BEATE NEUMEIER
Editor

Dichotonies.
Gender and Music

American Studies ★ A Monograph Series

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Dicho*ton*ies – Gender and Music: An Introduction

"…sonic gestures become codified, having gendered meanings ascribed to them over a period of time and generated through discursive networks, and those meanings are mutable according to the cultural, historical, and musical context of those gestures, and the subsequent contexts into which they are constantly reinscribed" (Biddle and Jarman-Ivens 2007, 10-11).

"Music always signifies and is always gendered" (Dirk Schulz, 267).

The idea for this volume originates in an interdisciplinary conference which I organized as part of a three-day festival of concerts, exhibitions, multi-media installations, workshops and talks dedicated to the interface of music and gender, **"***Klang.Körper.* A Festival for Contemporary Music and Gender" (concept: Nora Bauer), held in June 2008 in the City of Cologne, supported by the Cultural Affairs Office of the City of Cologne, the Opera of Cologne, the Music School, the School for the Arts and Media, the School for Design, the TV Station WDR, and the Radio Station Deutschlandfunk. The aim of the conference on "Dicho*ton*ies: Gender and Music" was to bring together scholars from the fields of gender studies, cultural theory, and music studies in an inter- and transdisciplinary dialogue about the past, present, and future of Gender Studies and New Musicology. At the end of the first decade of the new millennium, at a time when once abolished gender boundaries seem to be re-established under the guise of postfeminism, there is a discernible and renewed interest in rekindling the debate about the de- and reconstruction of dichotomies with regard to gender and music as well as with regard to its academic intersections in sociology, literary and cultural studies, musicology and music theory.

The different sections of the conference covered a wide range of gender issues pertaining to questions of music production, performance and reception, to aspects of gender and intermediality, to intersections of music theory with gender theory. The revised papers selected for publication in this volume can convey only a small part of the live events, where discussions were imbued with experiences of an astounding

variety of musical performances, including tours to the local club scene. Also, some of the most obvious areas of an interface between gender and music, such as research on the castrato and the counter tenor, were moved – by mutual consent of the organizers – to a session held at the Musikhochschule during the festival. Far from being comprehensive, this publication presents papers which deal with specific topics and examples of the interrelation of gender and music contributing to a general theory of dicho*ton*y. The papers are arranged in five sections dealing with historical and theoretical questions of the interface between gender and music studies, with notions of sound, of text, of (embodied) performance and of intermediality. Recurrent themes and inevitable overlaps between sections as well as the sometimes unexpected links between individual papers, covering different kinds of music of different historical periods, generate yet another form of unsettling established boundaries and point towards the continuity of certain concerns. Cross disciplinary collaborations between scholars of cultural studies and musicology about interfaces of music, gender and sexuality, such as *Disruptive Divas* (2002) co-authored by Mélisse Lafrance and musicologist Lori Burns, are still rare. Hence this volume attempts to promote this dialogue between the new musicology, which emerged as a result of feminist and queer studies (cf. Weedon), and cultural studies, which in turn are being enriched by insights gained from the encounter between two equally valid yet different perspectives. The common goal of all papers from different perspectives and disciplines is a commitment to the continuing project of a deconstructive thrust countering the persistent attempts at reconstructing dichotomies with regard to gender, sexuality and music as well as with regard to their (academic) interrelation.

The first section of this volume "Music and Gender: On a Historical and Theoretical Note" consists of a number of essays on the historical and theoretical dimension of the interplay between gender (studies) and music studies. It opens with contributions to questions raised in the plenary podium discussion at the beginning of the conference between cultural theorist Elisabeth Bronfen and musicologist Melanie Unseld on femininity in relation to silence and voice. Elisabeth Bronfen traces the history of the silencing of women from Shakespearean drama via the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century opera stage to Hollywood melodrama focusing on the ambivalence of voice as feminine self-articulation (cf. Bronfen/Unseld) between subversion and containment. In this context she emphasizes the necessity to treat voice "as an aesthetic and a political category" (25). Drawing on a wide variety of examples from screaming

women in Hitchcock's movies to the portrayal of the transition from silent (film) to sound film in *Singing in the Rain* she foregrounds how "the feminine voice […] performs both sublime perfection and monstrosity" (Ibid.), highlighting how this potential subversion of the "uncontrollable" (26) feminine voice necessitates the continuous efforts "to police the boundary between a culturally productive transgression and one that must be silenced" (Ibid.).

In response, Melanie Unseld focuses on silence as a notion of female empowerment in music with reference to nineteenth- and twentieth-century composers "establishing silence as a category in its own right in contradistinction to sound" (30), as well as with reference to the power of silence of the *femme fragile* in Claude Debussy's opera *Pelléas et Mélisande*, composed as "a *musique de silence* that not only digresses from the full sound of *Wagnérisme* but also from actual sound itself." (Ibid.).The notion of self-empowerment through silence on an aesthetic level, however, inevitably has to be countered by an insistence on the necessity of a public voice in the political arena. As the danger of being silenced remains a (real) threat to women in the music business as well as to theoreticians in gender studies in a supposedly postfeminist age, Unseld ends her contribution with an insistence on "the need to *perpetuate* gender studies not as an add-on but as a core research area" (31), termed a question of "responsibility" by Elisabeth Bronfen.

The implications of this opening dialogue are further explored in two essays by Chris Weedon and Susan McClary, assessing the relation of gender studies and music studies in its historical dimension and future possibilities from gender theoretical and musicological perspectives. In "Feminist and Queer Approaches to Music" Chris Weedon traces the history of feminism and of feminist, gender and queer studies with respect to the field of music since the 1960s. Focussing on the different areas of music production, performance and reception, she shows how the interrelation of gender and music "gave rise to […] the development of new feminist musicology" (34). Popular music in particular appears to be both a site of affirmation and subversion of culturally constructed gender norms, visible in Josephine Baker and Tina Turner, Madonna and the Spice Girls to glam rock and female punk, Riot Grrrl and queercore music. In the final part of her essay she poignantly highlights the necessity of exploring the interface of the (cultural) politics of gender and vocal sound referring to former prime minister Maggie Thatcher and singer Kate Bush as respective figure heads of politics and music.

From a feminist musicologist's perspective Susan McClary investigates "Why Gender Still (as Always) Matters in Music Studies". After briefly sketching the history of feminist musicology and the effects it had on music studies McClary explores the topic of divine love and the experience of ecstasy in the historically and culturally very different work of four women (music) artists ranging from the twelfth-century mystic Hildegard von Bingen and the seventeenth-century Italian nun Chiara Margarita Cozzolani to the twentieth-century Finnish composer Kaija Saariaho and the American pop idol Madonna. In a fascinating transcultural and transnational approach McClary foregrounds the similarities in the artists' re-creation of "the experience of Divine Love" drawing "from a vast cultural wellspring of images" (59).

The final contribution of the first section by Fred Everett Maus opens with a comment on the telling distinction between musicology (concerned with a historical/contextual understanding of music) and music theory (concerned with generalized technical theory and composition–specific musical analysis) in North America. In "Feminism, Music Theory, Time, and Embodiment", he directly engages with the work of Susan McClary and Suzanne Cusick, proposing to expand their feminist musicologist conceptualization of time respectively embodiment in musical experience with reference to specific conceptualizations of the listening experience in work done by E.T. Cone (1968) on synoptic comprehension vs. immediate apprehension of music, and by Roger Graybill (1990) and Alexandra Pierce (2007) on bodily exercises for the training of performers.

The implications of Maus' theoretical investigation into the listening experience in music are taken up in the second part, "Music and the Gendering of Sound: On a Sounding Note". The essays cover a wide range of music from contemporary symphony and opera, to popular music and musical subcultures. One focus in this section is on instrumental music (from symphony to breakbeat) and questions about the implications of the persistent dichotomy between absolute and narrative/signifying music. While the gendering of sound seems more apparent in explicit musical narratives like opera or pop song, a critical look at sound in instrumental music reveals the pitfalls of such dichotomous thinking.

The first essay in this section, David Beard's exploration of "Gender and Genre in Judith Weir's *Heroic Strokes of the Bow* and *Blond Eckbert*", which is part of the larger project of the first (!) monograph on

one of the leading contemporary composers in Britain, comparatively analyses Weir's engagement with Beethoven's idea of the heroic as expressed in his *Eroica* in her orchestral piece *Heroic Strokes of the Bow* (1992) and its reworking in the two-act opera *Blond Eckbert* (1994). Weir wrote her own libretto for the opera, significantly altering Tieck's novella to re-read Beethoven's *Eroica* "as a masculine delusion of self-sufficiency" (92).

While Beard's aim is the exploration of the achievements of the contemporary female composer Judith Weir's music in the context of the gendered tension between symphonic and operatic music, Kenneth Gloag concentrates on the contemporary male composer "Thomas Ades and the 'Narrative Agendas' of 'Absolute Music'". Starting from Ades' use of suggestive titles for his instrumental works, such as *Asyla* or *Ecstasio*, he eventually centers on Ades' *Piano Quintet* (2000), whose obvious historical reference to "specific 19th-century precursors" like Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms points to the composer's engagement with the idea of absolute music as apparent in symphony and string quartets. The alleged formal purity of the sonata form especially lends itself to a comparative analysis of "narrative agendas and discursive strategies" (101).

The other two essays in this section move the debate about the "gendered meanings" (115) of music into the field of contemporary music culture, focusing on electronic music and on pop singer Kate Bush respectively. Andrew Whelan's contribution on "The 'Amen' Breakbeat as Fratriarchal Totem" discusses the gendered meanings of this "most sampled piece of recorded sound in the history of Western music" (112), which can be heard in hip-hop, jungle, and breakcore as well as in pop or in commercials. Whelan explores the implications of the "amen" as a sonic marker of cool masculinity with reference to the mainly online breakcore subculture. In contrast, Philip Hoffman's essay addresses the possibilities of ungendering voice in the performance of a vocalist. Using a Deleuzian approach his analysis of "The Twittering Machine: Kate Bush's Becoming Bird" aims at highlighting a different, "nonhuman" use of the voice which ceases to be the carrier of meaning" (143). Thus he reads Kate Bush's 2005 album *Aerial* as an example of Deleuze/ Guattari's claim that "[m]usic is a deterritorialization of the voice", arguing that "in the final seconds of the album her voice becomes a multiplicity of voices, a chorus of meaningless 'laughter' that escapes from signifying cultural registers and instead expresses 'only' the workings of the assemblage of lung, vocal chord, tongue and lips" (Ibid.).

The third section of essays is concerned with investigations into "Music and the Gendering of Text: On a Textual Note". Jennifer Ronyak and Regula Hohl-Trillini focus on specific genres of nineteenth-century engagements with music and poetry, the Liederspiel written, composed and performed in the German salons of the Romantic period, and Victorian music poetry written as purely textual renditions of musical compositions, not intended for performance. Barbara Bradby and Leonhard Kreuzer take up equally revealing genres in contemporary popular culture, exploring the ambivalent gender constructions of female pop song and of gangsta rap respectively.

In her essay on "Gender Metaphors and Victorian Music Poetry" Regula Hohl Trillini explores intersections of the persistent dichotomous constructions of music and language with those of femininity and masculinity in Victorian culture, arguing that the opposition between language and music like that between masculinity and femininity is linked to a simultaneous elevation and devaluation of the latter categories. In this context the ideal of a purity of music and womanhood is constructed as opposed to the dangers of the emotional, sensuous, unfixable and uncontainable aspects of music and femininity. Hohl-Trillini reads Victorian strategies of *textualising* music as a form of "verbal containment" and of effectively silencing the potentially subversive *performance* of music and femininity in fiction (Meredith, Wilkie Collins, Arthur Hugh Clough) and poetry in contrast with music poetry (Frances Havergal's "Moonlight Sonata") as a prime example of substituting instrumental music with texts not intended for performance.

In a complementary fashion Jennifer Ronyak is interested in texts written for a specific kind of performance focusing on early nineteenth-century German salons, which according to philosopher Friedrich Schleiermacher enabled a "free sociability" necessary for the development of the individual's self-realization. She takes Schleiermacher's ideal to the test by focusing on the young female poet Luise Hensel and the "gender limitations" imposed on her as collaborator in the composition of the Stägemann *Schöne Müllerin* Liederspiel. In her comparison of text and performance Ronyak explores the implications of Hensel's use of the male persona of the solitary gardener in her poems and their transposition into music by Berger (one of Hensel's suitors), culminating in Hensel's impersonation of the gardener while accompanying herself on the piano.

Moving concerns of gender and music from the nineteenth century to contemporary mainstream popular culture and subculture Brabara Bradby

and Leonhard Kreuzer investigate two very different constructions of gender and sexuality, namely femininity and female desire in female popular song and gangsta masculinity. From a sociological perspective Barbara Bradby in "Sexy (No No No): The Cool and The Hot in Female Popular Song" looks at the texts of contemporary female popular songs as providing an "emotional dictionary" (Arlie Hochschild) geared towards a female audience which is indicative of the contemporary "division of the self involved in managing emotion" (178). Bradby traces "the split between the desire to be attached and the desire to be independent" (Hochschild) apparent in constructions of "the Cautionary Self in Girl-group Music of the 1960s" (like the The Shirelles) to songs by Britney Spears, whose person and music have been a preferred site for the discussion of "society's conflicting ideas and feelings about what a modern girl/woman should be like" (184). Whereas Dirk Schulz in the fourth section of this book engages in a discussion of the performative aspect of this conflict, Bradby concentrates on the lyrics of Britney's albums as a "social grammar of female desire" (Ibid.) which according to her reading still "obey the structural grammar set out in the 1960s songs" (185) despite of the increasingly explicit expressions of sexual rather than romantic desire.

Leonhard Kreuzer's "'Aiming at a Mirror': Towards a Critique of Gangsta Masculinity" takes issue with the image of hypermasculinity of gangsta rappers and its connection to sexism, materialism and violence. Challenging the unquestioned conflation of gangsta rap and gangsta masculinity with sexism he focuses on the notion of authenticity decisive for the genre, foregrounding the distinction between the myth of authenticity and its self-conscious artistic expression. His analysis of Dirty South artist Lil Wayne's "Shoot Me Down" and the interaction of its textual and musical elements suggests an awareness of the constructedness of gangsta masculinity and its authenticity. In its emphasis on the limits of a textual analysis of rap his essay situates itself in-between, foregrounding the necessary interrelation of a synoptic analysis of sound, text and performance.

The latter aspect takes center stage in the fourth section "Music and the Gendering of Performance: On a Performative Note" comprising a number of essays which are concerned with notions of gender trouble. The first three essays involve discussions of a wide range of cross gender performances in classical and popular music ranging from Lawrence Kramer's engagement with a contemporary female performance of Schubert's male-centered nineteenth-century song cycle ("Winterreise"),

to Carmen Birkle's investigation of Marilyn Manson's gothic Rock and Ralph Poole's analysis of Turkish Arabesk performers. Dirk Schulz's essay on the prison-house of pop and its notorious inmates Britney Spears and Michael Jackson concludes this section.

Lawrence Kramer's analysis of Brigitte Fassbaender's performance of Schubert's male-centered song cycle "Winterreise", focuses not on her visual performance, but on the voice recording, although according to Kramer a DVD analysis would have led to the same results. In his reading Fassbaender's version assumes a distinctly female subject position, in contradistinction to other celebrated cross-gendered performances praised for a seeming transcendence of gender. Drawing on (Freud and) Derrida's notion of "absolute mourning" he reads the singer's performance of "Winterreise" as "a critique of the marginalizing of the female subject and of the masculinizing and heterosexualizing of desire" (216). This resonates with the initial statements by Bronfen and Unseld about questions of the silencing of the female voice, as Fassbaender's performance turns into a powerful "reanimation of the feminine as a surplus of female voice" (227), claiming a feminine subject position.

In a very different vein questions of transgression and defiance through cross-gender performance in contemporary popular (sub)culture are the subject of essays by Carmen Birkle and Ralph Poole. Birkle's essay "Marilyn Manson and Gothic Rock" explores the playful use of names, bodies, texts, and sounds with an emphasis on the cultural images evoked. Drawing on Butler's concept of gender performativity and Kristeva's notion of the abject Birkle investigates Marilyn Manson's ambi-, bi-, or cross-gendered aspects of performance "as a disruptive and uncanny subcultural Other" (234) raising questions about gender and sexuality, violence, ethics and religion. At the same time she problematizes the boundary between gender bending as a subversive strategy and as a highly profitable commodity, unconcerned about possibly fatal consequences for consumers who might take the violent attributes of its metaphorically disruptive messages literally.

Like the contributions by Mita Banerjee and Birgit Däwes in the fifth section, Ralph Poole's essay on "Arabesk: Nomadic Tales, Oriental Beats, and Hybrid Looks" sets out to widen the scope of analysis further by inquiring "how musics as forms of performance are intermingled and preoccupied with issues of nationalism, ethnicity, transculturation and hybridity" (239). Using the example of "Arabesk" as a musical style "that

is closely connected to Turkey's recent national and cultural history" (Ibid.) Poole shows "how the ambiguous polysemic body politics of Arabesk reflect *and* subvert the basically inflexible dichotomous gender structure (still) reigning in Turkey" (246). Tracing the recent history of Arabesk he addresses at the same time questions of the relation of the oriental Arabesk to an increasingly globalised discourse of pop music focusing on the emergence of "hybrid and multifaceted personas like nostalgic macho Tatlises, Emrah's Sexed-Up Hard Body**,** flamboyant transsexual Bülent Ersoy, or orientalized sex icon Tarkan" (Ibid.).

Rather than tracing subversive traditions of music styles, Dirk Schulz in "Dancing to the Jailhouse Rock: The Pop Prison" explores "the panoptic Pop Prison, a growing apparatus of constant media surveillance, which accompanies successful musicians" (267). While Madonna seems to successfully escape those mechanisms of victimization by carefully constructing and controlling her own performances of public confessions, others have been less fortunate. Drawing on Michel Foucault Dirk Schulz focuses on the career of Michael Jackson from the 1980s to his death as well as on the careers of performers like Britney Spears who have emerged since the 1990s to elucidate the reasons for the increasing public interest in disciplining and punishing their "private selves" and "offstage" activities.

Section five, "Music and the Gendering of Media: On an Intermedial Note", focuses on a variety of intermedial crossovers between music and fiction, television, film, and drama. Sylvia Mieszkowski's essay on "Effeminate Idolatry: the Word and the Violin of the Flesh" ties in with Regula Hohl Trillini's textual explorations of nineteenth-century Victorian music poetry, focusing on dichotomous cultural constructions of word/music, masculinity/femininity and opposite sex/same sex desire in Vernon Lee's Victorian ghost story "The Wicked Voice" (1889). However, in contrast to the poems referred to in Hohl-Trillini's essay as examples of the textual containment and substitution of the potentially dangerous implications of music, the ghost story discussed in Mieszkowski's essay, conversely, thematizes the haunting aspects of the supposed evil of excessive vocal art, as represented in the "ambiguously gendered voice" of the castrato. From the perspective of the intermedial discipline of literary sound studies, Mieszkowski focuses on the implications of the sonic for the constitution of spiritual/religious, cultural/national and sexual identity. Drawing on Augustine's *Confessiones* (397-398), John Dennis' *Essay on the Operas after the Italian Manner* (1706) and Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality* (1976-1984) Mieszkowski

foregrounds the intersection of religious, national and medical discourses in Lee's ghost story about the haunting castrato voice as a "vehicle by which the text repeats and works through some key anxieties which accompany the production of both eigtheenth- and nineteenth-century masculinity" (303).

The essays by Mita Banerjee and Birgit Däwes turn to the way in which contemporary filmic media like popular television series and road movies enact intersections between music, gender, race, and class. Mita Banerjee's exploration of "The Cultural Logic of Bad Taste: Country Music, 'White Trash', and Gender Politics" investigates the relation of country music and white trash as a class-based and racial category drawing attention to the "differences within whiteness, helping to produce multiple…forms of white identity" (Wray and Newitz 1997, 4). Evoking Elvis Presley's movie *Jailhouse Rock*, the Elvis impersonator Elvez, and the TV series *Desperate Housewives* she asks questions about authenticity and performance foregrounding the gender politics involved. According to Mita Banerjee's reading "white trash masculinity can reassert itself through the deliberate performance of bad taste" in *Jailhouse Rock* through Elvis' insistence on his white trash origin, whereas the color difference of white trash femininity manifested in Edie's sluttiness in *Desperate Housewives* marks her status as an outsider.

Birgit Däwes' essay traces "Sound Tracks to the Frontier: Gender, Difference and Music in the American Road Movie". Reading the road movie as "musical celebration of the frontier's promises: transgressing boundaries of consciousness and ethics, of legal restrictions and social norms, and eventually, of life and death" (323) she focuses on recent road movies which have "moved away from journey's of masculine empowerment and diversified the notions of spatial, social, political and aesthetic boundaries." (324) Following the widening scope of the road movie from Ridley Scott's *Thelma & Louise* (1991) via Herbert Ross's *Boys on the Side* (1995) to Duncan Tucker's *Transamerica* (2005) Birgit Däwes examines "the symbolic landscapes of gender and ethnicity […] and […] the ways in which the soundscapes add to the remapping of these boundaries" (Ibid.) using different styles of blues, rock and country, female bands, and live singing as strategies of subversion.

My final remarks in this volume about "Contemporary Playwrights: Staging Music and Gender" are intended as yet another attempt to overcome the dichotomy between critical and creative forms of the

debate about gender and music, highlighting how some of the central issues discussed in this volume from the perspectives of music studies and cultural studies have been addressed in contemporary Anglo-American drama and theatre since the 1970s alongside and sometimes in anticipation of the theoretical debates. The playwrights chosen for discussion ask questions about musical text and context (Peter Shaffer and Tom Stoppard), about music and performative vs essentialist notions of gender (Pam Gems and Helen Cooper), and about music and ethnic identity (August Wilson, Ntozake Shange, and Kwame Kwei-Armah). The impact of the plays discussed indicates the wider implications of the contemporary cultural shift in the relation between vision, sound and body.

Such a conference and publication project would not be impossible without competent assistance and generous sponsors. I would like to express my thanks to the University of Cologne, the *Freunde und Förderer* of the University, to Nora Bauer and Klang.Körper for their financial support. Most importantly, I would like to thank Leonhard Kreuzer for his invaluable and unrelenting efforts in coordinating all matters of the conference organisation, supported by Dr. Astrid Recker, Dr. des. Konstanze Kutzbach, Tobias Schmidt, Sarah Steffens, Sonja Kuhlmann and Inga Grodzki. For the painstaking editorial work I would like to thank Dr. des. Dirk Schulz and Tobias Schmidt who – supported by Leonhard Kreuzer, Victoria Herche, Natascha Rohde and Bettina Seidel – collaborated in putting this volume together, from corresponding with contributors to proof-reading to preparing the manuscript for print.

I.

Music and Gender: A Historical and Theoretical Dialogue: On a Theoretical Note

Silencing and Silence: Femininity and the Ambivalence of Self-Articulation

ELISABETH BRONFEN

Silencing Voices

In my book *Over Her Dead Body*, revolving around the silencing of women, I focused on the lethal relationship between the feminine and the aesthetic image. My claim was that to turn a woman into an image feeds on what one might call the lethal rhetoric of narcissism: Rather than looking at myself, I project myself onto an other, turning her into the site of my self-reflection. This gesture of appropriation entails obliterating the singularity of the other, reifying her into an object serving my need for self-projection. The feminine corpse comes to serve as an example *par excellence* for the denial of the singularity of the other, or as Stanley Cavell would argue, for the refusal to acknowledge the other, to see and be seen by the other, to allow the voice of the other to be heard. By virtue of a lethal appropriation, the individual woman turns into a screen. Part and parcel of this narcissistic economy is denying the otherness of the other, denying her separateness. Indeed, one might speak about an Othello syndrome, given that, as Cavell has pointedly argued, the flaw of Shakespeare's tragic hero consists in his putting Woman into the position of God, so as to avert skepticism. If Desdemona is true, chaste, faithful, then Othello can overcome all doubt. Should his wife, however, prove not to be perfect, then "chaos is come again" (III.3). Since all narcissistic activity is aimed at avoiding chaos, it is imperative that we contain the difference of the other, which is to say her lack of coherence, her implenitude. In the case of Othello this comes to mean that, since Desdemona proves not to be an embodiment of flawless perfection (as no real woman could), she must be turned into a corpse. And how does he produce this dead body? He strangles his wife on their wedding bed. Only by silencing her voice, can Desdemona become the perfect image for Othello's flawed desire for certainty. Significantly the language he uses invokes the cold silence of marble. Leaning over her dead body, he can claim for himself that he was one who "loved not wisely but too well" (5.2.353); meaning perhaps that his love exceeded what ordinary love should be like.

A counter-figure to this lethal narcissism can be found in Shakespeare's romance *Winter's Tale*. Hermione is also forced to fall silent owning to the jealousy of her husband, and when she finally reappears in the last act, she does so as a marble image, more precisely as a statue. Significant for the move from tragedy to romance is, however, that as an embodiment of a silent marble statue, Hermione performs the consequences of her husband's distrust; she functions as an emblem for the denial of the other I am calling the logical consequence of a lethal economy of narcissism. In *Winter's Tale*, the denial of Hermione's separateness is also sparked by the denial of her voice. When, in the last scene of the third act, Leontes calls upon Paulina to bring forth her mistress, who has been found innocent, he is told that his queen can no longer speak, because she has died. The King is forced to speak for her, and what he speaks about, of course, is his own guilt. What I am interested in foregrounding is the manner in which this pathos figure, revolving around the denial of the feminine voice, has repeatedly returned to us since the Renaissance, both on the opera stage and in Hollywood melodramas. We must, however, bear in mind that when we speak about voice in relation to femininity, we are not just talking about the literal voice we hear or do not hear. We are also talking about the voice in a political sense. This raises the issue whether the woman in question has a voice of her own? Does someone else speak for her? Can she speak for herself? Is there a place, a public arena, where her voice can be raised and where it can be heard? And what does it mean for a woman to have a voice and to insist on it being heard?

In opera, and later in Hollywood melodramas, we find a strange contradiction at work. Women start singing on public stages with a particular gusto in the late 18th century, if we take Mozart's "Queen of the Night" as a particularly resilient example for a staging of the feminine voice in relation to a need for its silencing. In the 19th century, then, women figuratively and literally sing their hearts out on stage. Yet we must ask ourselves, whether we are really hearing them. The issue of having a voice that is not heard, or rather producing a situation in which raising one's voice means being heard for the first time, is precisely what is at stake in Ibsen's *Doll's House*, when Nora (and again I am indebted to Cavell's reading of this play) declares to her astonished husband that she has decided to leave him and her family. By finding her voice, her singular voice, to speak her particular grievances against patriarchal laws, she renders visible and audible the difference between having a voice and having a voice of one's own. This pathos gesture resurfaces in George

Cukor's *Gaslight*, where the heroine, who is the granddaughter of an opera singer, is psychically tortured by her husband, so that he can get at a treasure, hidden in the attic of her family's mansion. Hysterically enacting her husband's lethal denial of her voice, and with it her person, Ingrid Bergman performs the part of the mad opera heroine, playing for her cruel husband precisely the incapacitated, forgetful woman into whom he has sought to transform her. In so doing, she brings about his own incapacitation. Slyly turning his disenfranchisement of her into her own gesture of self-empowerment, she insists that she can not help him escape from the police and thus ensures her own survival, even while procuring the hidden money for herself. One might say, she parodically refigures his appropriation of her, rendering him into the collateral damage of an exchange I have been calling a lethal narcissistic love relationship.

Voice, thus my claim, should be treated both as an aesthetic and a political category. If we recall Roland Barthes' reading of the castrato in Balzac's novella "Sarrazine" we might say that the feminine voice exceeds the code of vocal utterance on both sides of the scale. It performs both sublime perfection and monstrosity, precisely because of its subversive moment. To stay within the realm of Hollywood, lets recall the manner in which Hitchcock enjoys not only staging screams, but particularly feminine screams. His screaming blond heroine, be it Janet Leigh's Marion Crane in the infamous shower scene in *Psycho*, be it Tippi Hedren's Marnie, undermines the narcissistic desires men project onto her. Because Hitchcock self-consciously equates the feminine body with the movie screen, these heroines rip open the film space with their screams, rendering visible what is in excess of all narcissistic gazing. They are both perfect and monstrous, in any case beyond the coded norm, most importantly, at the moment of their screaming, they give voice to a radical freedom from all attempts at capturing them within fantasies, part of which are their own illusions and self-delusions. Both women are punished for stealing money, even if Marnie is allowed to survive, while Marion falls prey to a psychopath's murderous gaze. Their scream is the moment when their own fantasies and those others have projected onto them give way to a truth they must recognize regarding their own implenitude.

As Mladen Dolar has noted, the voice can fruitfully be seen as the utterance of pure subjectivity beyond interpellation, because it undercuts not only those symbolic codes imposed on the subject but also those narcissistic imaginations the subject produces for herself, so as to protect

herself against culture's forbiddances. In so doing Dolar takes issue with Jacques Derrida's claim that voice is an expression of self-presence, privileged by the metaphysical discourse of western philosophy. Voice, Dolar argues instead, is a moment where the subject moves beyond cultural interpellation, because it comes to allow that part of the subject to be heard, which is utterly singular, and as such the mark of her or his radical subjectivity. Voice allows for what is utterly and absolutely specific to a person to be heard. While one can cover one's eyes with one's hands to obliterate sight, even if you try to cover your ears, sound will still penetrate them. Voice thus emerges as subversive because it is uncontrollable even while it can also not be contained by categories. It can produce sublime sounds, be it in the realm of the religious or the aesthetic discourse, even while it can also produce monstrous sounds, allowing humans to appear to be animals or machines. Or, as in the case of Orpheus' singing head floating down the river, the two can come to be fused. The severed head, as Carolyn Abbate suggests, is no longer human, yet also the source of utterly perfect human sound.

The manner in which song, coming from this severed head, moves us, affects us, is both unsettled and unsettling, calling for a new attempt at containment. We must thus also note that even while the conjunction of femininity and voice can be deployed as a strategy of subversion (or precisely because it is one of our culture's privileged pathos formula for subversion), the feminine voice is also the site where control must once more take hold. With Michel Foucault one might claim, re-appropriating, which is to say once more containing the feminine voice, marks a gesture of policing the boundary between a culturally productive transgression and one that must be silenced. In the final sequence of *Singing in the Rain*, we find the silent movie star, Lina Lamont, on stage, after her first sound film, a musical, has been shown to an enthusiastic audience. In this film, her extremely high-pitched voice, had been dubbed, an implicit act of curtailing this wild and strong woman, who throughout had dared to challenge the men producing, directing and writing the film. The hero Don Lockwood's (Gene Kelly) choice of Kathy Selden (Debbie Reynolds) as the woman, whose voice is actually heard is significant not only because hers is a smooth, palatable voice, but also because she fits the role of demure lover in a way that Jean Hagen's Lina does not. If we bear in mind that while the film's story invokes the revolutionary moment in Hollywood, when silent film turned into sound film, *Singing in the Rain* is, of course, a product of the 1950s. As Debbie Reynold's voice replaces that of Jean Hagen, what is obliterated is a feminine voice

bearing the marks of working class, urban New York, clearly inflected as an immigrant's voice. We get instead the homogenized voice of post-war middle America.

The final sequence is one of utter cruelty. While Lina stands in front of the curtain and Kathy behind it, the three men reassert their masculine power by pulling up the curtain so that the audience sees both women. The visually perfect star Lina is uncannily doubled by the vocally perfect, but as yet unknown star Kathy. I say, utterly cruel because the audience breaks into laughter, yet as a critical feminist one must ask: What exactly are they, and we with them, laughing at? We are laughing at a horrific domestication of the feminine voice. What we see is not only the shift from silent film to sound film, negotiated over the bodies of these two heroines/actresses. We also see the transformation of the radically subversive feminine voice of sinful, pre-production code Hollywood of the early 1930s into the far more contained feminine voice of the post-war 1950s, where all traces of working class, immigrant family origins have come to be eradicated. For a moment we see both women on stage, then Lina runs backstage and Kathy runs into the audience. Gene Kelly will ultimately stop her, declare her to be the actual star of the film and the star of his romantic life, and as they sing "You are my lucky star" together, they turn into figures on a billboard, advertising the film we have just seen. The transformation is significant, because as Kathy finds herself elevated into Lina's position, she is born as a star. This is a moment of feminine empowerment, negotiated over her voice more than her body; but also a moment of empowerment that requires the sacrifice of another woman's voice in both senses of the word. We don't hear Lina's voice any more, but we also hear nothing more from the star Lina Lamont. Even while Kathy Sheldon's (Debbie Reynolds) acquiring of a voice is celebrated, what is also celebrated is the containment of the subversive aspect of the feminine voice. But then again, if we need so much cinematic and dramaturgic energy to render a scene of containment, what this also renders visible and audible is the power of the feminine voice. Some trace of excess uncannily remains.

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MELANIE UNSELD

Silent Voices

The phenomenon of the female voice is pregnant with meaning because we encounter its very opposite strongly embedded in, even integral to, our cultural consciousness: Woman as a silent figure. The muteness of womankind is indubitably and inherently a musical issue.

Music and silence are tied together in many respects: silence is the fundamental acoustic prerequisite for sound; it forms the boundaries of the sound it surrounds. Since at least the 19th century, concert music has traditionally been music for listeners, requiring a background of silence. Music in the concert hall or on the opera stage emerges from silence and leads back into silence, making it possible to experience silence and music as contrasts. But the two are also closely related to one another, as can be seen in the many ways silence is used as a compositional tool. When seen from the perspective of music, silence is "the Other," referring back to the Self by virtue of its extrinsic nature. In this way, stillness is perceptible not only as the absence of sound but also as a "meaningful space" (cf. Seidel 1993, 240).[1] What Dietmar Kamper and Christoph Wulf state about the relationship between silence and speaking also applies to the field of music and its interplay between sounds and the lack of sound: Silence results in "an enigmatic complexity which language futilely tries to work out"(cf. Kamper/Wulf 1992, 2).

This "enigmatic complexity" in music history since the early 19th century has asserted itself in two different ways, ways that I can only briefly sketch here. On the one hand, Franz Schubert began to assert a new kind of rest, a rest not just serving as demarcation between sound and silence but making "the silence downright tangible, with its shockingly absolute presence anchoring itself [in the music]" (cf. Finscher 1997, 106). In addition to exploring the sensuality of sound and how it fills silence, it is this lack of sound that composers today attempt to fathom. The developments of the 20th century further contributed to the

[1] This and all following translations of sources by Gratia Stryker

"discovery of silence," establishing silence as a category in its own right in contradistinction to sound. In this sense Ulrich Dibelius states that, "[a]fter the democratization of all twelve half-steps […] and the acceptance of noise as […] an acoustic form of expression, the equal treatment of sound and rests (that is to say, lack of sound) asserts the third most important innovation of the music of the 20th century" (Dibelius 1994, 10).

This is *one* way in which the phenomenon of silence was asserted. The other has to do with the silence – or, rather, the *muteness* – of womankind. After all, muteness, in the sacred as well as the public sphere, is an essential part of the socialization of women. Until modern times, keeping silence as an expression of hierarchical as well as intellectual inferiority was for women a social norm, both implicitly and explicitly. Female silence reached the point of becoming an "enigmatic complexity," especially throughout the course of the 19th-century movement for women's rights. The "unsolvable mystery" of femininity – a concept that perpetuated itself by means of various established sciences – was intrinsically tied with keeping silent. The artists of the Décadence were particularly susceptible to the portrayal of the so-called "Weib" as the mute Other. It is striking that the silence kept by this female figure, as prototypical as it appears to us today, was not always intentionally pejorative or perceived as deprecating; on the contrary, it is the women who kept silent that paved the way for a mutual understanding between the sexes against the backdrop of sceptical rationalism. The symbolism imposed upon women celebrated muteness as a means of communication, with the true meaning of the silent, spoken-of figures only to be found beyond words: "[T]he words that we speak are only given sense thanks to the silence in which they are spoken," (1955, 40) writes Maurice Maeterlinck. The ambivalence of this "enigmatic complexity" sketched out here can be traced throughout music history (see Unseld 2001).

I would like to give just one particularly striking example from Claude Debussy's opera *Pelléas et Mélisande* (premiered in 1902). The figure of Mélisande is a typical *femme fragile*, the female type that held such extraordinary fascination for artists over the course of the century: close mouthed, hushed, mysterious. Mélisande could easily serve as the prototype of the *femme fragile* because of the "enigmatic complexity" of muteness manifest within her character: She reacts to the rational speech of Golaud with utter silence, and Debussy pens for her a *musique de silence* that not only digresses from the full sound of *Wagnérisme* but also from actual sound itself. Mélisande's death goes against every kind of stage

logic, both because of its lack of the monumental kind of *Liebestod* à la Isolde, and because of its carefully composed silence: The entire fifth act comprises a very long decrescendo, with the moment of Mélisande's death itself consisting of a grand pause. This is all the more haunting as it effectively allows us to experience her death only within acoustic nothingness: Since Mélisande is laid out on the ground during her death, the audience cannot *see* but only *hear* her – and this only if their ears are prepared to hear nothingness. Through the silence she keeps, Mélisande is alienated completely from her surroundings, with Golaud doubting her in his quest for the truth. According to the symbolist Maeterlinck, it is the very silence of this *femme fragile* experienced exclusively in terms of collapse that conveys the actual truth about the world. Moreover, by examining the opera's male figures from a gender-theoretical point of view, we see that the silence Mélisande keeps serves as her most powerful weapon. In closing I would like to quote Schubert as evidence for the thesis that silence can serve as a decisive acoustic symbol of power. Schubert reworked his Lied "*Der Erlkönig*" many times with the intention to strengthen the deadly power of the Earl King over the child. But instead of giving the *Erlkönig*'s part more sound, Schubert did just the opposite: in his successive revisions the dynamics are increasingly scaled back until the end when the Earl King finally strikes by means of a "luridly screaming" piano. Similarly, we must take care not to interpret the mute feminine figure of Debussy's Mélisande only as a *femme fragile*, delicate, frail and feminine; on the contrary, her silence, her refusal to give an answer to the piercingly rational questions of Golaud, her rest-riddled role in its symbolic context is also a sign of power.

In spite of the development in feminist musicology the absence of Woman from the perceived musical culture remains one of the largest methodological challenges of music scholarship, the documentation of music history and the musical culture of the 21st century. In addressing this problem I would like to close my statement by emphasizing the need to *perpetuate* gender studies not as an add-on but as a core research area. The results of feminist and gender studies of the 1970's, 80's and 90's will fade out with relative speed if we don't manage to make sure that gender awareness continues and that gender competence is firmly anchored as an important, integral part of our thinking. Studying gender is not a temporary fad or an exceptional undertaking but vital to any understanding and transmission of cultural coherence. In analogy to current attempts to re-establish an ecological and cultural balance and thereby to correct the mistakes of the past, my final plea for the

perpetuation (*Verstetigung*) of gender awareness is a plea for the resurrection of a free flow of information within the musical-cultural space in order to provide a place where all can participate and where attention is given to a diversity of musical-cultural artistry.

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CHRIS WEEDON

Feminist and Queer Approaches to Music

Early Beginnings

The weather on the day of the demonstration, 6 March 1971, was unbelievably cold with sudden bursts of snow, but a massive crowd of women, men and children gathered at Speaker's Corner. Down Oxford Street we went with floats and badges and placards listing the finally agreed [initial] four demands: "Equal Pay Now; Equal Education and Job Opportunities; Free 24-hour Nurseries, Free Contraception and Abortion on Demand". All the way there were chants: "Out of the office; Out of the home; Out from under; Women unite!" The Women's Street Theatre Group, with grotesquely made up faces, danced the whole way to the music of an Eddie Cantor song; "Keep young and beautiful; it's your duty to be beautiful; keep young and beautiful, if you want to be loved." (For a participant's description of the first national women's demonstration to be held in London since the suffragettes, March 1971 see: Rowe 563-4).

From its early beginnings in the late 1960s, second-wave feminism mobilised aspects of performance and music in campaigns and in consciousness raising, signalling what would become an on-going feminist concern with the cultural politics of representation. In the 1970s and 1980s Western feminist cultural theory and practice set a radical agenda for social change much of which is still relevant today. This agenda addressed many aspects of the public and private spheres, challenging the binary modes of thinking that constructed a separate private sphere that was ostensibly beyond politics. All aspects of life were revisioned as political, giving rise to the watchwords of the 1970s: "The personal is political". They also challenged the idea that art, music, science and scholarship transcended politics, questioning claims to gender neutral truths and universal values which more often than not reflected gendered interests, often excluding women or containing them within modes of cultural production deemed compatible with "women's nature" or acceptable femininity. Since the 1970s this feminist agenda

has been extended and transformed by developments in feminist and queer politics and in the cultural politics and intellectual work informed by them.

In the cultural sphere, feminist politics focused attention on how women are perceived and encouraged to be; on who controls culture; on whose interests cultural texts and practices represent; and on where women do or do not have a voice. These questions are directly relevant to all kinds of music and the institutions and industries that sustain them. As aspects of the politics of representation in its many forms, they were and remain directly related to questions of social and cultural power and by the 1980s they had been complexified by problematisations of the concept *women* that emphasised issues of class, race and sexuality. In the field of music, second wave feminism gave rise to a wide range of performance, activism and research that can be broadly categorised under five headings. These include: (i) histories and bibliographies of women in music that aimed to map a lost field of women's cultural production; (ii) images of women in popular music, opera and song; (iii) the recovery of women's lost traditions of composing and of music making; (iv) the position of women in the music industry across a wide range of types of music, including the music of specific ethnic groups, regions and classes; and (v) the development of new feminist musicology. In this new musicology, attention was paid among other things to how the codes and conventions that are identified in music theory describe and prescribe musical meaning. For example, in her groundbreaking work, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender and Sexuality,* Susan McClary offers a critique of compositional and theoretical language and shows how both composition and histories of composition have constructed a gendered musical discourse that works with binary oppositions that are ascribed gendered qualities. She throws light on how gender assumptions underpin analyses of musical texts including their use of narrative modes, "models of tension and release and the identification of thematic content as masculine or feminine" (12-15, see also works by Cusick, Hisama and Solie). Feminist scholarship has developed work on both Western classical musical canons, jazz and popular music, alongside histories of politicised performance (for more on this see the *Bibliography of Sources Related to Women's Studies, Gender Studies, Feminism and Music* and *Musical Theory Online*, 6. 3, 2000).

In tandem with this growing body of feminist scholarship, gay, lesbian and more recently queer scholars developed work that traces gay involvement in traditions of music writing and performance and analyses queer

interventions in music theatre and opera (see for example the website of glbtq.com with its *Encyclopaedia of Gay, Lesbian, Bi-sexual, Trans-gender and Queer*). In addition to the analysis of accessible Western popular and classical music and the recovery of lost music traditions, second-wave and third-wave feminisms, and the Gay Liberation and Queer movements also facilitated new music and modes of performance by creating the cultural political contexts and audiences for straight women and gay, bi-sexual and transgender women and men to become increasingly involved in the music industry. In doing so they also influenced the mainstream of both Western popular and classical music cultures. During the 1970s, women became increasingly visible in song writing and performance in musical genres ranging from country and folk to jazz, rock and punk. They also began to penetrate areas of classical music composition and performance that had been almost exclusively male. Commenting on the arena of women's performance in 1978, Molly Fowler observed that

> [t]he 70s have proved to be an era for women in the arts. In keeping, our musical airwaves are filled with the sound of women vocalists… countless … women have aptly conquered the music industry. It was an uphill struggle, and I seriously doubt whether anyone wants to readily give up the kingdom. (*Utah Chronicle*, April 3 1978)

At the centre of the cultural politics of gender and sexuality in the 1970s and 1980s was the nature and meanings ascribed to the gendered body and this has remained a focal point of more recent feminist, gender studies and queer approaches to culture. The legendary all-women demonstration at the Miss America contest in Atlantic City in 1968, at which protesters crowned a sheep as Miss America and reputedly (though not actually) burned their bras, had directed attention to the exploitation of women's bodies, to sexuality and to questions of women's complicity with capitalist patriarchy. Feminists identified popular music as a key site for the reproduction of patriarchal modes of thinking, feeling and behaving that addressed broad constituencies of both women and men. Yet opera, operetta and song were also sites where conservative gender norms were reproduced in both the texts themselves and their staging and performance. Yet from the beginning, second wave feminism insisted that music could also function as a mode of resistance to and subversion of oppressive gender norms and these are issues that remain important in feminist cultural politics. It was radical feminism in the 1970s that directed most attention to the body and to sexuality as the sites of women's difference and oppression and placed them both at the centre of

the political agenda. While aspects of this radicalism were quickly taken up by many liberal, Marxist and socialist feminists, radical feminists went beyond liberal and socialist objectives in seeking to give new, positive meanings to female difference. They argued that women's difference was fundamental to their position in the cultural sphere and affected how women created and represented themselves in cultural texts.

The body in question was, of course, not only gendered but racialised and subject to heterosexist regimes of power and representation. Moreover, women were in no sense passive victims of patriarchal modes of representation. There is a long history of women performers reproducing but also manipulating and even subverting sexist and racist modes of representation to their own ends. Vivid examples are the performances of Josephine Baker in Paris in the interwar period where she played to publics who were enthusiastic for primitivist representations of Black female sexuality. These modes of representation, forms of which live on in contemporary music videos, have deep roots in the western imagination and reached a highpoint in nineteenth century, racist socio-biology. Josephine Baker was the daughter of a Black mother and a Spanish father, from St. Louis, Missouri, and she worked with a travelling troupe and as a chorus girl in New York before going to Paris to appear in *La Revue Nègre*. This was an American production in which, at the age of nineteen, she was a sensational success, appearing naked in 1925, except for a girdle of rubber bananas. Throughout the twenties and thirties she starred at the *Folies Bergère* where she performed camped up modes of racialised sexuality that addressed a white imagination. Like many black female performers after her, she was proficient in manipulating otherwise oppressive discourses of black femininity. Baker's public image played to primitivist stereotypes that cultivated an image of exoticism and primitive sexuality, appealing directly to European myths of Black bodies. Always flamboyant, she "drove a Delage with snakeskin upholstery" and "appeared everywhere with her pet leopard, Chiquita" (Thorpe 108). A more recent example of a successful Black woman singer manipulating discourses of primitivism in the sphere of popular music is Tina Turner. Here, too, we find the recycling of images of Black female sexuality as primitive, wild and abundant. Whereas early in her career, Turner's image was largely controlled by her abusive husband Ike, after leaving him she continued to play to a primitivist imaginary, successfully using racialised stereotypes to promote her music, performing in long blond wigs and clothes that emphasised her sexuality (for more on this see bell hooks' essay "Selling Hot Pussy" 1992).

The idea of performance as a site for challenging and transforming hegemonic construction of gender and sexuality has become central to feminism and queer, both in the realms of theory, particularly with the influence of Judith Butler, and in alternative cultural production. It has even made inroad into the mainstream of classical music performance with high profile productions such as Matthew Bourne's *Swan Lake*, first staged at Sadler's Wells theatre in London in 1995, in which the swans are male and homosexual love is centre stage. Much cultural analysis of gender and sexuality, particularly in the sphere of popular music, has focused on the politics of representation in live performance, on video, DVD and film. Here the combined effects of the body, voice, music and mis-en-scene can facilitate both the reinscription and subversion of heterosexual gender norms, as well as discourses of race. This work – most of which is located in cultural studies – has analysed the ways in which the performance of gender in popular culture can variously work to reaffirm or subvert hegemonic ideas of masculinity and femininity as well as to subvert the binaries underpinning much heterosexism. It re-affirms the feminist and queer principle that there is no neutral body and the struggle to redefine the meaning of the body is on-going. For women, however, the subversion of gender is always circumscribed by broader power relations of patriarchy and as Sonja Eismann pointed out in 2008, forty years after the beginnings of second wave feminism:

> It cannot be overlooked – even though [avant-garde and experimental female musicians] subvert almost every gender cliché – […] they are not able to change the fact that the female body is still a battleground where […] "cultural wars" are waged. When a female musician is up on stage, the audience sees a woman, whereas when they see a man they see a musician. Women are never perceived independently of their gender, while men, free of sex-based limitations, set the norm that makes women the exception. (273)

Despite the impact of gender and queer politics, John Connell and Chris Gibson point out that: "Popular music remains an industry permeated by gendered norms and expectations at all levels; some of the most unequal gender relations can be found there (in some countries, male employment in the industry outnumbers that of women 5 to 1)." (5)