his supernatural scene in the past, but brings it up to date. This makes it all the more disturbing. The earlier Pre-Raphaelite artists drew on the traditional associations of music with heaven, based on their readings of the Bible and Dante. They also studied the medieval Dance of Death imagery. Dicksee, on the other hand, refers to the contemporary fascination with spiritualism, where materialisations were accompanied by unearthly music. Here the roles are reversed, with music causing the supernatural phenomenon. I would argue that Dicksee creates a visual echo of Wagner's theory, that the

[46] Richard Leppert, The Sight of Sound: Music, Representation and the History of the Body, (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press) 1993, p.144.
[47] Ibid., p.144.

man's concentrated listening enables him to encounter 'a ghostly figure', resurrected by his dream-state.

Music and Mesmerism

In 1894, the year before Reverie was exhibited, another artist was exploring the complicated relationship between music, the supernatural and the unconscious. George du Maurier published his novel Trilby, accompanied by a series of illustrations showing the transformation of a tone-deaf artists' model into a singing sensation. Du Maurier was tapping into the popular enthusiasm for mesmerism, which had much in common with the excitement generated by spiritualism. Both in séances and in mesmeric experiments, the mediums or mesmerised patients could reach beyond their normal mental and physical boundaries. In a mesmeric trance, the clairvoyant and uncanny abilities of sleep-walkers were deliberately induced. So when Trilby was mesmerised by the conductor Svengali, she could perform musical feats that were impossible in her waking state. Her body and voice were put on public display on stage across Europe, but she was oblivious to her musical ability:

> there is not a sign of effort, of difficulty overcome...she gently jerks her head from side to side in time to Svengali's baton as if to shake the willing notes out quicker and higher and shriller.[48]

Du Maurier's fictional account of a mesmerised singer echoes a well-publicised episode in Jenny Lind's career. We have already seen how Lind was closely associated with somnabulism and entranced performance. In 1847 she attended a mesmeric session conducted by Dr. James Braid. When one of Braid's subjects, a working-class girl, was mesmerised by him, she was able to demonstrate extraordinary musical ability. As Jenny Lind sang, the girl followed her note for note, through 'all the fantastic tricks and displays of genius by the Swedish nightingale'.[49] This extraordinary display of virtuosity lasted only as long as the trance: 'when the subject was

[48] George du Maurier, Trilby, 1894, reprinted, (Ware: Wordsworth Editions) 1995, p.173.
[49] Phrenological Journal, 1847, quoted by Daniel Pick, Svengali's Web, p.124.

awakened, she had no memory of her achievement'.[50] The parallels with Du Maurier's description of Trilby can be clearly seen.

Braid's workhouse girl was only one example of a subject who performed music while in an induced trance. The mesmerist Chauncy Hare Townsend described a patient known as E.A. who displayed clairvoyance by playing music in the dark.[51] But the relationship between music and mesmerism was more complex than these party-tricks implied. From the earliest mesmeric experiments in the 1770s, music was played in the background as subjects entered their trance-state.[52] The glass harmonica was used most often by Franz Anton Mesmer but wind instruments and the piano also seemed to help. Furthermore, music could perhaps explain how mesmerism worked, through the analogy of vibrating strings. If one violin string could be made to vibrate sympathetically when another was played, by extension an entranced subject could pick up the vibrations from the mesmeriser. As A.A. Tardy de Montravel wrote in 1785:

> The nerves of two human beings can...be compared to chords of two musical instruments placed in the greatest possible harmony and union. When the chord is played on one instrument, a corresponding chord is created by resonance in the other instrument.[53]

This could explain how Jenny Lind, or Svengali, controlled the singing of a mesmerised subject.

Du Maurier's illustrations for his novel show how Trilby was mesmerised by her husband [figure 56]. Svengali kneels in front of Trilby, raises his hands and their eyes lock. When she is performing, she follows the movement of his baton [figure 57]. However, the audience is excited not only by her voice but by also by the display of her body; after all, she was an artists' model. Before she became a singer, she enchanted young artists in the studios of

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[50] Daniel Pick, Svengali's Web, p.124.
[51] Phyllis Weliver, Women Musicians in Victorian Fiction 1860-1900: Representations of Music, Science and Gender in the Leisured Home, (Aldershot: Ashgate) 2000, p.79 and p.87.
[52] Ibid., p.64.
[53] Ibid, p.70.

Paris with her stunning figure. Paid to take her clothes off, and an unmarried mother, she was barely distinguishable from a prostitute. Certainly Little Billee's mother was aghast at the prospect of Trilby as a daughter-in-law. Although Du Maurier's written accounts of her singing focus on the purity of her voice and its 'holy, heavenly sweetness', his illustrations present her as a more equivocal figure.[54] In the early chapters she appears barefoot, sitting cross-legged on a rug and smoking a cigarette. Even in the later illustrations, her statuesque beauty is emphasised by classical drapery, bound to accentuate her breasts. In these images, music, mesmerism and sensuality are combined to create a frisson of excitement for the reader.

The trance-state makes the mesmerised subject vulnerable, not just to our gaze, but to more disturbing acts. Trilby's friends were convinced that it was Svengali's mesmeric power that had made the young woman agree to marry him, and Little Billee was particularly appalled by the idea of their physical relationship. Back in the real world, opponents of the mesmeric craze pointed to France where girls were allegedly seduced by doctors. Under the guise of mesmeric healing, these charlatans could make 'magnetic passes' over the girls' bodies, and then send them into a 'profound sleep' before assaulting them.[55]

Music and Trance: Rossetti and St. Cecilia

The eroticism of the entranced female was a subject that appealed to artists like Rossetti.[56] His illustration of St. Cecilia from Tennyson's poem The Palace of Art (1857, wood engraving, proof on India paper, engraved by Dalziel brothers, Victoria and Albert Museum) [figure 58] is reminiscent of contemporary images of mesmerists and their patients. An angel stands over Cecilia supporting her slumped body in an embrace. The musical context of her story - she has been playing the organ - suggests that this is an induced trance. We can compare this image with a Punch cartoon of the

[54] George du Maurier, Trilby, p.227.
[55] See Thomas Wakley's account in Alison Winter, Mesmerized: Powers of Mind in Victorian Britain, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press) 1998, p.101.
[56] My analysis of St. Cecilia imagery is developed from my article 'Playing the Organ in Pre-Raphaelite Paintings', Music in Art: International Journal of Music Iconography, (New York: Research Center for Music Iconography, CUNY) Vol.XXIX, no.1-2, Spring-Fall 2004, pp.151-170.

mesmerist John Elliotson 'playing' the head of his patient like a keyboard (Punch 1843, illustrated in Alison Winter, Mesmerized, p.63). The physical proximity of the man to his insensible female subject is unnerving. Another illustration, this time from France, is also pertinent. Soirée chez un artiste (L'Illustration, Paris, 19th May 1855) [figure 59] shows an evening party in the drawing-room of the artist Hector Horeau. A group of women have been thrown into a trance by an Italian doctor, M. Ragazzoni. This image is interesting for two reasons. The first is that the women's bodies are uncontrolled; some sink to the ground, others raise their hands and sway. There is a sexual dimension to their rapture. Secondly, this scene has a musical accompaniment: on the far left, a man is playing an upright piano. Evidently M. Ragazzoni believed that music would aid his attempts to mesmerise the women.

When Rossetti designed his image of St. Cecilia, the patron saint of music, he deliberately included an erotic, entranced dimension that would have been familiar to his contemporaries from descriptions of mesmerised women. In an ostensibly spiritual subject, Rossetti injects a note of ambiguity. The object of devotion slips from sacred to sensual, and the angelic embrace is no longer chaste. Music forms an essential component in this representational shift.

Rossetti chose to illustrate Tennyson's descriptions of the Palace of Art, including a tapestry of St. Cecilia:

> Or in a clear-wall'd city on the sea,
> Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair
> Wound with white roses, slept St. Cecily;
> An angel looked at her.[57]

Rossetti's vision of the saint is doubly distanced. It is a poetic account of an imaginary work of art, reimagined by Rossetti. The wood engraving appeared in an edition of Tennyson's poems published by Moxon, alongside

[57] Alfred Tennyson, Poems of Tennyson 1830-1870, (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 1912, reprinted 1943, p.85.

illustrations by his Pre-Raphaelite colleagues, Hunt and Millais. Tennyson was apparently pleased with the overall results of the Moxon edition,

> but the illustration of the St. Cecilia puzzled him not a little, and he had to give up the problem of what it had to do with his verses.[58]

We can well understand why. Rather than representing the expected spiritual scene, we are confronted with a physical encounter. The angel is not just looking at Cecilia; he is kissing her passionately. She swoons into his arms, her loose hair, closed eyes and exposed throat suggesting voluptuous abandon. Rossetti has subverted the ostensible subject of angelic inspiration.

The heightened eroticism of this image reflects a general trend in Rossetti's style in the later 1850s. By 1860 William Holman Hunt was denouncing Rossetti's images of women for displaying 'gross sensuality of a revolting kind'.[59] However this work demonstrates a particular interest in subverting the expectations of a sacred subject, by playing on the relationship between sacred music, trance and the ambivalent figure of the angel. To understand this relationship, we need to go back to the origins of the Cecilia legend. Cecilia was a Roman maiden who chose chastity over marriage, and persuaded her bridegroom Valerian and his brother to convert to Christianity. After they were martyred, she too was brought before the executioner. He bungled his job, and failed to cut off her head with three strokes of his axe, so she was taken home. After three agonising days, she died.

Cecilia was venerated as a virgin-martyr from the late 5th century, and early images reflect different aspects of her story. Sometimes she is shown with the Gospels in her hand, in others she holds the palm of martyrdom. She is also represented with a throne, a reference to her role as a preacher. However, by the early 14th century, another attribute comes to the fore; she

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[58] Ibid., p.181.

[59] Letter to Thomas Combe, describing Bocca Baciata (oil on wood, 1859, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston) 12th February 1860, quoted by Paul Spencer-Longhurst, The Blue Bower: Rossetti in the 1860s, (Lonodn: Scala and Barber Institute of Fine Arts) 2001, p.36.

is shown holding a portative organ.[60] Thereafter, this instrument becomes her symbol, and dominates all subsequent representations of the saint. In fact, it was hard for any audience from Renaissance Italy to Victorian Britain to look at an image of a woman playing the organ without thinking of St. Cecilia.

But why was St. Cecilia associated with the organ? At first glance, the link appears to derive from the early Latin texts used on her feast day at the basilica in Trastevere, traditionally the site of her house. These texts describe her wedding day, when she rejected the secular music of celebration, and instead sang in her heart to God, asking Him to protect her chastity. In these antiphons, the words 'sang in her heart' in Latin are '*cantatibus organis*', hence a potential misunderstanding arose. (The word '*organis*' refers to her heart rather than the musical instruments that were playing for her wedding feast.) However, the relationship between Cecilia and music, particularly organ music, goes much deeper. In medieval English versions of her legend, retold by Chaucer in the Second Nun's Tale and then by William Caxton (c.1422-c.1491), there is an explicit reference to organs being played:

> And day was comen of hir mariage,
> She, ful devout and humble in hir corage, ...
> And whil the organs maden melodie,
> To God allone in her herte thus sang she;
> O Lord, my soule and eek my body gye
> Unwemmed, lest that I confounded be.[61]

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[60] For a discussion of the development of the St. Cecilia image from the early Church to the Reformation, see Thomas Connolly, Mourning into Joy: Music, Raphael and St. Cecilia, (New Haven: Yale University Press) 1994, especially p.196. For more detailed case-studies of St. Cecilia imagery, see Barbara Russano Hanning, 'From Saint to Muse: Representations of Saint Cecilia in Florence' and Sabine Meine, 'Cecilia Without a Halo: the Changing Musical *Virtus*' in Music in Art: International Journal of Music Iconography, (New York: Research Center for Music Iconography, CUNY) Vol.XXIX, no.1-2, Spring-Fall 2004, pp.91-103 and pp.104-112 and also Julia Grella O'Connell, 'Of Music, Magdalenes and Metanoia in The Awakening Conscience', Journal of Musicological Research (London: Routledge) 24, 2005, pp.123-143.

[61] 'The Seconde Nonnes Tale of the Lyf of Seinte Cecile', The Riverside Chaucer, (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 1987, p.264, lines 130-135. Burne-Jones was familiar with both medieval English versions of the tale, as they were reprinted by his colleague William Morris at the the Kelmscott Press. The Golden Legend was published in 1892 and Chaucer's Complete Works, with wood engravings by Burne-Jones, appeared in 1896.

In this account, Cecilia rejects the organ music in favour of a more spiritual interior music. The organ here is a symbol of human pleasures – dancing and feasting - which she casts off. This explains why in the most famous image of the saint, Raphael's The Ecstasy of St. Cecilia with Sts. Paul, John the Evangelist, Augustine and Mary Magdalene (1513-14, oil on canvas, Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna) [figure 60], she is throwing down her portative organ, and turns her attention to the music of a heavenly choir. The music she makes in her heart is in harmony with the music of the angels. But if the organ in this context is to be read as a sign of worldliness, why do other images of the saint show her playing the instrument?

In his exploration of the iconography of St. Cecilia, Thomas Connolly suggests that the organ represents 'mixed music' which is suitable for use in devotion, but which falls short of the music of divine union achieved by Cecilia on her wedding day.[62] So the organ can refer to different stages in her career. In Raphael's picture, Cecilia has succeeded in entwining her will with God's; the organ is now redundant. But other images reflect the transformation of her soul that enabled her to come to this state. In her own preaching, she compared the conversion of the human spirit to alchemy; a Christian soul is the clay which becomes gold. In Cecilia's story, music is the 'philosopher's stone'. By playing the organ, by making music, Cecilia learns to contemplate God, and becomes sensitive to His will. As Connolly says, in the medieval world, 'music was in the interstices of things'.[63] Music is conceived as a link between the earthly and heavenly realms. So it is appropriate that images of St. Cecilia should make this link explicit.

Rossetti and Burne-Jones self-consciously drew on the traditional iconography of St. Cecilia. They exploited the tensions implicit in her legend between desire and chastity, earthly and heavenly music. Throughout their careers, their favourite subjects were those in which the barriers between the natural and supernatural worlds broke down. In their pictures, men and

[62] Thomas Connolly, Mourning into Joy, p.176-177.
[63] Ibid., p.237.

angels came face to face. St. Cecilia's story appealed to them. However, their interpretations turned her legend on its head.

If we want to appreciate the controversial nature of their work, we should compare it with a similar image by a contemporary artist. Julia Margaret Cameron (1815-1879) was a pioneering photographer who had much in common with the Pre-Raphaelites. Like them, she preferred religious or literary subjects. She knew Burne-Jones through her sister Sara Prinsep, who entertained the leading artists and writers of the day at her salon at Little Holland House.[64] In September 1865 Cameron presented an ambitious photograph to the South Kensington Museum (now Victoria and Albert Museum). She had attempted to create an image of St.Cecilia, after the manner of Raphael (1864-5, albumen print, Victoria and Albert Museum) [figure 61]. Cameron reproduced the composition of Raphael's altarpiece as best she could, using a makeshift portative organ and three of her regular models. However the resulting picture engages the viewer in one startling respect. It is now dominated by women.[65] The unknown man, representing St. Paul, seems detached from the scene in a way that is reminiscent of Rossetti's male figure in The Maids of Elfenmere. There is a similar suggestion that the three women in Cameron's photograph have been conjured up by the man as he meditates. There is also an equivalent ambiguity of gaze in the two images, especially in the entranced expression of St. Cecilia.

Cameron's photograph is confusing. On one hand, it seems to be a homage to Raphael. On another, it is allied to the images that Rossetti created to antagonise those who held Raphael sacred. Perhaps the problem lies with Cameron's desire for her art to be accepted by the Establishment. If we compare her relationship with Tennyson to Rossetti's treatment of the poet we can see why Rossetti's art is ground-breaking. Cameron was devoted to Tennyson, and even moved house in 1860 to be closer to him. She photographed him on numerous occasions, and, with his blessing, published

[64] Edward Burne-Jones spent several months convalescing at the Prinsep's home, Little Holland House during 1858.
[65] The three models are Mary Kellaway (St. John), Mary Hillier (St. Cecilia) and Mary Ryan (Mary Magdalene).

photographic illustrations to his best-seller, The Idylls of the King (1874). At their best, these images capture the magic and romance of the Arthurian tales, but they are often let down by creaky props and intrusive Victorian beards.

When Rossetti came to illustrate Tennyson for the Moxon edition in 1857, he transcended the details of the texts, and made the images his own. As his brother wrote, Rossetti took 'nothing more than a hint and an opportunity' from Tennyson's words. [66] Rossetti wove elements of the saint's legend into this composition so that the audience was forced to acknowledge both the devotional source and the desire expressed in the image. Rossetti shows Cecilia imprisoned in a tower shortly before her execution. The dove that flies through the prison bars suggests the soul's escape to heaven after death. The soldier munching an apple reminds us of Eve's Original Sin, and of man's earthly appetites. The sundial refers to the passing of time, and, as a *memento mori*, makes the viewer reflect on the transience of human experience. Even the way that Cecilia's head is thrown back, displaying her neck, anticipates the strokes of the executioner's axe and her pitifully slow death.

The presence of the angel is also justified by the original sacred sources. When Cecilia is attempting to convert her bridegroom Valerian, she explains that he must not touch her, as she is constantly guarded by a jealous angel:

> I have an aungel which that loveth me,
> That with greet love, wher so I wake or sleepe,
> Is redy ay my body for to kepe.[67]

This angel will kill anyone who harms her, or tries to touch her. The floral wreath that Cecilia wears on her head is a gift from the angel, brought from heaven as a sign that she remains a virgin. Rossetti's interpretation of this part of the story takes the relationship between Cecilia and her guardian angel to the next stage. The jealousy of the angel is the jealousy of a lover:

[66] William Michael Rossetti, quoted by ed. William E. Fredeman, Correspondence of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer) 2002, vol.2, p.181.

it is little wonder therefore that he forbids Valerian to touch her. Rossetti's design leaves the viewer unsure about the angel's status: he has no halo, and his wings are folded so that they resemble a knight's shield. St. Cecilia also lacks a halo, and her wreath of roses is sliding off her head, implying that her reputation as virgin-saint is in jeopardy.

At the heart of this encounter lies a positive organ. Cecilia's hands rest on the keyboard, as if she is about to start playing or has just finished. Either she is expecting to be inspired by her angelic embrace or, more likely, this embrace is the culmination of her performance. If she has just stopped playing then Rossetti's image has more in common with Raphael's altarpiece than might be apparent at first. In both pictures, Cecilia is turning from the music of the organ to enjoy a closer union with angels. While Raphael's saint raises her eyes to heaven, Rossetti's closes her eyes to take pleasure in her angel's embrace. Both artists have imagined Cecilia's music-making as a catalyst for her transformation. Music has broken down the barriers so that she can see, hear and touch angels.

Rossetti intended the angel's kiss to be the 'kiss of death', and certainly her swoon seems to anticipate death.[68] This interpretation is also reinforced by the details of the dove, the sundial and the soldier's weapon. The musical trances already analysed in this study - in Reverie, Trilby and Rossetti's own Maids of Elfenmere - have never been as dramatic and dangerous as this. Not only is Cecilia vulnerable to the erotic attentions of the angel, but the intensity of the musical experience seems life-threatening. The research of the anthropologist Gilbert Rouget help us to understand the nature of this violent swoon.

In his study of Music and Trance (1980), Rouget makes a distinction between religious ecstasy which results in a quiet meditative communion with God, and a more dramatic, fainting trance brought on by singing, playing

[67] Riverside Chaucer, p264, l.152-6.
[68] Correspondence of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, vol.2, p.175, no.57.15, n.3.

and listening to music.[69] Raphael's St. Cecilia seems to fall into the first category as she rejects earthly music, and is able 'in her heart' to sing in harmony with the heavenly choirs. Her experience coincides with Rouget's description of a private religious ecstasy which is 'accompanied by visual or auditory hallucinations'.[70] Rossetti's St. Cecilia appears to be experiencing the more violent form of trance which is explicitly linked to physical musical performance. Rouget suggests that the very root of the word, 'transir' meaning to 'pass away', implies a symbolic death. He goes further, citing examples of religious trances which can be manifested 'not only by fainting but by sudden death'. These usually afflict the uninitiated who experience religious music or poetry unexpectedly and who cannot control their response. The danger of such trances is heightened if the music is performed without the appropriate restraint of ritual and self-control.[71] I would argue that Rossetti's St. Cecilia has broken away from the conventions of musical performance which previously governed her ecstatic communion with God. As a result, she has been overcome by the unexpected power of devotional music, and has passed out. She is now vulnerable to the ardour of the male angel, and to the gaze of the viewer. Edgar Allen Poe, one of Rossetti's heroes, said that 'the death...of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world' and here Rossetti gives us a seductive foretaste of Cecilia's passing away.[72]

The connection between musical trance, eroticism and death is made explicit by Rossetti in The Palace of Art. However, it also underpins other images considered in this thesis. In Dicksee's Reverie, the dead woman is conjured up by music: her husband's trance-state is induced by the musical performance of his new wife. Furthermore, the spirit's appearance has a sexual dimension. Wearing only her nightdress, she reminds her husband of their conjugal ties, and displays the anguish of a jealous lover. In Du Maurier's account of Trilby's last days, he suggests that the musical

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[69] Gilbert Rouget, Music and Trance: A Theory of the Relations Between Music and Possession, translated from French, revised by Brunhilde Biebuyck, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) 1980, transl. 1985, pp.7-12.
[70] Ibid., p.10.
[71] Ibid., p.261.
[72] Edgar Allen Poe, in 'The Philosophy of Composition', 1846, quoted by Christine Poulson, 'Death and the Maiden: the Lady of Shalott and the Pre-Raphaelites', in Re-framing the Pre-Raphaelites, (Aldershot: Scolar) 1996, p.185.

mesmeric trances hastened her death. She was left 'hopelessly ill and insane' when the mesmerist Svengali died of a heart-attack, and seemed prematurely aged.[73] Svengali was even able to mesmerise her from beyond the grave. When his photograph was mysteriously delivered to Trilby's rooms, she stared at it intently, until 'her eyes dilated' and she began to sing. Then, worn out, she 'fell back on the pillow' and died.[74] Her friend Little Billee was convinced that

> he [was] calling her from the t-t-tomb!...She's gone straight to him, after all – in some other life!...to slave for him, and sing for him, and help him to make better music than ever![75]

In death, as in life, Trilby was both sexually and musically bound to Svengali, because of his mesmeric power over her.

Music and Desire: Burne-Jones and St. Cecilia

For Burne-Jones, the idea that music enabled mortals and angels to cross the threshold between this world and the next was irresistibly seductive. Throughout his life, Burne-Jones constantly returned to these borderlands. The added thrill of sexual vulnerability and an awareness of mortality, implicit in images of musical trance like Rossetti's St. Cecilia, encouraged Burne-Jones to explore the subject himself. He did so in a characteristically idiosyncratic manner, making it part of the decorative scheme for his wife's upright piano, with the Ladies and Death below and a white-robed girl, a positive organ and a winged figure above [figures 1 & 2].

The girl/organ/angel group appears in Burne-Jones's work at least four times between 1860 and 1877. According to Georgie, this composition was always intended to represent a sensual subject. Most scholars have accepted her account that even at the first stage of development the image was intended

[73] George du Maurier, Trilby, p.212.
[74] Ibid., p.226-7.
[75] Ibid., p.230.

as a love scene.[76] In her husband's biography (1904) Georgie says that this image was known as Le Chant d'Amour from the outset.[77] This title appears to have come from one of the old French *chansons* that Georgie enjoyed singing:'Hélas! je sais un chant d'amour, / Triste ou gai, tour à tour'. If we accept her reading, the girl is playing a love song while the winged figure represents Cupid. Certainly, the figure working the bellows does resemble the winged youth who appears in Love Leading the Pilgrim (oil on canvas, 1877-97, Tate Britain). But this thesis argues that without Georgie's title we would read this scene as St. Cecilia and her guardian angel. The girl's white dress and modest appearance are combined with Cecilia's distinctive attribute, the organ.

Burne-Jones knew and admired Rossetti's illustration for the Palace of Art as it was created when they were working side by side. He also knew Cecilia's story from his own study of Chaucer. The double-edged meaning of musical performance, sacred and sensual, exploited by Rossetti was pushed to the limit in Burne-Jones's Chant d'Amour series. Burne-Jones deliberately subverted a well-established devotional motif, by transforming it into an image of thwarted desire. He played on the same confusion of identities that were found in Rossetti's Palace of Art illustration – the male figure is both angel and knight, Cecilia is both virgin and bride. The resulting images trouble and exhilarate the viewer.

It is typical of Burne-Jones's working method that a favourite subject began as a work of decorative art. Many of his most celebrated oil paintings had taken shape in other media: his treatment of the Sleeping Beauty story, for example, began life on a tile panel (1862-3, tin-glazed earthenware tiles, decorated by Morris and Company, Victoria and Albert Museum). Once he was happy with a composition he would revisit it, creating versions in watercolour and oil. So we should not be surprised to find the initial idea for Le Chant d'Amour tucked away under a piano lid.

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[76] See for example the catalogue of the centenary exhibition, ed. Stephen Wildman and John Christian, Edward Burne-Jones; Victorian Artist-Dreamer, (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art) 1998, pp.98-100 and pp.212-214.
[77] Georgiana Burne-Jones, Memorials, vol.1, p.207.

The second version of the subject (Le Chant d'Amour, 1865, watercolour with bodycolour, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston) [figure 62] makes explicit references to the Cecilia legend, but undermines them by strengthening the erotic content of the picture. The most visible connection is the wreath of red and white flowers on the head of the Angel/Love. This detail comes directly from Cecilia's story:

> This aungel hadde of roses and of lilie
> Corones two, the whiche he bar in honde [78]

We know that Burne-Jones was aware of the significance of the crowns of roses and lilies in Cecilia's story. Not only could he see one in Rossetti's design for the Palace of Art, he also included them in his designs for the St. Cecilia window at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford (1874, stained and painted glass, made by Morris and Company). Below the main window, where the saint plays a portative organ, Burne-Jones depicted three scenes from her life. In the first, she teaches Valerian about the Christian faith; in the second, she plays her organ again, while her angel, holding two garlands of red and white flowers, stands between her and Valerian; in the third, Burne-Jones shows her martyrdom.

The floral coronet disappears in later treatments of Le Chant d'Amour but in the Boston watercolour it is a reminder of the sacred source of the story. However, the original devotional purpose of the subject is slipping away, to be replaced by physical desire. The winged figure's wreath identifies him as Cecilia's angel, but his blindfold and bow are traditional symbols of Cupid. The chief difference between the first and second versions of Le Chant d'Amour is the introduction of the listening knight. This figure is compatible with a reading based on the Cecilia legend. He could be interpreted as Valerian who encounters the angel when he converts to Christianity. If this was part of Burne-Jones's intention, then Valerian's presence could account for the melancholic mood of the picture. This is a love-triangle with Cecilia placed between her earthly and heavenly desires.

[78] Riverside Chaucer, p.265, l. 220-1.

The mood and structure of this watercolour are amplified in the oil version painted by Burne-Jones between 1868 and 1877 (oil on canvas, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) [figure 63]. This large Le Chant d'Amour was created as a pendant to Laus Veneris (oil on canvas, Laing Art Gallery, Tyne and Wear Museums, 1873-8) [frontispiece]. Both paintings were commissioned by Burne-Jones's patron William Graham to hang in his mansion in Grosvenor Place, London. It would not be too far-fetched to see them as contrasting visions, representing the two meanings of music. In Le Chant d'Amour we are reminded of the sacred music of Cecilia, while in Laus Veneris we are drawn into the picture by the sensual music of Venus.

By this stage of its development, however, Burne-Jones only offers us the occasional tantalising glimpse of the devotional origins of the Le Chant d'Amour composition. We find, for example, a carving of Adam on the side of the organ and, in the background, a delicate beam of light from a church window shines towards the instrument. However, the artist redirects our attention to more earthly passions. He reveals the physical beauty of Love by exposing his shapely arms and legs. The collapsed body of the love-sick knight, sad distant expression of the girl, and Love's closed eyes all contribute to an impression of yearning and thwarted desire.

The large oil painting of Le Chant d'Amour was soon recognised as one of Burne-Jones's masterpieces, fetching 3,150 guineas when it was auctioned in 1885. However alongside this highly public version, Burne-Jones had also been working on a more personal image. In 1870 he completed a portrait of his mistress Maria Zambaco (oil on canvas, Clemens-Sels-Museum, Neuss, Germany) [figure 64] in which Maria is shown resting her hands on a medieval manuscript. On the open page of the manuscript it is possible to make out a miniature version of Le Chant d'Amour. While Burne-Jones was painting this portrait, his wife discovered his adulterous affair and the inclusion of this tiny Le Chant d'Amour reflects his troubled emotional state. If this image can be read as a commentary on Burne-Jones's own situation, it reinforces our interpretation of the composition as a triangular relationship between a bride (Cecilia), a groom (Valerian) and a winged Love or Angel.

It seems astonishing how far this image travelled in Burne-Jones's work. It started life on a piano that was played by his wife, and could only have been seen while she sang. Within ten years Burne-Jones wove this same image into a memorial to his adulterous passion for Maria Zambaco. His original St. Cecilia, a symbol of chastity and devotion became an emblem of thwarted desire. This malleability demonstrates why musical subjects like St. Cecilia and her organ were so attractive to Burne-Jones. They could be twisted and reconfigured, hinting at one meaning while apparently proclaiming another.

The Symbolic Value of Portative and Positive Organs

Rossetti and Burne-Jones found the motif of the organ particularly seductive as the instrument embodies a multitude of symbolic possibilities. Even in conventional images of St. Cecilia its meaning is ambiguous as the organ can represent opposing aspects of her story. It can either refer to the earthly music of the marriage feast, or to the sacred music of the virgin as she dedicates herself to God. The organ can act as shorthand for religious devotion and anticipates the angelic music heard in heaven. In Rossetti's early work, The Girlhood of Mary Virgin, the portative organ was included as a symbol of Mary's sanctity. However, if two musicians are needed to play it - one pumps the bellows while the other plays the keyboard - the organ can become a metaphor for sexual union.

The smaller portative instrument could be carried with a sling in religious processions: its inclusion in altarpieces like Fra Angelico's Linaiouli Tabernacle (tempera on panel, 1433, Museo di San Marco, Florence) [figure 65] shows how it accompanied worship in the pre-Reformation church. The positive organ, on the other hand, was more often connected with sensuality. It appears, for example, in the series of erotic paintings of Venus with a musician (e.g. c.1550, oil on canvas, Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid) [figure 28] by Titian. In these pictures the organ provides a musical accompaniment as the viewer joins the musician in admiring Venus' naked body. This thesis argues that the switch from a portative organ (in Raphael's St. Cecilia) to a positive organ (in Rossetti's and Burne-Jones's work) is one sign of the move from a sacred to a sensual reading of their images.

Rossetti and his contemporaries took advantage of the partnership implicit in playing the positive organ. In their art, the instrument becomes a site of love-making. It is even possible to interpret certain elements of the organ's construction as symbols of arousal; perhaps the inflation of the bellows and the rigid organ pipes can be read in this way. It certainly does not seem too far-fetched if we consider one of Rossetti's designs in which the positive organ plays a central role. In the early 1860s, he created a design for Music as part of the King René's Honeymoon series showing the multi-talented king and his new wife.[79] The images were reproduced both on a painted cabinet (1861, Victoria and Albert Museum) [figure 66], and in stained glass (c.1863, Victoria and Albert Museum) [figure 67]. In the Music scene the Queen is playing the organ, while the King pumps the bellows. As the couple lean across the organ pipes to kiss, the Queen's mantle slides down around her hips. Meanwhile the King's hand grips the bellows. These are shown pressing into his lap. The implication of this, as the bellows swell and express air through the pipes, enhances the eroticism of this encounter.

Burne-Jones also acknowledged the potential of such a musical partnership, but he treated the theme with more subtlety. His paintings dwelt on loss and nostalgia, rather than successful love affairs. So his inclusion of a positive organ in the gouache Dorigen of Bretaigne longing for the safe return of her husband (1871, Victoria and Albert Museum) [figure 68] contributed to the poignancy of the subject. The story of Dorigen is taken from Chaucer's Franklin's Tale. Dorigen cannot make music on her organ as her husband is missing. The instrument is open, but must remain silent. Inside the cover, two shadowy figures are painted; they resemble conventional images of salutation and imply a reconciliation but, at present, Dorigen is alone.

This tendency to imagine the organ as a site for sensuality was sanctioned by the precedent of Titian's Venus. Nevertheless, it ran counter to the expectations of Victorian audiences. They associated organ music with Christian worship. By the 1870s, not only would they have been familiar with

Raphael's own version of the St. Cecilia story through engravings, they could even buy Christmas cards featuring Fra Angelico's musical angels, thanks to the canny marketing of Marcus Ward and Co. Perhaps the best indication of the instrument's sacred status was the phenomenal popularity of Arthur Sullivan's ballad, The Lost Chord (1877). His setting of verses by Adelaide Proctor became a drawing-room staple for several generations; over ½ million copies were sold during Victoria's reign.[80] The Lost Chord equated the sound of an organ with the music of heaven. Although the marvellous harmony cannot be repeated in this life, the musician hopes:

> that death's bright angel
> Will speak in that chord again;
> It may be that only in Heav'n
> I shall hear that great Amen.

Sullivan's fans had no difficulty in believing that music had the power to transcend the boundaries of normal perception. The unexpected chord briefly united the earthly and spiritual spheres, allowing a glimpse of heaven that was both audible and visible: 'It flooded the crimson twilight'.

This was why Rossetti and Burne-Jones's use of the organ in sensual subjects was troubling. Their Victorian audience was happy to accept that music could open up communication between the natural and the supernatural worlds. They saw extraordinary feats of mesmerised musical performance in hospitals and on stage. They attended séances to hear trumpets and accordions played by spirit-guides. Their Sunday morning services resounded with hymns that reinforced the connections between the Church Militant and the Church Triumphant:

> Hark how the heavenly anthem drowns
> All music but its own

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[79] The artists involved in this project included Ford Madox Brown, Burne-Jones, Rossetti and Morris. The cabinet was made for the architect John Pollard Seddon, and was shown at the International Exhibition of 1862.

[80] Derek Hyde, New-Found Voices: Women in 19th Century Music, (Aldershot: Ashgate) 3rd edition, 1998, p.66.

Awake my soul and sing...Through all eternity.[81]

That was not the problem. What most Victorians found hard to stomach was that the conventional moral framework had been overturned by these artists. Rossetti and Burne-Jones wanted St. Cecilia to be admired not for her virtue, but for her physicality. A new moral code was implied here, with beauty, emotion and desire replacing chastity and discipline as ideals. A sacred image was subverted by injecting an unhealthy erotic charge. The religious symbolism of the organ was undermined by making it the pivotal point in a sensual scene.

Conclusion

This shift from spiritual to sensual began in Rossetti's musical works from the late 1850s. If we compare his nominally Christian image A Christmas Carol (1857-8, watercolour on panel, Fogg Museum of Art, Harvard) [figure 69] with Hunt's The School-girl's hymn [figure 38] painted in 1859, we can see how Rossetti was already undermining the sacred subject. Hunt presents a scene of robust, energetic musical devotion. Rossetti on the other hand celebrates not spiritual but physical beauty. He focuses on the extravagantly long hair of the musician, as the women tend their bodies but not their souls. The overlapping patterns of the costumes, the decorative accessories, even the way the musician is trapped inside her instrument create an impression of claustrophobia and excess.

Supporters of the emerging aesthetic movement welcomed this challenge to Christian orthodoxy. It seemed that Rossetti was preaching a new faith - the Religion of Beauty - and his object of devotion was the female body. In February 1883 F.W.H Myers published a review of Rossetti's works that made this explicit. Myers suggested that for Rossetti and his followers, 'Love becomes...the interpreter and mediator between God and man'.[82] This creed made the Church redundant: transcendence could be achieved by

[81] Matthew Bridges, Crown Him with Many Crowns, 1851. See Michael Wheeler, Death and the Future Life in Victorian Literature and Theology, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 1990, pp.136-140.

sensual pleasure. Rossetti's poem Love's Redemption was blatant, even blasphemous in its appropriation of the imagery of the Eucharist:

> O thou who at Love's hour ecstatically
> Unto my lips dost evermore present
> The body and blood of Love in sacrament;
> Whom I have neared and felt thy breath to be
> The inmost incense of his sanctuary[83]

Music helped this slide into sensuality. Although, as we have seen, music was intimately connected with ideas of religious worship and a Christian heaven, it could also stimulate trance-states which left the hearer sexually vulnerable. More than this, music traditionally had a dual symbolism. It was linked with emotion – both sacred and profane. The thousands who turned out to hear Handel at the Crystal Palace could equally be moved by Bellini's love-lorn heroines. Hymns and oratorios brought the masses a little closer to paradise, but they had to compete with romantic ballads and operatic transciptions. Rossetti, Burne-Jones and their circle played on this duality. They used the inherent instability of musical symbolism for their own ends. Like Dante, they exploited the tension between sacred and sensual adoration. Hymns to the Virgin became, in their hands, hymns to Venus.

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[82] F.W.H.Myers, 'Rossetti & the Religion of Beauty', Cornhill Magazine, (London) February 1883, p.218.
[83] D.G. Rossetti, 'Love's Redemption' from The House of Life, Poems and Translations 1850-1870, p.109.

Chapter Four

Sensuality and Femininity

Introduction

In the Victorian imagination, musical worship was associated with devotion to the feminine. Sacred song surrounded the Virgin and Beatrice, and was performed by female saints like Cecilia. Equally, the Victorian vision of Venus had a musical accompaniment. Burne-Jones's images of the Venusberg, from his illustrations for the Earthly Paradise to Laus Veneris, were invariably saturated with music.

This chapter defines, in broad terms, the connections between gender and music in Victorian society. It also considers the oppositional models for female performance: domestic discipline versus seduction tactic. If musical display was a problem, how did women who were themselves exhibiting artists address the tensions between private accomplishment and public performance? The case of the Lady of Shalott helps us to disentangle the complexities inherent in representing a woman who is both artist and art-object. Furthermore, the insistent imagery of sensual women as sirens or mermaids gives us a new understanding of the fin-de-siècle preoccupation with the *femme fatale*. By adding musical overtones to their images, artists were able to present alternative models of sexuality that prefigured Freudian theories of libidinal desire.

Music and Otherness

For the Victorians, music was bound up with the idea of 'Woman'. This meant that it also carried connotations of femininity that prevailed in Victorian Britain.[1] We have to be careful to avoid the dangers of falling into 19th

[1] For a fuller discussion of the roles and perceptions of women in 19th century Britain, see Suzanne Fagence Cooper, The Victorian Woman, (London: V&A Museum) 2001. Judith Flanders, in her study of The Victorian House: Domestic Life from Childbirth to Deathbed, (London: Harper Collins) 2003 provides a wide-ranging account of women and the domestic sphere. Lynda Nead in Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell) 1988 and Alison Smith in The Victorian Nude: Sexuality, Morality

century rhetoric, defining Woman exclusively by her reproductive status as 'the sex'. However, in practice it is impossible to separate 19th century images of music from issues of gender and sexuality. Partly this is because music was associated with the female traits of emotion and sensuality. At the most obvious level, this approach was represented by Tennyson in his poem about female emancipation, The Princess: 'Man with the head / And woman with the heart...All else confusion'.[2] In general, the Victorian experience of musical paintings was framed by expectations that set masculine against feminine, reason against emotion. Griselda Pollock has defined certain Victorian images of women, especially those created by Rossetti as 'signs not of woman but of that Other in whose mirror masculinity must define itself'.[3] The evidence suggests that music serves the same function in these paintings. This thesis argues that, like images of Woman, music becomes a sign of otherness and implies an opposition to conventional Victorian masculinity.

For example, a painting like Leighton's The Music Lesson (1877, oil on canvas, Guildhall Art Gallery, Corporation of London) [figure 70] demonstrates multiple signs of otherness. The elaborate marble space, the non-Western costumes and Islamic stringed instrument place this scene in a fantasy harem or Turkish bath that is beyond the experience of most Victorian audiences.[4] Leighton's image is distanced from the viewer geographically. As the mother and daughter are white-skinned and fair-haired, there is the underlying anxiety that they are contemporary Europeans sold to a Turkish man for his sexual pleasure.[5] The setting implies polygamous relationships, a non-Christian morality and enforced sensuality. The musical theme reinforces these impressions. It gives a pretext for our

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and Art, (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press) 1996 analyse the changing attitudes to women and the female body in Victorian art. The role of women as artists and art-consumers is discussed in ed. Clarissa Campbell Orr, Women in the Victorian Art World, (Manchester: Manchester University Press) 1995, and by Deborah Cherry in Painting Women: Victorian Women Artists, (London: Routledge) 1993 and Beyond the Frame: Feminism and Visual Culture, Britain 1850-1900, (London: Routledge) 2000.

[2] Alfred Tennyson, 'The Princess', Poems of Tennyson 1830-1870, p.329.

[3] Griselda Pollock, Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art, (London: Routledge) 1988, p.153.

[4] Frederic Leighton anticipated the sensual, exotic and musical environment pictured by Ingres in his celebrated Le Bain Turc (1862, oil on canvas, Musée du Louvre, Paris) by five years.

glimpse into the enclosed world of the harem. By evoking the sense of hearing, music adds another level of sensory experience. Sound is added to the sense of touch implied by the elaborate costumes, cool marble and bare arms and feet of the female figures. The image also signals music as an explicitly feminine accomplishment, with the mother passing on her musical skills to her daughter. Music is implicated in the otherness of the image. If we consider it in binary terms - what it is, and also what it is not - this image suggests feeling rather than reason, feminine idleness rather than masculine responsibility, and decadence rather than duty.

Like women, music could be chaste or fallen, modest or seductive. The binaries that applied to 19th century debates about womanhood also applied to musical experience. In particular, the characterisation of women as 'feeling' rather than 'thinking' spilled over into debates about music and emotion. The result was a circular argument: women are emotional, music is a pre-eminently emotional art, therefore music is defined as feminine.

Until the late 18th century, medical discourses had tended to characterise the sexes as different not in essence, but only in degree.[6] However, by the Victorian period, in general men and women were defined as distinct and complementary. Woman supplied the sensitivity and flexibility that man lacked. This understanding of gender difference was voiced by John Ruskin in Sesame and Lilies (1864). He believed that men and women 'are in nothing alike and the happiness and perfection of both depends on each asking and receiving from the other what the other only can give'.[7] Woman, above all, was circumscribed by her ability to become a mother. Her reproductive organs informed her character, making her a more emotional creature than her husband. According to James MacGrigor Allan in an address he gave to the Anthropological Society of London in 1869, women's menstrual cycles were the underlying cause of 'their petulance, caprice and

[5] The same anxiety underlies the popular fascination with Hiram Powers' Greek Slave (1847, marble, Newark Museum, New Jersey) when it was shown at the Great Exhibition of 1851.
[6] For a discussion of this shift see John Tosh, A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press) 1999, pp.43-47.
[7] Ibid., p.46

irritability'.[8] This opinion passed into mainstream definitions of womanhood. Mrs Sarah Ellis, who published popular manuals on the duties of Victorian women and girls, believed that her readers were emotional rather than rational, 'more quick to feel than to understand'.[9] As a result, they responded more dramatically to musical experience. H.R. Haweis expressed the connections between the female body, music and emotion, in particularly vivid terms. He suggested that

> the emotional force in women is usually stronger, and always more delicate, than in men. Their constitutions are like those fine violins which vibrate to the lightest touch.[10]

If we approach the argument from the other side, we find that commentators defined music as 'inarticulate' but 'ravishing'; both were feminine traits. According to J.M.Capes writing in the Fortnightly Review in 1867, 'Music is the expression, par excellence, of life and emotion'.[11] Some progressive critics, led by Eduard Hanslick, complained about this insistence that 'music has to do with the feelings'. He wrote that 'this "having to do" is one of the expressions most typical of musical aesthetics up to our own time'. Unfortunately 'those who use such expressions leave us entirely in the dark as to the actual connection between music and feeling'.[12]

This connection between music and emotion has persisted to the present, with Roger Scruton and Malcolm Budd attempting to define the mechanism by which music affects us. Both look for a physiological relationship. Budd suggests that:

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[8] Mid-Victorian medical discourses that characterised women as unstable are discussed in ed. Martha Vicinus, Suffer and be Still: Women in the Victorian Age, (Indiana: Indiana University Press) 1972, especially p.40.
[9] Mrs. Sarah Ellis, The Daughters of England, their Position in Society, Character and Responsibilities, (London: Fisher, Son and Co.) 1842, new edition, 1845, p.20.
[10] H.R. Haweis, Music and Morals, (London: Daldy, Ibster and Co.) 1871, p.109.
[11] J. M. Capes, 'Music and Architecture', Fortnightly Review, (London) December 1867, p.709.
[12] Eduard Hanskick, On the Musically Beautiful, (1854), reprinted in ed. Bojan Bujic, Music in European Thought 1851-1912, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 1988, p.13.

> there is a correspondence between the dimension of pitch and the vertical dimension of space...allowing music to reflect felt bodily movements integral to a certain kind of emotion.

He also argues that the experience of tonal resolution, from desire to satisfaction, from tension to release, produces an emotional response in the listener. Scruton describes our reaction to music 'as a kind of latent dancing – a sublimated desire to 'move with' the music'.[13] Although they account for the impact of music in slightly different ways, both Scuton and Budd agree that music can shape the emotional reaction of the listener.

The intimate links between music, emotion and the feminine have also recently resurfaced as a subject of debate amongst musicologists. Fred Maus argues that the 'the loss of self to an overwhelming music is an experience of being feminized'.[14] Giving oneself up to the 'tremendous pleasure – sensual, emotional and intellectual' of a musical performance becomes an essentially feminine activity, regardless of the listener's gender.[15] Thus any sensual or emotional appreciation of music is seen as less authoritative (because less masculine) than a rational or analytical approach.

Masculinity and Effeminacy

The tendency to view musical pleasure as divergent from the masculine norm is hardly new; Plato had warned of music's ability to 'unman' the listener.[16] However, it underpinned the Victorian approach to painting musical images. As a result the vast majority of the pictures show women as the musicians. In the few cases where men make music, their status is diminished and they are distanced from contemporary expectations of

[13] Fiona Ellis, 'Scruton and Budd on Musical Meaning', British Journal of Aesthetics, (London: Thames and Hudson) vol.41, January 2001, pp.42 & 52.
[14] Fred Everett Maus's article, 'Masculine Discourse in Music Theory', Perspectives of New Music 31, 1993, pp.272-3 is discussed by Suzanne G. Cusick in 'Gender, Musicology and Feminism', ed. N. Cook and M. Everist, Rethinking Music, (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 1999, p.494.
[15] Ibid., p.494
[16] Plato, The Republic Book III, quoted by Richard Leppert, The Sight of Sound: Music, Representation and the History of the Body, (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press) 1993, p.219-220.

manliness. Male musicians are servants, or they are foreign, or they are effeminate. To some extent, this characterisation of the status of music-making men was based on reality. Most professional musicians, until at least the 1870s, were men, but often the most visible, both at the top and bottom of the profession were non-British. Both the Italian organ-grinder, and the Viennese piano-virtuoso were real figures in Victorian London, not simply caricatures. And, of course, the largest group of amateur musicians were young and female. Girls received more intensive musical training than their brothers, and publishers of piano teaching manuals knew their target audience: illustrations of 'The Correct Position of the Body' tended to show a girl seated at the piano.[17]

These assumptions were played out in the visual arts. We see, for example, in Burne-Jones's design for The Wedding Procession of Sir Degrevaunt (1860, pen and ink on card, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge) [figure 71], that the minstrels are of lower social status than the other figures; they wear short gowns while the groom wears a long robe. When we look for contemporary portraits of male musical celebrities, we find that they are predominantly non-British. The Spanish violinist Pablo de Sarasate was painted by Whistler (1884, oil on canvas, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh); the Hungarian Joseph Joachim was photographed by Julia Margaret Cameron (1868, The Wilson Centre for Photography) and he sat for G.F. Watts (1865-6, oil on canvas, Watts Gallery, Compton); the Polish pianist Ignacy Jan Paderewski was portrayed both by Burne-Jones (1890, oil on canvas, Royal College of Music) and Alma-Tadema (1891, oil on canvas, Museum Nardowc, Warsaw). These men were admired for their virtuosity, but they were set apart from mainstream Victorian masculinity. Victorian commentators were keenly aware of Joachim's Jewish roots, while Paderewski's performance style was described in terms traditionally associated with the feminine: he 'charms most by the depth of sentiment and tenderness of his playing'.[18]

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[17] Ed. James Parakilas, Piano Roles: A New History of the Piano, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press) 2002, p.120 and figure 15.

[18] The Musical Times 36, 1895, p.527, quoted by Dorothy de Val, ' "Legitimate, Phenomenal and Eccentric": Pianists and Pianism in Late Nineteenth-Century London', in ed. J. Dibble and B. Zon, Nineteenth-Century British Music Studies Vol. 2, (Aldershot: Ashgate) 2002, p.191.

This thesis argues that these same tokens of otherness shaped Victorian pictures of imaginary male musicians. Some artists, like Frederick Sandys, treated their male musicians with disdain while others, notably Leighton, presented them in a more sympathetic light. Sandys's illustration for Christina Rossetti's poem Amor Mundi (1865, wood engraving, Victoria and Albert Museum) [figure 72] depicts a leggy minstrel on the road to ruin.

He is too interested in showing off his good looks and lute-playing to realise his mistake in taking the easy, downhill path. He cannot see that the ground will crumble beneath his feet, and that he will soon join the corpse in the ditch. Sandys reinforces the connection between music and sexuality by his inclusion of musical instruments in the foreground, and the courting couple making music on the hill above. The serpentine lines of the design - in the hair, roots, pleated costume and coiled snake - seem to make visible the musical trap laid for the unwary minstrel. The musician is characterised as foolish and vain, led astray by music and his female companion. His manliness is jeapordised by his swaggering costume, and by his lack of moral strength.[19]

Frederic Leighton's attitude towards men making music was more ambivalent. In his work, feminine qualities like softness, sensitivity and pleasure were presented in a positive light, even when associated with male musicians. However, Leighton's subversion of conventional gender stereotypes upset some critics. When Golden Hours (1864, oil on canvas, Tapely 1978 Chattels Trust) [figure 73] was first exhibited, the male harpsichordist was condemned as effete.[20] This figure seemed to promote sensuality and luxury, qualities that were attacked by commentators in explicitly gendered terms. Some of Leighton's paintings were criticised for their 'want of manliest mastery'.[21] As we shall see, implications of androgyny

[19] For an account of Victorian expectations of male spiritual authority see Tosh, A Man's Place, p.37 and p.47.
[20] See Andrew Stephenson, 'Leighton and the Shifting Repertoires of 'Masculine' Artistic Identity in the Late Victorian Period' in ed. T. Barringer and E. Prettejohn, Frederic Leighton: Antiquity Renaissance Modernity, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press) 1999, p.232.
[21] 'Among the Pictures', Gentleman's Magazine, July 1868, quoted by Stephenson, ibid., p.232.

or sexual deviancy often coincided with musical imagery in the work of the more audacious Victorian artists.

Music as a Domestic Discipline

A central theme of this thesis is the doubleness of musical symbolism. We have already seen how musical performance falls into two categories. It can either represent the Apollonian music of the spheres– calming, devotional, orderly – or the Dionysian music of the body – sensual, unfettered, overwhelming. This study argues that the two faces of music had an impact on the way in which Victorians experienced women's performances. Chaste music performed in a domestic or controlled environment was usually considered safe. However it was also potentially disruptive, as music-making could signify courtship and seduction. Musical women had to contend with the ever-present myth of the siren, who lured men to death by her sweet singing. The prevailing Victorian oppositional model - categorising women as either virtuous or fallen - passed into law with the imposition of the Contagious Diseases Acts from 1864.[22] It also applied to the music they made.

For many mid-century commentators, music was an ideal domestic discipline if performed in an appropriate manner. The opportunity to channel emotion through musical performance was particularly valuable. H.R. Haweis assured his readers that music offered a safe outlet for feminine feeling, writing that 'A good play on the piano has not infrequently taken the place of a good cry upstairs.' He also believed that music practice improved deportment, mental discipline and morality: it makes a girl sit upright and pay attention to details' and

[22] With the introduction of the Contagious Diseases Acts from 1864 to 1867 police had the right to arrest a woman suspected of prostitution. She could then be forcibly examined for venereal disease and, if thought necessary, hospitalised against her will. This legislation had several implications. Firstly it penalised women, rather than their male clients, who were not treated in the same way. Secondly it assumed that policemen could tell whether a woman was respectable or not simply by looking at her. The Acts were repealed in 1886.

has probably done more to sweeten existence...to young women in particular, than all the homilies on the domestic virtues ever penned.[23]

In this context, the piano was the chief focus of domestic performance. It was the feminine instrument *par excellence* and, for the aspiring middle-classes, was a sign that the domestic ideal of the leisured wife had been achieved. As one commentator in the 1880s wrote, the piano was a 'highly respectablising piece of furniture'.[24]

The status of the piano in the household was reflected in contemporary painting. Leppert has analysed the appearance of female pianists in British and American paintings from the mid-century, while Charlotte Eyerman has traced the same subject in contemporary French art.[25] According to Leppert, male artists were able to use the trope of 'woman-and-piano' to explore the contradictory meanings of women in Victorian society. The same subject could be presented as 'the privatised angel of the house...and her radical public opposite' depending on the handling of the paint, and the posture of the model. Leppert suggests that this flexibility was possible because 'music and femininity were viewed interchangeably'.[26] Charlotte Eyerman also points to the double readings inherent in the subject. However she is more interested in the democratisation of the piano as it entered lower class homes, and its use as a signifier of modernity. She suggests that the popularity of 'woman-and-piano' in works by the French avant-garde reflects their desire to depict 'the contemporary moment' in opposition to the 'formulaic' subjects favoured by the Salon.[27] By showing a woman at a piano, artists like Cézanne, Manet or Degas created intimate scenes that engaged with the modern domestic interior.

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[23] H.R. Haweis quoted in Cyril Erhlich, The Piano: a History, (Oxford: Clarendon Press) 1976, revised and reprinted 1990, p.92 and Music and Morals, p.112.
[24] F.J.Crowest, Phases of Musical England, 1881, quoted by Cyril Ehrlich, The Piano: a History, p.99.
[25] See Richard Leppert, The Sight of Sound, pp.156-171, and Charlotte Eyerman, 'Piano Playing in Nineteenth Century French Visual Culture' in ed. James Parakilas, Piano Roles: A New History of the Piano, (New Haven: Yale University Press) 2002, pp.176-183.
[26] Richard Leppert, The Sight of Sound, p.155. His analysis of a variety of British, Continental and American images demonstrates how the conventions of disciplined domestic performance (typified by a mother teaching her daughter) could be overturned when women succumbed to the sensual and emotional aspects of music.

The association of piano-playing with other feminine accomplishments is demonstrated in Leppert's illustration of a small piano that was designed to double as a sewing table (early 19th century, German or Austrian, Yale University Collection of Musical Instruments). The mirror under the lid suggests that it would have been placed in a lady's bedroom, and could also be used as dressing table.[28]

In the 1880s, when young women were being encouraged to train as typists, their instruction manuals linked typing and piano-playing as appropriate female talents: 'The type-writer is especially adapted to feminine fingers...Type-writing involves no hard labor [sic], and no more skill than playing the piano'.[29] A poster designed by Lucien Fauré for The Empire Typewriter (1897, Victoria and Albert Museum) [figure 74] played on these links in its portrayal of a female typist. The young lady's femininity is reinforced by her wasp-waisted silhouette and the vase of flowers beside her desk. She places her hands on the keys as if she is about to begin a sonata. Underpinning these connections is the assumption that all young women were proficient pianists, even those from modest backgrounds who needed to earn their living as typists.

For distressed gentlewomen who were forced to find employment before the advent of the type-writer in the 1870s, their training on the piano was an obvious skill to sell. The Poor Teacher in Richard Redgrave's painting (replica 1844, oil on canvas, Victoria and Albert Museum) [figure 75] evidently offers piano lessons to her pupils; her instrument is prominently placed. It reinforces her gentility despite her poverty and, Redgrave implies, will perhaps relieve her loneliness. By teaching her young pupils to play, she was subscribing to the prevailing attitude that music was 'an accomplishment indispensable to an educated woman'.[30]

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[27] Charlotte Eyerman, 'Piano Playing in Nineteenth Century French Visual Culture', p.181.
[28] Richard Leppert, The Sight of Sound, pp.136-138.
[29] John Harrison, A Manual of the Type-Writer, (London: Isaac Pitman) 1888, p.9, quoted by Christopher Keep, 'The Cultural Work of the Type-Writer Girl', p.4 in iupjournals.org/victorian/vic40-3.html.
[30] Leonora Schmitz, 'On the Study of Music', Fortnightly Review, (London) 1st March 1866, p.222.

However, as Leppert suggested, musical performance was a double-edged sword. Although it encouraged family harmony, playing the piano could act as a courtship ritual, even in the domestic arena. The dangers of flirtatious or self-indulgent performances were ever-present. Music was only acceptable if girls were 'unconscious of the charm by which they please'.[31] Mrs. Ellis encouraged her readers to warn their friends if they seemed too eager to show off their musical skills at evening parties. Music stimulated the emotions, and musical performance put the female body on display; sensuality was bound to creep in. As Mrs. Ellis put it, 'so long as temptation lurks beneath the rose-leaves of enjoyment, music will remain to be a dangerous instrument'.[32]

Courtship and Seduction

As soon as women performed for anyone other than their immediate family, they potentially ran into two problems. Firstly, they could be accused of using music as a tool of seduction. Secondly, they would become visible as well as audible: they were making an exhibition of themselves. Music was recognised as a valuable aid to courtship. It demonstrated a young woman's respectable upbringing to potential suitors, but it also allowed her to express her romantic preferences and ensnare a husband. Interdisciplinary studies of music and Victorian literature are helpful here in establishing the relationship between women, courtship and music. Mary Burgan has pointed out that musical displays had to be deployed with care. In Victorian novels, a woman who 'uses her artistic skill for social advancement is seen as nothing better than a schemer'.[33] She highlights the case of Blanche Ingram, Jane Eyre's rival for Mr. Rochester's attentions, who 'seated herself with proud grace at the piano, spreading out her snowy robes in queenly amplitude' before playing 'a brilliant prelude; talking meantime'.[34]

George Eliot in Middlemarch (serialised 1871-2) explored the subtexts of musical intimacy in her characterisation of Rosamond Vincy. The first target

[31] Mrs. Sarah Ellis, The Daughters of England, p.21.
[32] Ibid., p.134.
[33] Mary Burgan, 'Heroines at the Piano: Women and Music in Nineteenth Century Fiction', Victorian Studies, (Indiana: Indiana University Press) vol. 30, Autumn 1986, p.62.

of her performance was Mr. Lydgate, who willingly submitted to her siren-song and allowed himself to be dragged into domesticity. He recognised the game she was playing, but imagined that he would prove the stronger partner. Lydgate fantasised that Rosamond would be

> that perfect piece of womanhood who would reverence her husband's mind after the fashion of an accomplished mermaid, using her comb and looking-glass and singing her song for the relaxation of his adored wisdom alone.[35]

The dangerous implications of the siren myth seemed lost on him. Having recognised the power of her piano-playing, Rosamond turned her attentions to Will Ladislaw. As a married woman who sang duets in private with a bachelor, she became the subject of village gossip.[36] Mrs. Cadwallader complained to Dorothea Brooke that 'Ladislaw is making a sad dark-blue scandal by warbling continually with your Mr. Lydgate's wife'.[37]

Why should this music-making be scandalous? In Rosamond's eyes, and in the eyes of her neighbours, the duets had a sexual undercurrent. Rosamond imagined Ladislaw always on call to add a frisson to her domestic boredom, 'sending out lambent flames every now and then in interesting scenes'.[38] Ladislaw would have to stand close to Rosamond as she played, and bend over her to turn the pages of their sheet music. Furthermore the very act of singing and playing involved awareness of the body, through breath and touch. Roland Barthes has made the distinction between listening to music and playing it. He describes the muscular sensuality involved in making music, as 'the musical text...passes into my fingers.' Leppert suggests that this knowledge of the sensual aspect of playing, 'the binding of the physical

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[34] Ibid., p.62, quotation from Charlotte Bronte, Jane Eyre, Chapter 17.
[35] George Eliot, Middlemarch, 1871-2, reprinted (Oxford; Oxford University Press) 1986, p.475.
[36] Ibid., p.355.
[37] Ibid., p.513.
[38] Ibid., p.616.

to the cognitive, [which] produces pleasure' underpinned Victorian concerns about women musicians.[39]

John Singer Sargent's portrait of the professional singer Mrs. George Batten (c.1897, oil on canvas, Glasgow Museums, Kelvingrove) [figure 76] dramatically demonstrates this fascination with the physicality of performance.[40] The viewer is confronted by Mrs. Batten's expansive bosom. The breadth of her bust suggests the impressive power of her lungs. The effect is emphasised by the narrowness of her corseted waist and the necklace that frames her chest. We are forced to focus on her body rather than her unidealised face. Few sitters could expect an artist to allow viewers to look up their nose, rather than into their eyes. But, at this angle, we concentrate on her breathing; how she controls the air that rises from her lungs and through her mouth and nose to create her music. Her reddened lips and open mouth, the tilt of her head, her long throat and the flesh of her bosom characterise her performance as a singer. They also suggest sexual arousal. As a result this portrait can be read two ways. It is an image of a powerful professional female but, by putting her voice and her body on display, this singer has laid herself open to the voyeuristic pleasure of her audience. She closes her eyes, but we look as well as listen. As a work of visual art this is, of course, only to be expected. However, Sargent's focus on the singer's body is breathtakingly bold.

This thesis argues that an awareness of the female body, and the erotic potential this implied, surfaced even in overtly chaste images like Frank Dicksee's Harmony (1877, oil on canvas, Tate Britain) [figure 77]. This popular work shows a woman playing the organ for her lover. The setting is medievalised, but this could be a contemporary couple in fashionable fancy dress. The image is romantic but not unseemly; the couple do not touch, and the woman seems unaware of her admirer. She appears to be experiencing a musically-inspired trance, reminiscent of St. Cecilia. The erotic implications of the scene are held in check by the spiritual surveillance

[39] Roland Barthes, 'Twenty Key Words for Roland Barthes', in The Grain of the Voice: Interviews 1962-1980, trans. Linda Coverdale, (New York: Hill and Wang) 1985, p.217 quoted by Richard Leppert, The Sight of Sound, p.215.

of the Virgin Mary, seen in the stained glass above their heads. Dicksee also manipulates the lighting to create a halo effect around the musician's head. The musical harmonies of the organ provide a heavy-handed analogy for the complementary roles of husband and wife. Yet this image is undeniably sensual. The viewer is encouraged to explore and consume the glowing colours of the glass, the textures of costume and hair, and the central moment of the woman's touch on the keyboard. The ambiguity of the historical and geographical setting make this a fantasy space. We imagine what will happen when the music fades. Then the woman, excited by the 'muscular sensuality' of her own performance, will turn to her lover.

The Victorians, of course, were not the first to link music and courtship. Even superficially innocent musical images by 17th century artists like Vermeer contained passionate undercurrents. Vermeer's Lady standing at a Virginal (c.1673-5, oil on canvas, National Gallery, London) [figure 78] implicates the viewer in a romantic encounter: the woman encourages us to join her by her look, and a figure of Cupid presides over the scene. Equally, in the Lady seated at a Virginal (c.1673-5, oil on canvas, National Gallery, London) [figure 79] Vermeer's inclusion of a bass viol in the foreground, suggests that the musician is expecting company. Other paintings by Vermeer are even more explicit in linking music with sensuality. His Procuress (1656, oil on canvas, Dresden Gallery) [figure 80] shows one man fondling a prostitute, while another holds a viol in one hand and a glass of wine in the other.

However, Pre-Raphaelite musical paintings display two distinctive qualities. The first is a tendency to melancholy, quite unlike the rowdy tavern scenes of the Dutch masters: there is no Victorian equivalent of David Teniers's images of Peasants making music in an inn (c.1635, oil on panel, National Gallery, London) [figure 81]. The other is a focus on music as a seductive tool for women. In Jan Steen's work The Harpsichord Lesson (late 1660s, oil on panel, Wallace Collection) [figure 82] for example, the modest female musician is subject to the attentions of an older man, who seems to be

[40] John Singer Sargent also drew a more restrained portrait of the composer Ethel Smyth singing (1901, pencil on paper, National Portrait Gallery, London).

looking at her cleavage rather than her fingering. As Leppert has demonstrated, the erotic potential of the music lesson was a popular subject for mainstream Victorian artists but this subject did not appeal to Rossetti and his circle.[41]

Rossetti's sensual musical scenes were not set in contemporary drawing rooms, but were played out in ambiguous historical spaces. His The Tune of Seven Towers (1857, watercolour, Tate Britain) [figure 83] is typical of the idiosyncratic Pre-Raphaelite approach. Although this is ostensibly a sensual scene – a marriage bed is being prepared with orange blossom in the background – the mood is one of unease. The woman is hemmed in by her musical instrument and by the flagstaff that cuts across the composition. She plucks the psaltery that lies across her knees, but rather than stimulating pleasure, her music encourages introspection. The bell fixed above her head seems to have ominous overtones, reminding the figures (and the viewer) of the tolling of a passing-bell. This is no prelude to love-making. The slumped poses of the figures and their averted eyes subvert the traditional associations of music with courtship.

Rossetti's work also prefigured the fin-de-siècle interest in the *femme fatale* by focusing on women's use of music to entrap men. Watercolours like The Borgia Family (1863, Victoria and Albert Museum) and The Merciless Lady (1865, Private Collection) [figure 84] place dangerous women in musical spaces. The claustrophobic composition of The Merciless Lady intensifies the conflicting emotions experienced by the three figures: the roof of the garden-bower seems to press down on their heads and offers only a narrow view of the greenery beyond. A quiet romantic encounter – signified by the two wine-glasses in the foreground – has been invaded by a fair-haired temptress whose music enthrals the young man. His lover tries to draw him away from her musical rival, but we fear that he is already lost. The 'merciless lady' with the psaltery is able to display the charms of her voice and her body, particularly her hands, through her performance. She is a land-locked siren. Such desirable yet treacherous women, who use music to

[41] Richard Leppert, The Sight of Sound, p.162-3.

cast a spell over men, became a recurring motif in the work of Rossetti's followers.

The Implications of Public Performance

If music and sensuality were intimately linked in the Victorian imagination, even in domestic performances, the dangers of playing in public were even greater. According to Susan McClary, even today 'women on the stage are viewed as sexual commodities regardless of their appearance or seriousness'.[42] Victorian women negotiated these difficulties in various ways. Students at the Royal Academy of Music could ask to sing in the wings, rather than on-stage, while the musicians in Lady Radnor's orchestra signified their moral purity by wearing white dresses.[43] The choice of music also had an impact on the perception of the performer. Sacred music was safer than music-hall turns. The Girl's Own paper advised its readers in 1883 that 'in the career of the public singer' a young woman 'may do much noble work for God and man' with the proviso that 'she must put on...the whole armour of Christ'.[44] Evidently, entering the public arena put a girl's virtue in jeopardy. Even the impeccable Jenny Lind was barred from Ruskin's strictly Evangelical household because she was no better than 'an ordinary actress'.[45] Victorian women musicians lived in the shadow of the 18th century, when the words 'virtuosa' and 'prostitute' were often regarded as synonymous.[46] Some early 19th century professional singers were notorious for their sexual misdemeanours. The soprano Elizabeth Billington published a racy autobiography, while the contralto Lucia Vestris claimed to have had an affair with Prince of Wales. In addition, she said that mother had sold her into prostitution. And she appeared on stage in breeches: 'What a breast – what an eye! What a foot, leg and thigh!'[47]

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[42] Susan McClary, Feminine Endings: Music, Gender and Sexuality, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press) 1991, p.151, quoted by Phyllis Weliver, Women Musicians in Victorian Fiction 1860-1900: Representations of Music, Science and Gender in the Leisured Home, (Aldershot: Ashgate) 2000, p.76.
[43] Derek Hyde, New-Found Voices: Women in 19th Century Music, (Aldershot: Ashgate) 3rd edition, 1998, p.49.
[44] Ibid., p.25.
[45] Ed. E.T.A. Cook and A. Wedderburn, The Works of John Ruskin, (London: George Allen) 1903-1912, vol.XXXVI, pp.92-3.
[46] Derek Hyde, New-Found Voices, p.8.
[47] Ibid., p.17.

However, as Derek Hyde has shown, increasing numbers of women dared to follow careers in music as the century progressed. Many of the stars, like their male counterparts, were from overseas: Jenny Lind, Adelina Patti and Pauline Viardot were all 'hailed as the greatest until eclipsed by the next visitor'.[48] In addition to the headline acts, British girls worked as singers, or as professional composers and instrumentalists. But there was always the implication that their role was more decorative than substantial. George Bernard Shaw's review of a concert in 1893 demonstrated the prevailing attitude to female musicians, by concentrating on the visual rather than the musical aspects of their performance. Shaw said that he 'was perfectly dazzled by the appearance of the orchestra'. Unfortunately 'the fair fiddlers rambled from bar to bar with a certain sweet indecision that had a charm of its own, but was not exactly what Purcell or Handel meant'.[49]

This tendency to focus on the pleasures of sight rather than sound also framed the Victorian painter's approach to professional women musicians. In 1875 James Tissot exhibited Hush – the Concert (oil on canvas, 1875, Manchester City Art Galleries) [figure 85]. His image of a fashionable evening party has a virtuosa as its centrepiece. The female violinist is preparing to play while the guests whisper, flirt and arrange their Worth evening gowns. When it was first shown, critics played guessing games, trying to establish the identity of the most prominent figures. Who are the turbanned gentlemen? Who is the bespectacled pianist? Above all, who is the violin virtuosa? The Times decided that she represented Wilma Neruda (later Lady Hallé,1839-1911), a regular visitor to England in the 1870s.[50] However, despite these attempts to discover the identity of the musician, what becomes clear is that Tissot had no intention to paint a portrait. His violinist is indistinguishable from the other female faces that punctuate the picture. She has the same sceptical arched brows, long nose and pursed mouth, the same piled-up hair, even the same neck-ribbon as the woman in the foreground holding a fan, or her simulacrum by the mirror who adjusts

[48] Ibid., p.24.
[49] Ibid., p.41.

her pink dress. Tissot was painting a type, based on the face of his own model and mistress Kathleen Newton. He was not interested in the individual musical talent of the violinist. Like Shaw's 'fair fiddlers' she was part of a decorative scheme.

Women Painting Women

While women musicians were trying to overcome Victorian preconceptions about their talents, female painters were also becoming increasingly professionalized and visible. They too were attracted by the subject of women making music. In most cases, they reflected the prevailing attitudes of their male contemporaries. Elizabeth Siddal (1829-1862) in her drawing of Lovers listening to Music (1854, pen and brown ink over pencil, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford) [figure 86], for example, reflected Victorian conventions in connecting music and courtship. Where she differed from Rossetti and his male colleagues is in her unidealised representation of the musicians. Their dark skins reflect the contemporary association of music-making with otherness, combining the exotic with the erotic. But these are not seductive creatures. Instead, they have awkward, spiky bodies, and appear impish rather than arousing.

Kate Bunce (1856-1927) was another professional artist who tackled the subject of musical women several times during her career. The daughter of the chairman of Birmingham City Art Gallery, she was a prize-winning student at the Birmingham School of Art, and exhibited around the country from 1887 to 1912.[51] Her style was very much in the Pre-Raphaelite tradition, combining medieval settings with literary and musical themes. In 1890 she painted The Minstrel (oil on canvas, private collection) [figure 87], showing a young woman playing the lute in the streets of a medieval town. Bunce attempts to avoid the sensual or 'low' connotations of her subject – an unaccompanied girl making music in a public space – by suggesting that the

[50] See Caroline Arscott, 'The Invisible and the Blind in Tissot's Social Recitals', in ed. Katharine Lochnan, Seductive Surfaces: the Art of Tissot, (New Haven: Yale University Press) 1999, p.70, n.27.

[51] For more biographical information and descriptions of Bunce's work, see Jan Marsh and Pamela Gerrish Nunn, Pre-Raphaelite Women Artists, (Manchester: Manchester City Art Gallery) 1997, p.145-147.

song is sacred, rather than profane. The minstrel is modestly dressed, and walks at a sedate pace. A statue of the Virgin Mary is conspicuously placed in the foreground, while the cross of a church roof appears directly over the musician's head. Even so, Bunce recognises the problems inherent in this performance. A number of women watch the minstrel pass. The Birmingham Evening Post commented on their 'gossiping remarks and wondering glances'.[52] A young mother represents a more appropriate model of femininity; her pose and position echo the figure of the Virgin. Most telling, however, is the disdain of the elderly woman in the foreground. Her expression implies that such a display of female music-making is at best unbecoming, and at worst, outrageous.

When Bunce returned to the subject five years later in Melody (Musica) (c.1895, oil on canvas, Birmingham City Museums and Art Gallery) [figure 88], her style had developed considerably. The musical performance is still framed by sacred motifs – a crucifix and stained-glass image of the Virgin are visible in the convex mirror – but the overall impression is of ornament and colour. Bunce's focus on the single female half-length, combined with decorative details, parallels Rossetti's later works, although Bunce's model is not deliberately seductive; her mouth is closed, her bust and arms are covered. However, she has become one element in an elaborately constructed visual feast. The embroidered dress, inlaid lute, chased vase and profusion of flowers encourage the viewer to explore every inch of the canvas. Music has provided a pretext for the display of a young woman and her feminine accessories. Even when seen through the eyes of another woman, this musician is presented not as an artist, but as an art-object.

Yet Kate Bunce and her female colleagues must have known what it was like to be treated in this manner. Women artists, like women musicians, were subjected to the scrutiny of the male gaze (and the critical female eye) before their talents were ever taken seriously. In her Girl of the Period articles (1869), Eliza Linton condemned the growing independence of young metropolitan women. Her description of 'The Girl of the Period Art Student'

[52] Birmingham Evening Post, 19th September 1890, quoted ibid., p.145.

quizzed the dress and deportment of the artists before turning to their art-productions. She was concerned about

> a kind of *audace* of manner in some cases' that seemed 'to lead the pretty student a little, just a little, beyond the bounds of what one has been taught to consider...good taste.[53]

The illustration accompanying this article reinforces the idea that women making art become a spectacle for men. The young students are overseen by at least five gentlemen, who are more interested in the girls themselves than in the work on their easels [figure 89].

Underpinning this attitude to female painters and musicians was an widely-held assumption that their art was amateur and derivative, rather than professional and original. Victorian women were expected to practise their art only until they were married. Then the pressing responsibilities of a family would make it unnecessary (or impossible) to pursue an independent career. Paintings produced by female artists were compared with the work of their male contemporaries, and usually found wanting. If they came too close to the style of a male artist, they were condemned for copying: both Elizabeth Siddal and Kate Bunce were accused of producing second-rate 'Rossettian' images. If they tried to create large-scale, elaborate, historical works, they could be criticised for being 'unfeminine'.

For example, Jane Benham Hay's five-metre wide The Burning of the Vanities (Florentine Procession) (1867, oil on canvas, Homerton College, Cambridge) [figure 90] used the same vocabulary as Frederic Leighton's sensational celebration of Cimabue's Madonna. Like Leighton, she presented a complex group of figures with carefully researched iconographic details. She even incorporated some of the Pre-Raphaelites' favourite musical motifs, like the girl playing a portative organ from Bonnard's Costumes Historiques. But when it was displayed as the centrepiece of the 1867 exhibition at Henry Wallis's French Gallery, it received mixed reviews. Critics acknowledged the ambitious composition, and her attempts to work in

[53] Eliza Linton, The Girl of the Period Miscellany, (London) 1869, p.164.

a progressive style, but they were concerned by its scale. Instead of being seen as a rival to Leighton, Benham Hay was condemned for copying him. William Holman Hunt was particularly scathing. In a letter to F.G. Stephens, he wrote that 'for a woman's picture it is a model of patience and pains-taking...a woman's idea of a fine subject'. He went on: 'it is an imitation of half a dozen different men', including Leighton, Rossetti and himself. Evidently she would have been better advised to paint on a more 'womanly' scale.[54]

Victorian audiences accepted that women would make music and paint pictures. However, in many cases, women's art-productions were treated differently from those created by their male contemporaries. Hunt's response to Benham Hay's work was typical. He acknowledged that it had taken time and effort to create her massive painting, but he failed to recognise her independent creativity. Underlying Hunt's comment was a belief that artistic 'genius' was a male characteristic. Women had a different role. They could inspire. They were Muses or mothers who nurtured the talent of the male genius, from boyhood to death-bed.

The reality of Victorian womanhood was often very different from these perceptions of the ideal. Women artists went about their business, and became increasingly visible. Having gained entry to the Royal Academy Schools in 1860, women began to receive the same rigorous training as men. Now they could tackle the large-scale figures that formed the basis for major historical or literary pictures. Any attempt to limit the role of women in the art-world must be seen as part of a rear-guard action, an attempt to maintain some mythical male hegemony. But it was still a powerful part of mid-century rhetoric. Some women, even those who put themselves in the public eye by writing and publishing, appeared to subscribe to the idea that women could jeopardise their femininity if they attempted independent creative effort. Mrs. Ellis, for example, encouraged The Wives of England to act as their husbands' muses. She suggested that a wife should use her talent to give 'a judicious turn' to the conversation, so that 'his information

[54] William Holman Hunt to F.G. Stephens, April 1867 quoted by Pamela Gerrish Nunn, 'Critically speaking', in ed. Clarissa Campbell Orr, Women in the Victoria Art World, p.122

and intelligence may be drawn forth for the benefit of others'.[55] Mrs. Ellis acknowledged that a woman could be truly gifted, but she believed that 'nothing can be more... fatal to her happiness, than an exhibition of the least disposition to presume upon such gifts' once she were married.[56] Of course, her argument was significantly undermined by her own failure to practise what she preached.

Jill Conway has shown that the perceived distinctions between men and women were supported by 19th century medical discourse. The differences were not merely cultural, but biological. According to the latest research, female energy was directed towards reproduction. As a result it was 'not available for psychic or intellectual growth'.[57] Even at a microscopic level, it seemed that the sexes were different. Research published by Patrick Geddes in 1889 proposed that male cells transmitted variation, while female cells supported new life and maintained stability.[58] If this were so, women were predetermined to be maternal and domestic, while men were naturally energetic and creative. Any attempt to break this biological mould could then be condemned as 'unnatural'.

These medical debates ran parallel to attempts to circumscribe female sexuality. William Acton was prominent among the commentators who believed that women were passionless, until they had been seduced. He suggested that 'love of home, children and domestic duties are the only passions they feel'. A modest woman 'submits to her husband's embraces, but principally to gratify him' and because of her own 'desire for maternity'.[59] Acton's was only one voice among many in the mid-century debates about prostitution and female sexuality. However his assumptions do seem to chime with the way in which women, particularly musical women, were portrayed in Victorian London.

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[55] Mrs. Sarah Ellis, The Wives of England , (London: Fisher, Son and Co.) 1843, p.105.
[56] Ibid., p.114-115.
[57] Jill Conway, 'Stereotypes of Femininity in a Theory of Sexual Evolution', in ed. Martha Vicinus, Suffer and be Still, p.141.
[58] Ibid., p.144.

Unnatural Desires: the Lady of Shalott

In 1833 Tennyson published a sequence of poems that reworked the Arthurian legends for a modern audience. As he lifted peripheral characters from Le Morte d'Arthur and placed them centre-stage, his interests were rather different from Malory's. His treatment of the tale of The Lady of Shalott attracted most interest from Victorian artists: Christine Poulson has traced at least 54 paintings and illustrations based on this poem from 1850 to 1915. Two episodes from the Lady's story seemed to chime with contemporary attitudes towards creative women. The first was her decision to act upon her desire for Sir Lancelot, and the second was her death, presented as an inevitable consequence of this desire.

The Lady of Shalott, in her own sphere, is a weaver. She reconstructs an image of the outside world, seen through a mirror, in the warp and weft of her loom. She is also musical. The peasants working in the fields below her tower listen to her song:

> the reaper...hears her chanting cheerly
> Like an angel singing clearly.[60]

She is forbidden to look directly at the world beyond her walls. But when she catches sight of Lancelot in her mirror she decides to break the taboo, and strides across the room to watch him as he rides to Camelot. The gratification of her desire has immediate and fatal consequences:

> The mirror cracked from side to side;
> 'The curse is come upon me', cried
> The Lady of Shalott.[61]

According to Poulson, Victorian readers would have interpreted the Lady's curse as the result of her 'emotional and sexual awakening. She is punished

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[59] William Acton, 1865, quoted by E.M. Sigsworth and T.J.Wyke, 'A Study of Victorian Prostitution and Venereal Disease' in ed. Martha Vicinus, Suffer and be Still, p.83.
[60] Alfred Tennyson, Poems, (London: Edward Moxon) 1833, 'The Lady of Shalott', l. 20-23.
[61] Ibid., l. 115-117.

for her independence'.[62] When Pre-Raphaelite artists came to paint her story, her own artistic talents were turned against her. William Holman Hunt reinterprets Tennyson's description – 'Out flew the web and floated wide' – so that the Lady's weaving no longer represents her creativity.[63] Instead her craft imprisons her. In Hunt's images of 'the curse', from the first drawing (1850, black chalk, pen and ink on paper, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne) to his late oil paintings (1886-1905, oil on canvas, Wadworth Athenaeum, Hartford, Connecticut), the unravelling threads of the Lady's loom whip around her body and trap her.

In Hunt's illustration for the Moxon edition of Tennyson's poems (1857, wood engraving, Victoria and Albert Museum) [figure 91] the effect is intensified by the swirling of her loosened hair (another sign of unbound sexuality) and the confined space of the design: she is forced to stoop her head to fit within the frame.

Having succumbed to her desire for Lancelot, the Lady passes into the public sphere. She steps into a boat, and floats down the river to Camelot. Kathy Alexis Psomiades in Beauty's Body (1997) has drawn attention to the transformation in her status, as she moves from being 'a disembodied voice' to become visible to the multitude.[64] The Lady does not entirely give up her creativity, as 'singing in her song she died'; however, she is no longer recognised as an artist.[65] She has become, like other female musicians, an art-object. It is this moment that was imagined by Rossetti in his illustration for the Moxon Tennyson (1857, wood engraving, Victoria and Albert Museum) [figure 92]. Lancelot stoops down to look at her, as she floats by in her coffin-like boat. She is illuminated by the torches of the townsfolk, to be looked at but no longer heard. Rossetti makes parallels between the Lady and the swans in the corner of the tiny image, both in her graceful whiteness, and in the metaphor of the 'swan-song' sung before death. By the time Lancelot sees her, she has fallen silent, and yet again the decorative

[62] Christine Poulson, 'Death and the Maiden: the Lady of Shalott and the Pre-Raphaelites', in ed. Ellen Harding, Re-framing the Pre-Raphaelites, (Aldershot: Scolar) 1996, p.182.
[63] Alfred Tennyson, 'The Lady of Shalott', l. 114.
[64] Kathy Alexis Psomiades, Beauty's Body: Femininity and Representation in British Aestheticism, (Stanford: Stanford University Press) 1997, p.26.
[65] Alfred Tennyson, 'The Lady of Shalott', l. 161.

qualities of the young female body overshadow her musical and artistic skills. Lancelot can only say 'She has a lovely face'.[66]

The story of the Lady of Shalott found echoes in Ophelia's madness and death. This episode from Hamlet also became a favourite subject for painters from the mid-century, beginning with John Everett Millais (1851, oil on canvas, Tate Britain) [figure 93] and Arthur Hughes (1852, oil on canvas, Manchester City Art Gallleries). Both women suffered as a result of their sexual desire, and both sought watery deaths. The parted lips of Millais's Ophelia could be read as a sign of arousal. But they also demonstrate that Millais was following Shakepeare's description of the scene. Ophelia is singing as she drowns, chanting 'snatches of old tunes' until

> ...her garments, heavy with their drink,
> Pulled the poor wretch from her melodious lay
> To muddy death.[67]

Ophelia's song signifies her loss of reason, as she is oblivious to the engulfing water. Ophelia's singing is a sign of madness and weakness, while the Lady's singing is a challenge to the world outside her tower (gendered male). In each case, however, their music reinforces their femininity.

Unnatural desires: Sirens and Mermaids

The watery setting of their songs and the sexual element in their narratives has further implications. Both the Lady and Ophelia reminded Victorian viewers of mermaids or sirens. Shakespeare made this connection explicit in his account of Ophelia's death:

> ...Her clothes spread wide,
> And mermaid-like a while they bore her up.[68]

[66] Ibid., l. 169.
[67] William Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act 4, Scene VII, l. 152-154.
[68] ibid., l. 146-147

The desire that these women felt, for Lancelot and Hamlet, was inappropriate and unfeminine according to prevailing 19th century standards. According to the 1850 Westminster Review for men 'in general, the sexual desire is inherent and spontaneous' but 'in the other sex, the desire is dormant, if not non-existent'.[69] If this were true, then the Lady of Shalott and Ophelia were 'unnatural' in feeling and acting upon their sexual desires. They become associated not only with 'fallen women', whose passions have been triggered by sexual experience, but those other deviant, sexually aggressive females, the sirens and mermaids.

These mythological creatures became a common metaphor used by Victorian writers and artists to signify dangerous musical connections. We have already seen how Rosamond Vincy's musical skills, combined with her physical beauty, reminded Lydgate of a mermaid. Similarly Laura Fairlie, who played the piano in Wilkie Collins's The Woman in White, was equated with a siren, not because she was predatory, but because it was risky for Walter Hartwright to indulge his own passion for her:

> Lulled by the Syren-song that my own heart sung to me, with eyes shut to all sight, and ears closed to all sound of danger, I drifted nearer and nearer to the fatal rocks.[70]

In Victorian literature, mermaids and sirens were interchangeable, both being beautiful, deadly creatures. However, their origins were distinct. The earliest and most famous encounter with sirens came in Homer's Odyssey (book XII), when Odysseus was able to sail past their lair by filling the ears of his companions with wax, and having himself lashed to the mast of his ship. Homer described the disjuncture between the sirens' sweet song:

> Celestial music warbles from their tongue,
> And thus the sweet deluders tune the song

[69] E.M. Sigsworth and T.J.Wyke, 'A Study of Victorian Prostitution and Venereal Disease', p.82.

and their deadly intent:

> ...wide around
> Lie human bones that whiten all the ground:
> The ground polluted floats with human gore,
> And human carnage taints the dreadful shore.[71]

He emphasised the pleasure which their music brought, so that men went willingly to their deaths. However, it was not until the 3rd century BC that the characteristic 'unnatural' shape of the sirens became established. Apollonius Rhodios, the Alexandrian librarian, said that these creatures were half-woman, half-bird. Apollodorus, writing around 140 BC expanded their story, giving their names as Pisinoe, Aglaope and Thelxiepia. They were the daughters of one of the Muses, and each had her own music. One played the lyre, another the flute while the third sang. Apollodorus confirmed that they were birds from the thighs down. Ovid, in his account, said that they had been granted wings so that they could look for their friend Persephone, who had been carried to the underworld.

In Victorian art and literature, the grotesque bodies of the sirens tended to be passed over. John William Waterhouse was unusual in sticking to the classical texts, in his Ulysses and the Sirens (1891, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne). This work plays down the seductive qualities of the sirens, and instead focuses on the archaeological detailing of the boat and the costume of the sailors. In a later image of The Siren (c.1900, oil on canvas, private collection) [figure 94] Waterhouse reverts to the conventional Victorian vision of an alluring young woman. Only the flash of a fish-scaled ankle betrays her real nature. The historical context has vanished, and we are left with a non-specific setting, in which the power of her music has drawn a sailor to his death.

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[70] Wilkie Collins, The Woman in White, 1860, London, Penguin edition, 1974, p.90. For a fuller discussion of this use of siren symbolism, see Phyllis Weliver, 'Female Power in Sensation Fiction', Women Musicians in Victorian Fiction, pp. 98-115

[71] Homer, The Odyssey, transl. Alexander Pope, book XII.

Waterhouse's image suggests a universal reading: all young women, not just the deformed creatures of myth, can lure men by their song. The implication of this work is shared by numerous Victorian images of so-called sirens, from Rossetti's early Boatmen and Siren (c.1853, pen and ink, Manchester City Art Gallery) [figure 95] to his 1873 Ligeia Siren (chalk on paper, private collection) [figure 18] or Edward Poynter's statuesque beauty (The Siren, 1864, oil on canvas, private collection). In each case, their monstrous bodies are concealed. In Burne-Jones's treatment of the subject, (study for The Sirens, c.1875, oil on canvas, National Gallery of South Africa, Cape Town) [figure 96] the women even seem to have fallen silent, drawing the ship towards the rocks simply by their look. Only a single female figure playing the harp in the foreground breaks the eerie stillness. The physical beauty of these women has taken precedence over their musical skill. They are decorative, rather than creative.

Victorian pictures of mermaids, on the other hand, did not side-step the issue of their misshapen bodies. The distinctive fish-tailed woman emerged from the siren myth in about 250 BC, but it was not until the Christian era that she gained her reputation as a destroyer of men. In medieval Bestiaries she was depicted as a vain creature, holding a comb and mirror, and 'enchanting folk by her song'.[72] In some accounts she was confused with the 'seal women' of the North Sea and in others, with the manatees and dugongs found in warmer waters. However, despite her deformity, the beautiful singing of the mermaid ensured that she was always alluring to mortal men.

Both Waterhouse and Burne-Jones were drawn to mermaids, as they were to sirens. Waterhouse demonstrated the importance of the motif in his oeuvre by choosing to paint A Mermaid for his 1900 Royal Academy diploma picture (oil on canvas) [figure 97]. This image of a young fish-tailed woman combing her hair represents the climax of his fascination with the *femme fatale*. Like most contemporary treatments of the same subject, the mermaid's music is less important than the display of her body. We look at her, rather than listening to her song. This focus on the mermaid as an object

[72] For a fuller discussion of the siren and mermaid myths, see Sir Arthur Waugh, 'The Folklore of the Merfolk', Folklore, (London: William Glashire, Ltd.) vol.71, 1960, esp. p.77.

of visual rather than aural pleasure makes her indistinguishable from the other dangerous women in Waterhouse's repertoire. The same face, hair and nude body are repeated in numerous studies. Waterhouse's adolescent temptresses include the nymphs who lure Hylas to a watery grave (1896, oil on canvas, Manchester City Art Gallery) [figure 98], a Naiad (1893, oil on canvas, private collection) who rises from a stream to gaze at a sleeping boy, and Lamia the snake-woman (1905, oil on canvas, private collection). One model seems to have filled all these roles in Waterhouse's art.[73] As a result, it becomes hard to disentangle the details of each myth; his images become a recurring nightmare in which the same nubile young woman with flowing hair and imploring eyes entraps the knight/sailor/classical hero.

Burne-Jones's approach to the mermaid motif in The Depths of the Sea (1886, oil on canvas, private collection) [figure 99] was radically different. In Waterhouse's image, the mermaid is unaware that she was being watched. As a result, she appears almost vulnerable to our gaze; her down-turned eyes and naked body make her an object of male fantasy as well as fear. Burne-Jones's fish-woman, on the other hand, knows she has an audience and smiles directly at us, expecting us to admire her cunning and beauty. She also has a distinctive character, and various stories were told to account for her unnerving expression. Georgie Burne-Jones said that her husband repainted the mermaid's face after hearing of the death of their friend Laura Lyttleton in childbirth. This picture became a memorial to the young 'Soul'. Lady Lewis offered an alternative version of the story, saying that the face was drawn from memory, after Burne-Jones saw a girl in a wood whom he believed was 'a nixie and had come up from the well'.[74]

Whatever the truth of the tales, it is clear that this mermaid is not a stock model. Her 'look of triumph...worthy of Leonardo da Vinci himself' forces the viewer to engage with her directly.[75] Burne-Jones re-imagines an over-familiar theme, showing us the mermaid in her natural element – water –

[73] The identity of Waterhouse's model has been debated. Anthony Hobson named her as Muriel Foster, but a family friend, Gwendoline Gunn, has also been suggested.
[74] Quoted by S. Wildman and J. Christian, Edward Burne-Jones: Victorian Artist-Dreamer, (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art) 1998, p.264.
[75] The Times (London) May 8th 1886, p.8, quoted by S. Wildman and J. Christian, Edward Burne-Jones: Victorian Artist-Dreamer, p.264.

rather than exposed on the rocks. We can begin to see the world through her eyes, and almost feel sorry for her, as she has not yet realised that the man she has seduced is already dead and useless. Georgie's suggestion that she was modelled on a well-loved young wife reinforces the idea that Burne-Jones was presenting his mermaid in a sympathetic light.

In The Depths of the Sea the male body is offered as an object for the viewer's delight as much as the mermaid's female form, which is only partially revealed. Her body is as strongly muscled as the sailor's. The sweep of her arm, combined with her smile, reminds the audience of Leonardo da Vinci's St. John the Baptist (1513-16, oil on wood, Louvre). Burne-Jones seems to be playing upon the celebrated description of da Vinci's picture by Walter Pater (1869) which questioned the saint's 'delicate brown flesh and woman's hair'.[76] The sexual ambiguities that attracted Pater to da Vinci's work are resurrected in Burne-Jones's work. In The Depths of the Sea he challenged Victorian gender stereotypes, by sympathetically depicting the mermaid's active desire, while the man becomes a passive victim and art-object.

In Bram Dijkstra's reading of this picture, Burne-Jones is condemned for a misogynistic fear of female sexuality. Idols of Perversity (1986), Dijkstra's study of images of women in late 19th century art, describes The Depths of the Sea as a 'masochistic fantasy'. He suggests that it portrays the 'oblivion of sensuality' that is the fate of sailors who succumb to the 'hypnotic eyes and vampire's mouth' of the mermaid.[77] Dijktra tries to explain the Victorian fascination with mermaids and sirens but his interpretation is too heavy-handed. He fails to address the differences between artists and the fact that the subject is, by its very nature, slippery and shape-shifting. Leighton's entwining, pneumatic mermaid in The Fisherman and the Syren (c.1856-8, oil on canvas, Bristol Museums and Art Gallery) [figure 100], for example, displays an aggression that is missing from Waterhouse's docile pin-up. Dijsktra points to the increasing visibility of independent women in Victorian

[76] Walter Pater, 'Leonardo da Vinci', The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry (London: Macmillan and Co.) 1873, 3rd edition 1888, revised and reprinted 1935, p.109.
[77] Bram Dijkstra, Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-siècle Culture, (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 1986, p.269.

society as the catalyst for works like these. But mermaid pictures were popular long before the rise of the New Woman.

Dijkstra also misses an essential point. Mermaids are sexually desiring, but this desire can never be consummated because of their deformity. Their fish-tails, like the bird-bodies of the sirens, mean that the promise of their song will always remain unfulfilled. Dijkstra accounts for the predatory aspect of the mermaid or siren, her 'insatiable urges forever unstilled', by dwelling on the bestial half of her nature.[78] Her sexual deviancy is inscribed on her body. But her animality makes her impotent, and unable to satisfy her longing.

Music, Water and the Libido

While Dijkstra sees mermaids gloating over their victims and constantly on the look-out for the next unwary man, Burne-Jones presents a different viewpoint. In the topsy-turvy, underwater world of the mermaid, gender differences can be blurred and androgyny becomes attractive, rather than repellent.

Burne-Jones's mermaid may be silent, but in The Depths of the Sea, I would argue that music is replaced by water as a signifier of otherness and the feminine. The sea has long been associated with the female body, with women's monthly cycles ebbing and flowing like the tide. At the end of the century, the relationships between moving water, gender and sensuality were themselves in a state of flux. These shifts were documented in Sigmund Freud's Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality published in 1905. Lawrence Kramer has shown that Freud recognised a change in cultural perceptions of desire. Traditionally desire was equated with fire: ardour, for example, derived from the Latin word 'to burn'. However, in the 19th century a new language of love emerged which imagined desire as fluid:

[78] Ibid., p.259.

> Freud describes the libido as increasing and diminishing, distributing and displacing itself...endlessly circulating, endlessly rhythmic.[79]

Kramer argues that this new model of sensuality surfaced in artistic and musical forms long before it was theorised by Freud. In his study of Wagner's Tristan und Isolde (composed 1857-9, 1st performance in London 1882), Kramer suggests that the fluid nature of Wagner's musical forms echoes the libidinal concept of desire. As Wagner wrote in his programme notes, it is 'forever renewing itself, craving and languishing'.[80] Kramer shows how this libidinal model encourages the deconstruction of traditional gender roles in Wagner's work, so that Isolde is imagined as the active partner, while Tristan is passive, wounded and dependent. In addition, the consummation of their desire is constantly deferred, and only achieved with the death of the male. In her Transfiguration scene, Isolde descibes her union with the dead Tristan in language that brings together song, moving water and female desire. Finally she can 'complete the cadence' that was shattered by a shriek in act 2, scene 2:

> Can it be that I alone
> hear this wondrous, glorious tune, ...
> from him flowing,
> through me pouring,
> rising, soaring,
> boldly singing?[81]

The parallels between Wagner's Isolde and Burne-Jones's mermaid should not be exaggerated. However, they both provided an alternative vision of female sexuality. Unlike most of their contemporaries, Wagner and Burne-Jones refused in these works to categorise their women as simply chaste or fallen, pure or debauched. Isolde and Burne-Jones's mermaid are at once

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[79] Lawrence Kramer, 'Musical Form and Fin-de-Siècle Sexuality' in Music as Cultural Practice, 1800-1900, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press) 1990, p.141.
[80] Richard Wagner's programme notes for the concert version of the Prelude, quoted by Lawrence Kramer, 'Musical Form and Fin-de-Siècle Sexuality', p.147.
[81] Libretto for Tristan und Isolde quoted by Lawrence Kramer, ibid., p.163.

desiring and sympathetic. At first sight, their longing is intensified as it is left unfulfilled by the object of their desire: in Isolde's case, because of Brangäne's intervention, and in the mermaid's because she is only half-woman. But both achieve satisfaction through immersion. Isolde is enraptured as her love for Tristan washes over and pours through her, while the mermaid is triumphant as she submerges herself in the sea, even though the sailor she clasps in her arms is already limp. They are experiencing a new, fluid model of sensuality, which is no longer focused on one object, nor is it specifically genital; the fish-tailed mermaid of course is denied that pleasure. Female libidinal desire does not in fact require a male object at all. Kramer points to fin-de-siècle works by the Austrian artist Gustav Klimt that privilege the independent and narcissistic sensuality of women underwater [figure 101].[82] Klimt's floating nudes, with parted lips, may be singing or simply aroused by their total submersion, but like works by Wagner and Burne-Jones, they represent a challenge to the dominant phallocentric model of the erotic.

The young Frederic Leighton also constructed highly-charged images that wove together music, moving water and libidinal desire. His Lieder ohne Worte (1861, oil on canvas, Tate Britain) [figure 102] explores the narcissistic sensuality identified by Kramer as a key-note of Freud's theory.[83] This painting shows a young servant listening to falling water and the singing of a blackbird while waiting for her water-jar to fill. From the outset Leighton intended this work to be about pleasure, aural, visual and physical. He

> endeavoured, both by colour and by flowing delicate forms, to translate to the eye of the spectator something of the pleasure which the child receives through her ears.[84]

His choice of title, 'Songs without Words', was not part of the original conception but was suggested by a visitor to the studio. It was lifted from

[82] Lawrence Kramer illustrates Klimt's Fish Blood, from Ver Sacrum, Vienna, vol.1, February, 1898, ibid., p.144.
[83] Ibid., p.146.
[84] Frederic Leighton, letter to Edward von Steinle, 30th April 1861, quoted by Royal Academy of Arts, Frederic Leighton 1830-1896, (London and New York: Royal Academy and Harry N. Abrams) 1996, p.21.

Mendelssohn's popular piano pieces, and would have been immediately recognised by visitors to the Academy's summer exhibition. It was a convenient hook on which to hang a musical painting.

Leighton's Lieder ohne Worte presents the female form in a purely decorative fashion. The veiled figure carrying a water jar on her head moves away from the viewer with a graceful tilt of her hips, but her face, indeed her whole body, is hidden by her drapery. We can only study her outline and the folds of cloth that suggest her limbs. She has become the visual equivalent of the vase she holds. We enjoy the exotic silhouettes of the water jars with their restrained ornament in the same way that we consume the sway of her back. In fact, the shapes of the vases correspond directly with those of the figures: the tall, red-and-black vase on the steps echoes the form of the veiled woman, while the rounded white vase repeats the colours and shape of the seated figure. The forms of the female body, suggested by the masses of flowing cloth, are studied and carefully placed, but Leighton denies his viewers the usual voyeuristic pleasures associated with pictures of servant-girls in far-away palaces. One figure is totally concealed so we can only imagine what she looks like. The other is more immediately alluring, with folds of blue drapery emphasising the outline of womanly hips and a tightly bound waist. Her hands and feet are bare, her top slips provocatively from her shoulder and she wears gold hoop earrings and necklaces. But these first impressions are deceptive. The servant's blouse falls open, but we see only the flat chest – of a boy.

Ambiguity of gender, of location, of the site of pleasure, is woven into every element of this painting. The figure in the foreground appears at first glance to be a girl, but when we look again, we see the distinctive features of one of Leighton's favourite models, John Hanson Walker. The identity of the sitter was certainly known to Leighton's friends; Emilia Barrington raised it with the artist in the early 1860s. Leighton was not trying to deceive his audience, but to encourage them to question their assumptions about artistic conventions. As a result, when this painting was first shown, critics did not know quite what to make of either the subject or the setting. The Athenaeum for example could not pin it down:

it may be Roman in the luxurious days; it may be Pompeian; it may be Egyptian of Cleopatra's age; it may even be Palladian.[85]

Leighton offers hints and suggestions, in the apparently archaeological detailing, and the delightful way he wraps and reveals his model's body, but everything in the picture is elusive and artificial. Most importantly, for the purposes of this thesis, the focus of pleasure is slippery. Initially, the audience expects to enjoy the sight of a beautiful body. But this body is sexually ambiguous; it can be read as male or female, adult or child. Leighton made it clear in his letter to his mentor Edward von Steinle that the pleasure experienced by the servant was his starting point. Any pleasure experienced by the audience was secondary.

This painting is, at least in part, about self-pleasuring. Its musical and watery environment points to the developing notions of libidinal (fluid) desire which does not need a single external focus, nor is it bound by gender stereotypes. Lieder ohne Worte illustrates a Freudian narcissistic model of desire, which according to Kramer occurs 'when libido is ...allowed to flow back onto the self'.[86] Leighton's depiction of auto-eroticism at one level conforms to Victorian fears of the ill-effects of masturbation on the young body. As the servant caresses her/his foot, we notice the blank pale face and dark shadows under the eyes. Victorian medics and clergymen warned of these physical side-effects, the 'pallid bloodless countenance' and the 'black and blue semi-circles under his eyes'.[87] J. B. Bullen sums up the conventional discourse: masturbation led to 'effeminate self-absorption'.[88] Leighton deliberately engages with these conventions, by portraying exactly these characteristics in the face and body of the servant. He also draws attention to the touch of the servant's hand, by the careful positioning of the two vases on the steps. But although his image hints at the dangers of self-pleasuring, he refuses to condemn it. Instead, he offers narcissistic desire as an

[85] Athenaeum (London) 4th May 1861, quoted by Royal Academy of Arts, Frederic Leighton, p.122.
[86] Lawrence Kramer, 'Musical Form and Fin-de-Siècle Sexuality', p.146.
[87] O.S. Fowler, Amativeness or Evils and Remedies of Excessive and Perverted Sexuality, (London) 1881, quoted by J.B. Bullen, The Pre-Raphaelite Body: Fear and Desire in Painting, Poetry and Criticism, (Oxford: Clarendon Press) 1998, p.209.

alternative to conventional gender relations, in the same way that he challenges our expectations about looking at young female models, and undermines the fantasy of the typical harem picture. The servant's pleasure in listening to bird-song and water is combined with the enjoyment of touch. This pleasure is self-contained and contemplative.

Leighton's Lieder ohne Worte is full of paradoxes. The architectural space seems solid enough, but it is only a stage on which a sequence of beautiful shapes and colours unfold. The painting celebrates self-sufficient sexuality, while at the same time, it reduces the female body to merely decorative forms. It warns us of the hazards of sensual indulgence, but encourages us to imagine the multiple pleasures – of touch and sound - experienced by the servant. How can we account for this ambivalence? The music and the water are faint in this picture – a single blackbird and the trickle of a fountain. This work was painted more than forty years before Freud published his theory of the libido. It represents the beginning of a development rather than its climax. Although it cannot fully escape its mid-Victorian context, it does open up the possibility of an alternative realm of the senses. Lieder ohne Worte puzzled many of Leighton's contemporaries, who saw it as purely ornamental and 'flimsy'.[89] On the other hand, Rossetti, another emerging aestheticist artist, thought it was 'the only very good painting' by Leighton.[90]

Like many of Leighton's explicitly musical paintings, including The Music Lesson and Golden Hours, in this work music is one of many signs of otherness: femininity / effeminacy, historical and geographical distance, passivity, and sensual pleasure. Lieder ohne Worte is distinctive in having the additional element of water, and the linked auto-erotic sub-text.[91] Of course, the downward, inward gaze of Leighton's servant figure also allows us to enjoy looking at her/him without the risk of being scrutinised ourselves.

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[88] J.B. Bullen, The Pre-Raphaelite Body, p.208.
[89] Saturday Review, (London), 25th May 1861, quoted by Royal Academy of Arts, Frederic Leighton, p.123.
[90] Ibid., p.123.

Conclusion

This music-induced reverie is repeated in painting after painting. In fact, the majority of the women who feature in musical images, whether by Leighton, Dicksee or Rossetti, seem oblivious to their audience. (Notable exceptions include Burne-Jones's mermaid, who holds our gaze, and Kate Bunce's minstrels.) This trance-state makes them vulnerable. As we have discovered in the story of the Lady of Shalott, they are transformed from art-producers to art-objects: 'she has a lovely face'. Of course, we should not be surprised that Victorian painters were interested in producing visual pleasure in their depiction of female musicians. Ultimately they had to make their paintings visually attractive, and what better way to appeal to the male-dominated market than by concentrating on the decorative qualities of the music-making young woman? Her bare arms and dainty fingers, parted lips and dancing feet could be legitimately displayed. But this approach reinforced the marginal position of musical women in Victorian society. Their fate was to be seen but not heard.

[91] The linked motifs of music, water and auto-eroticism re-emerge in his late work, The Garden of the Hesperides (1892, oil on canvas, Lady Lever Art Gallery, National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside) [figure125]. This painting is analysed in Chapter 6.

Chapter Five

Colour and *Correspondances*

Introduction

In 1868 the poet Algernon Swinburne considered the future of British art. His review of current exhibitions and works-in-progress focused on the emerging aesthetic movement, and especially the figures of Dante Gabriel Rossetti and James Whistler. Swinburne's review was compelling not only because it gave the public a glimpse of works still in the artists' studios, but also for the manner in which these works were described. Using a vocabulary derived from the experience of music rather than the visual arts, Swinburne wrote about 'the cadence of colour', 'the symphony of form', and 'chords of blue and white'.[1] Making links between the sister arts of music and painting had been a commonplace among theorists from Aristotle to Eastlake. Ruskin, for example, had written in The Stones of Venice that 'when an artist touches colour it is the same thing as when a poet takes up a musical instrument'.[2] The novelty was that, in Swinburne's circle, there was a sustained intensity of interest in the idea of 'correspondences' between sight and sound.

This chapter analyses the complex relations between sound and colour theory in the Victorian art-world. This multi-stranded study begins by offering an overview of historical attempts to create direct, even scientific, analogies between music and painting. It also considers the phenomenon of synaesthesia. This chapter then analyses the connections between music, colour and a developing interest in the art of the Venetian Renaissance, through a case-study of Rossetti's paintings. It demonstrates that, for the Victorians, Venetian colour was associated both with music and with sensuality. This chapter argues that the shift from Florentine to Venetian influences in Rossetti's art was a critical moment in the emergence of

[1] Notes on the Royal Academy Exhibition 1868, Part I by W.M. Rossetti, Part II by Algernon C. Swinburne, (London: John Hamden Hotten) 1868, pp.48, 32, 44.
[2] John Ruskin, 'Stones of Venice', ed. E.T.A. Cook and A. Wedderburn, The Works of John Ruskin, (London: George Allen) 1903-1912, vol.11, p.219.

aestheticism. This study also considers the simultaneous development of synaesthetic interests in the French art-world, and their transmission to London. In particular, it analyses the use of colour-harmonies in Whistler's paintings as an alternative aestheticist approach to blending sound and colour. It then assesses the impact of Wagner on British art, by tracing the Tannhäuser motif in contemporary poetry, criticism and painting. In particular, it focuses on the textual interplay between the work of the poet Algernon Swinburne, the painter Burne-Jones, and the critic Walter Pater. Through an analysis of Pater's writing, this thesis argues that a distinctive strand of aestheticism emerged, that wove together both the Venetian and the French approaches to painted music. This was embodied in the musical images created by Burne-Jones.

Making Sound Visible

When the Victorians thought about music and colour, their ideas were shaped by two historical oppositional models: melody versus harmony and science versus aesthetics. This thesis argues that the Victorians added a third model: Renaissance Venice versus contemporary France. However, during the 1860s and 1870s some artists attempted to heal these divisions. By weaving together apparently irreconcilable models, by embracing their contradictions, aesthetic artists could make their paintings sing.

In 1781 Rousseau had formalised the division between melody and harmony in his Essay on the Origin of Language. He wrote that

> Melody does in music precisely what drawing does in painting; it marks the lines and the figures, of which the chords and the sounds are but the colours.[3]

So melody was equated with line and harmony with colour. In the 19th century, most advanced artists and critics concentrated on colour chords, but

[3] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, quoted by Enrico Fubrini, Music and Culture in Eighteenth-Century Europe: A Source Book, translated from the original sources by Wolfgang Freis, Lisa Gasbarrone, Michael Louis Leone, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press) 1994, p.94.

some, like Burne-Jones, as we shall see, believed that a truly musical painting could not rely on harmony alone. He insisted on melodious structure too.

The tension between harmony and melody, line and colour, runs through any attempt to analyse Victorian musical paintings. It also informs the increasing interest in Venetian Renaissance painting. The colourful and sensual aspects in Venetian art were seen as a challenge to the linear, rational and sacred art of the Florentine Renaissance. Venice represented harmony, and Florence melody. But this was only the starting point. Historical models like Giorgione and Titian were challenged by the ultra-modern approach of the French school of landscape painters. In both cases, the musical element in painting was found in the evasion of narrative frameworks. But while Giorgione's art celebrated the human body, in France pure landscape became the pictorial equivalent of musical experience.[4] These differences were played out in the Victorian art world in the work of Rossetti who followed the Venetian model, and Whistler who trained in France. Yet sympathetic critics like Swinburne believed that both succeeded in creating paintings that paralleled music. Swinburne's own writing also revealed another area of French influence. He was excited by the poetry of Théophile Gautier, and reviews by Charles Baudelaire. Swinburne acted as a conduit for their controversial ideas about the inter-relationship of the arts. He also helped to transmit their enthusiasm for Wagner to the British art world.

The art criticism of Swinburne and later Walter Pater created analogies between music and painting using aesthetic frameworks based on music theory. Their interest in 'colour chords' was metaphorical rather than literal. However, there had always been an alternative approach which made connections between sound and colour, based on scientific principles. Attempts to forge concrete links between the arts were found in Aristotle's On Sense and Sensible Objects, and continue to contribute to the multi-media spectacles of the 21st century. John Gage in his study of Colour and

[4] For a full discussion of French landscape practice and theory, see Kermit Swiler Champa, 'Painted Responses to Music: the Landscapes of Corot and Monet', in ed. M.L. Morton and P.L. Schmunk, The Arts Entwined: Music and Painting in the Nineteenth Century, (New York and London: Garland) 2000, pp.101-115.

Culture (1993) provides an historical survey of attempts to make sound visible. In most cases artists wanted to establish an equivalence between the mathematical ratios of the musical octave, and the colour palette. However, until the end of the 17th century, the sequence of the colours was confused and liable to change. This did not stop the artist Giuseppe Arcimboldo, working in Prague in the 1570s, from trying to build a 'colour organ' in which white represented the lowest notes, with 'green and blue for the higher parts'.[5] By 1672 Sir Isaac Newton had formulated his division of coloured light into the spectrum or rainbow. When Newton deliberately divided his spectrum into seven, he gave artists and musicians more scope for creating direct links: as Gage writes 'the introduction of indigo...can only have been justified by the need to make up the seven tones in the musical octave'.[6]

Further scientific advances in the 19th century contributed to the interest in coloured music and musical colour. In 1864 James Clerk Maxwell proposed that visible light is a form of electromagnetic radiation. His discovery helped to promote the wave theory, finally overturning Newton's belief that light was made up of tiny corpuscles. If both sound and colour were produced by invisible waves, and changes in these wavelengths could alter pitch or hue, it should be possible to create equivalent scales. There were various attempts to do so, but few could agree on the exact relationship between notes and colours. Both D.R.Hay (1856) and A. Wallace Rimington (1912) made red equal to middle C and but in Hay's scale C1 was blue, while in Rimington's it was invisible. For Hay, the note G was yellow, but for Rimington it was blueish-green.[7] Clearly any artist trying to paint by numbers would have to be more subjective than scientific in his approach.

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[5] John Gage, Colour and Culture: Practice and Meaning from Antiquity to Abstraction, (London: Thames and Hudson) 1993, p.230.
[6] Ibid., p.232.
[7] D. R. Hay, The Science of Beauty, as Developed by Nature and as Applied to Art, (Edinburgh and London) 1856, p.78 and A. Wallace Rimington, Colour-Music: The Art of Mobile Colour (London: Hutchinson and Co.) 1912, p.177. Fred Collopy has created a colour-scale chart showing the variations in visual equivalents for musical notes from Isaac Newton (1704) to Steve Zieverink (2004). His work demonstrates the mutability of sound and colour analogies: there is not even general agreement over the colour of middle C. Ed. Kerry Brougher, Visual Music: Synaesthesia in Art and Music since 1900, (London: Thames and Hudson) 2005, p.213.

In the late 19th century some researchers turned their attention to the psychological rather than the physical relationship between sound and vision. In 1883 Sir Francis Galton published a pioneering study on 'Colour Associations', analysing cases where patients claimed to link words or letters with specific colours.[8] By 1890, Suarez de Mendoza's review of the literature on 'coloured hearing' cited 59 accounts of the phenomenon, which came to be called synaesthesia.[9] The mingling of the senses experienced by synaesthetes included not only hearing and sight, but could effect touch and taste as well. By the early 20th century avant-garde composers like Alexander Scriabin brought together the research into colour-scales and synaesthesia, creating works of art in which music and colour were combined with another modern breakthrough – electric light. The invention of a consistent and safe way of projecting coloured light opened up a new world of possibilities. Scriabin, himself a synaesthete who experienced coloured hearing, conceived his Prometheus symphony (1910-11) as a musical work accompanied by colour light projections. Early performances had to do without, as the colour-keyboard broke down at the Moscow premiere, but in 1915, the complete work was performed at Carnegie Hall, New York.[10]

The artists of the aesthetic movement were aware of the potential such scientific links might bring to their own work. Rossetti, Burne-Jones and Whistler could have read an account of Arcimboldo's 'colour-organ' in Eastlake's translation of Goethe's colour theory (1820).[11] But when we look at their paintings, it is clear that they struck a balance between mapping music directly onto their canvases, and creating allusive analogies suggested by musical theory. For them, the most important point was music's position as the ideal art, which all the other arts tried to emulate.

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[8] Sir Francis Galton, 'Colour Associations', Inquiries into the Human Faculty, (London: Dent) 1883, reprinted in ed. Simon Baron-Cohen and John E. Harrison, Synaesthesia: Classic and Contemporary Readings, (Oxford: Blackwell) 1997, pp.43-48.
[9] Lawrence E. Marks, 'On Colored-Hearing Synesthesia: Cross-modal Translations of Sensory Dimensions', reprinted, ibid., p.50.
[10] John Gage, Colour and Culture, p.243-244.
[11] Goethe, Colour Theory, translated by Charles Eastlake, 1820, ed. and reprinted by Rupprecht Matthaei, (London: Studio Vista) 1971, note BB, para.748, p.274.

In 1854 music critic Eduard Hanslick described music, in its highest form, as 'absolutely beautiful and self-sufficient.'[12] This thesis argues that the musical attributes of beauty and self-sufficiency became the watchwords of the aesthetic movement. Aestheticist artists hoped that if painting (or poetry) could become more musical, it could escape the confines of narrative and realism. Artists could then create works in which beauty was the only subject. In this regard, Swinburne's 1868 Royal Academy review is a key text. Swinburne suggested that some contemporary artists had succeeded in demonstrating 'an exclusive worship of things formally beautiful'. They were creating works of art whose 'meaning is beauty, and its reason for being is to be'.[13] In his eyes, this was the visual equivalent of music.

Rossetti and Renaissance Venice

From the start of his career, Rossetti was fascinated by the interweaving of the arts. This self-referential approach, with one art (poetry) speaking to and through another (painting) was one of the defining characteristics of his work. Many of his earliest drawings were produced in response to his reading: he wanted to translate the words of his favourite writers into visual images. So we find intensely personal illustrations for The Raven by Edgar Allen Poe (1848, pen and ink on paper, Victoria and Albert Museum) [figure 53] or episodes from Dante's Vita Nuova reworked in watercolour. In the 1850s his medieval fantasies inspired reciprocal poems by his friend William Morris, who wrote King Arthur's Tomb and The Blue Closet as parallels to Rossetti's images. But from the outset, Rossetti tried to create his own 'double works of art' : poems and pictures that were conceived and experienced together. When he exhibited his first picture in 1849, The Girlhood of Virgin Mary (1848-9, Tate Britain) [figure 47], he inscribed one sonnet on the frame to explain his esoteric symbolism, and another was printed in the exhibition catalogue. Visitors to the Free Exhibition could not look at the image without encountering the parallel text describing 'the blessed Mary, pre-elect / God's Virgin'. This poem, with fifteen other 'Sonnets for Pictures' was published in 1870. Nine of the published poems were twinned with his own paintings, but

[12] Eduard Hanslick, 'On the Musically Beautiful', 1854, translated and reprinted, ed. Bujic, Music in European thought 1851-1912, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 1988, p.19.

he also composed sonnets in response to works by Leonardo da Vinci, Mantegna, Ingres, Burne-Jones and, most significantly, Giorgione.

It is the Venetian Renaissance, and especially the art of Giorgione and Titian, that provides the key to understanding the role of colour in Rossetti's art from the late 1850s. It also helps to decode the relationship between colour and music in his paintings. The picture that inspired Rossetti's verse is a pastoral scene in the Louvre, a Concert Champêtre (c.1510-11, oil on canvas, Musée du Louvre) [figure 3]. In the 19th century the painting was attributed to Giorgione, but is now linked to Titian. This poem concentrates on the pleasurable sensations presented by the picture, especially music and the feeling of cool grass on naked flesh:

> Now the hand trails upon the viol-string
> That sobs, and the brown faces cease to sing,
> Sad with the whole of pleasure.[14]

Rossetti's poem draws together poetry and painting in a single experience, but, more than that, he explores the painting's own suggestion of musical sound, to add a further sensory pleasure. Unlike the other 'Sonnets for Pictures' which mingled two types of art (poetry and painting), the Giorgione poem weaves a third, music, into the scene. In doing so, Rossetti approaches the aesthetic goal of 'art for art's sake' alone, as the poem turns in upon itself, and refers only to other forms of art, painting and music. This claustrophobia is as much a feature of his painted worlds as of his poetic imagination.[15]

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[13] Algernon Swinburne, Notes on the Royal Academy Exhibition 1868, p.32.
[14] D.G. Rossetti, 'For a Venetian Pastoral by Giorgione (In the Louvre)', Poems and Translations 1850-1870, (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 1913, reprinted 1968, p.142.
[15] In his analysis of For a Venetian Pastoral, Jonathan Freedman considers the radical agenda of Rossetti's poem. In a multi-layered reading of this work, he suggests that, among other things, Rossetti was exploring the aestheticist dilemma of both acknowledging the passage of time, and wanting to crystallise a perfect moment. Freedman also unravels the tensions between the painting/woman with jug (gendered female) and the viewer/poet (gendered male). He proposes that the 'hushing' of the viewer/poet - the failure to utter the word that will animate the painting/woman - gives the poet his power: 'In this poem, silence itself becomes a signifier...the poem masters the image...and Rossetti remakes himself as a more fully masculinized poet'. Jonathan Freedman, Professions of Taste: Henry James, British Aestheticism and Commodity Culture, (Stanford, California: Stanford University

From the late 1850s, Rossetti's own paintings began to mirror the art of Venice, in his fascination with sensual surfaces, gorgeous colours and, especially, the hair and flesh of his female models. Several commentators, including J.B. Bullen, have suggested that this phase of Rossetti's career should be seen as a transition from a 'Florentine' to a 'Venetian' style.[16] His early narrative watercolours and oils were constructed with strong outlines and often with spiritual subjects, demonstrating a dependence on the ideals of the Florentine Renaissance. But from 1859, with the painting of Bocca Baciata (oil on wood, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston), his works became more Venetian; they focused on flesh, colour, physical beauty and the stimulation of the senses. This was not a sudden discovery. Rossetti had insisted that Giorgione, Titian and Veronese should be included in the 'List of Immortals' drawn up with Holman Hunt when the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was in its infancy.[17] His interest in Venetian art was reinforced during his visit to Paris in 1849, when he saw works by Giorgione and Titian in the Louvre. Closer to home, he would have known the Sybil (c.1522-4, oil on wood, Royal Collection) [figure 103] by Palma Vecchio displayed at Hampton Court. This voluptuous figure, with flowing blonde hair and unconcerned deshabillé, provided a model for Rossetti's own studies of beauty. The particular attraction of Giorgione was also reflected in Rossetti's drawing, Giorgione painting (1853, pen and ink, Birmingham City Museums and Art Gallery) [figure 104], with Lizzie Siddal as the artist's model. However, despite this early interest, the distinctive style of the Venetians did not become visible in Rossetti's pictures until several years later.

Contemporary critics from the 1860s made direct comparisons between Rossetti and the Venetians. A 'foreign critic', quoted at length in Fraser's Magazine, described him as a 'very great painter; perhaps as a colourist he has had no rival since Titian and Veronese...There is a St Catherine or St Cecilia of his which actually glows with colour – with such a glow of gold and

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Press) 1990, pp.19-24. However Freedman does not tackle the implications of music in this conflict between the arts of (male) poetry and (female) painting.

[16] See J. B.Bullen, The Pre-Raphaelite Body, (Oxford: Clarendon Press) 1998, p.95.

[17] See Paul Spencer-Longhurst, The Blue Bower: Rossetti in the 1860s, (London: Scala and Barber Institute of Fine Arts) 2001 p.15.

amethyst.'[18] William Sharp agreed that 'No such colourist has appeared in Europe since the days when the great Venetians emulated on canvas the glory of sunset tints or the barbaric splendour of Eastern dyes'.[19] But the use of splendid colour was also dangerous. It suggested a superficial and sensual approach to art, especially when it was combined with studies of ravishing female beauty. The Royal Academy was suspicious of it, following Joshua Reynolds' statement in his Discourses that the 'Venetian use of colour as brilliant but shallow'.[20] It was too emotionally-charged, and it was this seductive quality that worried the Academics. Reynolds complained of the Venetian artists 'who may be said to have exhausted all the powers of florid eloquence, to debauch the young and inexperienced.'[21]

It was precisely the 'brilliant' and 'florid' aspects of Venetian colouring that appealed to Rossetti as he began his artistic journey from Florence to Venice. And this thesis argues that music helped to underpin this development. As his paintings became more colourful, so they became more musical. From the late 1850s, music stopped being merely an object, and became the subject. In the 'Florentine' work of the late 1840s and 1850s, musical instruments appear as props. They are decorative details that reinforce the medieval or renaissance setting, and also act as symbols of Love or spiritual devotion. When we turn to The Blue Bower of 1865 (oil on canvas, The Barber Institute of Fine Arts, The University of Birmingham) [figure 34], the role of music has changed. Music-making is now the central subject of this image; it is the ostensible reason for the painting's existence. We are asked to admire a beautiful woman in a sensual setting, playing a musical instrument. This pattern is repeated in works like Veronica Veronese (1872, oil on canvas, Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington) [figure 105] and La Ghirlandata (1873, oil on canvas, Guildhall Art Gallery, Corporation of London) [figure 24].

The link between Venetian colour, sensuality and music is made clearer if we look at Ruskin's experience in 1858. Like Rossetti, John Ruskin had made

[18] 'Shirley', Frasers Magazine, (London) 1870, p.609.
[19] William Sharp, Fortnightly Review, (London) 1886, p.426.
[20] J.B. Bullen, The Pre-Raphaelite Body, p.97.
[21] Ibid., p.98.

a career out of admiring and promoting Early Italian art, but he too made the leap from Florence to Venice in the late 1850s. Ruskin was studying Veronese's Solomon and the Queen of Sheba in Turin. This painting challenged and finally overwhelmed his Evangelical Protestantism, as it was undeniably beautiful, yet seemed to be at odds with strict Christian teaching. He underwent what he called an 'unconversion', opening himself up to a more worldy enjoyment of art. The flesh painting and the rich colours were profoundly unsettling, as he acknowledged in a letter to his father:

> Has God made faces beautiful and limbs strong, and created these strange, fiery, fantastic energies, and created gold, and pearls and crystal, and the sun that makes them gorgeous...only that all these things may lead His creatures away from Him?[22]

The impact of the picture was reinforced by music that Ruskin could hear through the open windows of the gallery:

> The [military] band was playing some passages of brilliant music at the time, and this music blended so thoroughly with Veronese's splendour; the beautiful notes seeming to form one whole with the lovely forms and colours, and powerful human creatures.[23]

The overwhelming emotional pull of the music, in combination with the painting, was the catalyst for his radical change in views. Although he said that neither preacher, picture nor dulcimer was individually responsible for his sudden conversion, they worked together to challenge his religious and artistic beliefs. For the next decade, Ruskin praised the secular work of Titian and his Venetian contemporaries, over the sacred art of Giotto, Fra Angelico and the earlier Florentines. In particular, he became convinced that 'to a painter's true and highly trained instinct, the human body is the loveliest of all objects', and for the first time he was able to appreciate the nudes painted 'fearlessly' by Giorgione and Titian.[24] So Ruskin recognised that flesh,

[22] The Works of John Ruskin, vol.7, p.xli.
[23] Ibid., vol. 7, p.xli.
[24] Ibid.,'Modern Painters', Vol.7 p.297.

colour and music were three keys to appreciating Venetian art. All three were re-enacted in Rossetti's paintings of the 1860s and 1870s.

After Bocca Baciata (1859), Rossetti's art dealt obsessively with studies of the female figure, in historical, mythological or exotic settings; his brother called them 'beautiful women with floral adjuncts'.[25] Rossetti was open about his reliance on Venetian prototypes for the transformation of his style and choice of subjects. In 1859 he described how Bocca Baciata had 'taken after all a rather Venetian aspect'[26] and his Monna Vanna (1863-66, oil on canvas, Tate Britain) was originally titled Venus Veneta. Rossetti had intended her to represent the 'Venetian ideal of female beauty'.[27] Similarly, the first title of Fazio's Mistress (1863-1873, oil on canvas, Tate Britain) was Aurelia, to reinforce Rossetti's notion that this image should be approached as study in colour not narrative.

The move towards Venetian flesh and colour coincided with a turning away from overt story-telling in Rossetti's art. Music has a very particular part to play in Rossetti's evasion of narrative. Despite their superficial similarity we can draw a distinction between the musical and non-musical subjects of this period. In the paintings where there is no musical performance, there is always an external literary connection which supplies a reason for the focus on the female figure. For example Bocca Baciata is a picture of Alatiel, whose story is told in Boccaccio's Decameron. She is repeatedly abducted and seduced, before being passed off as a virgin when she marries her original fiancé. Lady Lilith, as Rossetti explains in his own poem, was Adam's first wife, 'the witch he loved before the gift of Eve.'[28] Fazio's Mistress is an imaginary portrait of the woman loved by the Renaissance poet Fazio degli Uberti. She is described in a poem translated by Rossetti, which focused on her 'crisp golden-threaded hair', her 'amorous beautiful mouth', and 'her white easy neck'.[29] Even the title of Monna Vanna (1863-

[25] William Michael Rossetti, D.G. Rossetti: his Family Letters with a Memoir, vol.1, p.203
[26] D.G. Rossetti to George Price Boyce, July 1859, quoted in A. Wilton and R. Upstone, Symbolism in Britain: the Age of Rossetti, Burne-Jones and Watts, (London: Tate Gallery) 1997, p.97.
[27] Letters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, ed. O. Doughty and J.R. Wahl, (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 1965, vol.2, p.606.
[28] D.G. Rossetti, Poems and Translations, 1850-70, p.146.
[29] Ibid., p.279-281

66, oil on canvas, Tate Britain) is an oblique reference to Dante's Vita Nuova. Rossetti deliberately chose these titles to act as signals to the historic or literary source of his subject. The finished work may be devoid of contextual references, but these images are never entirely self-contained: they always have an external source.

The key moment for this thesis occurs when Rossetti begins to incorporate musical images into the pictures. At that point, the literary sources evaporate. The titles of La Ghirlandata [figure 24], The Bower Meadow (1871-2, oil on canvas, Manchester City Art Galleries) and The Blue Bower [figure 34] do echo the themes of Rossetti's poetry, but there is no concrete link to external texts. Instead of a literary subject translated into paint, in these paintings the experience of playing and listening to music becomes the central subject. All other narrative concerns have been swept away. Music replaces poetry to create a new form of the 'double work of art'.

The case of Veronica Veronese [figure 105] is a little more complicated, as the title acknowledges two sources. The first is the Venetian Renaissance artist Veronese. His The Marriage Feast at Cana (1563, oil on canvas, Louvre) [figure 106] was described by Rossetti in 1860 as 'the greatest picture in the world without a doubt'.[30] The second is the Dantesque motif of the 'Veronica', a miraculous image of Christ's face. This suggests that Rossetti intended some spiritual undercurrent in his picture. In addition, Rossetti displayed this painting with a French text pasted on the frame, which was attributed to the Lettres de Girolamo Ridolfi. It is most likely that this source was invented by Rossetti or his friend Algernon Swinburne, rather than being unearthed in an 18th century manuscript. By creating a parallel text for a musical picture, Rossetti is reinforcing the conjunctions between the arts of literature, painting and music. This is, in effect, a 'triple work of art'. The text refers back to the music created in the image. Again, music becomes the subject of the painting, and specifically the moment at which music is created both by the bird and by the touch of the fingers on the violin: 'It was the marriage of the voices of nature and the spirit – the dawn of a

[30] D. G. Rossetti to William Michael Rossetti, Letters, ed. O. Doughty and J.R. Wahl, vol.1, p.367.

mystical creation'.[31] So the literary text, rather than pointing to an external narrative framework in fact reinforces the musical experience conjured up by Rossetti's picture. It focuses the viewer's attention on the moment of artistic creation, as the source of the music oscillates between the woman and the bird; she is trying to capture the purity of the bird-song by recording its notes in her music-book and recreating them on the strings of her violin.

The use of Veronese's name in the title highlights the connection between this musical experience, and the art of Venice, especially Veronese's use of colour. Ruskin was excited by the combination of colour and fleshly beauty he experienced when studying Veronese's paintings. We may even say he was seduced by it. He certainly described the effect of colour as 'a type of love', just as Rossetti called it 'love at first sight'.[32] Bullen suggests that Rossetti and his contemporaries 'recognized that he had sexualised his image[s] through the use of colour'.[33]

The conjunction of sensual pleasure, colour and music, derived from Venetian examples, is made explicit in Rossetti's painting of The Blue Bower. The siren-spell of the music entrances the viewer, as he contemplates a vision that is both overwhelmingly physical and resolutely two-dimensional, full of details that imply a reality but then subvert all attempts to place the image. When this picture was reviewed by F.G. Stephens in 1865 he dwelt on 'the marvellous fleshiness of the flesh; the fascinating sensuousness of the expression'.[34] Stephens went on to explain how this was achieved. He demonstrated how Rossetti denied the viewer any satisfactory narrative framework for the image: 'there is nothing to suggest subject, time or place'.[35] Rossetti has systematically removed external references by the confusion of props: Japanese *koto*, Renaissance costume and Chinese ceramic motifs set into Islamic tiles. Instead we are left to contemplate firstly the title, with its focus on colour and seclusion, and then the sensory experience of texture (fur-lined silk, cool tiled walls, hair, flesh), scent (flowers) and sound (plucked strings). Unlike the non-musical paintings to

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[31] my translation, from text quoted by A. Wilton and R. Upstone, Symbolism in Britain, p.197.
[32] See J.B. Bullen, The Pre-Raphaelite Body, p.105.
[33] Ibid., p.104.
[34] F.G. Stephens, The Athenaeum, (London) 21st October 1865, p.546.
[35] Ibid, p.545.

which it is related in terms of composition and style, there is no attempt to create an identifiable historical or geographical context through the use of props or costume. Music-making has replaced literary references as a pretext for the painting.

According to Stephens, the viewer is encouraged to explore the 'purely artistic splendour of the picture'.[36] However this conjunction of music, colour and sensuality is only the springboard for a dramatic theoretical leap. Stephens proposes that, by bringing these elements together, Rossetti created something that is more than the sum of its parts. He suggests that this painting can be the catalyst for a synaesthetic experience:

the music of the dulcimer passes out of the spectator's cognizance when the chromatic harmony takes its place in appealing to the eye.[37]

The evocation of music transforms the viewer's perception of colour. The blues and greens are seen in musical terms, as if they were notes combining to make a satisfying chord. H.C. Marillier, writing at the end of the century, agreed that by bringing together 'blue tiles at her back, blue cornflowers by her side; blue turquoises in her hair and deep blue eyes...a fur-lined robe of green, such green as that which the sea knows' Rossetti had created 'the most gorgeous blue and green harmonies'.[38]

This way of looking at Rossetti's musical pictures, as studies in colour harmony, was part of a broader development in the Victorian art world. Stephens was among the first critics to acknowledge the potentially transforming effect of music on painting, but he shared this new approach with others in Rossetti's circle, notably Swinburne. It is time to look more closely at how this new critical language emerged.

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[36] Ibid, p.545.
[37] Ibid, p.546.
[38] H.C. Marillier, Dante Gabriel Rossetti: An Illustrated Memorial of his Art and Life, (London) 1899, p.137.

Contemporary French Theories of Sound and Colour

Until the early 19th century, poetry had been promoted as the ideal art – '*ut pictura poesis*' – but this theory had gradually been replaced by the notion that music was the art to which all others should aspire.[39] The impetus for this new approach had come initially from the German Romantic movement of the early 19th century. However, it was transmitted to the British aesthetic movement through the writings of the French poets Théophile Gautier and Charles Baudelaire. In 1852 Gautier published an influential poem Symphonie en Blanc Majeur, in his volume Emaux et Camées. This description of a beautiful woman with snow-white skin became a talking-point among the Parisian artists: Edouard Manet, for example, compared a cloud of dust he saw in the street to 'the symphony in white that Théophile Gautier speaks of'.[40]

The concept of a 'Symphony in White' implied an intimate relationship between music and colour; they could, in certain circumstances, overlap. It also suggested that the arts of painting or poetry would be enhanced if they tried to embody some of the characteristics of music. Gautier's ideas were promoted by Baudelaire, who declared that the verses in Emaux et Camées demonstrated

> the full effects rising from the fusion of the double element, painting and music, from the shape of the melody, and from the gorgeous colour effects that are the reward of the regularity and symmetry in rhyme.[41]

He believed that the conjunction of the arts of painting, music and poetry which he saw in Gautier's work represented a new approach to creativity.

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[39] For a review of the historiography of this change in theoretical approach, see Philippe Junod, 'The New *Paragone*: Paradoxes and Contradictions of Musical Pictorialism' in ed. M.L. Morton and P.L. Schmunk, The Arts Entwined, especially pp.24-25.
[40] Quoted by R. Dorment and M.F. Macdonald, James McNeil Whistler, (Washington and Londo: Tate Gallery) 1994, p.15.
[41] Charles Baudelaire in L'Artiste, March 1859, reprinted in Charles Baudelaire: Selected writings, transl. P. E. Charvet, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 1972, p.282.

Baudelaire's own volume of poetry, Les Fleurs du Mal (1857), attempted to follow Gautier's example by equating sound, scent, touch and colour. His poem Correspondances made these links explicit, and gave a name to the artistic theory that he was proposing. It evoked scents 'fresh as babies' skin, soft as oboes, green as meadows'.[42] This concept of *correspondances* (synaesthesia) was explained as a natural affinity between the senses which could be heightened in some people. It could also be exaggerated by the use of drugs, especially hashish. Baudelaire described his own experience in Le Poème du Haschich:

> The senses of smell, sight, hearing and touch are affected...Sounds assume a colour and colours contain music...There is nothing unnatural in intoxication by hashish; it is simply that the corresponding responses of the senses are intensified or sharpened.[43]

Music also seemed to trigger this experience in some cases. Baudelaire cited the work of Ernest Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann who claimed that

> not only in dreams...but also when fully awake, listening to music, I find an analogy and close union between colours, sounds and scents. I have the impression that all these things have been created by one and the same ray of light, and that they are destined to unite in a wonderful concert.[44]

Hoffman's synaesthetic epigrams caught the artistic imagination. Baudelaire repeated Hoffmann's phrase '*Les parfums, les couleurs et les sons se répondent*' in his own poem Correspondances, and Hoffman's description of Johannes Kreisler as 'the little man in a coat the colour of C sharp minor with an E major coloured collar' gave a frisson of delight to anyone interested in transgressing the boundaries between the senses.[45]

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[42] '*Il est des parfums frais comme des chairs d'enfants, / Doux comme les hautbois, verts comme les prairies*'.
[43] Quoted by Edward Lockspeiser, Music and Painting: A Study in Comparative Ideas from Turner to Schoenberg, (London: Cassell) 1973, p 33 & 34.
[44] E.T.A. Hoffman, Kreisleriana, quoted by Charles Baudelaire in 'The Salon of 1846', Charles Baudelaire: Selected writings p.58.

Baudelaire's *correspondances* were related to Rossetti's idea of the 'double work of art'. In both, there was the simultaneous stimulation of different senses to create a single artistic experience. But in Rossetti's paired poems and paintings the two art forms were still separate, although experienced together. In the work of Gautier and Baudelaire one art used the vocabulary of another to create a more intense sensory experience.

Whistler and Contemporary France

In the early 1860s, when these ideas were starting to have an impact on painting on either side of the Channel, Baudelaire was moving in the same circles as James Whistler. They both figured in Fantin-Latour's group portrait, Homage to Delacroix (1864, oil on canvas, Musée D'Orsay, Paris). At this point Whistler was travelling regularly between Paris and London, and in many ways he embodied the transmission of French theories to the British art world. Discussions with Baudelaire on the *correspondances* between music and colour were relayed to Rossetti and his friends in Chelsea. In 1863 Whistler had found a studio close to Rossetti's house in Cheyne Walk, and they often met to share their passion for Japanese ceramics and prints.

When in 1867 Whistler exhibited his study of two reclining girls with the title Symphony in White No.3 (oil on canvas, Barber Institute of Fine Art, The University of Birmingham) [figure 107], he was demonstrating his allegiance to the French avant-garde. The British establishment were understandably annoyed by this reference; the reputations of Gautier and Baudelaire had been tarnished by controversies surrounding the publication of Les Fleurs du Mal. Their influence implied decadence and potential indecency. But the idea of the musical title had not come from Whistler himself. It was the critic Paul Mantz who had earlier described Whistler's The White Girl (1862, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Washington) [figure 4] as a '*Symphonie en blanc*', lifting the phrase from Gautier's poem.[46] Whistler chose to apply this description to his 1867 Royal Academy exhibit, suggesting that it was the

[45] Edward Lockspeiser, Music and Painting, p.75.
[46] Paul Mantz in Gazette des Beaux-Arts, quoted in R. Dorment and M.F. Macdonald, James McNeill Whistler, p.77.

third in a series, and by implication retitling The White Girl and The Little White Girl (1865, oil on canvas, Tate Britain) [figure 108] as No. 1 and No. 2.

The critic P. G. Hamerton of The Saturday Review was perplexed by the conjunction of colour and sound in the title. He could not see how they related to each other:

> One lady has a yellowish dress and brown hair and a bit of blue ribbon, the other has a red fan...There is a girl in white on a white sofa, but even this girl has reddish hair.[47]

Whistler retorted with another musical analogy:

> does he then...believe that a symphony in F contains no other note, but shall be a continued repetition of F, F, F?...Fool![48]

Whistler implies that the passages of colour, such as the hair, the rug and the plant, are equivalent to the notes that make up a musical chord. If the tonic note is white, the mediant and dominant notes are blue-grey and soft red-brown (assuming that this, like Gautier's poem, is a symphony in a major key). This combination of colours makes a harmonious visual chord.

Whistler's analogies between music and colour in this painting were not simply created by his clever choice of title. He had considered the parallels between colour and sound harmonies before he began work on this painting. One clue to this is the source, not of the colour scheme, but of the composition. The position of the girl sitting on the floor is related to a work by Eugene Delacroix, The Women of Algiers in their Apartment (1834, oil on canvas, Musée du Louvre) [figure 109]. Delacroix had died in 1863, but Whistler saw this painting when it was exhibited posthumously in 1864.

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[47] P. G. Hamerton, June 1st 1867, quoted by James Whistler in The Gentle Art of Making Enemies, second edition (London: William Heinemann), 1892, reprinted (New York: Dover Publications), 1967, p.44.
[48] James Whistler, June 1867, ibid., p.45.

Delacroix was a key figure in the development of the idea of *correspondances* between music and painting. His influence worked on two levels. Firstly he was a great music-lover, who believed that colour had an 'abstract communicative power like that of music'.[49] Secondly, his paintings were used by Baudelaire to explain the inter-relationship between music and painting. In his review of the Salon of 1845 Baudelaire wrote enthusiastically about the musical element in Delacroix's work:

> has anyone ever at any time displayed a greater musical coquetry? Was Veronese ever more magical? Who has succeeded in making colours on a canvas sing more capricious melodies, in finding more prodigious, new, unknown, delicate, delightful chords of tone? [50]

The reference to Veronese as a painter who brings music into his art of course reminds us of Ruskin's and Rossetti's experiences. And Baudelaire was invoking the twin models of musical painting, Renaissance Venice and contemporary French practice, and was able to reconcile them in the art of Delacroix.

The following year Baudelaire warmed to his musical theme. He began by describing the colours of a sunset as 'red fanfares' and soft rose tones 'like the distant and muted echoes of the light'. He called this spectactle 'the great symphony of today', 'the eternally renewed variation of the symphony of yesterday', a 'succession of melodies' and a 'complex hymn'.[51] It is clear that, by writing in these terms, Baudelaire was attempting to transform his own art of literature, through musical analogy. He was trying to achieve what he had praised Gautier for doing in Emaux et Camées, that is, 'the fusion of the double element, painting and music'.[52] However, he also wanted to make painters look at their own art afresh, and to encourage them to recognise the potential of musical painting.

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[49] Lisa Norris, 'Painting Around the Piano: Fantin-Latour, Wagner and the Musical in Art', in ed. M.L. Morton and P.L. Schmunk, The Arts Entwined, p.147.
[50] Charles Baudelaire, 'Le Salon de 1845', Charles Baudelaire: Selected writings, transl. P. E. Charvet, p.39.
[51] Charles Baudelaire, 'Le Salon de 1846', ibid., p.55.
[52] Charles Baudelaire, 'Théophile Gautier', published in L'Artiste, March 1859, ibid., p.282.

Despite his radical tone, Baudelaire in fact followed the traditional distinctions by equating colour with musical harmony, and line with melody. He began by suggesting that there was an equivalence between the scale of musical notes and a scale of colour tones and that, with this knowledge 'the true colourist' can 'create a harmony of twenty different reds'.[53] He contrasted this idea of harmonious colour with the concept of a melodious composition: 'a melody needs to be resolved...it needs a conclusion which all the individual effects combine to produce'.[54] The composition must be meaningful if it is to be melodious. It is not enough to create a patchwork of satisfying colour combinations; they have to be supported by an underlying structure.

By making a compositional reference to a celebrated painting by Delacroix in his Symphony in White No.3, Whistler showed that he was taking up the challenge set by Baudelaire. His self-conscious use of a musical title referred directly to the French tradition. But it also was a response to the British context in which he was exhibiting: he used it to evade a narrative reading of his painting. Whistler had been frustrated by the critics' desire to read his White Girl (1862) as an illustration to Wilkie Collins' novel The Woman in White (1859-61). By using a musical title, Whistler could make it plain that this latest picture was not intended to tell a story. The title focused attention on the overall colour effect of the picture, rather than its ostensible subject. From 1867, Whistler's idylls and landscapes became known as Symphonies or Nocturnes, and thus were presented as pretexts for explorations of colour and composition. Whistler even deflected attention away from the personalities of his sitters by describing his portrait commissions in purely formal terms as Harmonies.

Musical Theories in Whistler vs. Ruskin

In 1878 Whistler was forced to justify this idiosyncratic approach when he took John Ruskin to court over a libellous review of his painting Nocturne in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket (1875, oil on wood, The Detroit Institute of Arts) [figure 110]. Although in the 1860s both Ruskin and Whistler had

[53] Charles Baudelaire, 'Le Salon de 1846', ibid., p.56.
[54] Ibid., p.57.

been interested in the idea of the musical in art, by the mid-1870s Ruskin had retreated to his earlier position, that art should be moral, not just beautiful. Ruskin's lawyer explained to the jury that Whistler seemed to think that 'the object of art should be ornament rather than edification'.[55] Whistler in his turn attacked British critics and the British public for their inability to appreciate the aesthetic qualities of a painting. Again he focused on the analogies between music and painting which were implied in his choice of title. When asked to explain to the lawyer 'the beauty of that picture', Whistler replied 'I fear it would be as hopeless as for the musician to pour his notes into the ear of a deaf man'.[56]

At the trial Whistler was awarded a mere farthing in damages. It was clear that his approach challenged prevailing attitudes among the art-going public. In The Red Rag (1878) he attacked the narrative element in Academic art:

> The vast majority of English folk cannot and will not consider a picture as a picture, apart from any story which if may be supposed to tell.[57]

By contrast, when composing his own paintings, he 'care[d] nothing for the past, present or future' of the figures but arranged them on the canvas according to aesthetic not narrative concerns: 'because the black was wanted at that spot'. Therefore, he said, his pictures should not be judged on their 'dramatic, or legendary, or local interest' but on whether they represented satisfying combinations of colours and lines: 'subject-matter has nothing to do with harmony of sound or of colour'.[58]

When Whistler fixed on musical analogy as an alternative to story-telling he had picked a convenient and topical weapon to attack the Academy. He seemed to laugh off any suggestion that there was a more coherent argument underlying his use of musical terms in his titles and rhetoric. After

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[55] Linda Merrill, A Pot of Paint: Aesthetics on Trial in Whistler vs. Ruskin, (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institute) 1992, p.177. This section of my argument has previously been published in 'Aspiring to the Condition of Music: Painting in Britain 1860-1900', ed. Jeremy Dibble and Bennett Zon, Nineteenth Century British Music Studies vol.2, (Aldershot: Ashgate Press) 2002, pp.268-271.
[56] James Whistler, The Gentle Art of Making Enemies, p.10.
[57] James Whistler, 'The Red Rag', 1878, ibid., p.126
[58] Ibid., p.126 & 127.

all, he was a self-publicist as well as a painter, and he knew that phrases like 'Symphony in White' would raise hackles among British critics because of their association with controversial French poets. During the trial he claimed that

> it is an accident that I happened upon terms based on music...Very often I have been misunderstood for this fact, it having been supposed that I intended some way or other to show a connection between the two arts, whereas I had no such intention.[59]

It is also clear that the idea of musical titles did not originate with Whistler. He lifted the Symphony in White from Paul Mantz's comment, and the inspiration behind the series of Nocturnes came from his patron Frederick Leyland. Whistler acknowledged Leyland's suggestion in a letter:

> I can't thank you too much for the name 'nocturne' as a title for my moonlights! You have no idea what an irritation it proves to the critics, and consequent pleasure to me – besides, it is really so charming and does poetically say all I want to say and *no more* than I wish.[60]

However it appears that Whistler was being disingenuous when he suggested that the use of musical vocabulary was purely accidental. He may not have come up with the idea in the first place, but he knew how to use it to good effect. His off-hand remarks about the musical underpinning of his painting are characteristic of his attitude towards critics. He was keen to construct a public persona in which his paintings were seen as the 'instantaneous work of [his] hand'[61] rather than laboriously constructed compositions: as he said, 'the work of the master reeks not of the sweat of the brow – [it] suggests no effort'.[62]

Whistler gives himself away in two places. As we have seen, he acknowledges the wider debate in France by the visual echo of Delacroix's

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[59] Quoted by Linda Merrill, A Pot of Paint, p.144.
[60] James Whistler to Frederic Leyland, undated letter, quoted in R. Dorment and M.F. Macdonald, James McNeill Whistler, p.122.
[61] Quoted by Linda Merrill, A Pot of Paint, p.222.

work in Symphony in White No.3, and by appropriating such a loaded phrase for his first musical title. Secondly, he uses music to attack narrative in painting. This attack relies on an understanding of contemporary musical theory. Whistler was drawing on the idea that music, alone of all the arts, is about form rather than content. Music does not need a concrete subject-matter. Instead it can be appreciated for its abstract formal qualities. As Whistler expressed it, music could

> appeal to the artistic sense of the...ear, without confounding this with emotions entirely foreign to it, as devotion, pity, love, patriotism, and the like.[63]

Whistler was not the only artist who used musical analogies to avoid story-telling in his pictures. Clearly Rossetti also focused attention on the aesthetic and sensual qualities in his paintings by replacing literary with musical subjects. However, Whistler was unusual in that his published theories on the nature of painting, and especially his rejection of narrative, paralleled contemporary debates about music in France, Britain and Germany.

Many of these debates were triggered by the theory put forward in the first volume of Schopenhauer's The World as Will and Representation published in 1819. Schopenhauer argued that painting, poetry and architecture relied on imitation of natural objects or emotions in order to become embodied. But music did not. Music is

> quite independent of the phenomenal world, positively ignores it, and, to a certain extent, could still exist even if there were no world at all, which cannot be said of the other arts.[64]

Music therefore becomes the pre-eminent art, because the 'others speak only of the shadow, but music of the essence'.[65] This idea that music could

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[62] James Whistler, 'Propositions –No.2', The Gentle Art of Making Enemies, p.115.
[63] James Whistler, 'The Red Rag', 1878', ibid., p.127.

speak directly, whereas the other arts were merely echoes, was one of the explanations for the emotional impact of music. Even today theorists like Malcolm Budd rely on Schopenhauer's argument in their attempts to analyse how music creates an emotional reaction in the listener.[66]

In the late 1860s and 1870s Schopenhauer's ideas became part of mainstream aesthetic discourse. And their application to Whistler's work was soon established not only by the artist himself but by art-critics. In 1871 the Times published a perceptive review of Whistler's Nocturnes:

> they are illustrations of the theory...that painting is so closely akin to music that...[it] should not aim at expressing dramatic emotions, depicting incidents of history or recording facts of nature, but should be content with moulding our moods and stirring our imaginations, by subtle combinations of colour.[67]

This critic was explicitly stating that Whistler's works created emotional effects through colour and handling of paint, rather than through story-telling. He recognised that form had superseded content. So when Whistler chose his titles, the colour chord took precedence over the subject.

The Influence of Wagner

How did the British art-world come to hear of Schopenhauer's theories? The key moment seems to have been the advent of Richard Wagner, first in Paris in 1860, and then in London in 1877. One clue to the importance of Wagner's work in promoting the Schopenhauerian view of music can be found in an article published in the Fortnightly Review in 1872. This review of Wagner's work was written by Francis Hueffer, son-in-law of Ford Madox

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[64] Arthur Schopenhauer, 'Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung', reprinted by ed. Edward A Lippman, Musical Aesthetics: A Historical Reader vol.ii, The Nineteenth Century, (New York: Pendragon Press) 1986-1993, p.165.
[65] Ibid, p.165.
[66] See Fiona Ellis, 'Scruton and Budd on Musical Meaning', British Journal of Aesthetics, (London: Thames and Hudson) vol.41, January 2001, especially the review of Malcolm Budd, Values of Art, (London: Penguin Books) 1995, p.41.
[67] The Times, 14th December 1871, quoted by R. Dorment and M.F. Macdonald, James McNeill Whistler, p.123.

Brown, and close associate of the Pre-Raphaelite movement. Hueffer compared Wagner's 'Music of the Future' with the art of poetry, suggesting that opera – a combination of music, poetry and dramatic action - was more successful than words alone in expressing the 'immediate impulse' of emotion.[68] Hueffer then highlighted a 'certain likeness between the characters of Wagner and Schopenhauer'.[69] Echoing Schopenhauer, Hueffer proposed that 'music...does not want, nor even allow of a realistic conception'. Unlike the

> painter or sculptor [who] must borrow the raiment for his ideas from the human form or the landscape, the musician is alone with his inspiration...the voice of the spirit of the world.[70]

This is the role that Wagner, too, was claiming for the composer. Avant-garde artists like Whistler could, in their turn, seek out the musical element in the art of painting, in order to escape from the constraints of the visible world, and assume the mantle of the 'musical composer...the only creative artist'.[71]

Richard Wagner, musician, writer and celebrity, was a catalyst for changing attitudes on both sides of the Channel. His influence was pervasive, from the first Parisian concert performances in 1860, to the formation of the Revue Wagnérienne in 1885. In fin-de-siècle London, Aubrey Beardsley translated Wagnerian themes into seductive drawings, and used them as the pretext for an erotic novel about the Venusberg, published posthumously as Under the Hill.[72] Wagner's operas and the theories they represented were discussed in artistic and intellectual circles, while piano transcriptions of his works were played in middle-class drawing rooms. As Simon Shaw-Miller has pointed

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[68] Franz Hüffer [Francis Hueffer], 'Richard Wagner', Fortnightly Review, (London) vol.xi n.s., January -June 1872, p.265.
[69] Ibid., p.266.
[70] Ibid., p.268
[71] Ibid., p.268.
[72] Emma Sutton's work on Aubrey Beardsley and British Wagnerism in the 1890s, (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 2002 demonstrates the centrality of Wagner's music and theories for progressive artists and writers in fin-de-siècle London. It also shows the diverse and contested nature of British responses, and how Wagner's ideas were transformed, so that Wagnerism became 'a self-propelling cultural movement, at times only loosely related to the expressed theories and intentions of Wagner himself' p.3.

out, 'Wagnerism was a mass phenomenon of the cultivated bourgeoisie, affecting all branches of the arts'.[73]

To understand more fully the links between Wagner, Schopenhauer and the Victorian art world, we must turn again to the writings of Baudelaire and his British champion, Swinburne. For Baudelaire's theory of *correspondances* was tightly bound up with his enthusiasm for Wagner. Baudelaire's desire to promote the musical element in poetry and painting was underpinned by his experience of Wagner's concerts in Paris in 1860. This music seemed to vindicate his own belief in the interweaving of the arts; as he wrote to Wagner, '*il me semblait que cette musique était la mienne*'.[74] The concerts prompted Baudelaire to make his most daring assertion of his synaesthetic position in a review published in March 1861:

> what would be truly surprising would be to find that sound *could not* suggest colour, that colours *could not* evoke the idea of a melody, and that sound and colour were *unsuitable* for the translation of ideas.[75]

He reinforced this idea by quoting verses from his own poem, Correspondances. By mixing poetry and prose, music and literature in his review, Baudelaire was practising what he preached.

The review was written in response to the disastrous reception of Wagner's Tannhäuser when it was performed in Paris in 1861. The opera proved so controversial that it closed after only three performances. Baudelaire wanted to justify Wagner's approach to a perplexed and antagonistic Parisian public. In his article he contrasted the relatively positive reaction to the concert performances the year before with the present furore over the staged opera. Baudelaire defended the dramatic element which had been added to the music; in his view, it was the fusion of music and drama that made Wagner's work so potent. Baudelaire claimed that Wagner 'found it impossible not to

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[73] Simon Shaw-Miller, Visible Deeds of Music: Art and Music from Wagner to Cage, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press) 2002, p.36.
[74] 'It seemed that this music was my own'. Charles Baudelaire, quoted by Edward Lockspeiser, Music and Painting, p.67.

think in a double manner, poetically and musically; not to catch sight of each idea in two simultaneous forms'.[76] He quoted extensively from Wagner's writings to demonstrate how he was attempting to redefine the boundaries between the arts. Wagner's words seemed to parallel his own. Wagner recognised that

> it was precisely at the point at which one of these arts reached impassable frontiers that the sphere of action of the other started...and that in consequence, by the intimate union of these two arts it was possible to express what neither of them could express in isolation.[77]

The real potential for change was to be found 'in the gap' (*en creux*) between the arts.[78] If the artist could leap that gap, a new world of artistic possibilities would open up. The rules could be rewritten. The constraints of space and time which used to apply to painting, poetry and music could be challenged. Music could become colourful, and paintings could sing. As Walter Murch has written recently the combination of music and painting can 'trigger a kind of conceptual resonance between image and sound: the sound makes us see the image differently'.[79]

Of course, as Wagner's views were shaped by Schopenhauer, music remained the archetype of art. In his Letter on Music, quoted by Baudelaire, Wagner considered how a writer might take his poetry to the 'very limit of his art, to the point at which the domain of music begins.' He suggested that this would be achieved through 'rhythmical arrangement and the almost musical ornament of rhyme' so that 'in its final consummation' the poem 'would be perfect music'.[80] According to Wagner, this consummation would be achieved by the triumph of form (rhythm and rhyme) over content. By

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[75] Charles Baudelaire, 'Richard Wagner and Tannhäuser in Paris', reprinted in The Painter of Modern Life and other essays, translated and edited by Jonathan Mayne, (London: Phaidon) 1964, second edition 1995, p.115. The emphases are Baudelaire's.
[76] Ibid., p.119.
[77] Ibid., p.121.
[78] For a discussion of the tension between sound and image in contemporary art, see Simon Shaw-Miller's review of Michel Chion, Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen in 'Sighting Sound: Post Media, a Question of Genre', Art History, (Oxford) vol.24, no.1, March 2001, pp.140-1.
[79] Quoted by Simon Shaw-Miller, 'Sighting Sound', p.140.
[80] Ibid., p.123.

extension, a truly musical painting was one in which colour and composition, which are analogous to harmony and melody, became more important than the subject-matter.

How did these ideas reach Rossetti and his circle in London? One route was Whistler, who in the early 1860s crossed the Channel regularly, and mixed both with Baudelaire and the Chelsea set. His paintings and their titles suppressed the subject and privileged colour, to create paintings that paralleled musical compositions. It is also likely that Rossetti entered into these debates himself when he visited Paris in 1864. He certainly met Fantin-Latour, a passionate Wagnerian, whose oil painting of Tannhäuser on the Venusberg was shown in the Salon that year.[81] As Rossetti had gone to Paris specifically to visit the Delacroix Memorial Exhibition, he must have been aware of the discussions about colour and *correspondances* generated both by Wagner's music and by Delacroix's paintings

Rossetti's intimate friend Swinburne would also have contributed to these discussions in London in the early 1860s. It was Swinburne who published the first review of Les Fleurs du Mal in English, in The Spectator in 1862. No doubt he had been excited by the sensational and erotic nature of the poetry. The first edition of Les Fleurs du Mal had been condemned as obscene and was withdrawn. It was reprinted in 1861 with six poems removed. Swinburne adopted Baudelaire's idea of the 'fusion of painting and music' in his own writings, most directly in his descriptions of works by Rossetti and Whistler in his 1868 Review. Whistler was praised for 'the symphony, or if you will, antiphony' of his colour combinations, and in Rossetti's Lady Lilith, Swinburne was impressed by the 'chief chord of stronger colours touched in this picture'.[82] Again it is colour, rather than drawing or composition, that is identified as the most visible musical element in the paintings.

Swinburne demonstrated his sympathy towards Baudelaire's writing initially in his review of Les Fleurs du Mal, but this was only the beginning of an intellectual relationship. As Jerome McGann writes, 'Swinburne's conscious

[81] Fantin-Latour took D.G. Rossetti to visit Manet's studio, but Rossetti was unimpressed. See Paul Spencer-Longhurst, The Blue Bower, p.27.

recollection of Baudelaire...carries far beyond the explicit references, the direct echoes and the paraphrases'.[83] Baudelaire's desire to make links between the senses appealed to Swinburne. In October 1863 Baudelaire wrote to Swinburne, thanking him for the generous review of his poetry, and enthusing about Wagner's response to the Tannhäuser article. Evidently Baudelaire had discovered a kindred spirit. In 1866 on hearing of his death, Swinburne described Baudelaire as a critic of 'incomparably delicate insight and subtly good sense'.[84]

The Tannhäuser Motif in Aesthetic Art and Writing

Baudelaire's passion for Wagner left its mark on Swinburne's work at a number of levels. It is most obvious in the three verses or roundels written by Swinburne in memory of Wagner. The construction of these verses echoes the preoccupations shared by the three men, what McGann calls 'the circling patterns of interinvolved music'.[85] But it can also be traced in certain literary themes which recur in their work, in particular, the story of Tannhäuser and Venus. This tale became a talisman for avant-garde art on both sides of the channel. Medieval in origin, it told of Tannhäuser, a Christian knight who turned aside from his pilgrimage and became enthralled by Venus in her underground palace, the Horsel. This subject allowed artists to dwell on the tensions between sensuality and duty, the medieval and ancient worlds, Christianity and paganism, male desire and the femme fatale.

Wagner's operatic version stimulated the renaissance of interest in the legend. Tannhäuser was first performed in Dresden in 1845, and revived in Paris in 1861. Gautier saw a performance in Wiesbaden, and wrote a review for the Moniteur in September 1857. The 'irresistible charm' of this article encouraged Baudelaire to write his own extensive essay on Wagner's work in general, and the Tannhäuser in particular.[86] According to Baudelaire, the story represented 'the struggle between the flesh and the spirit, Heaven and

[82] Algernon Swinburne, Notes on the Royal Academy Exhibition 1868, pp.44 & 47.
[83] Jerome McGann, Swinburne: An Experiment in Criticism, (Chicago:University of Chicago Press) 1972, p.52.
[84] Algernon Swinburne, William Blake: a Critical Essay, (John Camden Hotten: London) 1868, reprinted (University of Nebraska Press: Nebraska) 1970, p.91.
[85] Jerome McGann, Swinburne: An Experiment in Criticism, p.45.

Hell, Satan and God'.[87] His description of the Overture dwelt on the figure of 'the true, terrible and universal Venus' and the sensuality of the Venusberg, conjured up by Wagner's music:

> Languors, fevered and agonized delights, ceaseless returns towards an ecstasy of pleasure which promises to quench, but never does quench, thirst.[88]

Unsurprisingly, it was the sensual aspect of the story which appealed most to Swinburne. On 14th June 1862 he began his own version, published four years later as Laus Veneris. His poem 'in praise of Venus' echoed many of the sentiments expressed by Baudelaire. Both focused on the poisonous desire of the goddess and particularly her ability to weave 'exceeding pleasure out of extreme pain'.[89] Baudelaire's 'agonized delights' find their parallel in Swinburne's suggestion that kissing Venus would 'leave [Tannhäuser's] lips charred.' The motif of desire as unquenched thirst is transformed by Swinburne into 'a feverish famine'.[90]

Musical motifs run through Swinburne's verse, hinting at a Wagnerian fusion of the arts. The knight is trapped inside the Horsel not by physical restraints, but by an assault on his senses: sound, scent, touch, colour and taste combine to create his prison.

> Her little chambers drip with flower-like red...
> Her gateways smoke with fume of flowers and fires,
> With loves burnt out and unassuaged desires;
> Between her lips the steam of them is sweet,
> The languor in her ears of many lyres.
>
> Her beds are full of perfume and sad sound,
> Her doors are made with music, and barred round

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[86] Charles Baudelaire, 'Richard Wagner and Tannhäuser in Paris', p.112.
[87] Ibid., p.125.
[88] Ibid., p.125.
[89] Algernon Swinburne, 'Laus Veneris', Poems and Ballads, (London: John Camden Hotten) 1866, p.18.
[90] Ibid., p.20.

With sighing and with laughter and with tears,
With tears whereby strong souls of men are bound.[91]

Swinburne's volume of poetry was dedicated 'affectionately and admiringly' to his friend Edward Burne-Jones. This dedication was an acknowledgement of their shared interests, especially their fascination with myths and legends, and their desire to retell the old stories for the modern world. Both men created their own versions of the Tannhäuser tale, and both focused on the person of the goddess by using the title Laus Veneris. Burne-Jones was aware of the debate surrounding Wagner's interpretation of the legend. It would have formed part of the lively discussions in Rossetti's studio in the early 1860s, where he was a regular visitor with Swinburne. Burne-Jones's decision to tackle the Tannhäuser subject in a watercolour in 1861 (Private Collection) coincided with the operatic débacle in Paris and Baudelaire's essay.

However Burne-Jones did not approach the subject simply through Wagner's version. The Tannhäuser story originated in a German medieval ballad, and Burne-Jones would have found it translated in Thomas Carlyle's German Romance (1827).[92] In the early 1860s Burne-Jones also discussed the story with William Morris. They had long shared a passion for ballads, and had often read Carlyle together in Oxford, so they knew the story from a non-Wagnerian perspective. Morris took 'The Hill of Venus' as his tale for February in the cycle of poems The Earthly Paradise and in response, in 1866 Burne-Jones designed 20 illustrations, although the lavish edition which they planned sadly never materialised. His black-and-white images mixed medieval and pagan motifs, but the designs were upright and restrained.

When Burne-Jones returned to the subject in 1873 in Laus Veneris (1873-1878, oil, gold paint and stamping, Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle) [frontispiece], his vision had been shaped by Swinburne's verse (published 1866). Saturated colours heightened with gold, bands of fabric around the

[91] Ibid., p.18.
[92] An alternative contemporary response to the legend came in the translation by Lady Duff Gordon published in the magazine Once a week in August 1861. This latest version was

necks, arms and waists of Venus' attendants, and the anticipated musical welcome for the knight, all chimed with Swinburne's description of the scene. The qualities that had so delighted Swinburne in Les Fleurs du Mal were recreated on Burne-Jones's canvas:

> the weariness of pain and the bitterness of pleasure...a heavy, heated temperature with dangerous hothouse scents.[93]

When Laus Veneris was shown at the 1878 Grosvenor Gallery exhibition the critics responded by attacking Burne-Jones in terms that were strongly reminiscent of the notorious 'Fleshly School of Poetry' review (1871). In that article, 'Thomas Maitland', writing in the Contemporary Review, had criticized Rossetti's writing for its 'deviation from the healthy forms of life' and its 'weary, wasting, yet exquisite sensuality'.[94] Now Burne-Jones also seemed infected with the same corrosive fleshliness. The reviews of 1878, echoing Maitland's fears, took particular offense at the 'unhealthy type' which Venus seemed to embody; a woman 'stricken with disease of the soul, so eaten up and gnawed away with disappointment and desire'.[95] In the eyes of the critics, Rossetti, Swinburne and Burne-Jones were all tainted by their 'disagreeable' and 'offensive' depiction of dominant female sexuality and male impotence.[96] Henry James put his finger on the problem with his half-joking description of Burne-Jones's Venus as a 'person who has had what the French call an "intimate" acquaintance with life'.[97]

At the root of these attacks was a disquiet about the influence of French poets on the British school. This was made explicit in a review of the exhibition by William Mallock which criticised artists like Burne-Jones for having 'no discrimination between good and evil'. He said that this 'new

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illustrated by John Everett Millais. See S. Wildman and J. Christian, Burne-Jones: Victorian Artist-Dreamer, (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art) 1998, p.168.

[93] Algernon Swinburne, review of Les Fleurs du Mal, The Spectator, (London) September 1862, quoted by S. Wildman and J. Christian, Burne-Jones: Victorian Artist-Dreamer, p.168.

[94] 'Thomas Maitland' (Robert Buchanan), 'The Fleshly School of Poetry: Mr. D.G. Rossetti', The Contemporary Review, (London) Vol.18, August-November 1871, p.337.

[95] Frederick Wedmore, 'Some Tendencies in Recent Painting', Temple Bar magazine, 53, July 1878, p.339, quoted by S. Wildman and J. Christian, Burne-Jones: Victorian Artist-Dreamer, p.169.

[96] Ibid., p.169.

[97] Ibid., p.169.

school of morals' grew out of the work of Gautier, the author of 'the foulest and filthiest book that man ever put pen to', and it was being promoted in Britain by Swinburne, Burne-Jones's close friend. This group of artists and poets, in his view, had only one interest: 'the same diseased desires...the languor of exhausted animalism'.[98]

The critics were right in one respect; Burne-Jones was responding to developments in French artistic circles. His oil version of the Tannhäuser legend did display characteristics that Baudelaire thought desirable. Laus Veneris was striving towards a 'fusion of painting and music' both in its form and its content. Burne-Jones signalled his intention by putting music at the heart of the image. The four attendants are preparing to play a hymn 'in praise of Venus' and the girl in blue turns the pages of the musical score. By placing the music-stand at the centre of the composition, Burne-Jones encourages us to focus on this score, where the words 'Laus Veneris' are picked out in black and red, and the notation is clearly visible. The illuminated lettering encourages the viewer to explore the elision between the anticipated musical performance and the painted image; they share the same title.

Burne-Jones has chosen to depict a moment before the music starts. At present the bell-harp lies in the girl's lap, the beaters hover above the flower-like tintinabula, the pipe is not yet on the lips. This is a brief pause before the narrative crisis. The knight is about to enter the Horsel. He is looking through the window and making his decision. As soon as he begins his descent into the Courts of Venus, the music will break the heavy silence and raise Venus from her lassitude.

But music is not simply used as a narrative device. This thesis argues that it is woven into every aspect of the picture. Burne-Jones's desire to make a musical painting is demonstrated by his use of colour harmonies and contrasts. These colours are the visual equivalent of the musical performance which Tannhäuser will experience. The striking of the bells

[98] W.H. Mallock, 'A Familiar Colloquy', Nineteenth Century (London) 1878, pp.289-302, quoted by J.B. Bullen, The Pre-Raphaelite Body, p.207.

punctuates the music in the same way that the repeated red of Venus's robe accents the picture. Burne-Jones uses this saturated colour in Cupid's wings, in the cap of the central attendant, and as a scarlet flame across half the canvas, drawing our eye up the elongated body of the Goddess. Burne-Jones balances this intense red with variations on the same theme: more muted versions are found in the dresses of the attendant on the far left, and of the girl with the beaters. The shot blue lining of Venus's sleeve acts as the key-note for the rest of the picture. The purplish and peacock blues found in the tapestry background, the tiled casement and the robe of the central figure heighten the impact of the fiery red. The careful placing of the scarlet highlights against the overall blue tone of the picture creates a mobile line across the composition, climaxing in the body of Venus. These points of bright colour may be read not only as parallels to the sounding of the bells, but also as rising and falling notes on a score, with Venus's robe as the cadenza. The prominent position of the musical score, with its own moving lines of red and black notes, legitimates this reading.

Burne-Jones created musical analogies in this painting by playing upon the traditional relationship between colour-harmonies and music. However, he also seemed to be creating his own version of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Wagner's idea of the unified work of art, put forward in his 1849 treatise on The Art-work of the Future, is played out in Burne-Jones's picture. Laus Veneris brings together Swinburne's poetry and archaic musical performance. But the interweaving of the arts goes further than this. In one image Burne-Jones presents us with a series of overlapping art-forms: the tapestries on the walls, the tiles around the window, the intricate metalworking of Venus's crown and the tintinabula, the illuminated manuscript on the music-stand, even the Morris and Company sofa on which Venus reclines. Burne-Jones also refuses to treat his canvas like a conventional easel painting. He stamps the gilding into the oil-paint of Venus's drapery, creating a three-dimensional effect which would be more at home on a piece of painted furniture. In Laus Veneris Burne-Jones brings together the decorative and fine arts, music and poetry. He even manages to incorporate the idea of sculpture by using a celebrated figure of Ariadne (c.240 BC, marble, Vatican Museum) as the source of Venus's pose.

This desire to weave the arts together to construct a coherent beautiful space, like the choice of the Tannhäuser subject itself, was as much a response to Burne-Jones's friendship with Morris as it was influenced by Wagner's ideas. After all, Morris single-handedly embodied the 'unity of the arts': he was a poet, calligrapher, weaver and dyer, a designer of wallpaper, ceramics, stained glass and tapestries. Seen in these terms, Burne-Jones's Court of Venus begins to resemble a glorified showroom advertising Morris and Company's wares. We have to accept that Morris was the abiding influence on Burne-Jones's work, while his attitude towards Wagner was often ambivalent. Burne-Jones particularly disliked the idea of opera sung by 'Prominent Women'. However in 1877, when Burne-Jones was putting the finishing touches to the Laus Veneris, Wagner had burst upon London society with a series of concerts at the Royal Albert Hall. The painter could not avoid the impact of this musical phenomenon. In fact, at a time when he rarely attended public events, Burne-Jones heard several concerts and a morning rehearsal conducted by Wagner. Although the two men never met, Burne-Jones did entertain Cosima Wagner at home. He drew her portrait, and in return she sent him a cast of Beethoven's death-mask, indicating that Burne-Jones had expressed an interest in an earlier ground-breaking German composer.[99] What Burne-Jones thought of most of Wagner's work, including Tannhäuser is hard to say, but in 1884 he did concede that they had found important common ground in Wagner's Parsifal. Burne-Jones described this as 'the very sounds that were to be heard in the Sangraal chapel'; he added 'and I ought to know'.[100]

Burne-Jones's personal reaction to Wagner's music was a mixture of admiration and disgust, but any Tannhäuser subject would inevitably have reminded visitors to the 1878 Grosvenor Gallery of Wagner's performances the previous year. Given the Parisian outcry against the Tannhäuser opera, and Baudelaire's intervention, Burne-Jones's painting was bound to be treated with suspicion by Establishment critics. The looming figure of Swinburne, as Baudelaire's champion, Burne-Jones's friend and author of

[99] Georgiana Burne-Jones, Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones, (London: Macmillan) 1904, new edition (London: Lund Humphries) 1993, vol.2, p.79-80.

his own shockingly sensual Laus Veneris also coloured responses to the painting. So while a sympathetic reviewer like F.G. Stephens was enthusiastic about the interweaving of the arts in Laus Veneris, calling it a 'poem in paint', others thought the intimate relationship between painting and poetry was unhealthy.[101] Vanity Fair described Burne-Jones and his associates as the 'Swinburne school of artists' and feared the Grosvenor Gallery would become a 'merely artistic lounge for the worshippers of the Fleshly School of Art'.[102] For this critic, the name of Swinburne, and its connotations of a debilitating French influence on British art, was a term of abuse. Harry Quilter, critic for the Contemporary Review agreed. He lumped together the 'unhealthy tone' of Swinburne's Poems and Ballads with the 'sad, weary, hopeless beauty' of Laus Veneris and the 'melancholy hopelessness' of Rossetti's poetry. But this review added another name to the list of usual suspects. Quilter complained that the leading lights of Rossetti's 'new school' were 'Messrs. Swinburne, Pater and Burne-Jones – a poet, a critic and a painter, all of them Oxford men'.[103]

Pater and the Condition of Music

When Walter Pater had published his Studies in the History of the Renaissance in 1873, there had been an outcry among moralists, who believed that its 'Conclusion' would 'mislead some of those young men into whose hands it might fall'.[104] The reason for this concern was Pater's privileging of aesthetic experience over religious or moral structures. He urged his readers, 'while all melts under our feet', to 'grasp at any exquisite passion', and he proposed that 'the theory or idea or system which requires of us the sacrifice of any part of this experience...has no real claim on us'.[105]

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[100] Ibid., vol.2, p.43.
[101] F.G. Stephens, quoted by S. Wildman and J. Christian, Burne-Jones: Victorian Artist-Dreamer, p.167.
[102] 'The Grosvenor Gallery and the Royal Academy', Vanity Fair (London) May 5th 1877, quoted by ed. Susan P. Casteras and Colleen Denney, The Grosvenor Gallery: A Palace of Art in Victorian England, (Yale: Yale University Press) 1996, p.83.
[103] Harry Quilter, 'The New Renaissance; or the Gospel of Intensity', Contemporary Review (London) 1880, p.391-400 quoted by Bullen, The Pre-Raphaelite Body, p.161.
[104] Walter Pater, 'Conclusion', The Renaissance, n. p.217.
[105] Ibid.,p.221.

Ostensibly, Pater's ideas were derived from his fascination with the world of ancient Greece; this was made explicit in his essay on the German scholar Winckelmann. His idea of the Renaissance, as he explained in this essay, was the revival of the Hellenic impulse, which he characterised as blitheness and breadth.[106] But the implications of his interest in Greek culture could be disturbing. Pater's appreciation of male beauty, combined with his own position teaching young men in Oxford, did not go unnoticed. Lyrical passages describing the Greek statues showed a tendency to eroticise the male figure 'where the moulding of the bodily organs is still as if suspended between growth and completion...; where the transition from curve to curve is so delicate and elusive'.[107] In 1877 Pater might have become the new Professor of Poetry at Oxford, but he withdrew his name after a homophobic article attacking 'The Greek Spirit in Modern Literature' was published by the Rev. R. Tyrwhitt. In 1883, he resigned his tutorship altogether.

Although Pater claimed to be writing about the art of the past, his Studies in the History of the Renaissance tell us much about Victorian painting and poetry. As Arthur Symons recognised in 1889, Pater's text was 'taken as the critical manifesto of the so-called "aesthetic" school'.[108] One sign of this close relationship with contemporary developments is the fact that his controversial 'Conclusion' was initially published in 1868 as part of a review of William Morris's poetry. Pater's ideas were evidently reinforced by his reading of Morris and only later applied to the art and poetry of the Renaissance. Similarly, when Rossetti and Swinburne discussed Pater's article on Leonardo da Vinci (1869), they saw how closely his writing mirrored their own.[109] Pater acknowledged this, saying that his essays owed 'their inspiration entirely to the example' of Swinburne's work.[110]

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[106] Walter Pater, 'Winckelmann', ibid., p.199.
[107] Ibid., p.203.
[108] Arthur Symons, Athenaeum (London) 14th December 1889, pp.813-4, quoted by ed. R. M. Seiler, Walter Pater: the Critical Heritage, (London, Boston and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul) 1980, p.201.
[109] D.G. Rossetti wrote to Algernon Swinburne: 'What a remarkable article that is of Pater's on Leonardo! Something of you perhaps, but a good deal of himself too to good purpose', and his friend replied 'there was a little spice of my own style as you say.' 26th November 1869 and Swinburne to Rossetti 28th November 1869, quoted by R.M. Seiler, ibid., p.1.

Like Rossetti and Swinburne, Pater was charmed by the scandalous French school of poetry. A perceptive critic in Blackwoods magazine drew his readers' attention to this affinity with the work of Baudelaire and Gautier: 'Greek as Mr. Pater is in soul, his models of style are all French'.[111] We know that Pater owned a copy of Gautier's Romans et Contes.[112] We also know that, having read Gautier's Guide de l'amateur Au Musée du Louvre (1858), he lifted Gautier's description of the Mona Lisa, and transferred it to his own account of Leonardo's St. John the Baptist. Gautier's choice of phrase – 'a vague, indefinite, inexpressible thought like a musical thought' - is reworked, becoming 'a train of sentiment, subtle and vague as a piece of music'.[113] It is particularly telling that Pater picked a musical motif in Gautier's writing, for music was central to Pater's artistic theory. Like Gautier, Baudelaire and Swinburne, Pater believed that music held the key to the transformation of the arts of painting and poetry. Pater made clear his debt to Gautier, by naming the source of his musical metaphor, but often he was more elusive. Baudelaire's suggestion that

> the arts seek, if not to supply the place of one another, then at least reciprocally to lend each other new forces[114]

resurfaces in Pater's essay unacknowledged, where it is repeated word for word. At other times, the links are less explicit, but nevertheless show a shared understanding of the role of music in contemporary art theory.

The connections between Pater, Baudelaire and Gautier seem reasonable, given Swinburne as a go-between. Rather more unlikely but significant parallels can be drawn between Wagner and Pater. Both men underpin their arguments by referring back to the art of Ancient Greece. Wagner's concept of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* relies on the original idea of the verse drama –

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[110] Algernon Swinburne to John Morley, April 11th 1873, quoted by Billie Andrew Inman, Walter Pater's Reading: A Bibliography of his Library Borrowings and Literary References 1858-1873, (New York and London: Garland Publishing) 1981, p.161.
[111] Blackwoods Magazine, (Edinburgh) January 1890, p.144 quoted by Laurel Brake, Walter Pater, (London: Northcote House & British Council) 1994, p.47.
[112] Billie Andrew Inman, Walter Pater's Reading, p.335.
[113] Ibid., p.210
[114] Charles Baudelaire's comment appears in his review of Delacroix's painting in 1863. Quoted by Philippe Junod, 'The New *Paragone*', p.32. Pater quotes Baudelaire in 'The School of Giorgione', The Renaissance, p.123.

mousike – in which poetry and music were inseparable. In his 1849 treatise on Art and Revolution, Wagner declared that 'we cannot make one step forward with out being brought face to face with ...the Art of Ancient Greece'. His own work was an attempt to reintegrate dance, music and poetry in a dramatic work or opera, creating a unified work of art.[115] We can compare this approach with Pater's writing. Although nominally about the European Renaissance, it was in fact a study of the revival of the pagan Hellenic spirit, characterised by its 'care for physical beauty [and] the worship of the body'.[116] The subjects of his essays ranged from late medieval poetry to 18th century connoisseurship, but at every stage he was searching for 'the pleasures of the senses and the imagination...beyond the bounds of the Christian religion'.[117]

As before, one key to understanding the relationship between artists and critics is the recurrent use of the Tannhäuser motif. When Pater wanted to express the idea of the 'Hellenic impulse' welling up and re-asserting itself in the late Middle Ages, he turned to Tannhäuser. Sometimes his references are suggestive rather than explicit. He writes, for example, of

> the Hellenic element alone [which] has not been...content with this underground life; from time to time it has started to the surface.[118]

At other times, the force of the metaphor is inescapable. Pater describes the pagan spirit in European art as

> a strange rival religion. It was the return of that ancient Venus, not dead, but only hidden for a time in the caves of the Venusberg.[119]

At this point Pater makes an oblique reference to Baudelaire's Tannhäuser review, in which the goddess is described

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[115] Simon Shaw-Miller, Visible Deeds of Music, p.39.
[116] Walter Pater, 'Preface', The Renaissance, p.xi.
[117] Walter Pater, 'Two Early French Stories', ibid., p.23.
[118] Walter Pater, 'Winckelmann', ibid., p.185.
[119] Walter Pater, 'Two Early French Stories', ibid., p.23.

> the radiant Venus of antiquity...[who] has not passed unscathed through the dreadful shades of the Middle Ages...She has retired into the depths of a cavern.[120]

For Wagner, for Baudelaire and for Pater, the Tannhäuser legend challenged not just the Medieval Church, but the 19th century Christian establishment, as it offered an alternative view of morality. In the Venusberg, desire transcends duty, passion overpowers sacrifice, Venus triumphs over the Virgin.

This thesis proposes that music itself offered a similar challenge to the orthodox understanding of art in Victorian Britain. This is one reason why music was a central feature of treatments of the Tannhäuser legend; it echoed the ostensible subject. Musical paintings and poems were freed from the demands of morality that were the 19th century norm. The most important question for an aestheticist critic was not 'what does this work of art teach me?' but rather, 'does it give me pleasure?'[121] For Pater, passion was the watchword: 'the poetic passion, the desire of beauty, the love of art for its own sake'.[122] Musical subjects embodied emotion. They focused attention on sensory experience, colour and femininity.

Reconciling Venice and France in Pater's Writing

Ruskin and his Pre-Raphaelite friends had already established a precedent for this approach in the art of the Venetian Renaissance. But it was Pater, in his essay on 'The School of Giorgione' (1877), who wove together music, colour, desire, Rossetti and Renaissance Venice into an argument that was a work of art in itself. Pater self-consciously drew attention to the intertwining of the arts, and the kinship between the Venetians and the Victorians. He invoked Rossetti both as a poet and a painter in his account of the Louvre Concert Champêtre [figure 3], a Venetian picture with musical performance at its heart: a female nude raises a recorder to her lips and a clothed man

[120] Charles Baudelaire, 'Richard Wagner and Tannhäuser in Paris', p.122.
[121] Walter Pater, 'Preface', The Renaissance, p.viii.
[122] Walter Pater, 'Conclusion', ibid., p.222.

strokes the strings of a lute.[123] This image, already a favourite in aestheticist circles, became a touchstone for Pater's analysis of the interaction of music and painting. Although he recognised the importance of distinctions between the arts, it was when they tried to cross the borders, to 'lend each other new forces' that the most beautiful works would be created. This he termed an '*Anders-streben* – a partial alienation from its own limitations'.[124] The artist who painted the Concert Champêtre had achieved this *Anders-streben*, making his painting musical not just in his choice of subject, but in the colour harmonies, the compositional balance and the reflective mood. Pater was urging his contemporaries to do the same. Following Schopenhauer, and then Wagner and Baudelaire, Pater believed that music was the pre-eminent art. His position was made plain in the epigram 'All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music'.[125]

What were the desirable characteristics of music that would strengthen the arts of painting and poetry? For Pater music represented the 'perfect identification of matter and form'. In music's

> consummate moments, the end is not distinct from the means,...the subject from the expression; they inhere in and completely saturate each other.[126]

This conception of music was closely related to Schopenhauer's belief that music transcended the phenomenal world. But it was Frederich von Schiller's letters On the Aesthetic Education of Man that seem to have shaped Pater's ideas by suggesting that music 'at its most sublime...must become sheer form'.[127]

The interpenetration of subject and form which Pater desired was achieved in the idylls of Renaissance Venice (reworked by Rossetti). But he also found it in modern French landscape art, exemplified by Alphonse Legros.

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[123] Walter Pater, 'The School of Giorgione', ibid., p.134.
[124] ibid., p.123.
[125] ibid., p.124.
[126] Ibid., p.128.
[127] Frederich von Schiller quoted by Billie Andrew Inman, Walter Pater and his Reading 1874-1877, (London and New York: Garland Publishing) 1990 p.102.

Pater's theory managed to reconcile France and Venice, the two prevailing, but apparently antagonistic trends, in 19th century musical painting. Both offered a 'site of reverie' equivalent to the experience of music, where aesthetic pleasure replaced narrative. Pater explained that in Legros's work the details of the scenery were relatively unimportant, compared with light and tonal effects. In his eyes, Legros managed to obliterate the distinction between matter and form. Pater's reference to Legros encouraged his readers to connect with the French-trained artist, Whistler. Billie Inman reminds us that in 1859 Whistler was responsible for introducing Legros to the London art-world; the two artists shared a studio for several months. With Fantin-Latour (another self-consciously 'musical' painter), the friends were known as the 'Société des Trois'.

Whistler's paintings did seem to fulfil one part of Pater's demands, that the 'mode of handling should become an end in itself'.[128] We can see this in his earliest moonlight scene to be known by a musical title, the Nocturne: Blue and Silver – Chelsea (1871, oil on wood, Tate Britain) [figure 111].[129] The Thames at night has been transformed, so that it is barely recognisable. Instead of topographical details, Whistler has concentrated on reflections, subtle colour shifts and the evocation of moving water. His rejection of realism is signified by the single figure standing on the river bank. This man seems to have been lifted from a Japanese print and is out of scale with the rest of the picture. Whistler's butterfly monogram also emphasises his anti-naturalistic and decorative intentions. As he said at the libel trial :

> As to what the picture represents, that depends upon who looks at it...My whole scheme was only to bring about a certain harmony of colour.[130]

This thesis argues that in Whistler's Nocturne: Blue and Silver – Chelsea, the 'matter' of the picture – a river scene – is inseparable from its 'form'. The

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[128] Walter Pater, 'The School of Giorgione', The Renaissance, p.124-125.
[129] On its first exhibition at the Dudley Gallery in 1871, this picture was entitled Harmony in Blue-Green – Moonlight and was retitled Nocturne in 1879, when it was shown at the Grosvenor Gallery. Whistler first used the title Nocturne for two pictures exhibited at the Dudley Gallery in 1872. My thanks to Elizabeth Prettejohn for this information.
[130] James Whistler, 'The Action', The Gentle Art of Making Enemies, p.8.

brush strokes that undulate across the canvas create an impression of flowing water. This rippling effect binds the subject to the mode of handling. Whistler used a runny medium, more like watercolour in the way it behaved than the usual sticky oil paint, to 'wash the surface of the canvas with liquid colours'.[131] The fluidity of the subject is echoed in the fluidity of the materials. At the same time, the motion of the brush leaves a series of horizontal lines punctuated by the reflected lights of the far bank. These lines become, as it were, the stave on which glowing notes are placed at varying pitches.

When Burne-Jones was asked to comment on Whistler's Nocturnes at the trial in 1878 he acknowledged that they were 'good in colour but bewildering in form'.[132] He interpreted the 'perfect identification of matter and form' in a different way.[133] He found Whistler's dissolving details and obscure night-scenes lacked an essential element. They may demonstrate the 'harmony' of colour, but where was the 'melody' of line? Burne-Jones's paintings, particularly the rich-toned works of the late 1860s and 1870s followed the other path that Pater recommended, looking to the art of the Venetians instead of the French. He evaded narrative but continued to celebrate the human body.

Melody and Harmony in Burne-Jones's Paintings

Burne-Jones's approach was demonstrated in his 1880 Grosvenor Gallery exhibit, The Golden Stairs (1876-80, oil on canvas, Tate Britain) [figure 112]. Like Whistler, he made his musical intentions clear; all the young women who descend the staircase are carrying instruments. The title reinforces the musical context of this painting, not by direct reference to musical compositions, but rather by focusing on the idea of colour. Burne-Jones had given the title a great deal of thought. In its early stages the composition was known as The King's Wedding and also Music on the stairs, but finally he

[131] Quoted by R. Dorment and M.F. Macdonald, James McNeill Whistler, p.121.
[132] James Whistler, 'The Action', The Gentle Art of Making Enemies, p.15.
[133] Walter Pater, 'The School of Giorgione', The Renaissance, p.128.

decided on a phrase from Dante: 'no one may ascend the golden stair'.[134] In fact the overall colour of the picture is silver, not gold, but the colour associations are symbolic as much as realistic. The idea of gold suggests a precious object, a rare and glowing masterpiece. It also encouraged reviewers to interrogate the colour of the composition rather than its subject. Burne-Jones was indicating that, in this picture, the form was just as important as the matter. Critics responded by praising the 'subtly-managed variations of white in the dresses' and 'the exquisite varieties...of tarnished and lustrous silver'.[135] This was partly because they could not make up their minds what the painting was about. They could see the procession of girls, but they could not account for it. For F.G. Stephens this was a virtue: 'why they pass before us, whither they go, who they are, there is nothing to tell'.[136] But the reviewer in the Illustrated London News found it tiresome. He complained that the

> maiden minstrels...are there for no reason in particular, and their expressions mean nothing in particular: if they are pleasant to look upon, that is all the artist's business.[137]

This reviewer was right that it was Burne-Jones's intention that the figures were 'pleasant to look upon'. This was rather the point. We have already heard Pater's declaration that 'in aesthetic criticism' the first question should always be 'does it give me pleasure?'[138] When Burne-Jones embarked upon this painting, he was thinking exclusively in terms of composition and colour, rather than narrative. Writing to his patron Cyril Flower, he described the work as 'the picture of many maidens – foolish virgins – or by whatever name it is to be called'; evidently this was not based on a single literary source, it was not telling a particular tale.[139] Instead, Burne-Jones used musical performance as a pretext for his combinations of colour, moving line and delightful female forms.

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[134] Penelope Fitzgerald, Edward Burne-Jones, (London: Michael Joseph) 1975, new edition (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing) 2003, p.183.
[135] Quoted by S. Wildman and J. Christian, Edward Burne-Jones: Victorian Artist-Dreamer, p.247.
[136] Athenaeum, (London) May 8th 1880, p.605, quoted by ibid., p.109.
[137] Illustrated London News, (London) May 8th 1880, p.451, quoted by ibid., p.109.
[138] Walter Pater, 'Preface', The Renaissance, p.viii.
[139] Penelope Fitzgerald, Edward Burne-Jones, p.184.

Music is embodied in the painting in multiple ways. Firstly, and most obviously, the girls are musicians. They are not making music at present, although one figure does seem to touch her bow to the strings of her viola d'amore. All the others remain silent. Secondly, the composition is a downward progression of figures. Each girl, seen alone, is beautiful but her relationship to the others gives the viewer an enhanced experience of beauty as we plot the movement and variations in detail across the canvas. By analogy, the painting seems like the development of a musical work, a sequence of overlapping and related notes. As one critic recognised 'the feet seem to fall in rhythmic harmony and the faces are full of breathing music'.[140] Thirdly, for Burne-Jones the colours and compositional lines of the picture – its harmony and melody - are as important as the details of the figures or any literary context. In The Golden Stairs, the matter cannot be separated from the form, the end is not distinct from the means. Burne-Jones has succeeded in creating 'a thing for the eye, a space of colour on the wall'.[141]

The afterlife of this painting helps us to understand the centrality of music-and-colour for the continental avant-garde at the turn of the century. Etchings and photographs of The Golden Stairs, published in Paris in the 1890s, were widely circulated and admired in France. Lady Battersea, for whom Burne-Jones had painted the picture, described her encounter in 1911 with two French feminists. When they discovered that she owned the original they hailed her as 'A friend! then you belong to...*le monde bohémien*!'[142] There is even a suggestion that the limited palette and overlapping forms of this painting influenced Marcel Duchamps's modernist masterpiece, Nude Descending a Staircase no.2 (1912, oil on canvas, Philadelphia Museum of Art) [figure 113]. We know that the idea of combining colour, line and music, demonstrated in Burne-Jones's work, resonated with Wassily Kandinsky. In his 1911 treatise Concerning the Spiritual in Art he tried to

[140] Quoted by S. Wildman and J. Christian, Edward Burne-Jones: Victorian Artist-Dreamer, p.108.
[141] Walter Pater, 'The School of Giorgione', The Renaissance, p.129 & 139.
[142] Penelope Fitzgerald, Edward Burne-Jones, p.185.

> apply the methods of music to his own art. And from this results that modern desire for rhythm in painting, for mathematical, abstract construction, for repeated notes of colour, for setting colour in motion.[143]

Kandinsky attempted to make these abstractions a reality when he designed three pieces for the stage in 1909, The Yellow Sound, The Green Sound and Black and White. They were never performed, but the idea of using projected electric light added another dimension to the possibilities of music-drama, transcending even Wagner's vision.

For Kandinsky, music allowed painting to free itself from narrative and realism. In his musical paintings after 1914 he achieved a complete abstraction, so that colour and line became an end in themselves. His Improvisations – like Whistler he borrowed a musical title - cannot be pinned down to literary, geographical or historical sources or settings. But the terms in which he wrote are strongly reminiscent of Pater's propositions from nearly 40 years earlier:

> There has never been a time when the arts approached each other more nearly than they do today...In each manifestation is the seed of a striving towards the abstract, the non-material.[144]

Burne-Jones's Golden Stairs and Whistler's Nocturnes in their own ways were already striving towards the abstract, using music as their model. Although Burne-Jones's girls are carefully delineated, their individual features are subsumed into an overall patterning of heads and toes. This tendency to transform the human figure can be more clearly seen in Burne-Jones's Parnassus, (1871, watercolour, bodycolour and gold paint, Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery) [figure 114]. Shadowy veiled figures gather beside a lake with hills and trees beyond. Four of the figures

[143] Wassily Kandinsky, Concerning the Spiritual in Art, translated and with an introduction by M.T.H. Sadler, (New York: Dover Publications) 1911, translated 1914, reprinted 1977, p.19. Kandinsky singles out 'Rossetti and his pupil Burne-Jones' as examples of artists who sought 'the abstract in art.' p.17

play lyres or psalteries, while the others listen. They are faceless, sexless, ageless. Their bodies glow gold, while the still water and the hills are muted purples and soft browns. The evocation of music is echoed in placing of the figures in the landscape. The groupings and varied positions of their heads act as a counterpoint to the rising and falling line of the horizon, like notes on a stave. Burne-Jones creates distinct phrasing, setting up a rhythm as we follow the figures across the image. He even suggests parallels between colour, emotion and musical key. The subdued tones seem analogous to a minor scale, and encourage a mood of melancholy contemplation.

Conclusion

A small-scale work like Parnassus reminds us of the affinities between Burne-Jones's art and Whistler's use of colour-harmonies. But we also need to remember that, in Burne-Jones's eyes, the Nocturnes were only sketches. Like Whistler, he produced explorations of colour and mood based on musical theory, but he did not exhibit them in this form. For him it was just the starting-point for a more sophisticated attempt to experience the *Anders-streben*. The significance of Burne-Jones's manipulation of music-and-colour is that he was able to weave together Rossetti's interest in sensation and sensuality with Whistler's collapsing of the distinction between matter and form. Burne-Jones achieved a balance between figurative subjects and abstract forms, by invoking music.

This chapter has demonstrated that Rossetti's musical paintings were unashamedly Venetian in their inspiration. Whistler appropriated the French tradition of musical landscape painting. But Burne-Jones created a new vocabulary that was distinctively British and resolutely modern. He moved beyond the soft-focus Venetian idylls of the 1870s, to produce the crystalline visions of the 1880s. The Golden Stairs is a visual echo of Pater's 'hard, gemlike flame'.[145] Burne-Jones was aware of Continental developments, but he experienced Wagner and Baudelaire through the prism of Swinburne's poetry and friendship. His allegiance to William Morris also

[144] Ibid., p.19.
[145] Walter Pater, 'Conclusion', The Renaissance, p.220.

coloured his treatment of ostensibly Wagnerian themes. They were all excited by the pliability of medieval myths. Burne-Jones recognised the vitality of the old stories and the beauty of ancient crafts. In his hands they metamorphosed: using the resonances between music and colour he shaped an 'art-work of the future'.

Chapter Six[1]

Memory, Nostalgia and Loss

Introduction

In his collection of essays Music and Morals (1871), H.R. Haweis devoted several pages to the relationship between music and memory. Like many of his contemporaries, he believed that music could trigger recollections in acute and intense ways. He suggested that there are 'many mediums which connect us vividly with the past but for freshness and suddenness and power over memory' the sense of hearing is paramount.[2] He imagines a middle-aged woman caught unawares by a few bars of music. At that moment she is transported back in time. She is a young girl again, and her piano practice is interrupted by a knock at the door: a friend is 'lifted in, dying or dead.' Snatches of music have brought her face to face with that 'fatal summer morning' and now for her are associated with death.[3] In this example, music acts as a *memento mori*, a reminder of death, because a particular phrase of the Murmures du Rhône is connected to a personally dramatic event.

Haweis's analysis of the essential characteristics of music also shows that the links between music, memory and loss go beyond such concrete, individual cases. In an earlier passage, Haweis suggested that music's most distinctive attribute is its 'velocity'.[4] He noted how music was constantly in motion, flowing from one note to the next. By focusing on velocity, Haweis was reiterating one of the central tenets of 18th century debates on the nature of music, and how it differed from the other arts. Rousseau, for example, insisted that each art form had its own distinct characteristics: 'The domain of music is time, while that of painting is space'.[5]

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[1] The material in this chapter is developed from my article, 'Music, Memory and Loss in Victorian Painting', published in Nineteenth Century Music Review, (Aldershot: Ashgate) 2/1, 2005, pp.23-56.
[2] H.R. Haweis, Music and Morals, (London: Daldy, Ibster and Co.) 1871, p.106-7.
[3] Ibid., p.107.
[4] ibid., p.33
[5] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *'Essai sur l'Origine des Langues'*, in Philippe Junod, 'The New *Paragone*: Paradoxes and Contradictions of Pictorial Musicalism' in ed. M.L. Morton and P.L. Schmunk, The Arts Entwined: Music and Painting in the Nineteenth Century, (New York and London: Garland) 2000, p.25

This chapter argues that Victorian artists, and especially artists of the aesthetic movement, used music as a metaphor for time passing. Like Haweis, they made links between music and bereavement. They also exploited the ability for music to evoke nostalgia, both for a personal past, and for an idyllic, pre-lapsarian world that had been lost. This chapter demonstrates how artists adopted and manipulated traditional musical symbolism. It also proposes that, for some Victorian artists, the potency of this musical symbolism enabled artists to question the boundaries of their own art. By appropriating music, artists could make the passage of time visible. Close reading of works by Burne-Jones shows how he wrestled with the tension between the physicality and stasis of paint, and the mobility and ephemerality of music. This tension lies at the heart of artists' attempts to make their pictures 'aspire towards the condition of music'.[6]

Movement through time is the key to understanding the connections between music and memory. The listener appreciates what has just been heard in relation to what is currently being heard, and in anticipation of what is coming in the next phrase. The mind moves back and forth across time, reconstructing the music in order to appreciate its development. So memory is intrinsically bound up with the enjoyment of music.

Musical imagery offered an alternative to the conventional symbolism of Victorian mourning. The cult of mourning – black-edged stationery, jet jewellery, crepe dresses worn with veiled bonnets, elaborate memorials – had become pervasive since the death of the Prince Consort in December 1861. The Queen, suffering from depression, had imposed strict regulations on the dress and deportment of the Royal household. Fashionable and middle-class families tried to emulate these codes of conduct when they too faced bereavement. The intensification of mourning rituals also had an impact on Victorian painting and became increasingly visible on the walls of the Royal Academy. In Frank Holl's work, Her Firstborn: Horsham Churchyard (1876, oil on canvas, McManus Galleries, Dundee) even the

[6] Walter Pater, 'The School of Giorgione', The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry, (London: Macmillan and Co.) 1873, 3rd edition 1888, revised and reprinted 1935, p.124.

rural poor tried to conform. Holl shows the bereaved mother wearing a black dress, cape and bonnet, while her husband and father both wear black neckties with their smocks and gaiters.

Artists of the Pre-Raphaelite and aesthetic movements were equally interested in tackling the subject of death or personal loss, but they found different ways of addressing the subject. Rather than employing the contemporary vocabulary of mourning dress, they used musical motifs. This thesis argues that they avoided modern sentimental narratives by drawing on older artistic traditions. So memory and loss could be explored through three conventional subjects – the *vanitas* still-life, the Orpheus legend and idylls of the ancient world. All three subjects rely on musical imagery.

These subjects were familiar both to the artists and their audiences. They could be seen in the Old Master displays at the National Gallery, the Louvre or the 1857 Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition. Some artists, like Rossetti, responded by lifting the traditional motifs directly into their own compositions: as we shall see, he incorporated small *vanitas* still-lives into his early watercolours and drawings. Others combined these art-historical references with their personal and literary interests: we know, for example, that Burne-Jones designed a cycle of images from the Orpheus legend to decorate a patron's piano.[7] Some artists, especially Whistler, attempted to obscure the core subjects, but they provide the underlying structure for many musical pictures.

When these models – *vanitas*, Orphic and idyll subjects - are applied to paintings by Pre-Raphaelite and aesthetic artists, they offer a starting-point for critical analysis of works that at first glance seem to be unrelated. These models show how historical references were used as spring-boards for radical and oppositional images. By looking back into the art-historical past,

[7] The Graham Piano (1879-80, Private Collection) was decorated by Burne-Jones. He designed the images originally in 1872 as illustrations to William Morris's poem, The Story of Orpheus and Eurydice. His pencil designs are now in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. A drawing of Georgie Burne-Jones (pencil, early 1860s, Christie's Images / Christopher Wood), illustrated by Judith Flanders, A Circle of Sisters (London: Viking) 2001 after p.105, suggests that Burne-Jones originally intended that his wedding-present piano (Victoria and Albert Museum) would be decorated with a scene of Orpheus taming Cerberus with his music, while Eurydice looks on.

young artists were able reinvent the traditional vocabulary, challenging the conventional symbolism associated with memory and mourning.

The *Vanitas* Tradition

How would young Victorian artists have encountered these models? And how did they apply them to their own works of art? Traditionally the most visible way of linking with music and memory was as part of a *vanitas* subject. Musical performance was a symbol of the ephemeral nature of worldly pleasures. Music acted as a reminder of death-in-life. This reading of musical motifs was bound up with the idea of music as a frivolous pastime, and one that encourages sensuality. Music was used to jog the memory, to encourage viewers to remember their spiritual responsibilities.

From the early 17th century, *vanitas* imagery had relied on this interpretation of musical motifs. *Vanitas* pictures equated the ephemeral nature of musical performance with man's own mortality: as sound moves and dies away, it acts as a sign of transience. As a result, musical instruments were combined with overt symbols of time passing, like clocks, hourglasses or candles. Other objects that shared music's transitory nature were also depicted: soap bubbles that are about to burst, fruit that rots and cut flowers that wither were all read as signs of fleeting pleasure.[8] One of the earliest examples of a musical *vanitas* subject is a painting by Martijn de Vos of Terra (The Earth).[9] This featured a pair of lovers making music, with a collection of instruments, a musical score and a merry company dancing in the background. The musical motifs were combined with other symbols of transitory experience, including plucked carnations, fruit, a wine glass and a lizard. At this early stage in the development of the *vanitas* motif, the interpretation is potentially ambiguous. On one level, this painting is a celebration of the fruitfulness of the earth and the pleasures of love. Only when we look more closely at the

[8] Edwin Buijsen's catalogue of The Hoogsteder Exhibition of Music and Painting in the Golden Age, (The Hague: Hoogsteder and Hoogsteder) 1994 provides a survey of the *vanitas* tradition in 16th and 17th century Europe.

[9] An engraving of this painting, made in Antwerp by Crispijn van de Passe the Elder, is reproduced by Pieter Fischer in Music in Paintings of the Low Countries in the 16th and 17th centuries, (Amsterdam: Swets and Zeitlinger) 1975, p.34.

details, do we discover warning signs that highlight the fleeting nature of these sensual delights.

Jan Miense Molenaer's painting, Lady World: a woman at her toilet, (1633, oil on canvas, The Toledo Museum of Art, Ohio) [figure 115] was a more overt warning against relying too much on superficial sensations.[10] The inclusion of a skull as a footstool is an immediately jarring note, and draws attention to the allegorical intentions of the artist. The woman having her hair dressed is herself a symbol of vanity, while other details underline the moral. The boy blows bubbles that float and vanish. Musical instruments, including a lute, cittern, virginal, recorder and violin, are displayed around the room. They act as signs on several levels. Firstly, they produce music which will evaporate as soon as it is heard. Secondly, they are beautifully decorated objects and represent a lifestyle that values luxury above morality. They also act as surrogate coffins, particularly the virginal on the left; they are hollow wooden caskets reminding us of our own final resting place.[11]

The connection between music and memory in these images is indirect. Music and instruments act as an *aide-mémoire* rather than creating a direct link to the past. Musical motifs encourage the viewer to turn away from short-lived pleasures, and concentrate instead on those that will not fade. But this action relies on the viewer's previous spiritual and aesthetic education. If the viewer is unaware of the moral interpretation of these images, no memory will be triggered. Rather, the viewer will consume the collection of beautiful objects – flowers, wine glasses, inlaid lutes and painted harpsichords – without the appropriate underlying anxiety. In order for the *vanitas* subject to be effective, both artist and audience must be complicit in understanding the role of musical instruments as a *memento mori.*

[10] Examples of 17th century Dutch still lives, incorporating musical instruments as vanitas symbols, could be found in many Victorian collections. These included Still Life: an allegory of the vanities of human life, Harmen Steenwyck, oil on oak, c.1640, featuring a lute and a flute, presented to the National Gallery, London by Baron Savile, 1888 or Vanitas Still Life, Jan Janz.Treck, oil on oak, 1648, featuring a lute, bought by the Liverpool merchant Robert Philip Wood (1818-98), now in the National Gallery, London.

[11] Richard Leppert discusses the potential visual analogy between musical instrument cases (rather than the instruments themselves) and coffins in The Sight of Sound: Music, Representation and the History of the Body, (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press) 1993, p.xxiv.

The Orpheus Tradition

In reworkings of the Orpheus legend, the relationship between music and memory is more direct. This legend provides a pretext for exploring the theme of bereavement, and music's role in linking the past and the present. The story was found in Virgil's Georgics and it was retold in Ovid's Metamorphoses, book X, and by many other poets since; it would certainly have formed part of any Victorian gentleman's classical education. Dorothy M Kosinksi, in her study of Orpheus in Nineteenth Century Symbolism (1989) demonstrates how different aspects of the myth resonated with different audiences over time. The ancient world focused on Orpheus's role as a priest and keeper of sacred mysteries, and his ability to tame wild animals. In the hands of medieval poets, Orpheus was the archetype of a noble lover who was prepared to face any danger to rescue his Lady Eurydice; in the 14th century, he became 'Sir Orfeo'.[12] In the 19th century, the romantic relationship again came to the fore. For the Victorians, the key incident was the death of Eurydice, and Orpheus's chance to regain her through musical performance. Music unlocks a passage to past happiness. Orpheus charms Pluto, the god of the underworld, with his performance and is allowed to descend into Hades to reclaim Eurydice. But this reunion is brief. Eurydice persuades Orpheus to defy Pluto's command, and look her in the eye. The moment he does so, she slips out of his grasp and disappears from sight.

The Orpheus legend therefore presents a direct connection between music and the personal past. Musical performance is a conduit that allows the past to be regained. However, this reunion is always unsatisfactory and impermanent. Memories cannot be looked at face to face, but inevitably slip away. Music allows a fleeting reunion with the dead, but can never fully regain that which was lost. In fact, it causes a double death.

Some 19th century British painters engaged directly with the Orpheus subject. G.F. Watts, for example, painted numerous versions from the 1860s onwards, including an Orpheus and Eurydice in oil, exhibited at the

[12] Dorothy M. Kosinski, Orpheus in Nineteenth Century Symbolism, (London: UMI Research Press) 1989, p.12.

Grosvenor Gallery in 1879 (now in a private collection in India.) In this treatment of the subject, Eurydice's second death is almost instantaneous. Orpheus struggles to support her nude body as she collapses back towards the hell-fires. Her pale skin and limp body contrast with Orpheus's violent muscular action, as he turns towards her. Watts reflects the horror of Orpheus's loss through the subdued palette, and his focus on the fatal embrace. All unnecessary details are expunged from the story. Only Orpheus's lyre remains to remind us of the narrative. Watts shows the instrument with all but one string broken, a motif that re-emerged in the mid-1880s in the figure of Hope (oil on canvas, 1885, Tate Britain). In the Orpheus picture, this single string seems to represent the fragility of the passageway between the living and the dead that was opened up by musical performance.

The Idyll Tradition

The motif of the lyre also relates to the third core subject that connects music to memory. This is the notion of music as the original language of ancient man. Orpheus's lyre, like Apollo's, is a sign of both poetry and music, linked by song. As such, it refers to the undivided language of innocent man before the Fall. The lyre represents a lost unity of the arts. The concept of music as the universal language of the prelapsarian world was part of conventional 19th century musical discourse. When, for example, Liszt wrote in 1855 that 'All art flows from the same source', he was referring to music.[13] So musical paintings, and especially images that included lyres or archaic instruments, could also embody nostalgia for a golden age. This idea of nostalgia was an attempt to recapture a lost innocence.

This thesis argues that, in Victorian aestheticism, nostalgia coincided with a critique of contemporary industrialised society. Musical idylls offered an alternative vision of life, not just as it once was, but as it could be. In Morris's words, they contrast 'How we live and how we might live'.[14] Of course, this prelapsarian world was out of reach of personal memory, but it was part of

[13] Philippe Junod, 'The New *Paragone*', p.27

the collective cultural memory of Victorian artists. They longed for a world they had never known, but could only imagine.

Elements from all three models – *vanitas*, Orphic and idyllic – can be traced in the musical pictures made by Pre-Raphaelite and aesthetic artists. In making connections with these traditional motifs, the artists were able to engage with memory and the past in several different ways. If they referred to *vanitas* subjects, they could imply regret for sensuality, or the loss of youthful innocence. The Orpheus legend provided a framework for linking the dead and the living through music. Or artists could go back to the dawn of time, when words and music were bound together in song, to create a nostalgic vision of an invented pre-industrial idyll. Regret, bereavement and nostalgia were all conjured up by music.

Reworking the *Vanitas* tradition

How were these ideas put into practice? Perhaps it is helpful to start with one of the most familiar Pre-Raphaelite paintings to see how memories could be triggered by music. There are many possible readings of William Holman Hunt's The Awakening Conscience (1853-4, oil on canvas, Tate Britain) [figure 116] but I see it as an elaborate *vanitas* image.[15] It contains all the necessary ingredients. Hunt shows us a beautiful, partially-dressed woman surrounded by luxury objects, a clock and cut flowers. The rosewood piano itself is an example of lavish spending. So is the elaborate clock that acts as a reminder of time passing. Perched on top of the piano is a vase of morning glory, a particularly telling sign of fleeting beauty as these flowers bloom and die in a single day. So all these 'trivial objects [that] force themselves upon the attention', and the 'fatal newness of the furniture'[16] described by Ruskin

[14] William Morris's lecture with this title was written in July 1896, a few months before his death.

[15] Richard Leppert in The Sight of Sound, p.207 and Julia Grella O'Connell in 'Of Music, Magdalenes and Metanoia in The Awakening Conscience', Journal of Musicological Research, (London: Routledge) 24, 2005, have both analysed the musical symbolism in this work, but neither have pointed to the *vanitas* imagery of the props. Like Grella O'Connell, I find Leppert's reading – that the man is using parlour songs as a seduction tactic – unconvincing.

[16] John Ruskin, quoted by Judith Bronkhurst in The Pre-Raphaelites, (London: Tate Gallery) 1984, p.121.

create the same impression on the viewer as a 17th century *vanitas* painting. They remind us of the transitory nature of beauty and sensual pleasure.

Music plays a central role in linking the past with the present in this painting. Not only is the piano a symbol of material excess, it also triggers the girl's recollections of her own past. In The Awakening Conscience it is music that precipitates the narrative crisis. The girl, who a moment ago had been sitting on her lover's lap, has just resolved to leave her life of sin. What has caused her change of heart? The sheet music provides a clue, and was evidently intended to be read by the viewer, as Hunt has carefully painted the title. It is Oft in the Stilly Night, a ballad by Thomas Moore that reminds the girl of the life she has lost. It includes the lines:

> When I remember all
> The friends so link'd together,
> I've seen around me fall
> Like leaves in wintry weather.

The music encourages her to remember her past, and to contemplate her own mortality. This effect is intensified by the other sheet music lying on the floor. This is a setting by Edward Lear of Tears, Idle Tears from Tennyson's The Princess. This song explicitly contrasts the happiness of innocent youth with the misery of a sinful maturity: 'O Death in Life, the days that are no more'. The memories that are called to the surface by this music cause her change of heart.

In Hunt's picture, music works on two levels to stir the memory. Firstly, the musical instrument is an important element in the collection of objects that make up a *vanitas* image. This affects the viewer by appealing to artistic precedent; it causes us to recollect that material and sensual pleasures are transitory. Secondly, music works directly on the girl in the painting, reminding her of her past, and creating the drama of the scene.

Hunt's painting was a very modern and controversial interpretation of the *vanitas* subject. Unsurprisingly, his Pre-Raphaelite Brother, D.G. Rossetti used the convention rather differently when he incorporated *vanitas* motifs into his historical pictures. In some respects, Rossetti was returning to the original formula when he placed small groups of symbolic objects in the corners of his drawings and watercolours. A *vanitas* still-life can be seen in the foreground of the first version of Dante drawing an angel on the first anniversary of the death of Beatrice (1848-9, pen and ink, Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery) [figure 117]. Here the group consists of an hour-glass, an oil lamp, a book and a waisted rebec with bow. In a later watercolour of the same incident from Dante's Vita Nuova (1853-4, Ashmolean Museum) [figure 118], the *vanitas* group is more complex, and now includes a skull and some trailing ivy. In this picture, the instrument is an ornamental rebec or rebab, inlaid with ebony and with three decorated roses on its sounding board. Rossetti uses the musical *vanitas* group to reinforce his literary subject. Dante is interrupted as he contemplates the death of his beloved Beatrice. He is remembering her life and meditating on her afterlife. The juxtaposed skull and rebec remind him of the shortness of her earthly existence, compared with the eternity of heaven.

In his early *vanitas* subjects, Rossetti's symbolic objects are divorced from the main action of the composition. They perch precariously in a corner of the picture. This emphasizes the symbolic nature of the group; they are isolated rather than sitting comfortably within the narrative. However, there is evidence of a shift in his treatment of the *vanitas* theme as early as 1853, with his drawing Hesterna Rosa (1853, pen and ink, Tate Britain) [figure 119].

In Hesterna Rosa the symbolic objects are no longer just props, an implausible collection of bric-a-brac tucked under a desk. Instead Rossetti has woven the *vanitas* motif through the whole subject. So the music-making, the cut flowers and the elaborate costumes of the women contribute to the underlying mood of regret. Rossetti described the scene as 'an orgy wearing towards dawn in a lamplit court. The principal figure is a weary girl

who presses her fingers to her brows'.[17] She is contemplating her own past. She realises that her own beauty is fading, and she has become one of 'yesterday's roses' (*hesterna rosa*), like the wilting blooms of her garland:

> I am worn with strife
> And feel like the flowers that fade.[18]

The drawing is inscribed with these lines from Philip van Artevelde (1834), a play by Sir Henry Taylor, to indicate the specific source of Rossetti's idea. In the original text, Elena who is 'neither maid nor wife' looks back on her past life, and regrets her illicit relationship with the Duke of Bourbon. Rossetti's drawing depicts a scene that is does not occur within the time-frame of the play. Instead, the choice of subject itself invokes the idea of memory. This image is a reconstruction of Elena's own past, a moment of crisis that is resurrected by her act of remembering.

Music is an important element in this process of remembrance and regret. In Rossetti's drawing and his later watercolour (1865, Delaware Art Museum), Elena turns towards a young girl who is plucking or tuning a lute. Rossetti's contemporaries would have been familiar with the theory that music allowed the mind to slip between the past and the present. These theories grew out of the German Romantic movement: writers like E.T.A. Hoffman and his contemporaries valued music for its 'non-referential suggestive forms'.[19] Musical experience was believed to encourage contemplation and a disengagement of the conscious mind, so that the forgotten, the unconscious, or the subconscious could come to the surface. These ideas were reiterated by mid-19th century commentators, both in Britain and France. Thomas Carlyle for example in 1852 described music as 'a kind of inarticulate, unfathomable speech which leads us to the edge of the Infinite, and lets us for a moment gaze into that'.[20] Charles Baudelaire agreed that musical experience had a particular power of personal revelation. He

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[17] D.G. Rossetti in a letter to Edmund Bates, quoted in The Samuel and Mary R. Bancroft, Jr. and related Pre-Raphaelite collections, (Delaware: Delaware Art Museum) 1978, p.112.
[18] Ibid., p.112.
[19] Marsha L. Morton, '"From the Other Side": An Introduction', in M.L. Morton and P.L. Schmunk, The Arts Entwined, p.3.

suggested that Wagner's music especially 'expresses all the deepest-hidden secrets of the human heart' by 'forcing our memory and our power of meditation' into action.[21] So Rossetti, like Hunt in The Awakening Conscience, creates a link between music, memory and regret in two distinct ways: first, by the collection of *vanitas* symbols (the musical instruments, the fallen flowers and the luxurious material environment) and second, by the direct impact of the music upon the girl, as it stimulates the contemplation of her own past.

The increasingly subtle treatment of the *vanitas* theme was developed by Edward Burne-Jones. Like Rossetti, he wove the symbolic objects into the broader framework of his compositions, rather than leaving them on the margins. In his Illustration for 'The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyam' (c.1871, watercolour and pencil, Ashmolean Museum) [figure 120] Burne-Jones brought together music-making, a pair of lovers, a psaltery and a sundial. This collection of Persian poetry, translated and published anonymously by Edward FitzGerald in 1859, became a firm favourite with Burne-Jones. He was given a copy by Rossetti in 1861, and recommended it to Ruskin. The startling and delightful impression made by these 'splendid blasphemies'[22] upon a Victorian audience is best expressed by Ruskin, who wrote 'I never did - until this day – read anything so glorious'.[23] Burne-Jones and Morris collaborated on four illustrated manuscripts of the poems, including copies for Burne-Jones's wife, Georgie, and his young friend, Frances Graham.

Burne-Jones subverts the conventional subject of love-making with a musical accompaniment. He refuses to depict a joyful scene of sensory pleasure. Instead, the couple gaze mournfully at the sundial, contemplating the passage of time and the fleeting nature of their youth. Burne-Jones's watercolour does not illustrate a particular passage from the Rubaiyat.

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[20] Thomas Carlyle, On Heroes and Hero Worship, 1852, quoted in '"From the Other Side": An Introduction', p.5.
[21] Charles Baudelaire, 'Richard Wagner and Tannhäuser in Paris', 1861 in The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays, translated and edited by Jonathan Mayne, (London: Phaidon) 1964, 2nd edition 1995, p.137 & p.133.
[22] Georgiana Burne-Jones, Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones, (London: Macmillan) 1904, new edition (London: Lund Humphries) 1993, vol.2, p.135.
[23] John Ruskin, quoted by S. Wildman and J. Christian, Edward Burne-Jones: Victorian Artist-Dreamer, (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art) 1998, p.162.

Rather, he follows one strand within the verses, the idea that all pleasures will pass. The sundial is Burne-Jones's own symbol to represent this theme; it is not mentioned overtly in the texts. However, the music-filled rose-garden is derived from the verses:

> Alas, that spring should vanish with the rose!
> That youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close!
> The nightingale that in the branches sang,
> Ah, whence, and whither flown again, who knows![24]

Burne-Jones reinforces the melancholy mood of contemplation in the drooping posture of the male figure, and particularly by the emotional and physical isolation of the two lovers: they look at the sundial, not at each other, and their bodies do not touch. In this case, perhaps we should read the *vanitas* motif of the sundial as a symbol of forboding for the future, rather than regret for the past. The lovers realise that their passion is short-lived and will soon pass away. The use of the psaltery and the sundial in this watercolour represents a shift in the relationship between musical *vanitas* imagery and memory. Rather than stimulating recollection, Burne-Jones suggests that these symbolic objects encourage premonition. Music allows the mind to slip between past, present and future, just as musical notes constantly flow onwards through time, and cannot be frozen, but only remembered.

The subdued mood created in this musical picture by Burne-Jones is very similar to works by Whistler which also have musical themes. However, Whistler was less interested in the conventions of the *vanitas* motif. Instead he seems to have drawn on the implications of the Orpheus legend; in his paintings, music represents an attempt to regain something that has been lost. The Orpheus connection was never overtly stated by Whistler. However, this thesis argues that it offers a starting-point for analysing the relationship between music, personal memory and loss in Whistler's paintings.

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[24] The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, trans. Edward Fitzgerald, 1859, 1st edition, stanza 72.

Reworking the Orpheus Tradition: Whistler

Links between music, memory and loss first emerge in Whistler's At the Piano (1858-9, oil on canvas, The Taft Museum, Cincinnati) [figure 121]. This painting, first shown in Paris in 1859, was admired by Millais, Hunt and William Michael Rossetti when it was hung 'on the line' at the Royal Academy in 1860. The Pre-Raphaelite Brothers all complimented Whistler on his use of colour. The limited palette of rich tones – deep red, black, white and red, with a touch of apple green – reminded sophisticated viewers of the colour-schemes of 17th century Dutch paintings, particularly Vermeer. The composition was also reminiscent of these earlier works; Whistler recreates the distinctive profile silhouette of both the performer and her instrument found in Vermeer's A young woman standing at a virginal (c.1670, oil on canvas, National Gallery, London) [figure 78]. [25]

There are two key differences, however, that support the view that Whistler's painting can be read as a contemplation of personal loss. In Vermeer's painting the musician looks out at the viewer, inviting us to join in the musical experience, while Whistler's musician looks down at the keyboard. She is concentrating on her performance, and in oblivious to our gaze. Her solemn expression, and the quiet resignation of the girl who leans on the piano, are reinforced by the mourning dress they both wear. The strong passages of black and white in this painting are created by these mourning costumes; black for a mature woman, and white for a child.

We know that the sitters for this painting were Whistler's sister Deborah and her ten year old daughter Annie. The piano is probably part of the family's history: Deborah and her father used to play duets on it during her childhood in Russia.[26] Major Whistler had died in 1849, but immediately after he completed At the Piano, James Whistler wrote to Deborah to tell her that he

[25] In the 1860s this painting by Vermeer was in the collection of Théophile Etienne Joseph Thoré in Paris. It was he who suggested that Whistler's picture would 'go well with my Van de Meer der Delft and other masters'. Quoted by R. Dorment and M.F. Macdonald, James McNeill Whistler, (Washington and London: Tate Gallery) 1994, p.72. Whistler could have seen several Vermeer paintings during his visit in 1857 to the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition.

was 'trying to make a portrait of Father'.[27] This posthumous portrait, now lost, can perhaps be seen as Whistler's response to the impression created by At the Piano. If this is the case, we can make a connection between the loss of her father, and Deborah's performance in At the Piano. Perhaps Deborah is thinking of her dead father and her childhood duets while playing for her own daughter. Like Orpheus, Deborah's music briefly allows her to reach back into the past and connect with a loved one who has slipped away into death. Whistler's painting has captured the intense concentration of this fleeting moment in which the past, present and future of the family meet. Its sombre mood reminds us that the fragile musical link between Deborah and her father will soon be broken.

If we pursue this idea further, we see how the two figures, young and old, mirror each other in the composition. This mirror-image can potentially offer an even more intimate link between past and present. The girl in white may be a projection of the musician's younger self. We are enabled to see a vision of the past, the woman as child, that has been conjured up by her performance.[28] This reading of the painting clearly relies on an appreciation of the biographical background to the work. However, even without this detailed information, Victorian audiences could have made the link between personal loss (signified by the mourning dress) and the contemplation of that loss during music. The prominent role played by the costumes would determine the audience's response to the two figures so the black and white dresses have an aesthetic, narrative and sentimental significance.

At the piano has an explicitly musical subject. In Whistler's later paintings, the relationship between music and memory is more obscure but, through close reading, it can nevertheless be uncovered. These paintings also oscillate between a subtle use of *vanitas* references, and a sense of personal loss connected with the themes of the Orpheus legend.

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[26] Ibid., p.73.
[27] Ibid., p.73.

In Symphony in White No.1: The White Girl (1862, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Washington) [figure 4] Whistler includes a number of cut flowers. In her left hand, the girl holds a lily that has lost most of its petals, while pansies, white lilac and other blooms have fallen at her feet. Whistler appears to be making a direct, if brief, reference to the conventions of *vanitas* subjects. Taken together with the musical title, these flowers suggest that Whistler was aiming at a mood of regret for sensual pleasures. Certainly the painting was read by some contemporary critics as an image of lost innocence. The girl's loosened hair and her abstracted look suggest that we are witnessing the aftermath of a sexual encounter. When this painting was shown in Paris in 1863, it was described by Castagnary as

> the day after the marriage, that troubling moment when the young woman looks at herself, and is astonished that she can no longer see the virginity that was there yesterday.[29]

However other critics were less sure of the subject. They failed to make the link between the fallen flowers, the flowing hair, the predatory bear-skin and the girl's sexual experience. Instead, they connected Whistler's painting to Wilkie Collins' sensation novel The Woman in White (serialised 1859-1860). Even fellow artists like George du Maurier 'assumed that Whistler intended an allusion' to the book. [30]

By 1867, Whistler had added the musical reference Symphony in White No.1 to this painting. The retrospective retitling was a deliberate attempt to direct the critics' responses away from the narrative of the painting, and to concentrate on its mood. There were several reasons for this. Firstly Whistler, who always referred to his painting as '*La Fille Blanche*' rather than

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[28] This interpretation is reinforced when we compare Whistler's painting with works such as Rossetti's The Maids of Elfenmere (1855, wood engraving, Victoria and Albert Museum) [figure 54], in which unearthly female figures appear, singing, as if in a vision or dream.
[29] J.-A. Castagnary, quoted by Robin Spencer, 'Whistler's 'The White Girl': Painting, Poetry and Meaning', Burlington Magazine, (London), May 1998, no.1142, p.309.
[30] Ibid., p.302.

'*La Dame Blanche*', wanted to break the link with Collins's novel.[31] Secondly, he was refocusing attention on the painting as a colour-study. Whistler appropriated the musical terms used by a French critic Paul Mantz in his review of 1863, when he described the painting as a '*symphonie en blanc*'.[32] Thirdly, Whistler was reinforcing the *vanitas* subject by making an explicit musical reference. Music, taken together with the fallen flowers and the potentially erotic undertones of the girl's appearance, suggests that she is remembering her innocent past, and contemplating the loss of that innocence. In doing so, she is in the same position as the mistress in Hunt's in The Awakening Conscience or the fallen woman in Rossetti's Hesterna Rosa.

The musical motif in the title also helps us to make sense of some other contemporary responses to this painting. We have already seen in Chapter Three, with Dicksee's ghost-painting Reverie, how music offers a bridge to the past, allowing us to remember and regret that which is lost. Following the example of Orpheus, music also allows communication, albeit briefly, with the dead. Several reviewers of this Symphony in White acknowledged this. Tapping into the contemporary craze for mesmerism and spiritualism, they described this girl as 'a medium' with a 'tormented ... expression'.[33] Could she be in a trance, or sleep-walking? This interpretation would account for her wide eyes that gaze into the space beyond the viewer, and the way her arms hang limply by her side.

Or perhaps she really is a 'Dame Blanche'. Rather than being the medium she could be, as the painter Courbet suggested, '*une apparition, du spiritisme*'.[34] Thoré agreed: she had '*l'air d'un fantôme*' and seemed like 'a vision who appears in a dream'.[35] By adding a musical title, Whistler was encouraging his audience to consume the painting as if it were analagous to a piece of music. This opens up all kinds of new possibilities: as Schopenhauer wrote 'a man who gives himself up entirely to the impression

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[31] Ibid., p.302.
[32] Paul Mantz, 'Gazette des Beaux-Arts', quoted in R. Dorment and M.F. Macdonald, James McNeill Whistler, p77.
[33] Fernand Desnoyers, quoted by Robin Spencer, 'Whistler's 'The White Girl', p.308.
[34] Gustave Courbet, quoted by Fantin-Latour in a letter to Whistler, ibid., p.308.
[35] Thoré-Bürger, ibid., p.308.

of a symphony experiences the metaphysical'.[36] *'D'où vient cette blanche apparition avec ses cheveux dénoués, ses grands yeux noyés dans l'extase?'* asked Paul Mantz in 1863.[37] By 1867, Whistler had given a hint at the answer. She may come from our own contemplation of the 'symphony in white' of the title. If this white girl was interpreted by Whistler's contemporaries as an apparition, then perhaps this also helps to shape our reading of the girl in At the Piano. Musical performance becomes an invocation, reaching back into the memory, so that the white girl leaning on the piano also appears as a 'vision' or a 'dream'.

Music and the Mirror-Image

The motif of the mirror-image, hinted at by Whistler in At the Piano, becomes the central theme of The Little White Girl (1864, oil on canvas, Tate Britain) [figure 108]. In At the Piano we are teased with the idea that the woman is contemplating her own childhood, in the figure of her daughter. In The Little White Girl the dislocation between the figure in the room and her double in the mirror lies at the heart of the image.

This picture was also known by a musical title from 1867: it became the Symphony in White No.2. Again, the retrospective addition of the title emphasises that this is not a portrait but a study of mood. The use of the mirror implies a troubled state of mind as it focuses attention on the idea of the divided self. The two faces do not match up in expression or position - the girl in the mirror looks sadder than the girl in the room - so the viewer's gaze oscillates between the two. This doubling makes us question which is the real girl. Is it the quietly contemplative figure or the tired and shadowy face in the mirror? I would argue that, by making a connection between the musical title and the themes implicit in the Orpheus legend, we can start to unravel this perplexing image.

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[36] Arthur Schopenhauer, The World as Will and Representation, vol.1, 1819, translated R.B. Haldane and J. Kemp, (London: Routledge) 1906, vol.1, p.339.
[37] 'Where does this white apparition come from, with her loosened hair, her large eyes drowning in ecstasy?', my translation, Paul Mantz quoted by Robin Spencer, 'Whistler's 'The White Girl', p.308.

In her study of Nostalgia and Recollection in Victorian Culture (1998), Ann Colley considers the role of the divided self and Orpheus myth. By looking back into our past, she says we are made more aware of the distance between that past and our present. As Colley writes, nostalgia 'signifies the ultimate duality' as we can imagine our younger self, but can no longer fully inhabit that body. [38] If we look at Whistler's painting in this light, it helps to account for the differences between the Little White Girl and her mirror-image. She is contemplating her past, and made aware of her changed self. As we have seen, this is the response that would normally be associated with *vanitas* imagery. However, Whistler's painting does not contain any of the usual ingredients of a *vanitas* still life, unless we read the azaleas in the foreground as cut flowers, rather than a potted plant. Instead, the mirror is the dominant feature, reflecting the girl's face. This mirror, taken together with the new title, leads us back to the Orpheus myth.

Colley's method, notably her linking of Orpheus and nostalgic memory, can usefully be applied to an analysis of The Little White Girl. Colley links Eurydices's double death with the experience of nostalgia: 'briefly the released image inhabits consciousness'.[39] When we look into the painting, we find that Whistler has shown us the moment when the girl is able briefly to glimpse her past in the reflection. However, the musical title reinforces the transitory nature of this experience. It will inevitably slip from her grasp and leave her doubly bereft: she loses her younger self once through the passage of time, and then again as the nostalgic experience fades. Or, in Colley's words,

> soon though the vividness weakens, and even though one might reach out like Orpheus, to hold it, the image turns to retread its path to the underworld of the unconscious.[40]

So Whistler's addition of a musical title does more than just focus our attention on the colour harmonies and mood of the painting. The musical

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[38] Ann C. Colley, Nostalgia and Recollection in Victorian Culture, (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan) 1998, p.210.
[39] Ibid., p.209.
[40] Ibid., p.209.

reference can also lead us towards the symbolism of Orpheus, his music and his loss.

When Algernon Swinburne saw this painting in Whistler's studio, he composed a poem, Before the Mirror, that was intended to echo rather than elucidate its subject. These lines were inscribed on the frame of the painting when it was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1865, so that painting and poem could be experienced together.[41] The final verses of Swinburne's 'parallel masterpiece'[42] dwell on the theme of literal and metaphorical reflection:

> Deep in the gleaming glass
> She sees all past things pass,
> And all sweet life that was lie down and die.[43]

Swinburne evidently read this painting as an image of a girl remembering her past and regretting its loss. He explicitly imagines that loss in terms of a death. By looking in the glass, her old life is briefly resurrected, and then it slips away again.

Swinburne also questioned the relationship between the girl and her mirror-image:

> Art thou the ghost, my sister,
> White sister there,
> Am I the ghost, who knows?

This ghostly image reminds us of Thoré's comparison of The White Girl (1862) with a '*fantôme*'. So Swinburne initally suggests that the figure in the mirror represents the life that has been lost, and can be regained only by an act of memory. Like Orpheus, the Little White Girl comes face to face with someone who has passed away. But Swinburne recognises the paradox in

[41] The original frame no longer exists, but it is known from photographs. See A. Wilton and R. Upstone, Symbolism in Britain: the Age of Rossetti, Burne-Jones and Watts, (London: Tate Gallery) fig.22, p.39.
[42] R. Dorment and M.F. Macdonald. James McNeill Whistler, p.78.

the picture: the girl in the mirror looks older and more care-worn than the girl in the room. It is as if the face in the mirror is in fact contemplating her younger, happier self. This is the central ambiguity in a notoriously ambiguous image. Swinburne's verses were described by the Times as 'beautiful but not very lucid' and Whistler's picture was criticised in the same terms.[44] However, the reviewer acknowledged that 'thought and passion are under the surface of the plain features', and so recognised both the contemplative mood of the painting, and also the disruptive influence of the reflected face.[45]

The unease created by a mirror-image that does not quite match its original was a motif that emerges in the work of several of Whistler's contemporaries. The closest parallel is found in photographs by Clementina Hawarden. Studies of her teenage daughters, Isabella Grace and Clementina Maude, frequently play with this idea. Sometimes she poses the two girls so that, at first glance, we read the composition as one figure and a reflection. When we look again, we find that there are two bodies, and two distinct personalities, with echoing gestures [figure 122]. Other photographs show a single girl contemplating her reflected image in a mirror, but the reflection is obscured or darkened [figure 123]. It is, of course, interesting to imagine what impact Hawarden's work had on Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll); we know he admired her photographs, and bought several of her studies when he met her in June 1864. Alternatively, Dodgson may have seen Whistler's looking-glass painting at the Royal Academy in 1865.

The mirrors in both Hawarden's and Whistler's compositions provoke unresolved tension and ambiguity. In Whistler's case, the disrupted reflection contributes to his deliberate attempts to undermine straightforward readings of his painting. His choice of musical titles was also a fundamental part of this process. Whistler hints at a narrative, for example in the prominent position of the wedding ring on The Little White Girl's left hand, but gives no further clues to her background or status. By refocusing attention on the titles, Whistler encourages his audience to read the titles themselves as

[43] Algernon Charles Swinburne, Poems and Ballads, 1866, London, quoted ibid., p.79.
[44] A. Wilton and R. Upstone, Symbolism in Britain, p.116.

signs of his intention. Although in his public statements, Whistler distanced himself from art-historical conventions such as *vanitas* or mythological imagery, he knew that his audiences would be thinking about his musical descriptions when they looked at his paintings. So both Whistler and his exhibition-going public relied upon the traditional and symbolic meanings of music when they approached the works.

Whistler was 'so steeped in the art of Frans Hals, Velasquez and even Titian' that his works can legitimately be read as a gloss on the old masters.[46] He had seen many of their works at the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition in 1857, and echoed their characteristic flourishes in his own paintings. The composition of the Little White Girl, for example, is clearly a reminiscence of Velasquez's Rokeby Venus (1647-51, oil on canvas, National Gallery, London).[47] So we should accept that Whistler was playing upon musical conventions familiar from his study of Old Master paintings. He did not reproduce them overtly but he was well aware that music was traditionally associated with *vanitas* motifs or the Orpheus legend, as well as other potential symbolic readings.

Whistler would also have known about the contemporary fashion for Orpheus subjects. This myth was regularly represented on the wall of the Salon and the Royal Academy, especially since the 1858 Paris revival of Gluck's opera Orfeo ed Eurydice (1762)[48] and Whistler himself had heard Offenbach's version of the story in Orphée aux Enfers at the *Bouffes Parisiens* in 1859.[49] A picture by Louis Français of Orpheus was shown at the Salon in 1863, and a year later Frederic Leighton exhibited his Orpheus and Eurydice at the Royal Academy.[50] To some eyes, Leighton and Whistler represented opposite extremes of the Victorian art world. Leighton built his reputation on

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[45] Ibid., p.116.
[46] R. Dorment and M.F. Macdonald, James Mc Neill Whistler, p.212.
[47] This painting had been in a private collection in Yorkshire since 1813.
[48] Mme. Viardot, the star of this revived production, was a friend of Frederic Leighton, and she also performed extracts from the opera at George Eliot's house in the presence of Edward Burne-Jones. See Georgiana Burne-Jones, Memorials, vol.2, p.17.
[49] Letter from James Whistler to Matthew White Ridley, Summer 1859, Glasgow University Library, Whistler MS R90, On-line edition, Centre for Whistler Studies, University of Glasgow.
[50] Royal Academy of Arts, Frederic Leighton, (London and New York: Royal Academy and Harry N. Abrams) 1996, p.29.

large-scale historical paintings, he was patronised by the Queen, and in 1878 he was appointed President of the Royal Academy. He was very much part of the artistic Establishment. However, like Whistler, he created revolutionary images by weaving music into his paintings. So, rather than seeing these two artists as antagonistic, it may sometimes be more useful to examine their works together, as they both represent an aestheticist drive to evade narrative by refocusing on musical imagery.

Reworking the Orpheus Tradition: Leighton

Leighton's first attempt at a significant musical painting was a critical disaster. The Triumph of Music: 'Orpheus, by the power of his art, redeems his wife from Hades' (1856, oil on canvas, untraced[51]) is now only known from an oil sketch (private collection, on loan to Leighton House Museum and Art Gallery.) It was condemned by the Art Journal - 'Never was disappointment greater' – and even his parents were uneasy about it. [52] It was the 'choice of a mythological subject' that worried his father. He suggested to Leighton that this was evidence of the artist's 'poverty of invention'.[53] In his opinion, the Orpheus legend was becoming hackneyed. Evidently, the Victorian public were over-familiar with the musical hero and his dead wife.

This poor reaction did not stop Leighton from returning to the subject in the 1860s. Orpheus and Eurydice (c.1864, oil on canvas, Leighton House Museum and Art Gallery) [figure 124] was a much tighter composition, concentrating on the dramatic crisis when Eurydice insists that Orpheus should meet her eye. The subject demonstrated some of Leighton's most successful technical qualities: his treatment of drapery, the anatomical complexity of the entwined figures, the contrast between the dark, muscular man and the smooth, pale skin of the woman, and his interest in historical detailing. This last quality is represented by the lyre slung across Orpheus's back. The lyre serves several functions. It reminds the audience of the

[51] The painting was taken off its stretcher after the Academy exhibition, and 'consigned ... to oblivion during his lifetime in the dark recess of a cellar.' It has been lost since 1945. See Royal Academy of Arts, Frederic Leighton, p.108.
[52] The Art Journal, 1st June 1856, p.172, reprinted ibid., p.108.

significance of musical performance in the narrative background to this life-and-death struggle. It also shows that Leighton studied ancient examples of musical instruments in his attempt to recreate the myth. He has depicted one particular form of lyre, the *kithara*, which was distinguished by its 'massive and often richly ornamented body'.[54] Images of these instruments could be seen on Greek vases dating from the 5th century BC, complete with the ribbons and painted decoration replicated by Leighton. The *kithara* was technically sophisticated, with as many as twelve strings, and was played by virtuosi. According to Geiringer, it 'was employed mainly for the accompaniment of lyric and epic poetry. The emotional mood to which [it] gave expression was calm and restrained'.[55]

Reworking the Idyll Tradition: Leighton

We should not be surprised then that the same *kithara* is found in Leighton's idyll of the ancient world, The Garden of the Hesperides (1892, oil on canvas, Lady Lever Art Gallery, Museums and Galleries on Merseyside) [figure 125]. It appears to be identical to the one used in the Orpheus painting nearly 30 years before. This instrument provides an appropriate musical accompaniment to the prelapsarian vision imagined in the painting, as it represents the unity of poetry and music in song. This brings us to the third theme that links music and memory in Victorian painting.

The Garden of the Hesperides can be seen as the culmination of Leighton's attempts to create a musical painting. This was only one strand in the development of his career, and his work was less radical that Whistler's, but they did share the same drive towards creating a purely aesthetic experience. As the Times critic noted 'he has painted not the garden invaded, nor the dragon destroyed, but the three beautiful maidens'.[56] Leighton favours beauty over drama, and music plays an essential role in the construction of the idyll. It creates an environment that envelops the scene in a third dimension of sound, and reminds the audience of a golden age,

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[53] Ibid., p.108.
[54] Karl Geiringer, Instruments in the History of Western Music, (London: George Allen & Unwin) 1943, revised 1978, p.35 and plate III.
[55] Ibid., p.35.
[56] The Times, 30th April 1892, quoted by Royal Academy of Arts, Frederic Leighton, p.233.

when music was the primal language. This conception of music is itself ancient. Rousseau, in his Essays on the origins of language traces it back at least as far as Imperial Rome: 'Talking and singing were once the same thing, says Strabo'.[57] An essential element in the prelapsarian world, this unity of the arts was lost after the Fall. In Leighton's pagan myth, the rupture was caused by Hercules stealing the golden apples, but the symbolic motifs are of course analogous with the Biblical narrative. We see the garden, the fruit and the dragon/snake of Eden.

Leighton has created a space in which his audience can indulge their nostalgia for a paradise now lost. He shows us the dawn of time, with three girls seated under a tree, embraced by Ladon, the guardian of the golden apples, in the form of a snake. It is a vision of sensual pleasure, sunlight and song. One significant element in this nostalgic mood is the motif of circularity. This is represented most obviously in the shape of the painting, set within its gilded frame. It is like a bubble held in suspense, which may burst at any moment. This circularity is repeated in the shapes within the picture, in the curving body of the snake and the neck of the egret, in the golden apples themselves. In looking at this picture, our eye is constantly drawn back towards the centre, reluctant to break out of the frame.

The musical performance of the girl in the flame-coloured drapery underlines the nostalgic mood. As she is playing the *kithara*, Leighton implies that her song represents the original unbroken language: in ancient Greece, this instrument was used to accompany performances of poetry that were sung rather than spoken. Music and verse are indivisible. Leighton perhaps draws on Tennyson's notion in his Song about 'the golden apple, the hallowed fruit', that it is the music itself that saves the idyll from disruption. So long as the daughters of Hesperus continue to sing, the dragon will stay awake, and the apples will be safe. But

[57] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 'Essay on the origins of language', 1781, reprinted in ed. Enrico Fubini, Music and Culture in Eighteenth Century Europe: A Source Book, transl. by Wolfgang Freis, Lisa Gasbarrone, Michael Louis Leone, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press) 1994, p.92.

If ye sing not, if ye make false measure

We shall lose eternal pleasure.[58]

In Tennyson's fancy, the singing is also essential to the creation of the golden apples themselves:

For the blossom unto threefold music bloweth;

Evermore it is born anew;

And the sap to threefold music floweth,

From the root

Drawn in the dark,

Up to the fruit.[59]

In the Victorian imagination, the singing of the Hesperides underpinned the idyll and prevented the bubble from bursting. Of course, Leighton and Tennyson's audience were also aware that the garden would be invaded, and the song broken. Simultaneously, music sustains the beauty of the garden, and yet it represents the transience of this tranquillity: it is the natural condition of music that it should move on, fade and die. Music reminds us that the idyll cannot last forever.

The singing depicted in Leighton's picture also makes us even more conscious of how far we have travelled away from this paradise. We cannot hear the girl or her lyre, as the distance between us is too great. We are in exile. Leighton offers a glimpse of our ancient contentment, when all our senses were satisfied. He allows us to gaze into this space, and consume it visually, but we can never resurrect it.

This idyll is purely the product of our own imagination: it is not a real memory. But Leighton reinforces the impression that this image represents his audience's shared cultural past, by using symbolic elements from the parallel myths of pagan and Judeo-Christian antiquity. He implies that the vision he has created represents an underlying truth to which his viewers can all subscribe.

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[58] Alfred Tennyson, The Poems of Tennyson 1830-1870, (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 1912, reprinted 1943, p.855.

Leighton's mingling of pagan and Christian references was very much a characteristic of later Victorian painting. This thesis argues that, by their hints and allusions, artists associated with the aesthetic movement played with the idea of collective cultural memory. They developed a style which relied on a fluid relationship between the past and the present. Images from classical, medieval or renaissance art constantly seeped into their work, but were never fully resolved into authentic historical scenes – they were more like reminiscences. Leighton's Garden to the Hesperides is typical in the way he places accurate archaelogical details (like the *kithara*) in a setting that is unresolved geographically or historically. Leighton's soft-focus technique reinforces the appearance of this place as mythical and ambiguous, and so does his purely decorative handling of passages such as the drapery of the central figure.

This playful use of the Victorian collective cultural memory is best explained by reference to the writings of Walter Pater. J.B. Bullen has drawn attention to Pater's 'persistent collapse of historicity.' In Pater's The Renaissance (1873)

> the distant past – the Renaissance – the early eighteenth century and the immediate present are foreshortened with...urgency and ...energy.[60]

Pater breaks down barriers between periods, and transforms the Victorians' relationship with their past. He challenges the Victorian assumption of progress which was applied to art as it was to science, by suggesting that works of different periods - 13th century poems, the Mona Lisa and ancient Greek sculpture – are products of the same artistic spirit. Pater denies the evolutionary principle in art. In doing so, he connects the past intimately with the present. Driven by his aestheticist thirst for synthesis, Pater's compendium of beauty makes no distinction between ancient and modern.

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[59] Ibid., p.855-6.

Reworking the Idyll Tradition: Burne-Jones

The tantalising mixture of classical, medieval, renaissance and modern found in Pater's studies of beauty have their visual parallel in Edward Burne-Jones's paintings. I would argue that they embody the aestheticist tendency to 'embrace contradictions'.[61] Like Leighton, Burne-Jones weaves music into his evocations of a lost world. In his painting of The Mill, (1870-82, oil on canvas, Victoria and Albert Museum) [figure 126] some passages are reminiscent of medieval Bruges, others suggest Michelangelo's bathers. In the foreground, the softly pacing women dance to the music of a bell harp, an 18th century instrument, played by an ambiguous figure who appears as a revenant, a saint, or more likely, as an allegory of Love: the musician's head is haloed by the outline of the arch.

This picture brings together ideas of music and memory in a number of ways. The Mill is Burne-Jones's protest against the loss of an older way of life, represented by the watermill, the meadow and the bell-harp. It is also an attempt imaginatively to regain some of what has been lost, by drawing on resonant images that reside in the collective memory. The presence of music is essential to this process. As in the Garden of the Hesperides, music symbolises a unity in the arts which has existed before the Fall, and here it has the additional element of dance. Body and mind are united in their response to the musical performance. The bell-harp contributes to the historical effect of the image, but also to its ambiguity and sense of unreality. He has deliberately chosen an archaic instrument, yet it could never be used effectively as its plucked strings could not resonate. This bell harp, constructed as a studio prop especially for Burne-Jones, was made without a sound-board, so that the decorative patterning of the strings could be seen. Like the mixture of historical references (medieval, Renaissance and 18th century) in this composition, the bell-harp is designed to confuse.

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[60] J. B. Bullen, 'The Historiography of Studies in the History of the Renaissance', in ed. Laurel Brake and Ian Small, Pater in the 1990s, (North Carolina: ELT Press) 1991, p.160

[61] Jonathan Freedman, Professions of Taste: Henry James, British Aestheticism and Commodity Culture, (Standford, California: Stanford University Press) 1990, p.6.

These accumulated historical references also position Burne-Jones as 'anti-modern': he described his own approach to work as being a 'crusade and Holy Warfare against the age'.[62] This was partly a reaction against his own childhood experiences in Birmingham, where 'the whole town reeked with oil and smoke and sweat and drunkenness'.[63] Burne-Jones deliberately constructs images that rely on nostalgia for a better, pre-industrial world, to induce a sense of loss and melancholy. This idea is reinforced by the twilight setting of his pictures; the day is darkening and will soon pass into night.

In the 1998 centenary exhibition of his work, Burne-Jones was presented as an 'artist-dreamer' and it is this dream-like aspect which comes to the fore in The Mill. He believed that artists should appeal to the imagination, or an imaginative recreation of the past, rather than reproducing the details of industrialised society. He argued that 'the realism they talk about is not art but science' [64] and so refused to create images that could be read as a 'direct transcript from nature'.[65] He fervently believed that paintings should not attempt to rival photography. Instead he created works that were built up from many different historical sources, each one carefully sketched and then transformed into an imaginary composite. This process contributes to the hallucinatory quality of his pictures. They are both real – each of the objects has been studied from life, or from specially commissioned studio props, or lifted from earlier works of art – and totally unreal – the combination of these objects in a softly-lit landscape or architectural space is impossible. In Burne-Jones's own words, 'what eventually gets onto the canvas is a reflection of a reflection of something purely imaginary'.[66]

David Peters Corbett argues that the resulting pictures are not an escape from contemporary reality, but rather they engage with the 19th century's 'despair at the dismantling of uncertainties'. The anxieties of the age are 'rendered visible' because they are expressed in an imaginative framework.[67] Furthermore, in Corbett's view, these paintings represent a challenge to the

[62] Georgiana Burne-Jones, Memorials, vol.1, p.84.
[63] Ibid., vol.1, p.36.
[64] Ibid., vol.2, p.261. See reference in David Peters Corbett, 'Visuality and Unmediation in Burne-Jones's *Laus Veneris*', Art History, (London) volume 24, no.1, February 2001, p.87.
[65] Georgiana Burne-Jones, Memorials, vol.2, p.261.
[66] Ibid.,vol.2, p.261.

primacy of the written word in Victorian culture. He suggests that many of Burne-Jones's paintings offer an alternative means to understand the world, through visual accounts rather than written ones. Corbett argues that these images represent a struggle between the brush and the pen, between the innocent unmediated eye of the painter and the self-conscious medium of language. The Victorian art world was increasingly determined in a literary rather than visual way, through newspapers, reviews and the fashion for literary subjects. Some artists like Burne-Jones responded by expressing 'nostalgia for understanding without mediation'[68]: seeing not reading.

I would take this argument further. By referring to sound rather than sight, Burne-Jones suggests an even more direct sensory relationship with reality. Music offers an escape-route from the literary overload oppressing modern culture. The argument that music allows an unmediated experience can certainly be traced as far back as Kant. He believed that music 'communicates by means of mere sensations without concepts'.[69] In Kant's opinion, this put music at a disadvantage, but Burne-Jones wanted to recapture the experience of eden through sensation. Musical paintings like The Mill deliberately avoid the literary references that frame many of his other works; they connect to no external narrative. Instead they present a nostalgic vision of a world in which song and dance are pre-eminent.

Music, Water and the Passage of Time

The Mill can be read in parallel with Leighton's The Garden of the Hesperides as a recreation of a musical prelapsarian world. However, Burne-Jones's work is more than a straightforward fantasy about the unity of the arts before the Fall. The inclusion of a river in the middle-ground of The Mill offers further links between the themes of memory, music and the passage of time. Both music and water are constantly in motion, and both represent the impossibility of freezing time. In Burne-Jones's painting there is a tension between the snapshot effect – the moment captured – and the

[67] David Peters Corbett, 'Visuality and Unmediation in Burne-Jones's *Laus Veneris*', p.86.
[68] Ibid. p.88.
[69] Immanuel Kant, 'Kritik der Urteilskraft', 1790, quoted by M.L. Morton and P.L. Schmunk, The Arts Entwined, p.3.

knowledge that this moment is only fleeting and will pass away. The dancers continue their dance, the mill wheel revolves, the river glides past and the music rises and falls. The river is traditionally a resonant symbol of loss, as it flows to the sea and then out to the infinite horizon. Gaston Bachelard in his study of L'Eau et les Rêves offers a number of readings which elucidate this idea. He argues that rivers are associated with loss and mourning, as they remind us of ancient rituals in which the dead are cast into the stream, and float away on their last journey.[70] The figures on the far bank in The Mill may be conceived as souls who have crossed over to the other side of the river, and certainly are reminiscent of Burne-Jones studies of Souls on the banks of the River Styx (c.1873, oil on canvas, Private Collection) [figure 127]. If we look at a contemporary work by one of Burne-Jones's followers, the symbolism is made explicit. The Waters of Lethe by the Plains of Babylon (1879-80, tempera and gold paint on canvas, Manchester City Art Galleries) [figure 128] was shown at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1880 by John Roddam Spencer Stanhope. His figures dive into the river, and emerge naked on the far bank to begin their afterlife.

Watery motifs are found in many of Burne-Jones's musical paintings. On the surface, they demonstrate his interest in the artists of the Venetian Renaissance. As Pater wrote in 1877, Giorgione and his school delighted in depicting 'music at the pool-side...or mingled with the sound of the pitcher in the well, or heard across running water'.[71] However, Burne-Jones shows a particular interest in linking music and slowly moving water with strong reflections. This motif parallels Whistler's looking-glass; it encourages a self-conscious contemplation of the present through a study of the reflection. The double images make us question what is real and what is an impermanent trick of the light. They invite us to enter an alternative reality which appears on the surface of the water. How does this relate to the musical theme of the pictures? Burne-Jones combines water and music so frequently that we have to acknowledge that he saw the two images as interconnected.

[70] Gaston Bachelard, L'Eau et les Rêves, (Paris: Librairie José Corti) 1942, p.99.

Is it possible that both offer a critique of his own art of painting? We know that Burne-Jones's work was conceived as a challenge to contemporary reality and realism. The music and water he depicts, in their turn, are a challenge to his own pictures, a suggestion of an additional distancing from the present by immersion in an alternative plane beyond the picture surface. Many of his paintings offer us tantalising glimpses of this further sur-reality. The chinks of light that flow from behind the picture suggest a world that is just out of reach. What is really important is happening around the corner, up the staircase, through the window, if only we could get at it. Burne-Jones's works do offer us face-to-face encounters between the natural and the supernatural: he paints epiphanies, annunciations and mermaids. But he recognises that we can never quite see clearly, never have a direct experience of what is beyond the frame.

Burne-Jones's musical pictures suggest that this experience can be achieved by means other than vision and paint. His paintings are physical like the real world, composed of pigment and canvas, and so are tied to that reality, fixed in time and space. They are a static rendering of a concrete if imaginary environment. But music is ethereal – made of air - and water is liquid. Their presence in the paintings suggests that Burne-Jones recognised the limitations of his own art. He provides the means of escape from his own pictures, into alternative dimensions of sound and water. We are reminded of Bachelard's study of watery images in the poetry of Poe and Swinburne. He suggests that the reflections seen in Poe's '*eaux profondes*' are '*plus réel que le réel parce qu'il est plus pur*'.[72] Bachelard also argues that water is the original alien environment, and that it provides '*la seule image exacte, raisonnable...du saut dans l'inconnu*'.[73] Burne-Jones's art cannot take the plunge and explore these other-worlds, but he can encourage us to contemplate them.

We know that Burne-Jones wrestled with the inadequacy of his own productions: in one of his illustrated letters he showed The artist attempting

[71] Walter Pater, 'The School of Giorgione', The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry, (London: Macmillan) 1877, 3rd edition 1888, revised and reprinted 1935, p.139.
[72] Bachelard, L'Eau et les Rêves, p.67. Poe's 'deep waters' are 'more real than reality because they are more pure'.

to enter the realm of art, with disastrous consequences (1883, pen and ink, series of 5 drawings in a letter to Katie Lewis, British Museum) [figure 129]. Burne-Jones jumps through the canvas, tears it and falls out the other side, destroying the picture in the process. We can never fully experience the landscapes of his imagination, so the idylls that he attempts to recreate are always loaded with melancholy. They are based on his memories of an imagined world, a composite drawn from pagan and medieval literature, classical and gothic architecture, and a love of the English countryside. But this 'strange land that is more true than real'[74], woven out of personal and collective cultural memories, can only hint at the pre-industrial, prelapsarian experience.

Music, Nostalgia and the End of Empire

In a work like The Lament (1865-6, watercolour with bodycolour on paper laid down on canvas, William Morris Gallery, Walthamstow) [figure 130] the connection between music, memory and melancholy is made explicit in the title. The Lament brings together two strands of our argument, a mood of regret for sensuality and nostalgia for a golden age. It combines *vanitas* motifs like the falling rose petals and decorative bell-harp, with a vision of the time when music provided an undivided language.

Burne-Jones offers us a glimpse of the old order, in his visual echoes of the Parthenon frieze, the most resonant of classical relics. He plays games with the collective cultural memory of his audience, and uses his own reminiscences as the basis for his work. The figure on the right, with hands clasped and head bowed, is derived from Burne-Jones's sketchbook studies of Ares (c.1864-5, pencil, Victoria and Albert Museum) [figure 131]. He also makes an explicit link with the exuberant, sensual music of the ancient feasts, in the small sculpted figure of Pan with his pipes. But the classical world is collapsing: the ancient building crumbles, and its courts are invaded with wild roses. In the background, light gleams through mysterious openings, again inviting the sensation that there is more beyond the picture

[73] Ibid., p.222. 'The only exact, rational image...expressing the jump into the unknown'.
[74] Georgiana Burne-Jones, Memorials, vol.1, p.116.

surface, if only we could break through. The musician sings softly and her companion is overcome with sorrow at the passing of time. Her song no longer acts as a unifying force, combining music and poetry in a single undivided art. Instead it represents transience, in the inevitable onward movement of the notes.

Unlike many of his contemporaries, Burne-Jones rarely used overtly musical titles. So by labelling this picture as a lament, he underlines its melancholy emotional content. He also diverts his audience away from attempts to place the image within a narrative framework. The musical title encourages his viewers to address this painting as if it were a piece of music. In particular, we are able to follow the rhythms and pauses of the architecture and the counterpoint of the figures, in the same way that we experience the rise and fall of overlaid musical sound. Musical form, as well as musical symbolism, is woven into the whole composition.

The implications of this subject evidently troubled Burne-Jones, for he returned to it in 1870, with Love among the Ruins (watercolour and bodycolour, repainted 1898, private collection) [figure 132]. This was a successful picture both in London and Paris, where it was exhibited in the Exposition Universelle of 1878. It is an even more melancholic musical image; for Malcolm Bell this composition represented a 'strain of sweet sad music'.[75] Bell reinforced the anti-literary, anti-narrative tendency in Burne-Jones's musical paintings when he suggested that they 'convey a sentiment or an idea but not a story'.[76] This composition is also a key example of what Bullen called the 'collapse of historicity' in aestheticist works of art. Burne-Jones blurs geographical and historical boundaries, by using one of his favourite allegorical sources, the 15th century Hypnerotomachia as his starting point.[77] He then applies a title from one of Robert Browning's

[75] Malcolm Bell, Sir Edward Burne-Jones, (London: George Bell and Sons) 1901, p.65.
[76] Malcolm Bell, 1892, p.90, quoted by A. Wilton and R.Upstone, Symbolism in Britain, p.151.
[77] Penelope Fitzgerald, Edward Burne-Jones, (London: Michael Joseph) 1975, new edition (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing) 2003, p.138.

verses. But the composition resurfaces in an illustration for the Rubaiyat, completed in 1872.[78]

The sense of loss and decay that was present in The Lament is even more tangible here. The musician has ceased playing completely – the bell harp is silenced as it is clenched between his knees - and the lovers cling to each other for comfort. The palace has begun to fall down around them, and they are trapped by the tangle of roses. Like some escapee from Burne-Jones's pictures of the Sleeping Beauty, the briar rose encroaches even further on the scene.

Again, this painting offers hints of *vanitas* imagery, and reminiscences of the ancient world: the musical motif reminds us of these possible readings. But mostly it encourages us to contemplate the inevitable unravelling of earthly ambition. For the critic Robert de le Sizeranne this painting was not about the past, but about the present, 'the ruins amidst which we live, which are all too real'.[79] Love among the ruins is a resonant image of the end of empire. As such it is hardly an escape from the realities of Burne-Jones's Victorian experience, but rather a critique of British expansion. In the 1870s, Britain was formalising its imperial hold on India and beginning a concerted push into Africa. In the same decade Burne-Jones made his one and only foray into politics, in support of Morris's campaign against British interference in Bulgaria. So this picture is a timely reminder that all empires must decline and fall. We get the sensation that the world is old and careworn, and if only we could go back, we might recapture some of the playfulness of the baby cherubs who tumble across the portico. They mark the gateway to a brighter world beyond the walls.

The original painting of Love among the ruins became, in itself, a potent symbol of loss. In 1893 it was sent to France to be reproduced as a photogravure; clearly its popularity had not waned since its first French exhibition in 1878. Unfortunately the surface of the watercolour was badly

[78] See S. Wildman and J. Christian, Edward Burne-Jones: Victorian Artist-Dreamer, catalogue no. 59, p.163.
[79] Robert de la Sizeranne, 'English Contemporary Art', 1898, quoted in David Peters Corbett, 'Visuality and Unmediation in Burne-Jones's *Laus Veneris*', p.86.

damaged by being 'washed over with white of egg or some such substance'.[80] Burne-Jones mourned the destruction of his vision. As his wife said, 'it always laid heavy on his heart'.[81] So Burne-Jones began to resurrect the image. Not only did he repaint it, but he also tried to make it less vulnerable, less transient, by using oil paints this time. The new oil version painted in 1893-4 now belongs to the National Trust. Burne-Jones also managed to restore the original watercolour. A few months before his death in 1898 he agreed to look at it again, and discovered that the film clouding the image could be carefully removed. In his last days, he repainted the girl's head, and it 'seemed something like a miracle when at last the whole picture shone out again'.[82]

Silence and Death

This small miracle of resurrection of course runs counter to the argument of Burne-Jones's melancholy musical paintings. His images remind us of the death of the old world, and the fleeting nature of sensual pleasure. Perhaps the most significant feature of Love among the ruins is that the music has ceased. In the silence, Burne-Jones represents a loss that cannot be recovered. Silence, like sleep, acts as a synonym for death in Victorian literature and painting. Rossetti, for example, linked the three elements in his early poem My Sister's Sleep, describing the death of a young girl as the bells chime midnight and then 'I heard the silence for a little space'.[83] His verses create drama from tiny movements and noises:

> Our mother rose from where she sat:
> Her needles, as she laid them down,
> Met lightly, and her silken gown
> Settled.

[80] Georgiana Burne-Jones, Memorials, vol.2, p.237.
[81] Ibid., vol.2, p.341.
[82] Ibid., vol.2, p.341.
[83] Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Poems and Translations 1850-1870, (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 1913, reprinted 1968, p.98. The poem was written in 1847 and first published in 1850.

We are reminded of Frank Holl's paintings about the death of a child, Hush! and Hushed (both 1877, oil on canvas, Tate Britain). Again, silence is equated with bereavement.

Sound becomes most significant when it ceases. We become conscious of a gap, a loss. Perhaps we can relate these works to the controversial performances of John Cage and Le Monte Young created a century later. In their art, the sight of the musician or the instrument becomes the focus, as conventional musical sound is rejected. The audience contemplates the lack of music, and what is left behind. For our purposes, Young's Composition No.5 (1960) is particularly interesting. In this work, a butterfly or butterflies are released into the performance area. The doors and windows are left open and 'the composition may be considered finished when the butterfly flies away'.[84] The flight 'acts as a visual metaphor for the absent melody, or inaudible sound'.[85] The escape of the butterfly from the performance space can also signify a soul leaving the body. In Roman mythology the butterfly was associated with Psyche, herself a personification of the soul (and a favourite subject for Burne-Jones). In the silent dancing and disappearance of the butterflies, we mourn not just the lack of music, but a symbolic death.

The image of the butterfly also brings us back to the pervasive *vanitas* motif. Like music itself, the butterfly is mobile, ephemeral, and appeals directly to our senses. We are not surprised to find it making regular appearances in 17th century *vanitas* still-lives. For late Victorian audiences, the butterfly became notorious as Whistler's personal motif. It began as a playful version of his initials, JW, but gradually replaced his full signature and took on a life of its own. It appears with a flourish, and a sting in its tail, in the margins of The Gentle Art of Making Enemies (1890) as a silent commentator on Whistler's critics. The butterfly represented Whistler's belief that art should appear effortlessly beautiful, and untroubled by moral concerns: 'perfect in its bud as in its bloom – with no reason to explain its presence – no mission to

[84] Le Monte Young, quoted by Simon Shaw-Miller, Visible Deeds of Music: Art and Music from Wagner to Cage, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press) 2002, p.226.
[85] Ibid., p.226.

fulfil'.[86] The use of the butterfly, in combination with musical titles or subjects, is particularly resonant. It reinforces characteristics inherent in Whistler's work, especially notions of fugitive beauty and the swift movement of the brush across the canvas. But it also encourages the viewer to engage with the opposition between soul and body; the butterfly flies away from the earth and into the air. In fact, Whistler's butterfly can be read as a parallel to the watery images found in Burne-Jones's musical paintings. Both motifs offer an escape into an alternative element, water or air. More than this, both are traditionally linked with the passage to the afterlife.

Conclusion

Clearly this symbolism was malleable, and it was possibly unconscious on the part of the artist. But we can rely on certain, well-rehearsed conventions. We know that all the Pre-Raphaelite Brothers, and the aestheticists who came after them, were grounded in art-historical training, or at the very least had studied Old Master paintings, read medieval, renaissance and contemporary poetry, and knew the pagan legends as well as their Bible stories. We also know, as the artists themselves knew, that their audiences would attempt to interpret their paintings using artistic precedent as their guide. So although these painters may have tried to subvert the traditional symbolism of musical images, they could not avoid it. Conventions like the *vanitas* motif or the Orpheus legend would inevitably impact on both the creation and the reception of musical paintings. The links between music and memory, or music and bereavement were familiar to Victorian artists and audiences. They were bound to be woven into contemporary responses to the paintings, and would have hovered in the background while the artists were constructing their musical compositions.

Even if some of the symbolism was too esoteric to be grasped by many visitors to the Royal Academy or Grosvenor Gallery exhibitions, there is one simple characteristic of music that underpinned these all connections between music and loss. To coin Haweis's phrase, music is defined by its

[86] James Whistler, The Gentle Art of Making Enemies, (London: William Heinemann) 2nd edition 1892, reprinted, (New York: Dover Publications) 1967, p.116.

'velocity'. It is constantly slipping away from us, passing into our memory. This is what Pater is referring to when he describes the art of Giorgione, and his phrase could equally apply to paintings by Burne-Jones, Rossetti, Leighton or even Whistler. In these works, ' life itself is conceived as a sort of listening – listening to music...to the sound of water', and to 'time as it flies'.[87]

[87] Walter Pater, 'School of Giorgione', The Renaissance, p.140.

Conclusion

In 2003 a new Paintings Gallery opened at the Victoria & Albert Museum. Burne-Jones's musical idyll The Mill [figure 126] was one of the pictures to benefit from the rehang. For the first time in a generation, visitors were able properly to enjoy the softly-pacing girls and the mysterious musician. At the same time a gilded grand piano [figure 9], designed and decorated by Burne-Jones and Kate Faulkner, was moved to the centre of the gallery. Placing the instrument at the heart of the display was an acknowledgement that a piano can be equivalent to an easel painting, a legitimate presence in an art-gallery.

The conjunction of the musical painting and the piano provides a useful focus for this conclusion. Firstly, it raises questions about the presentation of musical instruments in museums, which may offer a starting-point for further research. Secondly, it reinforces a number of themes already developed in this thesis. Looking at the painting and the piano together opens up new readings, both of the objects themselves and of the place of music in Victorian art. In particular, it highlights the central theme of women's relationship with music. Musical women are not just passive sites of contemplation or sensual fantasies, although this is how they might appear in The Mill.[1] They are also active producers of art, both in the performance of music at this piano, and in the creation of the instrument – it is beautiful because Kate Faulkner made it so.[2]

The new setting of the painting and the piano also reminds us of their original context. Although they were not displayed in the same space in the

[1] The passivity of the dancing women in The Mill is misleading. The models, Maria Zambaco, Maria Spartali and Aglaia Coronio were all artists in their own right; Zambaco as a sculptor, Spartali a painter and Coronio a book-binder and embroiderer.
[2] It is likely that Isabella Ionides, Aleco's wife, would have performed at this instrument, as well as his sister Chariclea. She married the musician Edward Dannreuther, founder of the London Wagner Society in 1872. A sketch of Aleco and his friends made by George de Maurier shows a musical evening with a young lady at the piano. This illustration is reproduced by Athena Loeussi in The Ionides Circle and Art, M. Phil. thesis, Courtauld Institute of Art, 1982, p.202.

19th century, these objects help us to understand the way art was consumed in aesthetic circles. The Mill was bought by Constantine Ionides, to be hung in a room that was used for entertaining. As the Ionides family and their friends looked at it, music was playing in the background. The piano, meanwhile, had been commissioned by Constantine's brother, Alexander (Aleco) for his home in Holland Park. There it was placed in a spectacular drawing room, surrounded by paintings and works of art.[3] Aleco's collection was intended to create a sensory environment where sight and sound worked in harmony. Pictures and music were experienced simultaneously and as Pater said 'lent each other new forces'.[4]

But this thesis demonstrates that pictures like The Mill were musical not only in their subject and their surroundings, but in the way they were painted. This is what Pater meant by his exhortation that pictures should become more like music. It was about form as much as content. We can see how this was achieved if we compare The Mill with more conventional, non-musical pictures on show in the next gallery of the V&A Museum. Alongside the Ionides collection, there is another group of paintings given by a Victorian patron, John Sheepshanks. His collection is a snap-shot of mid-19th century taste. The pictures are literary or anecdotal; Sheepshanks had a particular fondness for Landseer's dogs. Their titles, Choosing the Wedding Gown or The Old Shepherd's Chief Mourner, give them away.[5] The viewer's pleasure is created by the realistic detailing of the props and the implied narrative. The subjects are often sentimental, and taken from contemporary life or the recent past. These pictures are prosaic.

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[3] The piano is visible in the photograph of A Kensington Interior reproduced in the Art Journal, (London) 1893, along with two paintings by Burne-Jones, Pan and Psyche and Luna. It reappears four years later, now flanked by Tannhäuser by Fantin-Latour and Belcolore by Rossetti, in a photograph in The Studio, (London) 1897, vol.xii. For both illustrations, see Athena Leoussi, The Ionides Circle and Art, pp.211-212. Aleco was also a prominent collector of Whistler's work, owning at least five oil paintings, including Arrangement in Grey: Portrait of the Painter and Nocturne in Blue and Gold: Valparaiso Bay.

[4] Walter Pater, 'School of Giorgione', The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry, (London: Macmillan) 1877, 3rd edition 1888, revised and reprinted 1935, p.123.

[5] William Mulready, Choosing the Wedding Gown (1845, oil on canvas, Victoria and Albert Museum): this was a subject from Goldsmith's novel, The Vicar of Wakefield. Edwin Landseer, The Old Shepherd's Chief Mourner (1837, oil on canvas, Victoria and Albert Museum).

John Sheepshanks's death in 1863 coincided with the moment when music became visible, and aestheticism began to blossom. In 1861 Leighton exhibited Lieder ohne Worte [figure 102], in 1864 Whistler started work on Variations in Flesh Colour and Green [figure 35] and a year later Rossetti painted The Blue Bower [figure 34]. By 1870, Burne-Jones's idylls showed how music had transformed painting. Mood took precedence over narrative. Beauty triumphed over truth, or at least 'truth-to-nature'. The composition was conceived in terms of colour-harmonies and the rhythm of the figures as they described a line across the canvas. Gallery-goers were transported away from urban industrial England to a never-land of sweet sound and graceful movement. They scanned the picture's surface, not for clues to a story, but for combinations of line and colour that embodied the implied music. 'Make your work sing, Sir, make it sing', Burne-Jones told his studio assistant. [6]

'My Kingdom is Not of this World': Music's Challenge to Realism

Musical paintings were not merely an escape from the contemporary, they were a response to it. This is one of the contradictions at the heart of the aestheticist project. Burne-Jones attempted to produce art for the modern world, through the paradox of painting an idealised past. Aestheticist artists recognised that realism had been overtaken by photography. It was not enough to picture the mundane. Art should give a glimpse of something that could only be imagined or hoped for, a place where all the senses were satisfied, where nature sings in tune.[7] If they could appropriate the characteristics of music, aestheticist artists believed they might achieve this. Music, as a non-mimetic medium, did not try to replicate the visible. It offered an alternative landscape of the imagination, unencumbered by the

[6] Edward Burne-Jones to Thomas Rooke, March 18th 1897, transcript of Rooke's studio notes, National Art Library, 86.RR.52, p.362.
[7] 'Nature, who, for once, has sung in tune', James Whistler, The Gentle Art of Making Enemies, (London: William Heinemann) 2nd edition 1892, reprinted, (New York: Dover Publications) 1967, p.144

physicality of real objects. This thesis has shown that by invoking music, painters could transcend the phenomenal world. They engaged with modernity by drawing attention to the surface of the picture: it is not real, it is not teaching a moral, it is a self-conscious creation to be explored and enjoyed. Liberated from the demands of realism, figures could change shape, becoming androgynous or highly sexualised. Colours too could shift, and reappear in unexpected combinations, stimulating an emotional response in the viewer. This impulse helps to account for paintings as different as Whistler's Nocturne: Blue and Silver – Chelsea [figure 111] and Burne-Jones's The Golden Stairs [figure 112].

The use of music as a model derives ultimately from Schopenhauer's theory that music is the one direct expression of the Will. The Victorians came to Schopenhauer through Wagner. But Wagner's own understanding of Schopenhauer was shaped by his enthusiasm for Beethoven. In an essay of 1870, Wagner presented Beethoven as the musical archetype, creating art that transcended the physical and the known.[8] Wagner theorized music's power by invoking the Biblical quotation: 'My Kingdom is not of this world'. He believed that music came from within; it derived from the essence of things, and that Beethoven made this manifest.[9] Here we see the threads drawing together, as we cast our minds back to the encounter between Burne-Jones and Cosima Wagner. Her gift to him was Beethoven's death mask. It was an acknowledgement of a shared understanding of what music meant.

The Beethoven connection also helps us to place Victorian aestheticism in a wider European context. It opens further avenues for investigation, beyond the bounds of this thesis. In particular, it reveals potential parallels with the

[8] Wagner was not alone in holding up Beethoven as the key to understanding music's potential. Nietzsche also believed that Beethoven's 9th Symphony was able to 'make the spirit free, give wings to thought'. Quoted by Clare A. P. Willsdon, 'Klimt's Beethoven Frieze: Goethe, *Tempelkunst* and the Fulfilment of Wishes', Art History, (Oxford: Oxford University Press) vol.19, No.1, March 1996, p.51.

[9] Richard Wagner, Beethoven, 1870, quoted by Peter Vergo, Art in Vienna 1898-1918: Klimt, Kokoschka, Schiele and their Contemporaries, (Oxford: Phaidon) 1975, 2nd edition 1981, p.72.

Secessionists of turn-of-the-century Vienna. In fact, Gustav Klimt asked Whistler to join this breakaway group in 1897.[10] Like the aestheticists, the artists of the Vienna Secession acknowledged music as the ideal art, but managed to retain their figurative framework. They too were driven by a 'desire to make perceptible an image, however imperfectly glimpsed, of a higher order...by a] transcendental striving, the mission of the artist as clairvoyant'.[11] And they demonstrated their intent through a multi-media project in celebration of Beethoven. The 14th Secessionist exhibition, held in 1902, was built around Max Klinger's sculpture of the composer. The Secession building was decorated with frescoes, and Gustav Mahler prepared an arrangement of Beethoven's 9th Symphony for the opening night. Most of the decorations were lost when the exhibition closed, but Klimt's sequence of six panels survived. The surface of his Beethoven-frieze was embellished with semi-precious stones and goldleaf, creating an effect reminiscent of Burne-Jones's Laus Veneris [frontispiece]. Like Burne-Jones, Klimt combined unnaturally elongated bodies and eroticised watery women with meditations on medieval quests. The Knight on the entrance wall of the gallery was a brother-in-arms for Burne-Jones's Tannhäuser. Klimt used Beethoven's music as a springboard for non-naturalistic pictures of love, death and transcendence: in 1903, the panels were shown again, this time with the quotation '*Mein Reich ist nicht von dieser Welt*' (My Kingdom is not of this world).

Neither Klimt nor Burne-Jones felt it necessary, or even desirable, to make the leap from figurative to abstract art. Like many of their contemporaries, they understood that musical analogies would allow them to create new worlds, beyond the visible, where human forms became 'dissolved in the merely decorative, almost geometrical'.[12] Almost, but not quite. They flirted with sur-reality and pattern-making but, although their images were

[10] Gustav Klimt to James Whistler, 13th Dec 1897, discussed in R. Dorment and M.F. Macdonald, James McNeill Whistler, (Washington and London: Tate Gallery) 1994, p.54 n.
[11] Peter Vergo, Art in Vienna 1898-1918, p.17.
[12] J. A. Lux, 'Klinger's Beethoven und die Moderne Raum-kunst', Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration, (1902) X, p.479, quoted by Peter Vergo, Art in Vienna 1898-1918, p.69.

dreamlike, they were also recognisable. Picturing music tested the boundaries of art, and the patience of critics. Nevertheless, because aestheticist and Secessionist images were allegorical rather than abstract, they were not simply escapist, but offered a critique of the modern world.

This thesis proposes that the musical paintings produced by Burne-Jones and his contemporaries have a double meaning. At first sight they appear as explorations of beauty in line and colour. But they also highlight the fault-lines in Victorian society. Let us look again at the main themes that were tackled by the aestheticists.

Music, Women and Sensuality

Firstly they reflected the shifting roles of women, by celebrating and then subverting conventional depictions of the feminine. Chapters Three and Four analyse the links between women and music from various directions. Taken together, they demonstrate the multiple meanings of music, as artists addressed both the domestic and the seductive aspects of women through musical motifs. This thesis also shows how music hinted at the dangerous unnatural desire of mermaids and sirens, at a time when theories about the fluid libido were opening up new models of sexuality. Leighton, Rossetti and Burne-Jones all responded to these changes in their pictures of musical women.

As Chapter Two makes clear, images of dancing girls were also part of the standard Victorian repertoire of musical subjects. They were overlaid with assumptions about the erotic, the exotic and the authentic. Many reflected prevailing attitudes that labelled the Orient as feminised, sensual and subject to the controlling eye of Imperialists. But this thesis argues that aestheticist artists like Whistler and Moore questioned the Victorian relationship to non-Western cultures. They drew attention to the artifice inherent in attempts to paint the harem. Instead they created hybrid images, making it clear that their works were artistic constructs, with music as a pretext.

Music, Loss and Nostalgia

Secondly, this thesis demonstrates that music encouraged artists to address their relationship with the past. In its simplest form, the use of archaic musical instruments as props was evidence of an artist's interest in historical accuracy. It chimed with the Victorian desire to catalogue the past, and to present parallels between their own time and the classical, Gothic or Tudor worlds. In an age of rapid change, it could be comforting to know that they were inheritors of great traditions – of democracy, exploration or trade. But music also opened up channels to other pasts which were more problematic. It encouraged nostalgia for a golden age, before language and song became separated. Chapter Six argues that the musical idyll was a compelling subject for Leighton and Burne-Jones, and it was a reference point for many writers on art, especially Pater. As well as offering a glimpse of the pre-lapsarian world, music also allowed access to the personal past. It stimulated memory. Through the Orpheus myth, artists explored music's ability to revive the lost. Some, like Leighton, approached it head-on while others, notably Whistler, were more oblique in their references. Both artists agreed that music could, if only for a moment, resurrect the past.

Music and the Spirit

Music's ability to link the present and the past was bound up with its role as a bridge between the physical and spiritual worlds. Chapter Three shows how this connection derived from the ancient theory of the music of the spheres and was reiterated in Christian teaching, when heaven was imagined as a musical space. Aestheticist artists incorporated these conventions into their art. But they also explored less orthodox ideas about the relationship between body and soul. Through musical imagery they could picture ghosts and mesmeric trances, two very modern preoccupations. Furthermore, the traditional framework that held the natural and the supernatural worlds in balance seemed to be under threat. In the decades before the emergence of Freud, ideas about the conscious,

unconscious and subconscious were already starting to suggest alternative ways of understanding spiritual experiences. Instead of looking outwards (or upwards), the Victorians began to look inwards. Music appeared to be the medium through which the secrets of the mind could be unlocked; in the words of Wagner, 'creation passes from a conscious to an unconscious act...imposed upon [the composer] by his inner vision (*Anschauung*) of the Idea itself'.[13] This helps to explain the musical references in Whistler's Symphonies in White or Rossetti's Maids of Elfenmere. Through music, the spectator is given insight into the minds of the melancholy White Girls, or the visionary young man. We become, as Wagner hoped we might, clairvoyant.[14]

Music and the Suppression of Narrative

When the act of looking becomes bound up with imagined listening, the experience of art is transformed. By invoking music, artists provoked a new response from their audiences. Gallery-goers approached the pictures with music in mind, and learnt to think in terms of mood and movement, the rhythm of surface patterning, the sensuality of colour. Pictures like Leighton's Lieder ohne Worte made no sense in literary terms. Instead they created pleasure by offering the audience a space to contemplate the relationship between line and mass, dark and light, male and female beauty, within an envelope of implied sound. Whistler also denied his audience the chance to map his landscapes in conventional ways; the figures and landmarks were often distorted. By comparing his pictures to musical forms, he suggested new ways of seeing. He wanted to break the habit of 'looking, ... not at a picture, but *through* it, at some human fact, that shall, or shall not, from a social point of view, better their mental or moral state'.[15] Whistler's Nocturnes are emphatically about the stroke of the brush across the surface

[13] Richard Wagner, On Beethoven, 1870, translated by William Ashton Ellis, Actors and Singers: Richard Wagner's Prose Works, (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co) 1896, vol.5, pp.63-64.
[14] Ibid., p.110-111.
[15] James Whistler, The Gentle Art of Making Enemies, p.138.

of the canvas. This thesis argues that they make visible Pater's 'consummate moments' of music, when matter and form 'completely saturate each other'.[16]

Finale

But Whistler was not the only Victorian artist who could make his paintings sing. Histories of modern art have tended to single him out as the precursor to the musical abstractions of Kandinsky and Kupka: he is the one 19th century artist mentioned in the 2005 exhibition Visual Music, for example.[17] This thesis has shown that many other progressive artists responded to the challenge of 'aspir[ing] towards the condition of music'.[18] Leighton, Rossetti, and Burne-Jones all found that, by painting music, they could reimagine the past, engage with the present and perhaps create an 'art-work of the future'.

The final word will go to Burne-Jones. Music was one of the great themes of his art; it was woven into his love of the Middle Ages, and coloured his ideal of female beauty. Thanks to his wife we can, even at this distance, get close enough to hear him in his studio. In the last year of his life, Burne-Jones returned to a subject that had fascinated him as a young man, Chaucer's Prioress's Tale. His latest version (1865-98, gouache on paper on linen support, Delaware Art Museum) grew out of the decoration for a wardrobe given as a wedding present to Morris nearly forty years before. As Georgie wrote, in all that time, 'the vision had not changed.' And then Burne-Jones's own voice breaks in: 'You see how the flowers come at intervals like those in a tune' (humming as he pointed to one after the other): 'La la la la.'[19]

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[16] Walter Pater, 'School of Giorgione', p.128.
[17] Ed. Kerry Brougher, Visual Music: Synaesthesia in Art and Music before 1900, (London: Thames and Hudson) 2005, p.26.
[18] Walter Pater, 'School of Giorgione', p.124.
[19] Georgiana Burne-Jones, Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones, (London: Macmillan) 1904, new edition, (London: Lund Humphries) 1993, vol.2, p.333.

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