Transgressive Tunes and the Gendered Music of Victorian Poetry

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Dissertation Abstract

The gendering of music in Victorian poetry often remains inaudible in contemporary criticism because of the radical differences between modern and Victorian understandings of music. "Transgressive Tunes and the Gendered Music of Victorian Poetry" makes the gendered intermediations of music and poetry newly resonant. It argues that poets from Felicia Hemans to Thomas Hardy wrote poems about music that critiqued the larger literary, legal, and social restrictions women faced. The project traces an arc of increasing musical agency for women: from poems on instruments forbidden to women (violin and flute), to poems on acceptable instruments (piano and voice), to poems that present themselves for women to sing, to song settings of Victorian poems that women actually sang in the parlor. By juxtaposing poems about the gendering of music with evidence from a rich cultural archive including periodicals, musical treatises, concert reviews, and satirical illustrations, "Transgressive Tunes" makes audible the lost music of Victorian poetry and its connections with women's voices. The final chapter, analyzing musical settings of Victorian poems, uses a digital framework that lets scholars who cannot read music follow its arguments. This project, in attending to the gendered music of Victorian poetry, exposes the sociopolitical implications of these musical poems, their subversive critiques, and the power and voice they gave to Victorian women poets.

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Introduction

Lost Chords Audible (and Digitized)

This dissertation presents new perspectives in interdisciplinary Victorian studies by tracing the gendered intermediations of poetry and music. It chronicles a trajectory of increasing musical agency for women: from poems that discuss instruments forbidden to women (such as the violin and flute), to poems on acceptable instruments (such as the piano and voice), to poems that present themselves as musical works for w omen to sing, to settings of Victorian poems that women actually sang in the parlor. While these poems allude to the restrictive gendering of instruments, they critique rather than endorse it: they acknowledge existing realities in order to object to the larger literary, legal, and social restrictions women faced. The dissertation uses historically and culturally grounded scholarship influenced by feminist theory and queer studies to examine the sociopolitical implications of poems and the voice they gave to Victorian women poets.

Music permeated every aspect of life in the Victorian period: with the rise of industrialization, the Victorian period experienced an increase in not only literacy and literary productions, but also musical knowledge, production, and performance: sheet music of the latest hits sung by star performers at inexpensive concerts became readily available for eager pupils to perform in the parlor on their newly affordable pianos, and an ever increasing number of professional musicians rose to meet the demand to teach them. Broadside ballads became available for even the lower classes to purchase on their way to work (where they might be entertained by street performers), and the music hall awaited them that evening. That music permeated everyday existence in an unprecedented fashion during the Victorian period is a fact that the literature of the period illustrates.

Although domestic music was considered the domain of women, this designation did not grant them free rein to play any instrument they desired: the violin and the flute in particular were considered unfeminine instruments until the *fin de siècle*. The violin was thought to represent a woman's body, and therefore music periodicals like *The Musical Times* and comedic illustrations in *Punch* insisted that only men should play on those strings. The flute was also considered an unladylike instrument because of its phallic associations. Conversely, the piano and voice were considered acceptable instruments for young ladies as a result of their connections to religious music and domesticity. Singing and piano playing in particular were deemed essential skills for finding a husband, as articles in *Victoria Magazine* and *The Girl's Own Paper* make plain. These gendered musical conventions appear throughout Victorian poetry from the works of Felicia Hemans to those of Thomas Hardy.

While John Picker, Yopie Prins, Phyllis Weliver, and Emma Sutton have helpfully detailed the connections between music and Victorian literature, the gendering of music in Victorian poetry often remains inaudible in contemporary criticism because of the radical differences between modern and Victorian understandings of music. On the rare occasions in which the gendering of music is discussed, critics examine novels that endorse the idea that women should play piano and sing in the parlor as a part of a courtship ritual to attract a husband. Yet music plays a much richer part in Victorian literature than such criticism might suggest, as many poems challenge or question such gendered tropes, often doing so while seeming to endorse them. While music has been the center of the narratives of many Victorian novels, it is equally essential to the sound of Victorian poetry: as this dissertation shows, many poets incorporated musical meters, allusions to famous operas, and even printed musical notes into their poems to more closely connect the two arts. In focusing on the connections between

music and nineteenth-century literature, this study also helps correct a common trend in sound studies criticism: most musico-literary criticism that explains the history of the connections between the sister arts omits the Victorian period entirely, including James Winn's *Unsuspected Eloquence: A History of the Relations between Poetry and Music* and Henry Thompson Kirby-Smith's *The Celestial Twins: Poetry and Music through the Ages*. Lawrence Kramer's influential study *Music and Poetry: The Nineteenth Century and After*, while providing the exception to this trend, only examines art songs and continental music, and primarily focuses on the Romantic poets before turning to the Modernists.

Much of the commentary on the connections between music and poetry in the *fin-de-siècle*, by focusing on the influence of Wagner and other continental composers, implicitly confirms the adage that England was "Das Land ohne Musik" ("the land without music") (Temperley, "Introduction" 5). Such a focus overlooks the vibrant musical scene of nineteenth-century England, which boasted a wealth of English composers and a plethora of concerts and musical activities. My project builds on contemporary trends in musicological criticism, by such figures as Derek Scott, Michael Allis, and Paula Gillett, delving into musical archives to articulate the cultural realities of music in the Victorian period. My project puts a rich cultural archive including periodicals, musical treatises, concert reviews, and satirical illustrations in service of a reading of the poetry, to better understand the nuances of the gendering of music and so make audible the lost music of Victorian poetry and its connections with women's voices.

My dissertation breaks new ground in other ways as well. Although it addresses some canonical works, such as Elizabeth Barrett Browning's "A Musical Instrument," Alfred Tennyson's "The Lady of Shalott," and George Eliot's *Armgart*, many of the poems I discuss have been overlooked by the critical conversation, partly in favor of poems that address visual art

at the expense of music. Many of these works have also been dismissed or denigrated, either for resembling sentimental verse or for adopting titles like "Song," that likewise associate them with women and simplicity. The parlor songs that occupy much of the final chapter have been undervalued by musicologists for similar reasons, as they were easy to play and women were their primary producers and consumers.

Although critics in our own time frequently follow the Victorians and deride the poems in this dissertation as decidedly sentimental and inferior, such designations overlook the more complicated responses to the gendering of music these works contain. Isobel Armstrong referred to a similar phenomenon as the "doubleness of women's poetry": this doubleness arises from an "ostensible adoption of an affective mode, often simple, often pious, often conventional," although "those conventions are subjected to investigation, questioned, or used for unexpected purposes" (324). To her, "The simpler the surface of the poem, the more likely it is that a second and more difficult poem will exist beneath it" (324). Many of the poems in this dissertation adopt the strategy Armstrong identifies. Since not all of these poems count as affective verse, and since some poets who adopt this strategy are men, I will hereafter refer to this technique as "transgressive conformity": this seemingly paradoxical figuration encapsulates the way such poems conform to societal expectations around the gendered status quo as a means to avoid censure for their transgressive critiques of those expectations, which are still audible to those who listen for the coded implications. The transgression in such poems is usually not in service of political action or change, but is rather a method of protesting from within. Consequently, the domestic sphere in the Victorian period became a principal theater of coded action for political energies.

Queer women writers employed transgressive conformity to protest the Victorians' assumption that women could not experience or express sexual desire, especially to another woman. These writers wrote love songs directed to women and conformed to the letter of the law by never explicitly gendering the speaker as female. But by refusing to explicitly gender the speaker as male, either, they undercut this assumption. This transgression went unnoticed by contemporary critics and even many modern critics, who automatically read the speaker as male as though assuming that the lyric "I" can only ever refer to a man. By considering these speakers as women, my dissertation helps correct these assumptions that silence female voices and queer desire.

The first chapter studies Victorian poems that represent women with the flute and violin, instruments whose shape and cultural associations barred women from playing them until the 1870s and 1880s. As women were not permitted to play these instruments, women poets by portraying themselves as the violin subtly discuss sexual desire that society claimed they could not feel. Such poems also critique the double-standard that let women be the passive, discarded instrument but not the active performer, as Elizabeth Barrett Browning's sonnet XXXII from *Sonnets from the Portuguese* (1850), Mathilde Blind's "On a Viola D'Amore Carved With a Cupid's Head, and Played on for the First Time after More than a Century" (1893), and Michael Field's "Of a Violin" (1908) demonstrate. Conversely, Amy Levy and Ada Cambridge composed dramatic monologues from the point of view of male violin players, adopting a masculine perspective to gain authority and power in order to voice their critiques of social inequality and violence against women. Elizabeth Barrett Browning's "A Musical Instrument" (1860) and Robert Browning's "Flute-Music, with an Accompaniment" (1889), both poems that

foreground the flute, show the problems of a poetics that values women only as brutalized instruments like Syrinx rather than as competent composers and performers in their own right.

The second chapter addresses poems that feature women as keyboard and vocal performers. These socially acceptable practices enabled women to advertise their suitability for marriage by performing in the domestic parlor. But Victorian poems featuring women pianists and singers rarely have their heroines follow prescribed musical gender roles: the pianist in Mary Coleridge's "To a Piano" (1908) channels Romantic visionary power, Tennyson's Lady of Shalott sings in public and become a suitor, George Eliot's Armgart rejects an offer of marriage in order to espouse her public singing career, and Sylvia in Amy Levy's "To Sylvia" (1884) takes a masturbatory pleasure in playing the piano. Although piano and voice were permitted for women, poems depicting women and these instruments often describe departed players: Coleridge describes a dead pianist, Tennyson's Lady dies while publicly singing, and Levy's singer has abandoned her. These absent musical women are not exiled from the poem, however, as their music and the heterodox behavior it recalls come back as a haunting presence. The poems depict women subverting the musical rules, and suffering as a result, in order to show that the era's permissive instrumental conventions were just as restrictive as the taboo on playing violins and flutes.

In the latter half of the dissertation, I focus on poems representing music that women themselves would perform. The third chapter comprises poems entitled "Song." This title is often viewed merely as a trope for a generalized lyrical subjectivity or as a nod to the genre's musical origins in ancient Greece, as "*lyrikos"* means "of the lyre." In a Victorian context, however, this theory needs reconsideration: since songs were deemed the most suitable genre for women performers and composers, poems so named present themselves as acceptable for

women's musical and literary performance. Many female poets, such as Felicia Hemans, Christina Rossetti, and Michael Field, merge their poems into songs by incorporating hymn meters, especially those associated with women hymnodists, to create a feminine acoustical space as an alternative to the predominantly masculine lyric tradition, while cloaking the subversive character of their words with the socially acceptable veneer of the genre.

The final chapter focuses on four songs that use well-known Victorian poems as lyrics: Caroline Norton wrote words and music for "Juanita" (1853), Michael William Balfe and Arthur Somervell both wrote settings of Tennyson's *Maud* (1857 and 1898 respectively), and Sir Arthur Sullivan famously set Adelaide Procter's "A Lost Chord" (1877). These extremely popular settings, often sung by women in the parlor, have been denigrated for their perceived sentimentality and simplicity, but they actually perform nuanced understandings of the texts they set. Their posture of social acceptability enabled the women who sang them to address socially unacceptable topics covertly. Norton's "Juanita" features a woman singing a proposal to another woman, thereby inverting the conventional structure of marriage and granting women greater voice and agency. Both settings of *Maud* dramatize the speaker's violence and obsession with Maud and thereby disrupt the supposedly idyllic parlor's code of courtship. Sullivan's setting of Procter's "A Lost Chord" performs not only the poem's overt religiosity, but also its feminist investment in gender equality. Building on the resurgence of nineteenth-century sound studies scholarship instigated by such luminaries as Nicholas Temperley, Ruth Solie, and Yopie Prins, my project examines parlor as well as art song settings of Victorian poems, their connections with gender, and their part in the cultural afterlives of the works they set.

In spite of this renewed interest in nineteenth-century sound studies, academic arguments involving sound are nearly impossible to make in traditional print media. An article can print an

excerpt of a score, but only scholars who can read music will understand it. Likewise, articles or books can include audio files externally, as did Nicholas Temperley's special edition of *Victorian Studies* (1986) that included a cassette tape with the songs discussed. However, these solutions do not address the central problem: readers may have difficulty finding the exact musical phrases mentioned in articles, and those with less musical expertise are left out of the conversation entirely. More recent strategies for incorporating audio into academic arguments have marginally improved the situation, but none of them integrates audio with score.[1] To address these problems, I created "Songs of the Victorians" (http://www.songsofthevictorians.com), an archive and analysis of musical settings of Victorian poems with an interactive framework where each measure of a score is highlighted in time with the music. This is the medium through which my final chapter should be read. When the analysis discusses a particular measure or phrase of the music and its interpretation of the poem, readers can click on a speaker icon to play the corresponding musical excerpt: the relevant portion of the score pops up and is highlighted in time with the music so that all users, regardless of their ability to read music, can follow the score and the thread of the argument.

The digital chapter performs the larger project of the dissertation as a whole: it makes the (fictive) lost chords of Victorian poetry newly audible. In being attuned to the cultural and

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[1] Digital archives such as the UCSB's "English Broadside Ballad Archive" (http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/) and the "Romantic-Era Songs" project (http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/douglass/music/index.html) helpfully bring musical settings to the fore, but neither incorporates the audio with the score. Newer options for incorporating music in academic articles include SoundCite (http://soundcite.knightlab.com/), a tool that lets users embed sound clips in websites, Scalar (http://scalar.usc.edu/scalar/), a publishing framework that lets users annotate media, and the strategy of assigning QR codes for each audio excerpt and inserting them into a print article, as Jennifer Wood suggests ("Burnable Books"). None of these options integrates the audio with the score: SoundCite will only let users hear the audio, Scalar only supports textual annotations of media files, and QR codes require readers to have smart phones, which vastly limits the audience for the article.

historical significance of musical instruments and music throughout the period, my dissertation foregrounds a performative conception of the lyric predicated on the fundamental connection between the two arts. Since these poems were intimately involved in cultural conversations about women and music, by attending to the gendered music of Victorian poetry we can understand these musical poems, their subversive critiques, and the power and voice they gave to Victorian women poets.

Chapter 1

Victorian Women and Forbidden Instruments: Poetic Portrayals of the Violin and Flute

Victorian poetry is full of descriptions of musical performances that feature a wide variety of instruments, including piano, harp, voice, organ, flute, and violin. Even the bassoon makes an appearance in Tennyson's *Maud* (1855). Despite this abundance of orchestral instruments, hardly any poetry features representations of women playing violin or flute. Nor is this surprising, when we consider the fact that playing either instrument was considered unfeminine in the Victorian era. No respectable middle- or upper-class woman would admit to knowledge of the violin or the flute or be seen performing on either one. Some music journalists called playing such an instrument an action that would have "unsexed" the player (Statham 106), and even physical contact with the instrument caused derogatory comments: "it was an odd sight, and one that rarely failed to elicit visible and audible comment, not always charitable, when a girl or young woman carried a violin case through the streets of a city" (Krebs 80). These restrictive conventions began to loosen after 1870 for the violin[2] and in the1880s for the flute, and Victorian fiction began to incorporate women violinists as a part of the New Woman movement (Gillett 109).[3] Although this late-century trend is essentially absent from poetry,[4] and no such trend exists in either genre for the flute, many Victorian lyrics nevertheless associate

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[2] In spite of this change, female violinists did not become socially acceptable until the 1890s (Weliver 49).

[3] Bertha Thomas's *The Violin-Player* (1880), Mary Ward's *Robert Elsmere* (1888), Cecily Ullmann Sidgwick's *A Splendid Cousin* (1892), Sarah Grand's *The Heavenly Twins* (1893), Elizabeth Godfrey's *Cornish Diamonds* (1895), Mildred Finlay's "The Stradivarius" (1897), George Gissing's *The Whirlpool* (1897), and M.E. Francis's *The Duenna of a Genius* (1898) are only a few of the fictional accounts of female violinists written between 1870 and 1900 (Gillett 119−134).

[4] Marion Scott, a violinist and musicologist, provides an exception to this rule: in 1892, at the age of fifteen, she wrote a poem that explicitly discusses her love of the instrument (Gillett 116).

women with the violin and flute while reflecting on the cultural and gendered understanding of the instruments.

This chapter examines poetic representations of women and these forbidden instruments. Both instruments were often conceived of in terms of sexualized bodies: while the violin was figured as a feminine instrument on which only men could play, the flute was figured as a masculine instrument that likewise required a masculine master. Poems featuring these instruments invoke and often critique these tropes and the passive roles to which they relegate women. Both groups of poems also bring into the open the violence on which these tropes rest. In violin poems, which I will discuss first, poets use the instrument to speak of sexual desire and inequality and to criticize violence against women. In flute poems, the writers argue for an end to poetic violence against women, a new, ethical poetics, and an acknowledgment of women's previously forbidden musical knowledge. These violin and flute poems have only rarely received critical examination,[5] and the few studies that exist entirely overlook the gendered significance of the instruments. Only by considering these poems alongside the cultural history of the violin and the flute can we understand their political and social arguments.

Victorian Women and Forbidden Instruments: Violins, Violence, and Sexual Subversion

The violin poems this chapter discusses acknowledge and critique the most prevalent tropes of the time regarding violins: that the instrument communicates satanic, magical, or sexual knowledge, and that it represents a woman's body to be played on by another. In doing so, they trace a half-century-long thematic trajectory that parallels the evolving cultural

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[5] Phyllis Weliver's Women Musicians in Victorian Fiction, 1860-1900: Representations of Music, Science and Gender in the Leisured Home and Paula Gillett's Musical Women in England, 1870-1914:"Encroaching on All Man's Privileges" have examined the violin and flute in Victorian fiction and culture, but neither focuses on poetry.

perceptions of the instrument. Elizabeth Barrett Browning's Sonnet 32 from *Sonnets from the Portuguese* (1850) casts the violin as feminine to express sexual desire at a time before women were permitted to study violin. In 1875, shortly after the first women violinists were accepted to the Royal Academy of Music, Ada Cambridge's "The Old Manor House" critiques the objectification of women inherent in this feminization of the instrument. Oscar Wilde's "The Harlot's House" (1885), written as women violinists were gaining greater societal acceptance, uses the feminized violin to criticize Victorian perceptions of sexual desire and prostitution in the context of the Contagious Diseases Act and the impending Criminal Law Amendment of 1885. Finally, Mathilde Blind's "On a Viola D'Amore Carved With a Cupid's Head, and Played on for the First Time after More than a Century" (1893) uses the still new "fad" for women violinists to express hope for greater agency and voice for women more generally.

Since the mid-sixteenth century, the violin has been figured both as a saintly instrument and as a satanic one: John Donne's "A Song for St. Cecilia's Day" (1867) and William Wordsworth's "Power of Music" (1806), for example, portray violin playing as part of a transcendent musical experience that brings the listeners closer to God and to perfect happiness; but the violin was also a central instrument in dance music, which many Protestant and Catholic clergymen throughout Europe believed was immoral (Gillett 88). The fiddle acquired the moniker "the Devil's instrument," and Shakespeare himself acknowledged the connection in *Henry IV* Part I when Prince Hal exclaims "the devil rides upon a fiddlestick" (2.4.482-483). Thomas Hardy's poem "The Fiddler" (1909) also expresses this transition from religious to supposedly satanic music: "Music hails from the devil, / Though vaunted to come from heaven" (9-10). In the Victorian period, with the rise of the cult of the virtuoso, this folk legend took on greater immediacy: Niccolò Paganini (1782-1840), famous Italian violinist, achieved universal

renown for his incredible technique, and his skill led to rumors that he had sold his soul to the devil in exchange for his fiddling prowess (Metzner 126). Even music critics described his performances in supernatural and satanic terms, as an anonymous review in the *American Art Journal* demonstrates:

> One may well talk of "apparition" in Paganini's case; because the intense and eccentric personality of the man had its share in the attention his performances excited. A vampire in an orchestra is not an every-day sight; and never did man by dress and gesture made [*sic*] more of a ghostly aspect than did he; neither more obviously thereby invite the fabrication of the marvelous anecdotes which Fancy makes out of nothing, for Scandal to repeat. (92)

Such fanciful descriptions also found their way into poetry of the period: Louisa Ann Meredith's "Extemporaneous Sonnetta, With Variations, Composed for and Inscribed to the Baron Paganini" (1835) addresses his supposedly supernatural knowledge, and Leigh Hunt also wrote a poem to this "sorcerer" in his 1834 work "Paganini."

Critics of women violinists feared that the "pure" and "fair" sex, exposed to this instrument of the devil, would be corrupted (Gillett 78), and they found ways to demonize violin playing as unfeminine because women had to tilt their heads, contort their hands, and move their bow arm quickly. An American reviewer in 1878 explained that the violin was "an awkward instrument for a woman, whose well-formed chin was designed by nature for other purposes than to pinch down this instrument into position" (qtd. in MacLeod 12), and an 1878 review mentioned that the supposedly "ungraceful" (247) appearance of women violinists was due to "the rapid action of a lady's arm in a presto movement, or to the depression of her head in holding the instrument" (248). It also voiced the stereotype (reflected in the topic division of my

chapters here) that "the easy, natural position, and the pliancy of feminine fingers seem to point to the pianoforte as the legitimate instrument for the fair sex" (246-247). A commentator for the periodical *Choir* also expressed this idea in 1863: "We do not think the violin a lady's instrument. Better endeavor to excel on the piano, or harp" (qtd. in MacLeod 12). Such comments imply that women were expected to play music to provide aesthetic appreciation for their viewers and to remain true to ideas of feminine beauty and behavior, rather than to show their skills.

Although the violin was not considered appropriate for women to play, the instrument itself was often figured as feminine, as the twentieth-century violinist Yehudi Menuhin makes explicit in his book *Violin and Viola*:

> Its shape is in fact inspired by and symbolic of the most beautiful human object, the woman's body. There are no straight lines in the violin; every line is curved and bent, embracing and delicate. We speak of its parts anatomically: head, neck, shoulders, waist, belly, back--and bottom. The varnish of a Stradivarius or Guarnerius evokes the sun caught in the silken texture of human skin. And like the female human voice, the violin combines the entire soprano and contralto range. (7-8)

Menuhin's comment exposes not only the essentialization, but also the objectification of women implicit in the association between women and the feminized instruments on which men would play. This comparison stands out further in light of the myth that women's nerves were tightly strung: in his influential book *Music and Morals* (1871), Reverend H.R. Haweis asserts that "the emotional force in women is usually stronger, and almost always more delicate, than in men. Their constitutions are like those fine violins which vibrate to the lightest touch" (491). While Menuhin posits that there might be "an element of narcissism in the woman's relation to the

violin" (7-8), such a woman player might also have presented too homoerotic an image for Victorian society to permit. As the violin was considered feminine, so the bow was considered masculine: its shape, its power "as initiator and controlling force over the instrument's sound," and its connections with a conductor's baton, an archer's bow, and a sorcerer's wand (Gillett 85) strengthened these associations. Since the violin was frequently figured as requiring a masterful (masculine) player to bow it, a woman performer would dramatically upend the gendered *status quo,* an inversion that a writer for *The Athenaeum* in 1869 saw as evidence that "the fair sex are gradually encroaching on all man's privileges" ("Musical and Drama Gossip" 284).[6]

Although the *Athenaeum* reviewer expressed a fairly common sentiment for the time, some musical and feminist periodicals advocated for women violinists far earlier in the century and began the slow shift towards acceptance. In May 1839, *The Musical World* ran an article defending "lady violinists" to their detractors: it argued that women could bring grace and beauty to violin playing and to the instrument's sound and suggested that "we shall give no hypercritical heed to the rapid action of a lady's arm in a *presto* movement, or to the depression of her head in holding the instrument" (35). The article also mentions famous women violinists of the past and present[7] to demonstrate "what the fair sex can achieve—in regard to the first of instruments" (37) and rebelliously ridicules the opposition: "Should these defensive remarks,

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[6] Women were barred from playing other bowed instruments as well. The cello, the most notable example, was forbidden because the performer must straddle the instrument (Gillett 111), and, in 1869, *The Spectator* commented on the dearth of women performers: "Female violinists are rare [. . . and] female violoncellists are rarer still, and we have never met with one" (qtd. in F.G.E. 739). The rarity of women practitioners of these instruments is paralleled by the rarity of Victorian poems about them: I have never met with one.

[7] An article from an 1889 issue of *The Lady's Realm* and a 1906 article by F.G.E. in *The Musical Times* both adopt this strategy of mentioning famous women violinists to prove that the instrument is acceptable for women; these articles show that the debate continued even after women were more accepted as musicians.

however, be found unsatisfactory by your anti-young-woman's-playing-the-violin-at-all sort of people, we have nothing further to say to them" (35). In spite of this advocacy, the violin was considered off-limits for women until the early 1870s.

Barrett Browning's sonnet 32 from *Sonnets from the Portuguese,* written in 1850 when women violinists were still considered scandalous, focuses on the viol, a precursor of the violin, and adopts the most conventional trope of the instrument as a woman's body:

The first time that the sun rose on thine oath
To love me, I looked forward to the moon
To slacken all those bonds which seemed too soon
And quickly tied to make a lasting troth.
Quick-loving hearts, I thought, may quickly loathe;
And, looking on myself, I seemed not one
For such man's love!--more like an out-of-tune
Worn viol, a good singer would be wroth
To spoil his song with, and which, snatched in haste,
Is laid down at the first ill-sounding note.
I did not wrong myself so, but I placed
A wrong on thee. For perfect strains may float
'Neath master-hands, from instruments defaced, -
And great souls, at one stroke, may do and doat.

The speaker imagines herself as an inadequate and rejected viol, set aside because it "spoil[s]" (9) the man's performance and is "laid down at the first ill-sounding note" (10). She believes herself inferior to her fiancé, whose "master-hands" (13) have mastery over her. Her belief that

"perfect strains may float / 'Neath master-hands, from instruments defaced" (12-13) both reveals her confidence that his superior talent rectifies her own errors and imperfections and demonstrates the unequal power dynamics between them.

Although this poem might sound like a ringing endorsement of conventional views of femininity and the violin, its implicit gender reversals complicate such an interpretation. While the speaker portrays herself as a viol, merely the accompaniment to her "beau," and would therefore seem to further subjugate herself, she also inverts traditional gender paradigms: women were expected to sing in the parlor as a way of proving their marriageability,[8] while men played stringed instruments. When Barrett Browning describes the man's viol performance as a "song" and herself as the stringed instrument, she subtly overturns musical gender role expectations while still appearing to preserve them. She further discounts her self-effacement and insistence that "looking on [herself], [she] seemed not one / For such man's love" (6-7), since the "perfect strains" (12) she will produce refer to the sounds of pleasure she makes as "master-hands" (13) "stroke" her (14). In conforming to gendered norms by figuring herself as a passive, defective instrument, she is able to trangressively describe sexual pleasure without impropriety.[9]

In portraying the speaker as a discarded viol, Barrett Browning also voices a metapoetic concern about the role of women in poetry. As women poets were often considered inferior to their male counterparts, the speaker's fear of rejection and of being "not one / For such man's love" (6-7) also shows her desire to be accepted as a woman poet. Even figuring herself as viol

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[8] The second chapter of the dissertation will discuss this gendered expectation in more depth.
[9] Hardy's poem "Haunting Fingers, A Phantasy in a Museum of Musical Instruments" (1923) also has fingers traverse instruments, but it has a gothic twist on this trope: instead of the fingers of a beloved, the ghostly and imagined fingers of previous performers traverse the instruments as they speak of happier days when their masters were alive, rather than of sexual desire.

instead of a violin demonstrates her desire for women to have greater artistic voice: the viol, or viola da gamba, had once been considered acceptable for women, perhaps because it was propped against the knees to play and therefore required less contortion (Gillett 80). The speaker's emphasis on her inferiority does not implicitly claim that women's poetry is inferior, however, as the poem's form itself demonstrates: Barrett Browning wrote this poem and the others in the collection as Petrarchan sonnets.[10] By writing a cycle of poems in a form traditionally used by men to praise women, she claims greater agency and voice in refusing to be the silent, observed subject (Mermin 130). Her scattered use of unexpected caesuras in varied metrical locations throughout the poem disrupts the poem's placid surface and creates a new type of more subtle linguistic and rhythmic virtuosity at odds with her claims of composing "ill-sounding note[s]": her pen may "stroke" out beautiful poetry without the "master hands" of a man.[11] The poem's rhyme scheme also belies its submissive content: Margaret Morlier has convincingly argued that the alternating near rhymes of the octave echo the sound of an out-of-tune viol, while the correct rhymes of the sestet correspond to the tuned viol played by "master-hands" ("Sonnets" 103-104), and yet the nuances of this rhyme scheme reveal Barrett Browning's own mastery. The discord between the poem's confident style and its submissive content suggests that the submission is merely a socially expected posture and that, paradoxically, women can gain agency only by appearing to relinquish it. The in-tune rhymes of the octave likewise sound discordant in this context, as the poem eschews the more traditional

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[10] Like the sonnet form, the viol was also associated with Italy.

[11] Critics at the time mistook such rhythmical and acoustical irregularities for "carelessness," but Barrett Browning herself insisted that her rhymes were "as good rhymes as any used by rhymer," the result of "a great deal of attention," and a decision "in cold blood, to hazard some experiments": "in no spirit of carelessness or easy writing, or desire to escape difficulties, have I run into then,--but chosen them, selected them, on principle" (262-263).

cdecde rhyme scheme of the sestet in favor of a cdcdcd pattern. By avoiding the "e" rhyme and instead remaining locked into a strict alternation of the earlier sounds, the poem sounds trapped and doomed to repeatedly move forward, then fall back.[12] The speaker is likewise trapped by societal expectations for women's compositions and violin playing, and can only move forward by falling back to a more overtly subservient stance.

Just twenty years after Barrett Browning's poem, societal opinions regarding women violinists were moving forward. In a surprisingly progressive policy change, the Royal Academy of Music began to matriculate women violinists on January 18, 1872 (F.G.E. 739) and helped inaugurate the era of greater acceptance for them. Dante Gabriel Rossetti's 1872 painting *Veronica Veronese* perfectly encapsulates the conflicting contemporary ideas about women violinists. The painting's French inscription gives Veronica musical agency that the painting itself does not:

> Se penchant vivement, la Veronica jeta les premières notes sur la feuille vierge. Ensuite elle prit l'archet du violon pour réaliser son rêve; mais avant de décrocher l'instrument suspendu, elle resta quelques instants immobile en écoutant l'oiseau inspirateur, pendant que sa main gauche errait sur les cordes cherchant le motif suprême encore eloigné. C'était le mariage des voix de la nature et de l'âme—l'aube d'une création mystique.
>
> Suddenly leaning forward, the Lady Veronica rapidly wrote the first notes on the virgin page. Then she took the bow of her violin to make her dream reality; but before commencing to play the instrument hanging from her hand, she remained quiet a few moments, listening to the inspiring bird, while her left hand strayed over the strings

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[12] Morlier claims that Barrett Browning's rhymes serve "to protest the traditions of beauty and of literature from which the feminine voice had been excluded" ("Sonnets" 98).

> searching for the supreme melody, still elusive. It was the marriage of the voices of nature and the soul—the dawn of a mystic creation. ("Veronica Veronese")

Although the quotation acknowledges that women can be violinists (as well as composers), the painting does not demonstrate the full extent of Lady Veronica's musical abilities: it shows her touching the strings and holding the bow, but it does not depict the moment of performance or composition. Instead, she contemplates the violin in silence. Even in visual art, then, women are allowed to hold the violin, but are not fully accepted as violinists.

A *Punch* cartoon from April 3, 1875 further shows society's resistance to women violinists. Entitled "The Fair Sex-Tett (Accomplishments of the Rising Female Generation)," it shows a chamber music group composed of six women performing on stage in scandalously low-cut dresses: two play violin, and the remaining four play viola, cello, double-bass, and an absurdly oversized contrabass ophicleide (a very strange-looking cross between a tuba and a contrabassoon). Although none of the violinists contorts her head or arms, the cellist straddles her instrument in a posture reserved only for men, and the audience, composed entirely of men, gazes at them in astonishment, demonstrating exactly what the artist thought of the "accomplishments" of the next generation of women.

In 1875, amid this culture of doubt and hostility, Ada Cambridge's "The Old Manor House" examined the dangers of denying women musical agency. Like Barrett Browning's sonnet, her poem similarly figured a young woman as a violin. However, her dramatic monologue is from the perspective of a male violinist and soldier named Guy, recently returned from the Crimean War, who has becomes obsessed with Margaret, the object of his affections. Guy and Margaret begin as friends, reading poetry and playing music together (he accompanies her singing on the violin), until he kisses her without her permission, at which point she begins to

avoid him. He then confronts her, and it is implied (though not stated) that he rapes her. Soon after, he is called away to rejoin his regiment and learns in his absence that she has married to save the family. After a brain fever brought on by news of Margaret's marriage, he returns, confronts her, and assaults her again, before finally leaving to travel the world. He returns years later to discover she has just died, and he sneaks into her bedroom to sit by her body until the morning.

The violence in this poem is one of many abuses of masculine power Cambridge connects with violin playing,[13] and it functions as a critique of the objectification of women, the limited agency they are permitted, and the late date at which women were allowed to claim musical agency over the violin. Although Guy's violin playing is only mentioned once in the poem, the scene introduces the larger problems of violence and power imbalances that characterize the relationship between the speaker and Margaret:

> We had, too, little concerts in that dear recess,—I used to play
> Accompaniments on my violin, and she would sing "Old Robin Gray,"
> And simple, tender Scottish songs of loyal love and royal wrongs.
>
> My violin is dead for me, the dust lies thick upon the case;
> And she is dead,—yet I can see e'en now the rapt and listening face;
> And all about the garden floats the echo of those crying notes! (9)

Guy relates an idyllic scene in which he and Margaret performed together and followed traditional gender roles: Margaret sang love songs while Guy played the violin. Even the

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[13] The acoustical similarity between "violins" and violence" underscores the connection between the two that Cambridge depicts throughout the poem.

feminized violin follows expected gender roles, since once Margaret dies, the violin "is dead" too: he shuts it in its case and lets "the dust [lie] thick upon" it while Margaret lies shut in her coffin in the ground. Here, as elsewhere in the poem, Margaret is figured as passive and deprived of agency while Guy holds the power: she dies but he chooses to make his violin "die" by not opening the case to play it again. The association between Margaret and his violin implies that playing his instrument metaphorically represents running his fingers over her body, an act he performed against her will (as we will soon see). Like the violin, which he can dispose of at will, Guy sees Margaret as an object that exists solely for him to possess and use. This objectification and association between Margaret and the violin show the dangers of internalizing the conventional tropes about the musical instrument.

The Scottish song that they perform further renders Margaret a musical victim. The song "Auld Robin Gray," written in 1773 by Lady Anne Lindsay (Faubert 175), tells the story of their relationship as Guy sees it: a young Scottish woman named Jenny and a young but poor man fall in love, and the man leaves temporarily to earn his fortune so they can marry. While he is away, the young woman is forced to marry an older man she does not love to save the family. When her young man returns, they take "but ae kiss," and then part to be miserable for the rest of their lives. By having Margaret sing this song, Cambridge suggests that she, like many women, is trapped by the circumstances of her life and by a societally-enforced lack of agency. It also shows Guy's narrative control over her, as the song she sings does not depict what actually happened in their relationship but rather confirms the narrative he desires. Most of all, the juxtaposition of Margaret's tale with Jenny's experience implies that life cannot be as happy as even heartbreaking art: while Jenny loved her Jamie, tells her own tale, and lives free from

sexual assault, Margaret was molested and denied such chances.[14] The fates of Margaret and Jenny critique the difficulties women faced: they, like violins, are objects to be owned, plundered, and pursued, and are not allowed to pursue the subjects of their love, a privilege abused by those who have it. This allusion also associates her poem with an earlier, important feminist work: Mary Wollstonecraft's *Maria*: *or, The Wrongs of Woman*, an unfinished novelistic sequel to *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) published posthumously. In *Maria*, a "lovely maniac" who has been "married, against her inclination, to a rich old man, extremely jealous," and "in consequence of his treatment [. . .] lost her senses" (175), sings the "pathetic ballad of old Rob" (175). Whether or not Cambridge intentionally nods to Wollstonecraft's feminist work, her allusion to the same ballad demonstrates her investment in feminist discourses of a century's standing as well as her desire to expose the long history of this song and the cruelty towards women it describes. In having Guy's violin accompany this song, Cambridge implicitly shows the ways that the tropes about the instrument further perpetuate gender inequality.

No matter what "Auld Robin Gray" might imply, Guy takes much more than a kiss from Margaret. He sexually assaults her repeatedly:

> She would have passed me, shy and still,—she would not suffer herself to mark
> That I was grown so bold, until I took her dear hands in the dark.
> And then—and then——Well! she was good and patient, and she understood.
>
> My arms were strong, and rude, and rough—because my love was so intense;

[14] Cambridge's tale is also silent on the subject of Margaret's feelings for Guy; Guy insists that she says "I shall still belong to you" and that she writes him "tender letters" while he is at war (17), but such statements convey obligation and a sense of ownership rather than the degree of love that Jenny feels.

She knew the reason well enough, and so she would not take offence;

Though 'twas by force I made her stay, she did not try to get away. (14)

Although Margaret does "try to get away," Guy takes advantage of the "dark" and uses "force" and his "strong, and rude, and rough" arms to hold her still. The multiple dashes and the repetition of "and then--and then" tell the truth that Guy cannot find words to confess, and his insistence that "she understood" and "would not take offence" reveals that she was forced to comply with his desires. The contradiction inherent in the claim "Though 'twas by force I made her stay, she did not try to get away" intimates that he did hold her against her will, and, when coupled with his refusal to say what happened, strongly implies that he raped her. Later in the poem, he more explicitly assaults her: he "kissed her hands, her wrists, her hair, the very fringes of her gown; / While she sat cowering in a heap, and moaned, and shook, but could not weep" (21).

The poem's music itself, especially in this passage, sounds threatening and violent: the sheer length and momentum of the iambic octameter lines, even with the caesura, convey Guy's forceful relentlessness. The high degree of internal rhyme ("still" and "until," "rough" and "enough," and "good" and "understood") as well as the alliteration ("shy" and "still," "dark" and "dear," "rude" and "rough") and repetition ("she would," "and then," "well," and "-") acoustically and typographically enact Guy's obsession with Margaret: the lines remain as close to the same sounds, words, and symbols as Guy does to Margaret. The two dashes surrounding "and then" not only show his inability to admit that he raped her, but also typographically represent his arms holding her still, and, from this perspective, the relative stasis in the sound of the lines further holds her a musical prisoner: the poem's music echoes the musical restraints of the duet they performed and the violin tropes that govern Guy's interactions with her.

The poem's similarity to Tennyson's *Maud* further stresses the significance of Guy's violin playing. In both poems, male military speakers become obsessed with women whose names begin with the letter M and stalk them after a party (Guy's "come down" echoes the famous line "Come into the garden, Maud"[15]). In both cases, the women die while the speakers are abroad. In fact, these poems are part of a larger Victorian trend of dramatic monologues that feature military speakers who cause or wish violence against women, all the while declaiming their innocence and the rationality of their actions: the speaker in Tennyson's earlier "Locksley Hall" (1842), also a soldier, dramatically wishes his cousin Amy dead. In having the speaker play violin, Cambridge links this larger cultural obsession with violence against women not only with his military background, but also with violins themselves.

The final image of the poem harkens back to the earlier description of Margaret and the violin: "I see her now—so sweet and white! the fair, pure face so trouble-worn! / The thin hands folded on her breast, in peace at last, and perfect rest!" (36). By ending her poem with Margaret in her coffin like the violin in its case, her face "trouble-worn" like Barrett Browning's "worn viol," Cambridge shows the cruelty of treating women like instruments who can only achieve rest and escape unwelcome "master hands" once they have been "laid down" from life. Unlike Barrett Browning's earlier violin poem that embraced the tropes of a feminized violin to discuss sexual desire, Cambridge's dramatic monologue dramatizes the real-life dangers of adopting such language. These scenes carry the trope of the violin as the passive, feminized, and sexualized object to its extreme: Guy sees Margaret as his passive possession, not a woman who has the power of consent, with which he can indulge his sexual desires at any point. Cambridge

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[15] The speaker in *Maud* even comments on the violin he hears as he waits for her in the garden. This poem is addressed in greater detail in the final chapter of the dissertation.

foregrounded the question of consent when she wrote of spousal rape in "A Wife's Protest" as "a nightly torture" (Vickery 44): "I lay down upon my bed, / A prison on the rack" (98). Since, in 1888, the Justices in the Court of Crown Cases Reserved held in *Regina v. Clarence* that marital rape did not exist because a wife "has no right or power to refuse her consent" (qtd. in Shanley 185), Cambridge's insistence on a woman's right to grant or deny consent at all times makes more apparent her commitment to challenging the unfair treatment of women as well as the musical tropes that constrain them. Although it might seem curious that Cambridge wrote less optimistic poems about the violin and the representations of women at a time when women were finally allowed to study the instrument at the Royal Academy, this skepticism may reflect a concern that this increase in musical freedom for women was only the first step in a long struggle, and that women were still not given agency, musical or otherwise, equal to men's.

Within a decade of Cambridge's poem, the situation for women violinists had improved: in 1878, feminist crusader Emily Faithfull confidently asserted in the *Victoria Magazine* that there is nothing "unfeminine in playing the violin" (250). Lady Lindsay in an 1880 issue of *The Girl's Own Paper* went so far as to say that "Madame Neruda, like a musical St. George, has gone forth, violin and bow in hand, to fight the dragon of prejudice, or rather, like a female Orpheus, has made captive all the wild beasts about her by the sweet sounds she has evoked" (233-234). This shift in perception appears in painterly depictions of the violin as well: in 1883, the Pre-Raphaelite artist Arthur Hughes painted "The Home Quartet (Mrs. Vernon Lushington and her Children)," which lovingly detailed the women in a family playing a string quartet, and the *Illustrated London News* featured an illustration of two sisters performing a violin and piano duet. Although these idealized performances occurred at home rather than in public, they still show the greater degree of acceptance that women violinists of the 1880s could enjoy.

Wilde's "The Harlot's House" (1885), written just before the "violin fad" of the 1890s, depicts another indoor musical scene with women and the violin. But unlike its idealized visual counterparts, it portrays music in a sex workers' establishment that entices a young woman to leave her suitor. Like its predecessors, the poem incorporates the tropes of the feminized violin as a conveyor of transgressive knowledge and sexual desire, but it does so to comment obliquely on two important legislative acts of the time regarding prostitution:

We caught the tread of dancing feet,
We loitered down the moonlit street,
And stopped beneath the harlot's house.

Inside, above the din and fray,
We heard the loud musicians play
The "Treues Liebes Herz" of Strauss.

Like strange mechanical grotesques,
Making fantastic arabesques,
The shadows raced across the blind.

We watched the ghostly dancers spin
To sound of horn and violin,
Like black leaves wheeling in the wind.

Like wire-pulled automatons,

Slim silhouetted skeletons

Went sidling through the slow quadrille,

Then took each other by the hand,

And danced a stately saraband;

Their laughter echoed thin and shrill.

Sometimes a clockwork puppet pressed

A phantom lover to her breast,

Sometimes they seemed to try to sing.

Sometimes a horrible marionette

Came out, and smoked its cigarette

Upon the steps like a live thing.

Then, turning to my love, I said,

‘The dead are dancing with the dead,

The dust is whirling with the dust.’

But she--she heard the violin,

And left my side, and entered in:

Love passed into the house of lust.

Then suddenly the tune went false,

The dancers wearied of the waltz,

The shadows ceased to wheel and whirl.

And down the long and silent street,

The dawn, with silver-sandalled feet,

Crept like a frightened girl.

Although this poem describes violin playing and dancing, it does not glory in the language of sexual desire like Barrett Browning's poem. The "horn and violin" players' choice of song, "'Treues Liebes Herz' of Strauss" (6), is especially ironic: translated, it means "true loving heart," a characteristic that the speaker believes the sex workers and the young woman lack. The "True Loving Heart" is doubly "false," however, as the piece is incorrectly attributed to Strauss, and no such song exists. Since Strauss was best know for his waltzes, an intimate dance that was considered scandalous in the early Victorian period (Temperley, "Dance Music" 208), this attribution dramatizes the disembodiment of these women's bodies: instead of fleshy figures dancing closely, the speaker sees them as clockwork creatures whose dancing is "mechanical" (7) and part of a Danse Macabre rather than a waltz. The dancers are "ghostly" (10), "skeletons" (14), or "phantoms" (20) that are dead like "black leaves" (12) and only appear "like a live thing" (24). They also lack bodily autonomy, as they are "automatons" (13) or "puppets" (19) who must do as their client or madam instructs. The violin appears to be the puppetmaster, however, since it produces the siren song that lures the young woman into the brothel: "she heard the violin, / And left my side, and entered in" (28-29). Like the violin in Thomas Hardy's

"The Fiddler," which "makes people do at a revel / What multiplies sins by seven" (11-12), this violin leads to lust and communicates supposedly sinful, sexual knowledge to the young woman.

Although the speaker thinks that the waltz "went false" once the woman left him, the poem's meter throughout already sounds like a broken waltz: while the three lines of each stanza correspond to the three beats in each measure of music, the clash between the poem's tetrameter and the triple meter of a waltz enhances the speaker's sense of the music as faulty. The music of the poem's rhyme scheme initially appears likewise broken: its aab ccb dde ffe rhyme scheme sounds like an off-kilter terza rima mixed with couplets, as though the subject matter is eroding the structure of poetic forms as well as of Victorian morality. The rhyme scheme also enacts the broken relationship between the speaker and the young woman and her decision to find companionship elsewhere: if each couplet is metaphorically viewed as a couple, with each rhyming word as an individual, then each stanza consists of a couple, and then a couple divided by other pairs.[16]

While the poem appears to endorse tropes of the violin as a destructive, sinful influence on young women, it also invites a more subversive interpretation that speaks to the violin's benefits. Although prostitution was certainly a dangerous business that many women were forced into for survival (and that was responsible for the demise of many), the young woman's attraction to the house suggests a less traditional stance. The speaker's vocabulary and syntactical style imply that he is at least in the middle if not upper class, and his expression of endearment for the young woman ("my love") implies that they were at least courting, if not engaged: why, then, if she had marriage prospects and (perhaps) money, did she choose to

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[16] The constantly shifting rhyming pairs also enact the constantly shifting partners of the "quadrille" danced inside the house.

follow the music out of that safe world and destroy her reputation in "polite society"? The beliefs of prominent physician and surgeon, William Acton, provide one possible explanation: he claimed that "the majority of women (happily for society) are not very much troubled with sexual feeling of any kind" and that "only loose or, at least, low and immoral women" were capable of sexual desire (208-209).[17] In light of such assertions, the young woman's decision to enter the house for a sexual encounter may metaphorically reflect and thereby critique Acton's ideas: she may have felt that, if she experienced sexual desire, she was already a "low and immoral woman" who was essentially already a prostitute. Perhaps she also recognized the possibility of a same-sex encounter: the speaker refers to the establishment as a "harlot's house" rather than using more gender-neutral terms like brothel or bordello, so the speaker's companion may have entered the house to hire rather than to become a sex worker. The woman's attraction to the violin also supports a queer reading: she entered the establishment upon hearing the violin, an instrument gendered feminine, which itself suggests that she was attracted to other women and embraces the idea that a woman's playing the violin could be homoerotic.[18] This poem, rather than adopting a conventional, moralizing attitude towards prostitution and sex, displays its transgressive conformity by critiquing such attitudes as overly repressive and heteronormative.[19]

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[17] Acton objected to the practice of the "excision of the clitoris" to cure "nymphomania" not because he thought it inhumane, but because he insisted that it has "no special sexual sensation" and therefore would not limit women's sexual desire (208-209).

[18] Wilde also used music to allude to queer desire and relationships in *De Profundis* (1897), *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895), and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) (Sutton 46-47).

[19] Wilde himself reluctantly frequented prostitutes, as he explains in a letter dated 1900: "How evil it is to buy love and how evil to sell it! And yet what purple hours one can snatch from that grey slowly moving thing we call Time. My mouth is twisted with kissing, and I feed on fevers" (Hart-Davis 828).

Wilde also uses the violin to comment on the plight of women and prostitutes in Victorian England more generally. This poem was first published in the April 11, 1885 issue of the *Dramatic Review*; the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, designed to restrict prostitution by raising the age of consent for women, was reintroduced to parliament for a third time two days later ("No. 58"). Another contentious bill regarding prostitution, the Contagious Diseases Act, was already being hotly debated before its repeal in 1886. These Acts, which were passed in 1864 to stop the spread of venereal diseases to the navy, enabled plainclothes police officers to detain any woman suspected of being a prostitute and subject her to a physical examination; if she was found to be infected, she was detained in a hospital for three months until cured (extended to nine months in 1869), or indefinitely if the disease was incurable. The Ladies' National Association for the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act began a petition to protest this "unjust" law which "remove[d] every guaranty of personal security which the law has established and held sacred, and put their reputation, their freedom, and their persons absolutely in the power of the police" (qtd. in Martineau 431), and in 1870 the feminist journal *Shield* appeared and began publicly lobbying for the repeal of the acts. As Linda Hughes has argued, the discussion of prostitution and the Contagious Diseases Acts in *Shield* led to an increase in poems about such topics: D.G. Rossetti's "Jenny" and Augusta Webster's "The Castaway" were published in that year, and Wilde's poem as well as Blind's "The Russian Student's Tale" (1891) and "Noonday Rest" (1895) followed (235-236). In the context of the Contagious Diseases Acts, the speaker's conception of the party as a Danse Macabre shows his belief that the prostitutes are diseased and close to death.

The poem, however, does not endorse that perspective: the final image of the creeping "silver-sandalled" dawn complicates the conventional narrative about "fallen women." This

epithet is most frequently associated with the goddess Artemis,[20] famed for her purity and her hunting prowess. Since the speaker elides the dawn and the young woman he courted, this allusion also metaphorically associates a prostitute with a famous virgin and critiques the very notion of virginity. He also invokes Artemis's most iconic possession: her bow. In associating a woman, attracted to a violin, with a goddess famed for a bow, the culturally coded masculine symbol of musical power necessary for playing the violin, Wilde implies that this young woman might be not doomed to a life as an automaton, but rather enabled to play her own music.[21] Ultimately, the violin is not a siren that lures women to their downfall, but a transmitter of transgressive sexual knowledge, passion, and agency between women that Wilde also uses to comment on the changing views on women, violins, and political issues at the time.

Within a decade of Wilde's poem, women violinists were performing in even greater numbers: Krebs believed in 1893 that "the violin is to-day a 'lady's instrument' in a truer sense than that in which this term was applied to the piano" (80). Overtly feminist journals like *The Woman's World*, which Wilde edited from November 1887 to July 1889, explicitly advocated for the chamber music accomplishments *Punch* had mocked:

> Where there are two or three members of the family desirous of taking up a stringed instrument, it will be found a most gratifying plan for each to study a different instrument of the string quartette, either the violin or violoncello. [. . .] In the instance of a family of four or five girls, two should study the violin, the other two might study viola and

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[20] Fanny Kemble's "Vision of the Vatican" (1866), Maurice Thompson's "Diana" (1883), John Arthur Coupland's "Paris and Helen: and Endymion" (1883), and Zitella Cocke's "Gods of Hellas" (1895) and are only a few of the Victorian poems to use this epithet in conjunction with Artemis.

[21] Artemis thus becomes Lady Lindsay's musical ideal, "a musical St. George," armed with a bow, who fights prejudice (233-234).

> violoncello, and the fifth the pianoforte. Thus a quartette or quintette would be found in one family. (Barrett 652)

In spite of the growing acceptance of these musical roles, "violin-playing as a profession for ladies [was] a sealed thoroughfare [. . .] as the public [had] not yet overcome its prejudices in the matter" (Barrett 651), leaving "the teaching branch of the profession the only one freely open to lady performers" (Barrett 651). While the article focuses on the limitations that women faced, it ends on a slightly more optimistic note by imagining that women might one day become more prominent performers: "it remains to be seen whether it is not possible to find profitable employment for others in the capacity of orchestral players and well-prepared teachers" (Barrett 654).

In 1893, the same year as Kreb's article, Mathilde Blind, a German-born Victorian poet, biographer, and essayist (Diedrick 374), wrote a poem that implicitly addresses both the increasing musical agency and the limitations that the violin fad produced. In "On a Viola D'Amore Carved With a Cupid's Head, and Played on for the First Time after More than a Century," she focuses on the same nexus of issues about women, stringed instruments, sexual desire, and poetic agency that concerned her predecessors, but she more overtly critiques the tropes of a feminized violin and more optimistically imagines the future of women's artistic voices.[22] Like Barrett Browning's, her poem discusses an earlier stringed instrument, but Blind's choice of a viola d'amore rather than a viol makes explicit the poem's interest in discussing

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[22] James Diedrick's claims about Blind's dramatic monologues of the 1890s are equally applicable to this lyric work: they "are more explicitly critical of prevailing social and gender codes than those she published in the 1870s" and show "that fin-de-siècle women poets were as deeply engaged with these issues as their novelist counterparts" (374).

music and love. Her poem also depicts a discarded and feminized stringed instrument, plucked from the shelf, and portrays playing it as a type of sorcery:

What fairy music clear and light,
Responsive to your fingers,
Swells rippling on the summer night,
And amorously lingers
Upon the sense, as long ago
In days of rouge and rococo!

A century of silence lay
On strings that had not spoken
Since powdered lords to ladies gay
Gave, for a lover's token,
Fans glowing fresh from Watteau's art,
Well worth a marchioness's heart.

Your dormant music, tranced and bound,
Was like the Sleeping Beauty
Prince Charming in the forest found,
And kissed in loyal duty:
And when she woke her eyes' blue fire
Turned the dumb forest to a lyre.

Thus Amor with the bandaged eyes,

Fit symbol of hushed numbers,

Most musically wakes and sighs

After an age of slumbers:

Beneath your magic bow's control

The Viol has regained her soul.

The viola, like the viol, is again a feminized surrogate for the speaker: it is a relic of "days of rouge and rococo" (6). By associating the instrument with makeup and a decorative art style that was pejoratively considered feminine (Milam 270), Blind looks to the past to historicize a gendered Victorian view. She also attributes the beautiful music to the ministrations of the (presumably male) musician: the instrument (and, implicitly, the speaker herself) is "responsive to [his] fingers" (2) and the music "swells" (3) and "amorously lingers" (4) "beneath [his] magic bow's control" (23). As with Barrett Browning's poem, such sexually charged language could be published only if it was sufficiently covert. This poem, then, in its portrayal of sexual desire, writes against Swinburne's famous claim in "Notes on Poems and Reviews" (1866) that "the office of adult art is neither puerile nor feminine, but virile" (359) by showing how it can, in fact, be feminine. The speaker's string of comparisons that illuminate the relationship between instrument and performer makes the sensual associations surprisingly explicit: the music, as in Robert Browning's "A Toccata of Galuppi's" (1855) (as the next chapter shall demonstrate), reminds her of eighteenth-century aristocrats courting, and the blindfolded cupid at the head of the instrument reminds her of Prince Charming awakening Sleeping Beauty with a kiss.

These comparisons associate the instrument not only with femininity and sexual desire, but also with extreme passivity: the viola d'amore was asleep and dead to the world for "more

than a century," as the title states, and, like a fairy tale princess, can only be brought to life by the sexual attentions of a man. Although it "wakes . . . / After an age of slumbers," its ekphrastic depiction is troubling:

> Thus Amor with the bandaged eyes,
> Fit symbol of hushed numbers,
> Most musically wakes and sighs
> After an age of slumbers. (19-22)

The description of "Amor with the bandaged eyes" alludes to the most common characteristic of a viola d'amore: a carved, blindfolded Cupid head in place of the scroll.[23] While this feature alludes to the famous adage "love is blind," presumably because love is embedded in the instrument's name, Love in this poem is not "blindfolded" (a word which, when substituted for "the bandaged" would have still scanned properly), but "bandaged" (19), as though its eyes were injured or blinded. While this image implicitly puns on Blind's surname and more closely ties her to the viola, it also invites a second interpretation. In the previous stanza, Sleeping Beauty's transformative musical vision gave voice to the previously silent: her "eyes' blue fire / Turned the dumb forest to a lyre" (17-18) after she was awakened with a kiss. Ostensibly, her passion and joy at regaining consciousness and finding her true love make the world sing. Her "eyes' blue fire," however, could just as easily be her anger at having been awakened by a nonconsensual kiss (even though that was the only cure), and her fiery response could make the forest sing in solidarity with her resistance. The allusion to both Milton's "Il Penseroso" (1645) and Coleridge's "The Nightingale" (1798) in the phrase "most musically" further connects

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[23] The blindfolded cupid's head is not a requirement of the viola d'amore, although it is the most common decoration: many have unblindfolded eyes or have a woman's head instead of a Cupid's head.

Sleeping Beauty and the viola to violation: both poems use the phrase "most musical" to refer to Philomela, a young woman who was raped and then mutilated by her brother-in-law before being turned into a nightingale. Both Milton and Coleridge deemphasize the story of her violation. Milton refers to her song as merely "melancholy," and Coleridge, disagreeing with Milton that either the nightingale or nature is melancholy, instead argues that sadness lies not with the violated woman whose body was doubly pierced, but with "that night-wandering man whose heart was pierced / With the remembrance of a grievous wrong" (16-17). This allusion both strengthens the association among Sleeping Beauty, violated women, and musical instruments, and implicitly critiques her male literary predecessors who are blind to the connections between narratives about women, music, and sexual violence. The feminized viola's more literal rendering of blinded love, when juxtaposed with Sleeping Beauty, appears to punish women for their artistic power and voice. Rather than endorse this punitive perspective, however, the poem argues against it and advocates for a larger presence of women's voices: it implies that like Sleeping Beauty, who was "tranced and bound" (13), this viola, and by extension, all women musicians and poets, will be able to take off the blindfold and find freedom and regain their music and voices after "a century of silence" (7). Since by 1893, when Blind wrote this poem, women were finally able to play violins in public, she takes that historical fact as a harbinger for women's poetic and musical emancipation.[24]

The final stanza imagines even greater musical agency for women in an allusion to a second tale: the story of Cupid and Psyche. Psyche, married to a being she has never seen and knows nothing about, is convinced by her sisters that her sexual partner is a monster. She

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[24] Blind's opinion is not universal, however, as Michael Field's poem "My Heart is a Violin" from the same year takes a less optimistic view of this development and does not have the hope that the violin will sing.

secretly visits his chamber while he sleeps to see what he looks like, but she accidentally drips wax on him. He awakens and flees, leaving her alone, although they are ultimately reunited. The poem's description of a "bandaged" Cupid who "wakes" and regains his "soul" (a well-known symbol for Psyche) presents an image of a woman who refuses to be passive and to submit to the sexual demands of others (even though her plan is not entirely successful). It also performs a gender inversion: the viola is a man rather than a woman, and the player is a woman rather than a man. Although this poem does implicitly break down the gender binaries that haunt the history of violin poems, it refuses to make those changes overt: Cupid is named "Amor," Psyche only appears in the mention of the viol's "soul," and the story of Sleeping Beauty, with its more traditional gender roles, is given greater prominence. Ultimately, these gendered tropes are not dismantled, but rather subtly challenged, just as society has accepted women violinists, but has not granted them fully equality.

Blind enacts the challenge to gendered tropes through the music of the poetry as well: while all the other rhymes in the poem share a common spelling of the rhyming syllables (i.e. "fingers" and "lingers," and "night" and "light"), the pattern is broken twice in the final stanza: on "eyes" and "sighs" and again on "control" and "soul."[25] Although the viola's "eyes" have been bandaged, perhaps in a metaphorical attempt to control her, the poem breaks free from that control by not following the expected trajectory. The final couplet makes this more apparent: the poem concludes by asserting that the violin will be heard through the magic bow's control, but the rhyme discounts the idea that the violin will be fully controlled, since the "soul" refuses

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[25] In my reading of the poem's rhyme scheme, since spelling at this time had been largely standardized, I take seriously Hollander's claim in *Vision and Resonance* that "The visual similarity of a pair of rhyming words, the degree to which their full vowel-consonant similarity is mirrored in the like spelling of the syllable, must be considered, [. . .] for twentieth-century readings of poetry of the past, a significant parameter" (122)

to be under the rhymed "control" of the "magic bow." At the end, then, Blind not only imagines a greater role for women's voices, both musical and poetic, but also imagines breaking free from the control of the culturally coded masculine bow to have the viola, and, by extension, women's poets, sing on their own without the assistance of others.

Like Blind's violin poem, Wilde's, Cambridge's, and Barrett Browning's invoked the very tropes that musical culture at large used to keep the instrument off-limits: the violin communicated satanic and magical knowledge to women, and women were figured as the passive instrument on which a male master plays. Although each poem reflects the cultural understanding and gendering of the instrument at the time, leading to a more optimistic view of women's musical and poetic agency, none of them featured a woman openly playing the violin, and the critiques of the violin tropes were always made obliquely, unlike the New Woman fiction that proudly featured fiddling women. Perhaps, since women increasingly turned to novel-writing as an outlet for their published voice, that openly avant-garde genre seemed more welcoming for such narratives than did the world of Victorian poetry, where the diminutive label of "poetess" and the supposed domesticity it promised may have discouraged them from adopting an instrument which still met with resistance in some quarters.

Although violins and violence are sonically similar (and, according to Cambridge in particular, thematically connected as well), the association between the two is not unique: many Victorian poems about flutes and reeds also posit a connection between violence, especially sexual violence against women, and these woodwinds. The second section of the chapter examines this connection by focusing on flute and reed poems by Barrett Browning and Robert Browning. These works, like some of the violin poems, protest against the double-standard that figures the woman as the instrument and the man as masterful player and also against the sexual

violence that this metaphor can entail. But they also argue for a new, ethical poetic style that eschews violence against women and for embracing women as female flautists.

Reading Reeds: Female Flautists, Sexual Violence and the Brownings's Pan Poems

Elizabeth Barrett Browning's often-anthologized poem "A Musical Instrument" (1860) reworks the Greek myth of Syrinx from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In this classical work, the demi-god Pan pursues the nymph Syrinx with the intent of raping her, until the water nymphs take pity on her and turn her into a reed. In the final part of the myth, on which Barrett Browning's poem focuses, Pan converts the reed into the first panpipes. In spite of the poem's popularity and the manifold current critical commentaries, the poem is most often considered a dramatization of the necessity of pain to the creation of great art, and, in the process, of Pan as a poet.[26] While Alison Chapman has pointed out the parallels between Pan's attempted rape and his actions towards the reed (278), and Margaret Morlier has demonstrated that this poem critiques "in epistemological terms the masculinist bias that represented 'his individual goat-godship' as the figure of the artist" ("Pan" 138), scholars have not yet adequately addressed the role of this graphic rape and the connection to the music it produces. Why do we hear the music in the whistling lines "sweet, sweet, piercing sweet"? Why is the reed consistently described as a single entity after Pan turned it into an instrument when reason dictates it should be panpipes? And what does this poem say about women's music and poetry and men's appropriation of them? To answer these questions, I examine it, through the lens of the cultural history of flute playing, alongside two other poems by Barrett Browning that address the connections between women's authorship, flute and reed playing, and sexual violence. I contend that Barrett

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[26] Joanne Feit Diehl (584-585) and Hiram Corson (262) are just some of the critics who have voiced this view.

Browning's three Pan poems use music to critique contemporary poetic depictions of women's music as predicated on sexual violence and that they argue for a new poetics that eschews traditional mythical narratives about artistic creation. The chapter concludes by viewing Robert Browning poem "Flute-Music, with an Accompaniment" (1889) in its relationship to Barrett Browning's music poems and to contemporaneous changes in societal rules regarding women flute players. In this light, Browning's poem emerges as a critique of traditional views of women's inability to appreciate the mystery of music and thus of the wrongheaded conventional interpretations this poem has nevertheless attracted. By examining these poems in conversation with each other, we can recognize their resistance to the double-standard facing women musicians as well as poets, and in the process, can avoid writing critical interpretations that employ the very techniques these poets discredit.

Whereas Greek myths are replete with tales of sexual violence against women instigated by gods, Barrett Browning's choice of Syrinx as the figure for her tale foregrounds the connection between violence, gender, and the flute. The flute, like the violin, was considered inappropriate, and no self-respecting woman would admit to playing it. Woodwinds were considered inelegant, and Frederick J. Crowest, in *The Lady's World*, went so far as to say, "distended cheeks and swollen lips are not marks of beauty nowadays; and while this is so the flute and other wind-instruments are unlikely to come into fashion" (175); a reviewer for the *Magazine of Music* agreed in 1892, insisting that a "lovely woman inevitably ceases to be lovely when she tackles a wind instrument" (180).[27] These beliefs are misplaced, since distended

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[27] This reviewer lists other wind instruments, such as the cornet and bassoon, which he believes women should never play. He even alludes to Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (1798) in imagining the horror a female bassoonist would produce: "The mere thought of a female bassoonist is enough to make one emulate the behavior of the wedding guest" (180).

cheeks would be present only if the performer had inferior technique. A less explicit but still prevalent explanation is found in the history of the instrument: the flute has long been a symbol for virility. Young men in eighteenth-century paintings would often hold a flute, not merely as an allusion to the pastoral tradition, but also as a symbolic guarantee that they would continue the family legacy and produce heirs as well as airs (Leppert 122). The flute, like the fiddlestick, also has a rather phallic shape, which explains why the image of women blowing into such an instrument proved too scandalous for them to imagine, much less write down. Barrett Browning's "A Musical Instrument" upends this traditional portrayal. Although Pan, and not a female flautist, is the performer, Syrinx herself *is* a woodwind, thus dispelling the idea that women cannot be associated with a masculine instrument. She is depicted not as Ovid's panpipes, "made of unequal reeds fitted together by a joining of wax" ("atque ita disparibus calamis conpagine cerae") (1.711), but as a reed flute, and Claude Debussy solidified that association in his 1913 composition, "Syrinx," for unaccompanied flute.

Although critics have addressed the connections between Pan's attempt to rape Syrinx and his conversion of Syrinx into a reed (Chapman 278), they have not yet attended to the poem's associating rape with music in particular. In Barrett Browning's poem, the first five stanzas detail Pan's process in creating the reed flute and emphasize the brutality of the act:

> What was he doing, the great god Pan,
> Down in the reeds by the river?
> Spreading ruin and scattering ban,
> Splashing and paddling with hoofs of a goat,
> And breaking the golden lilies afloat
> With the dragon-fly on the river.

He tore out a reed, the great god Pan,

From the deep cool bed of the river:

The limpid water turbidly ran,

And the broken lilies a-dying lay,

And the dragon-fly had fled away,

Ere he brought it out of the river.

High on the shore sat the great god Pan

While turbidly flowed the river;

And hacked and hewed as a great god can,

With his hard bleak steel at the patient reed,

Till there was not a sign of the leaf indeed

To prove it fresh from the river.

He cut it short, did the great god Pan,

(How tall it stood in the river!)

Then drew the pith, like the heart of a man,

Steadily from the outside ring,

And notched the poor dry empty thing

In holes, as he sat by the river.

“This is the way,” laughed the great god Pan

(Laughed while he sat by the river),

"The only way, since gods began

To make sweet music, they could succeed."

Then, dropping his mouth to a hole in the reed,

He blew in power by the river. (1-30)

Although we expect the refrain "the great god Pan" to lead to a positive depiction, we instead see him causing destruction; he begins "spreading ruin and scattering ban" (3). He destroys the nearby lilies (5), symbols of purity and virginity, and "tore" (7) the reed from its "bed" (8) in the river, as though the reed were still the young Syrinx, abducted from the sanctuary of her bed and raped, and her blood the "turbidly" flowing water (14). He further brutalizes her: he "drew the pith, like the heart of a man / Steadily from the outside ring" (21-22). The "outside ring," while ostensibly referring to the end of the reed, also evokes a woman's vagina, and this hollowing of the reed becomes a description of the conclusion of a rape, as though Pan is withdrawing from Syrinx's mutilated body, bringing with him her "pith," or soul and courage, effectively destroying her resilience. The word "pith" encourages an anatomical reading, since as a transitive verb, it refers to the slaughtering technique of "pierc[ing], sever[ing], or destroy[ing] the upper spinal cord or brainstem of (an animal), so as to cause death or insensibility" ("pith"): Syrinx, therefore, like an animal, is slaughtered by Pan to produce a flute. The association between drawing out the "pith" and the "heart" also evokes images of human sacrifice, whereby the heart would be drawn out of the body, and further portrays Syrinx as a sacrifice to a (demi) God.

The layout of "A Musical Instrument" in its original publication, *The Cornhill Magazine*, further depicts Syrinx's violation, not in the image itself, but in its placement: an illustration by

Frederick Leighton was inserted in this middle of the poem between stanzas four and five. Its insertion around the midpoint of the poem enacts Pan's insertion into Syrinx, both as he "drew out the pith" and as he creates "notche[s]" (23) and "holes" (29) in her with the penetration of his "hard bleak steel" (16). The poem's typography also enacts the violence the poem depicts: "(How tall it stood in the river!)" (20). This parenthetical remark, like its fellow in the ensuing stanza, expresses muted regret for Pan's actions, but its placement invites an additional reading. By describing Syrinx's height before Pan's intervention, and then enclosing that description and cutting it off from the rest of the poem, the change is not only emphasized but also enacted through typographical control.

When Pan begins to play at the opening of the penultimate stanza, the tone and direction of the poem alter, the music's beauty seeming to exonerate his brutality: "Sweet, sweet, sweet, O Pan! / Piercing sweet by the river" (31-32). The repetition of the word "sweet" with its sibilant and soothing sounds echoes the beauty of the music, and the act of speaking these words recreates its music: the mouth position used to say the word enacts the embouchure for playing the panpipes. The singular absence of the repeated epithet "the great god Pan" in the first line of this stanza further shows the music's power, as it creates the impression that the speaker, so awed by the music, forgot to include it. Pan himself refers to the music as "sweet" when explaining that his way is "the only way, since gods began / To make sweet music, they could succeed" (27-28), so the speaker's quotation of Pan's phrase both implies that the music lives up to the demi-god's standards and that the speaker believes that Pan's treatment of the reed was justified. The belief that beauty must come from pain has a long literary and mythical tradition: Hermes mutilates a tortoise to make the first lyre in the creation story of the lyric itself from the Homeric Hymns, the musician Orpheus is ripped apart by the Maenads, Philomela's tongue is

cut out by her rapist and she is turned into a nightingale, and the satyr Marsyas is tortured to death for two musical missteps—for picking up a flute Minerva discarded and for losing a musical challenge to Apollo (Holsinger 54). The belief even has an early Christian corollary made most explicit by Cassiodorus: "The harp denotes the glorious passion, performed on stretched tendons and individuated bones, which made the virtue of patience resound with the song as it were of the understanding" ("Cithara vero gloriosam significat passionem, quae tensis nervis dinumeratisque ossibus, virtutem patientiae intellectuali quodam carmine personabat") (qtd. in Holsinger 58). Pan's philosophy of art and Barrett Browning's articulation of it also anticipate Nietzsche's theory in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) that "Music and tragic myth are equally expressions of the Dionysian capacity of a people, and they are inseparable" (143) and that "the joy aroused by the tragic myth has the same origin as the joyous sensation of dissonance in music. The Dionysian, with its primordial joy experienced even in pain, is the common source of music and tragic myth" (141). Certainly, countless sonnets by Shakespeare, Petrarch, and Sidney find beauty in the pain of love, and Coleridge, Tennyson, L.E.L., and Hemans all beautifully render the pain of death, depression, abandonment, and exclusion. This poem may appear to continue this narrative, since the music is "piercing sweet" (32): the music's beauty appears to come directly from Pan's piercing of Syrinx, and therefore from women's pain and violation, as Syrinx's screams comprise the panpipes' music.[28]

The end of the poem appears to lend further credence to Pan's philosophy and to accept such violence as inherent to artistic creation, since it concludes with a description of the music, born of violence, bringing new life. The revivification begins slowly, with the day forgetting to

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[28] Thomas Woolner's *Silenus* (1884) makes the violence of this music explicit. Silenus, Syrinx's lover, hears Pan playing on the reeds made out of the nymph and hears her pain and fate in the music: "music, piercing, strange, / Melodious wailing pitiful, that smote / His heart to sorrowing for Syrinx lost" (19).

end rather than choosing to live ("The sun on the hill forgot to die" (34)) but then restoring the scene from the poem's opening with the lilies' reanimation and the dragonfly's return (35-36), a gesture that suggests that Pan's violence might be forgiven. This scene, however, dramatizes the idea that life continues for others, whereas the reed "grows nevermore again" (41). The syntax of this phrase encapsulates the confusion produced by the end of the poem: in placing the negation after instead of before the verb, the line foregrounds the growth rather than the destruction and appears to diminish the violation that took place, leading Corrine Davies to believe that the end of the poem shows us "a paradise almost regained or perhaps just anticipated in the revival of the riverbank" (566).

Yet for the reed (and, by extension, the victims of such violence), there is no such paradise, and no beautiful music will ever bring it back. The poem may seem to suggest that art requires destroying and pulling apart your subject, killing it and removing it from its context in order to give it a new life as art, but it complicates that perspective by showing that this practice does not always revivify the subject, and that "blinding sweet" music often blinds us not just to violence, but to sexual violence against women in particular. The poem's very subject matter shows that while art can masterfully discuss or depict rape, rape is not "the only way" to create art.[29] In fact, speaking the words that describe Syrinx's music complicates the conventional narrative about pain's necessity to art by raising ethical quandaries: in reciting these words to produce this reed's "music," the performer recreates the music predicated on violence against women, and metaphorically makes Syrinx scream again. By making readers unwitting

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[29] Arthur Machen's gothic novella *The Great God Pan* (1890), whose title was inspired by the refrain in Barrett Browning's "A Musical Instrument," makes the association between sexual violence against women and Pan more explicit: the story follows a scientist who performs brain surgery on a young woman in order to help her "see the god Pan" (2). This mental penetration leads to her giving birth to a demonic child who causes destruction everywhere she goes.

participants in a violent system of language, Barrett Browning implicitly critiques the naturalization of such attitudes in writers, readers, and narratives of poetry.

When "A Musical Instrument" is put in conversation with Barrett Browning's earlier poem "The Dead Pan" (1844), her discord with such theories of art and the musical history of pain becomes more pronounced. Her poem responds to John Kenyon's translation of Schiller's *Götter Griechenlands*, which claims that poetry has diminished since Pan's death. She instead triumphantly asserts poetry's superiority after Pan's demise:

> Get to dust, as common mortals,
> By a common doom and track!
> Let no Schiller from the portals
> Of that Hades call you back,
> Or instruct us to weep all
> At your antique funeral.
>
> Pan, Pan is dead. (XXXII)

In addition to rejecting the immortality of Greek gods ("Get to dust, as common mortals"), she also insists that Greek myths, especially those celebrating Pan, should stay dead to poetry, regardless of the opinions of other literary figures, like Schiller. In saying that we should not cry at Pan's death, Barrett Browning directly contradicts Kenyon's claim that prophecy and poetry ceased with Pan's demise and instead argues that we should seek new compositional techniques. For her, such a move meant a rejection of the "vain false gods of Hellas" and an acceptance of Christ:

> What is true and just and honest,
> What is lovely, what is pure,

All of praise that hath admonisht,

All of virtue,—shall endure;

These are themes for poets' uses,

Stirring nobler than the Muses,

Ere Pan was dead. (XXXVIII)

Using language from Philippians 4.8, the poem casts Pan, and, by extension, all of Hellenic culture, as a relic of a barbarous, pre-Christian age whose art springs from and causes destruction, and vests art's salvation in Christianity, which to her mind avoids cruelty and violence against others and instead brings "calm" and "consecration." As Morlier argues, "In Barrett Browning's poetry, Pan represents the potential for aggression, violence, and control in Romantic egoism. By celebrating the death of Pan and the birth of Christianity, 'The Dead Pan' enacts the demise of an epistemology of self-projection that leads to power over others and the birth of an epistemology of self-connection that leads to power-sharing with others" ("Pan" 134). Given Barrett Browning's explicit stance in this poem—a work about which she felt so strongly that she demanded it should conclude her 1844 volume (Davies 563)--it is unlikely that her poem from sixteen years later argues the opposite viewpoint and encourages us to support Pan and his violence as necessary for art.

Her insistence that poets should value things that are "true," "just," "honest," "lovely," "pure," and full of "virtue," suggests that she objects not only to the Pan and Syrinx myth, but also to many other famous myths, perhaps including the tale of Philomela, another woman essentially turned into a wood-wind. Philomela figures frequently throughout the history of lyric poetry, not only as previously mentioned in Milton's "Il Penseroso" and Coleridge's "The Nightingale," but also in Keats's and Shelley's use of the nightingale as a symbol for the poet.

Barrett Browning's desire to let the Greek myths stay dead makes implicit a subtext which "A Musical Instrument" makes slightly more explicit: the stories of Syrinx and Philomela, often used in lyric poetry, involve brutality, and in particular, sexual violence against women, as a way to produce beautiful music. The violence of "A Musical Instrument" juxtaposed with the criticism of violence in "The Dead Pan" implies, as does Blind's later poem, that such metaphors blind us to and excuse the violence itself. These two works together suggest that, for Barrett Browning, poems about reeds function as requests for new myths and new narratives for the connections between music and poetry that do not involve harming women. "A Musical Instrument" does in fact critique the very notion that Schiller and Kenyon and the received interpretation of the history of the lyric espoused, namely that violence, and rape in particular, is an inherent part of poetry and its history with music.

Although Syrinx produces "piercing sweet" music, it is produced not by her own agency or self-expression, but rather by Pan's invasive performance, a fact that might seem to endorse a problematic Victorian belief about women's abilities as composers: Hans von Bülow, writer for *The Musical World,* believed that "we may allow that the fair sex possess reproductive genius, just as we unconditionally deny that they possess productive genius. . . There will never be a compositoress, there can be only, at most a copyist spoilt" (qtd. in Gillett 22). By having the reed not speak for herself and only produce music when a man plays her, the poem seems to imply that women's music can at best only replicate what other, better, (more masculine) composers have done. Although the poem alludes to these notions, it refuses to endorse them, as the title itself makes clear. Since it is called "A Musical Instrument," and not "Panpipes," the poem both moves away from the idea of Syrinx as panpipes and also from the idea of Pan as the agent of her creation: the poem's title, though it mentions the instrument Pan created, does not

mention Pan or name the instrument after him. If we take the title literally and regard the poem as itself the musical instrument (in this case, the reed), then the poem's words represent the music Syrinx produces. As a result, this poem metaphorically gives Syrinx the voice and agency she lacks in the narrative. While one could argue that only by titling the poem "Syrinx" could Barrett Browning actually emphasize the nymph's agency, the poem's actual title emphasizes not just Syrinx's violation, but also the instrument itself, and its more general application foregrounds questions of music, gender, and violence.

An examination of her earlier poem "A Reed" (1850) also shows Barrett Browning's investment in associating women with instruments culturally coded as masculine and giving them a voice. In "A Reed," the reed itself declares her artistic theory:

I.

I am no trumpet, but a reed:

No flattering breath shall from me lead

A silver sound, a hollow sound.

I will not ring, for priest or king,

One blast that in re-echoing

Would leave a bondsman faster bound.

II.

I am no trumpet, but a reed,—

A broken reed, the wind indeed

Left flat upon a dismal shore;

Yet if a little maid, or child,

Should sigh within it, earnest-mild,

This reed will answer evermore.

III.

I am no trumpet, but a reed.

Go, tell the fishers, as they spread

Their nets along the river's edge,

I will not tear their nets at all,

Nor pierce their hands, if they should fall;

Then let them leave me in the sedge.

Marjorie Stone and Beverly Taylor have convincingly argued that "the multiple signed copies of 'A Reed,' combined with its first-person declarations, suggest that it can be read as a signature poem for Barrett Browning, testifying obliquely to her values, modes of self-representation, and sense of identity" (203); therefore, although the reed never states its gender, it should be considered female. Besides being associated with women's voices, this reed, like Syrinx, is also broken. The breakage was not as violent, since it was "the wind" (8), and not an encounter with Pan, that left her "flat upon a dismal shore" (9). Since this woodwind was broken by an impersonal force rather than another being, the image suggests that society as well as individuals can damage women and limit their voices.

Also like Syrinx, this reed has been turned into an instrument, but unlike her mythic counterpart, she stipulates who will perform on her: "Yet if a little maid, or child, / Should sigh within it, earnest-mild, / This reed will answer evermore" (10-12). In a gesture towards a less violent, more collaborative music, the reed promises to respond to young women and children rather than to vengeful demi-gods. The reed also refuses to let power inequalities change her mind: she will not play music "for priest or king" (4). The reed, too, pledges its non-violence:

"I will not tear their nets at all, / Nor pierce their hands, if they should fall" (16-17). Although this description does fit into the model of women's being docile and placid, even in self-defense (if a fisherman fell on the reed, she would be crushed, and yet she refuses to fight back by piercing his hands), it also values peace above all else and shows by contrast the brutality and horror of Pan's violence. The pledge not to pierce the hands of others also alludes to Isaiah 36.6: "Lo, thou trustest in the staff of this broken reed, on Egypt; whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all that trust in him" (*King James Bible*). By promising not to "pierce their hands," the reed implies that, while broken, she will not be a false leader, or "Pharaoh king of Egypt to all that trust in him," but rather a dependable one who will never "leave a bondsman faster bound" and will instead inspire a new poetic style. The reed's repeated insistence that she is "not a trumpet, but a reed" makes a further plea for a new poetics: instead of having her music be the apocalyptic "trumpet of a prophecy" that Shelley desires, her call for a new dawn of poetry is more modest and less sublime. In light of this Christian significance, the reed in "A Musical Instrument" also has a religious interpretation. In Matthew 12.20, Jesus mentions a reed after explaining the importance of healing those who are injured and less fortunate, even if it means breaking the Sabbath: "A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory." This quotation, itself a direct quotation of Isaiah 42.3, voices the belief that the Christian god will not break those who are already injured, but will rather give them the chance to heal. Since Pan not only bruises reeds, but also breaks them, this biblical allusion further suggests that "A Musical Instrument" cannot endorse Pan's actions, even in the name of art. Both poems, therefore, while still invoking violence, critique it as barbarous and imagine moving beyond such violence to a model for musical poetry based on restorative relations, consent, and women's voices.

Interestingly, like "The Dead Pan," "A Reed" also critiques an earlier work: Shelley's "Hymn of Pan" (1824). Shelley's poem adopts Pan's point of view, and its concluding lines explicitly lament Syrinx's escape:

> I pursued a maiden, and clasp'd a reed:
> Gods and men, we are all deluded thus!
> It breaks in our bosom, and then we bleed.
> All wept—as I think both ye now would,
> If envy or age had not frozen your blood—
> At the sorrow of my sweet pipings. (31-36)

Shelley ventriloquizes not only Pan, but also a common stereotype about women in saying that all men and gods are "deluded thus" (32). Pan implies that all men are deceived by women who pretend to be one thing while being another, and he portrays himself as an innocent, representative man treated unfairly by a deviously teasing, representative woman. The poem also provides Pan's perspective only, never the reed's, and glosses over the attempted rape.[30] Barrett Browning disagrees with this point of view and "not only gives voice to the reed, but also, instead of complaining about the fate of Syrinx, proposes that the role of any poet should be like the reed, mediating moral reality rather than, like Pan, presuming to create it" (Morlier, "Pan" 144), and critiques the problematic gender politics inherent in conventional associations of reeds and woodwinds with masculinity.

Reeds are famously associated with not only the flute, but also the pen (and thereby, as Gilbert and Gubar have demonstrated, also the phallus). As both writing implement and musical instrument were once made of reeds, poetic associations between the two abound. William

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[30] Keats likewise laments Pan's loss of Syrinx in "I Stood Tip-Toe" (1817).

Blake, in the introduction to "Songs of Innocence" (1789), riffs on the connections between reed and quill, music and poetry, when a piper becomes a poet:

> "Piper, sit thee down and write
> In a book, that all may read."
> So he vanished from my sight,
> And I plucked a hollow reed,
>
> And I made a rural pen,
> And I stained the water clear,
> And I wrote my happy songs
> Every child may joy to hear. (13-20)

This poem, like "A Musical Instrument," features a musician breaking a reed, but this time it becomes a "pen" that creates not only poems, but also "songs," preserving the connection between the sister arts. In light of this double meaning of the reed, many scholars see Barrett Browning's Pan as the "universal and pastoral" (Merivale 49) poet figure, since he uses the reed to create art. The acoustical similarity of "Pan" and "pen" further supports their interpretation, as does the poem's claim that Pan is "making a poet out of a man" (39).[31] Yet Pan's belief that a poet must hurt others, especially women, to become an artist directly contradicts Barrett Browning's expression of her own non-violent artistic philosophy in "A Reed." It also ignores the possibility that Syrinx is the pen: the music contains her voice, not Pan's. In this light, the poem becomes as much a commentary on the importance of women's writing and music as it is a

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[31] The juxtaposition of Pan's cruel laughter at cutting the reed with the line "Making a poet out of a man" questions the very notion that such violence should be inherent to the poetic project.

critique of men's. Men were considered true poets, whereas women were considered not to have the intellectual capacity for serious poetic composition, and Barrett Browning voiced these sexist critiques through the character of Romney in *Aurora Leigh* (1856):

> Women as you are,
> Mere women, personal and passionate,
> You give us doating mothers, and chaste wives.
> Sublime Madonnas, and enduring saints!
> We get no Christ from you,–and verily
> We shall not get a poet, in my mind. (II, 222-25)

Since the musical instrument which was considered inappropriate for women also represents the writing implement likewise considered, especially for poetry, ill-placed in the hands of women,[32] Barrett Browning questions this tradition by writing the tale of how Syrinx became an instrument: she has the phallic reed/pen, the conventional symbol of masculine domination in art, actually be a woman. With this gender inversion, Barrett Browning complicates the traditional narrative of the pen and reed as a biological instrument of masculine control. She shows that women can be not only the instruments and subjects of poetry, but also the source, and she turns away from the type of poet Pan embodies.

Barrett Browning's investment in moving away from stories about male artists who suffer for art is made clearer by a comparison to poems about the satyr Marsyas, and his appearance in

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[32] In his introduction to *English Poetesses* (1883), Eric S. Robertson bluntly states "The more women write poetry, the more carefully are we able to compare their poetical powers with men's powers, and the more completely is the case made out against them [. . .] Women have always been inferior to men as writers of poetry; and they always will be" (xv).

Matthew Arnold's *Empedocles on Etna* (1852) in particular. This portrayal of Marsyas[33] is in many ways the antithesis of Barrett Browning's version of the Syrinx myth: Callicles describes how Marsyas, like Pan, "had torn up by the roots / The tall crested water-reeds / [. . .] / And had carved them into flutes" (173-176). This act is not described as a violation of the reeds, and Pan's punishment of being "hang'd upon a branching fir" (148) as Apollo "began to whet his knife" (150) is portrayed as a tragedy which Callicles laments with the words "Ah, poor Faun, poor Faun! ah, poor Faun!" (190). In this story of fashioned flutes, Marsyas, not Syrinx, is penetrated by a knife and made the victim of musical violence instigated by a god that is reminiscent not of rape, but of a pseudo-Crucifixion.[34] According to Fulgentius, Marsyas learned to play the flute after Minerva abandoned hers because playing it gave her "stretched cheeks" (qtd. in Holsinger 54), so this poem, in using the Marsyas legend, invokes the very symptom used by Victorian musicologists to justify the informal ban on women playing the flute. It portrays a tortured male musical Christ figure that endorsed Victorian musical theories of exclusion. Barrett Browning, then, implicitly responds to the literary and musical culture of the time by rejecting tropes that both encouraged a musical ban and privileged the voice of a suffering male, rather than female, poet.

As an examination of "A Reed" and "The Dead Pan" in conjunction with "A Musical Instrument" has demonstrated, Barrett Browning, though intrigued by the artistic philosophy Pan espouses, instead valued an aesthetics based rather on restorative relations. The majority of critics who have addressed these poems, however, write variations on Pan's artistic themes:

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[33] Marsyas was a more popular Victorian subject than Syrinx: in addition to Arnold's poem, Lewis Morris's *The Epic of Hades* (1877), Eugene Lee Hamilton's "Apollo and Marsyas" (1884), Charles George Douglas Roberts's "Marsyas" (1893), and Wilde's *De Profundis* all discuss the myth.
[34] Marsyas's death is often figured as a pseudo-Crucifixion (Holsinger 58), so this poem's representation of it is not anomalous.

Dorothy Mermin claims that Syrinx's violation is ultimately beneficial, as "Pan's violence sums up the various kinds of desire, betrayal, and loss—filial, parental, political, sexual—that arouse the most poetically energizing emotions in *Last Poets*" (243), and thus implicitly endorses Pan's belief that this sexual violence is necessary for art. Pan's perspective is most explicitly voiced in Hiram Corson's 1895 reading of the poem, in which the suffering of the poet must be "refined and exalted" to produce an expression of "sympathy and relationship" with the world (259). To him, Syrinx is only "a potential poet' (261) who, thanks to Pan's violent actions, is "now fully prepared to receive the divine afflatus, and, on receiving it, to give forth a sweet and soul-quickening music" (262). Such an interpretation not only overlooks the consistently critical view of Pan in Barrett Browning's poems, but also ventriloquizes Pan's own beliefs. Barrett Browning certainly "critique[s] . . . the culture that [her Romantic predecessors] represent and the injustice that they maintain, however unintentionally, against serious women poets" (Morlier, "Pan" 151) as well as the culture that replicates these myths and the double standard that lets women represent instruments which they are forbidden from playing; however, she also indicts poets, like Pan, who, however well-meaning, perpetuate these damaging theories through their myths (and, in a modern correlation, critics who do the same) and who see metaphorical violence against women as a necessary stage of their growth into full-fledged poets.

Robert Browning adopts his wife's themes of the connections between poetry, the flute, and the systematic silencing of women in "Flute-Music, with an Accompaniment" from *Asolando* (1889) in a surprisingly progressive manner that critics have similarly done their best to counteract. The poem is a dialogue between a man and a woman (known only as "He" and "She") in which both hear a flute player and discuss the merits of his music, with the man speaking in praise of the performance and its ability to convey the nuances of love, and the

woman pragmatically pointing out the flautist's inexperience and errors. Whereas most critics have assumed that the poetic dialogue between a man and a woman addresses the "contrast between illusion and reality" (Kennedy 63) and ultimately have agreed that the man has the correct understanding of the music, they overlook the woman's knowledge of flute music and the radical politics of that knowledge in light of the history of women's flute playing.

In the 1880s two women, Maria Bianchini and Cora Cardigan, were becoming world-famous for doing something that had previously been unthinkable: they were playing flute in public on stages throughout Europe. *The Musical World* printed a review of Bianchini's performance in Vienna in 1880 that commented on the changing views of female flautists:

> The unusual sight of a lady playing such an instrument did not strike people as so strange as we thought it would; Signora Bianchini, who has a tall figure and whose demeanour is characterized by sympathetic, unaffected simplicity, avoids the ugly contortions of the lips and short-breathed blowing which may so easily jeopardise the aesthetic effect of flute-playing. Managed as it was on the occasion in question, the flute is decidedly not an unfeminine instrument. (Hanslick 134)

Although the review does allow that the flute should not be off-limits for women, it is careful to show that it was permissible "on the occasion in question," not in general. Although this review was reprinted in London, it was originally published in Vienna where public disapprobation against women flautists was weaker, which might also explain the more positive outlook. An advertisement for Cardigan from 1884 further demonstrates that female flautists were a deviation from the norm, as it presents her as "the only Lady Flute, Piccolo, and Violin Solo Artiste on the English Stage" for her musical hall performance (qtd. in Gillett 197). Only in 1885 was she permitted to perform in more elegant and traditional concert venues for classical music, like St.

James's Hall (Gillett 197). While women were gaining the right to play flute in public, however, they still encountered substantial limitations: they were ineligible for music scholarships at the Royal Academy of Music until 1901 (although they could attend by 1892) and at the Royal College of Music until 1918. The very fact that these two female flautists drew such focus shows that the culture at large was still hesitant to accept them. In 1892, after a concert featuring women flautists from the Royal Academy of Music, an attendee insisted in *The Globe* that there should be legislation banning them. *The Magazine of Music* responded that they were "entirely in accord" with the critic's distaste of women playing wind instruments, but believed such action would be unnecessary: they "feel sure that the pressure of public opinion is quite sufficient to prevent the new fashion from coming into universal vogue" (180). The *Magazine* also insisted that women themselves would see the folly of these attempts to "rival man," since "women may generally be trusted to avoid pursuits which cannot be successfully followed except at a sacrifice of personal attractiveness" (180). Robert Browning, as an amateur musician and concert lover, was most likely aware not only of the increasing presence of women flautists in year he wrote "Flute-Music, with an Accompaniment," but also of the heated debates these musical women produced, and his decision to have a woman express her depth of knowledge about flute music is a radical departure from the social norm and from the history of flute music poems.

Browning's female speaker has an extensive knowledge of the instrument, as her detailed discussion of musical instruction as well as repertoire demonstrates:

> Out then with—what treatise?
>
> *Youth's Complete Instructor*
>
> *How to play the Flute. Quid petis?*
>
> Follow Youth's conductor

On and on, through *Easy*,

Up to *Harder*, *Hardest*

Flute-piece, till thou, flautist wheezy,

Possibly discardest

Tootlings hoarse and husky,

Mayst expend with courage

Breath—on tunes once bright, now dusky—

Meant to cool thy porridge. (61-72)

She recognizes the pieces that the flautist plays as from a particular (imaginary) method book—*Youth's Complete Instructor / How to play the Flute"* (62-63)—a title which perfectly parodies common flute technical manuals of the day, with such titles as Swaine's *The Young Musician* (1818), Robert Keith's *A New and Complete Preceptor for the German Flute* (1815), and Edward Miller's earlier *The New Flute Instructor or The Art of Playing the German Flute* (1799) (Powell). Since the vast majority of amateur performers begin not with instruction books designed to improve their breath support or dexterity, but with actual pieces which they perform for their enjoyment rather than for mastery, her understanding, even in jest, of how method books are structured and titled demonstrates her familiarity with the materials that prepare musicians to perform more complicated works. She imagines the player gaining proficiency and performing the "*Hardest / Flute-piece*" (66-67), but she critiques his tone, breath support, and interpretation: he sounds "wheezy" (67), so he does not support the sound with pressure from his diaphragm, and although he may "possibly discard[]" (68) his "Tootlings hoarse and husky" (69), he currently lacks the clear, pure sound required for good flute playing and reduces beautiful "tunes once bright" to mere "tootlings" which sound "now dusky" (71), having lost their grandeur.

While her comment that his breath is "Meant to cool thy porridge" (72) rather than to play flute is part of her witty banter, it has a larger critique: she thinks that his playing is mundane and passionless--it cools rather than inflames.

The woman appears to know as much about famous flute pieces as she does about breath support and technique books. Her words show that she actually can hear the sublime beauty of music that this flautist cannot capture:

> That's an air of Tulou's
> He maltreats persistent, . . .
> Listen! That's *legato*
> Rightly played, his fingers restive
> Touch as if *staccato*. (73-74, 82-84)

With these lines, the woman demonstrates detailed knowledge of the music she hears; she knows that a particular phrase should be played smoothly, with all the notes connected, rather than with each note played short and separate. This difference is not a mere technical error: it is also an interpretive error. *Legato* phrases are usually more lyrical and soothing because of their continuous notes, whereas *staccato* phrases are sharper and less calm. The flautist has confused the two--as dramatic a change as converting a happy line to a sad one--and to that extent the flautist's beautiful interpretation of music is not as perfect as the man would like to believe. She further shows her familiarity with the flute by mentioning Jean-Louis Tulou (1786-1865), a flute professor at the Paris Conservatoire, whose *Méthode de Flûte* (1835) became the official flute method book at that influential institution (Boland v).

The woman emphasizes her interpretive, as well as technical, understanding of music when she responds to the man's objection that to her, "All's mere repetition" (110) without beauty:

> You, the just-initiate,
> Praise to heart's content (what wonder?)
> Tootings I hear vitiate
> Romeo's serenading—
> I who, times full twenty,
> Turned to ice—no ash-tops aiding—
> At his *caldamente*. (126-132)

Whereas the man hears the "passionate imploring" in the flautist's rendition of Gounod's *Romeo et Juliette*, the woman hears how it is marred: as before, when the flautist played *staccato* for a *legato* passage, here, the flautist aims to play *caldamente* (warmly) and instead produces the opposite effect of chill. She, as an informed musician, is moved by music that can truly convey passion, not just music that approximates passion.

She proves her point most forcefully when she demonstrates that her knowledge comes not from repeatedly hearing the flautist practice, but from having studied and learned the piece herself:

> So, 'twas distance altered
> Sharps to flats? The missing
> Bar when syncopation faltered
> (You thought—paused for kissing!)
> Ash-tops too felonious

Intercepted? Rather
Say—they well-nigh made euphonious
Discord, helped to gather
Phrase, by phrase, turn patches
Into simulated
Unity which botching matches,—
Scraps redintegrated. (133-144)

Her facetious, teasing comment on whether their distance from the flautist altered "sharps to flats" (134) implies that he either plays incorrect notes (i.e. a flat for a sharp) or is out of tune. She knows the music so well that she can tell that the flautist not only left out a measure, but also botched the syncopation. She also implies that her companion may not be the brilliant interpreter of music he claims to be, since he cannot tell the difference between a mistake and a romantic overture.

His tone deafness applies not only to music but also to relationships, as both his misinterpretation and his responses to his female companion demonstrate: the man never credits her with musical knowledge or expertise, as he instead always assumes that he truly understands music while she is a mere dilettante. His opening remarks show that his appreciation of the music arises from a Romantic literary tradition rather than a musical one:

Ah, the bird-like fluting
Through the ash-tops yonder—
Bullfinch-bubblings, soft sounds suiting
What sweet thoughts, I wonder? (1-4)

He compares the flautist with an unseen songbird like Keats's nightingale and imagines the entire musical scene as a part of the natural world rather than the parlor. He also appears to believe that this literary knowledge of natural musical makes him uniquely qualified to pass judgment on composed musical performances. He meets the woman's critiques with name-calling, such as "trick-betrayer" (85) and "unwise one" (86). He further claims that she is "telling tales" (86) and that the flautist's mistakes are proof that he is not "lusting / Through no vile ambition / After making captive / All the world" (91-94): the latter claim implies that her greater knowledge of music and higher standards betray a "vile ambition" (91) to hold the world in thrall. He also dismisses her remarks on Gounod, implies that she cannot understand the beauty of music, and ends by expressing his desire to continue with his beliefs unchallenged:

> But since I sleep, don't wake me!
>
> What if all's appearance?
>
> Is not outside seeming
>
> Real as substance inside?
>
> Both are facts, so leave me dreaming. (184-188)

If we agree with Nachum Schoffman that the music over which they argue is "Ah! Lève-toi, soleil," the "waking" scene from Gounod's Act II scene II of *Roméo et Juliette* (62),[35] then Browning is ironizing the speaker: he claims to truly understand the passion and soul of the music, but refuses to wake up to the truth of the "waking" scene. Like the flautist's playing that leaves the woman "icy" rather than *calda* or the phrase *staccato* rather than *legato,* here, it leaves the speaker asleep rather than awake. Although the man appears to be romantically interested in

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[35] He convincingly details both the musical connections between the poem and the aria and determines that "If this identification is correct, then the details of the woman's criticism can be understood as she points out that the flutist's rendition of this aria is full of mistakes" (62).

his companion, as Castan has argued (5), and their discussion is flirtation banter, this affection appears to have its rather strictly-delineated limits: he gives a male flute player benefit of the doubt over a female one, and, in assuming her ignorance, refuses to grant her legitimacy. Such attitudes and insults are representative of the widespread difficulties such women flautists faced.

In fact, the speaker's dismissal of his companion emulates the dismissive language that women musical critics faced. Krebs voiced many of these objections just four years after the publication of Browning's poem: he insists that, "As a musical critic, on the whole, women cannot, I think, be considered successful," in part because "A woman does not deliberately approve or condemn a composition or its performance without a good reason for doing so; but this reason, though generally quite satisfactory and sufficient to herself, is frequently apparent to no one else, and, consequently, her criticism, though always a model of candor, must often yield to the more deliberate judgment of men." (86). The criticism that She frames in Browning's poem is certainly a model of candor, and the response He makes to her suggests that her criticism is "apparent to no one else." Since the man receives the final word, the poem appears to suggest that the woman has "yield[ed] to the more deliberate judgment of men," and that the man is left unawakened. This conclusion would initially imply that the poem silences female flautists and refuses to take them seriously as musicians, a perspective that the majority of critics have endorsed. Castan believes that the woman is a bad interpreter of music because she does not "hear the flute playing as he does" (7), while Donald Hair agrees that the woman has minimal music understanding: "there is no good reason to take the woman's word that the flute-playing is badly done, nor to trust her judgment of the performance any more than the man's" (5).

However, this poem is remarkable not only for the way it ventriloquizes the critiques of women's musical knowledge, but also for its ability to overturn those conventions while

appearing to endorse them. Krebs insisted that women feel, rather than understand, music: "Women feel intuitively the power of music, and are deeply affected by its appeals to the emotions, they are frequently led astray in their judgments, because they are more easily impressed than men in favor of, or against a certain artist or his work" (86). However, Browning's female speaker, while she does understand the emotions of the music, is not more "easily impressed" than her male counterpart, who instead more accurately embodies this quotation. Likewise, Krebs also claimed that women, "more dominated by emotions and intuitions," arrive at musical understanding instinctively, while men instead follow "profound reasoning" (83). He further asserts that "A man seeks to explain why and how he arrives at certain musical conclusions, while a woman is not apt to define her impressions and deductions clearly, and is, therefore, less successful in giving them an outward direction and in framing their tones" (83). Conversely, in Browning's poem, the man uses impressionistic language while the woman clearly explains her musical understanding. By voicing both sides of the argument, yet overturning one side, Browning shows the unfair treatment of women who try to show their expertise in areas where their presence has just recently been grudgingly permitted.[36]

Although Browning's poem opposes Krebs's theories, most criticism of it actually endorses and advances those theories by equating the woman with music while denying her any musical knowledge. Castan argues that "she is unwise, then, because the true subject of his fancy is her rather than the music, and if she destroys what he is saying about it, she is, unbeknown to herself, destroying herself, revealing herself as something other than what he sees

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[36] Browning's "Inapprehensiveness," also from *Asolando*, likewise features a man and a woman disagreeing about art, but here, the man listens to the woman's critique ("No, the book / [. . ./] was not by Ruskin" (30-32)), and suggests a new attribution in response ("Vernon Lee?" (32)). With this comparison, Browning suggests that women receive more acceptance as literary critics and writers than they do as flautists or musical critics.

her as" (6). His claim that she is "destroying herself" in critiquing the music implies both that her self-worth is created only by the man's thoughts and that she has no independent existence. In essence, he argues that she is the flute music itself. Ridenour takes this line of reasoning a step further: "implicitly here the woman is the song. Or rather, the flute music as accompanied by the structuring commentary of the man and the woman all together make up the song, a fact which is a joke on the woman" (372). These comments make overt a problem that Barrett Browning herself pointed out in "A Musical Instrument": in the Victorian period, and even in our own age, women in poetry can represent flute music, but are not allowed to perform, understand, or critique it. Instead, such women were and are dismissed or insulted, accused by critics of having "no music in [their] soul[s]" (Castan 7), of a "distorted and repressed fancy like that of Tom Gradgrind in *Hard Times* or of Charley Hexham in *Our Mutual Friend*" (Hair 5), of being "overcritical" out of revenge because the flute player may have "rejected her love some time in the past" (Kennedy 64), and of being "reductive" (Hollander, "Browning" 86) and "aggressive[ly] domineering" (Castan 4) for disagreeing with the man's interpretation. By not examining the cultural, gendered significance of the flute, these critics reduce the poem to a conventional portrayal of man's superior knowledge based on their own biases rather than emphasize its engagement with a more progressive discourse based on women's musical agency and knowledge. Through their comments, they re-silence women and reinforce the sexist stereotypes and Victorian social conditions these poems write against.

As this chapter has demonstrated, poems involving women and forbidden instruments like the flute and violin often invoked the very tropes that musical culture at large used to keep the instrument off-limits: women were figured as the passive instrument on which a male master must play, the violin transmitted dangerous and magical knowledge to women, the flute and

violin were symbols of masculine virility, and women lacked the musical knowledge necessary to be taken seriously as musicians. All the writers here considered, regardless of their geographic origin, sexual orientation, or gender, write against these tropes, both to critique the double standard facing women musicians, and to express ideas as revolutionary as women's performing on these instruments. Violin poems interrogate the repression of sexual desire, and male privilege and the violence it can produce, while also voicing a hope for increased agency for women. Flute and reed poems criticize poetry's reliance on sexual violence against women to create art and wish for a new, more ethical poetics based on valuing women's musical knowledge. Since all these poems make their arguments through transgressive conformity, appearing to support that which they question, only by attending to the cultural and gendered history of these instruments can we fully understand the political arguments of these poems and avoid endorsing the very ideas they critique.

Chapter 2

Lost Voices and Vanished Hands: Missing Musicians and their Allowed Instruments

While playing the violin or flute was considered unladylike during much of the nineteenth century, singing and playing piano were deemed essential skills for all young ladies of the middle class. Women were condemned for the "ungraceful" and "unfeminine" activities of playing flute and violin, but they were praised for the supposedly more elegant pastimes of singing and playing the piano, activities that comprised a central component of courtship rituals as they provided potential suitors with ample opportunity to admire the performing women. Victorian music periodicals were replete with articles explaining why vocal and pianistic skills were essential for a good, docile, subservient woman whose playing brought joy to the home. In Victorian poems, however, women singers and pianists are hardly submissive: Oscar Wilde's pianist in "In a Gold Room" (1882) is openly sensual rather than modest, and Mary Coleridge's performer in "To a Piano" (1908) channels a Romantic prophetic vision. Likewise, Alfred Tennyson's Lady in "The Lady of Shalott" (1842) refuses the role of the passive parlor performer and tries her hand at public singing and instigating courtship, George Eliot's titular character in *Armgart* (1871) rejects an advantageous marriage to pursue her musical career, and Amy Levy's singer-pianist in "To Sylvia" (1884) experiences sexual self-gratification through her performances.

While these works demonstrate the transgressive possibilities of women's musical skills, the musical women they depict are missing or silenced: most piano poems feature dead pianists or depict a woman leaving her instrument at a man's request, and women in singing poems fare equally poorly. Tennyson's Lady dies while singing, and Armgart loses her singing voice. This silencing might initially seem to be proof that the poets wish to punish their heroines for their

transgressions, but it is instead part of a larger political project: it enacts the way that the restrictions governing women's singing and piano playing systematically silence women. These works, despite their emphasis on absent and silenced women, do contain some hope for the future: the music of dead women is recorded through poetry, showing that despite the best efforts of society, women's voices cannot be excised.

The "Remembered Strain" of Silenced Pianists

The most prevalent assumption about pianos in literature comes from nineteenth-century novels, in which piano playing is embroiled in courtship ritual: from Emma's theorizing on which suitor bought the pianoforte for Jane Fairfax, to Walter Hartright's and Laura Fairlie's implicit acknowledgment of their love as Laura plays, to Lord Henry's flirtation with Dorian Gray after Dorian's performance of Schumann. Victorian poems also describe pianistic performances, although such works have rarely received critical commentary. In the only substantial study of nineteenth-century piano poems, Regula Hohl Trillini insists that Victorian piano poems "kill the pianist," or rather depict the pianist "as actually dead, or at least far enough away in time and space to be no more than a memory" (116), to show "the implicit message of most nineteenth-century piano poetry": "that the only good woman pianist is--distanced and silenced—a dead woman pianist" (122). But in fact, poets invoke the piano and its gendered associations for more varied reasons. When men are shown at the piano, an occurrence that challenges conventional gender stereotypes, they demonstrate their technical prowess at the expense of silenced women pianists. When women perform, they are often either feared or admired for the sexual passion their music produces—a trait that all musicological treatises rail against—or for their ability to be remembered long after playing, and even after death. Instead of seeing this association between music and the afterlife as evidence that the "only good pianist

is a dead pianist," I view it as a way for poets, especially women poets, to acknowledge that women's musical art is not merely a conventional, transient demonstration of courtship, but rather a form of artistic immortality.

In order to understand how these poetic depictions challenge societal restrictions governing the piano, we must first examine the restrictions themselves. Augusta Webster explains it best in her essay "Pianist and Martyr," from *A Housewife's Opinions*:

> In our days there are many maidens, young and doubtless heavenly, who are perseveringly flattening their finger-tips with a view to becoming musical. They pursue their art of measured sounds ascetically, not to gratify a taste but to perform a duty. Left to their own instinctive aspirations, they would have been as likely to wish to learn bricklaying as instrumental music, but they, or their parents for them, know the moral proprieties, and therefore they set themselves to fulfil one of the chief purposes to which Nature has destined them and acquire the womanly virtue of playing the piano. The better the girl the longer she practises. (21)

Piano playing was required for women in polite society and was an obligatory part of the process of girling, or, as critic Ruth Solie explains it, the "performance—of girlhood, both to satisfy familial and social demands . . . and . . . to satisfy needs of their own either to resist those demands or to reassure themselves about their own capacity to fulfill them" (86): to be instructed in piano was to be instructed in being a becoming a woman. Elizabeth Barrett Browning describes Aurora's reluctant education in piano playing in the first book of *Aurora Leigh* (1856):

> I learnt much music,-such as would have been
> As quite impossible in Johnson's day

As still it might be wished—fine sleights of hand
And unimagined fingering, shuffling off
The hearer's soul through hurricanes of notes
To a noisy Tophet. (1.415-420)

Aurora both registers the increased importance of piano playing in the nineteenth century and expresses her regret at the new responsibility that the increased popularity of the piano entails. She also portrays the fast fingerwork characteristic of impressive technique as the equivalent of a magic trick that transports its hearers not to paradise, as one might expect, but to hell ("Tophet"). This particular hell is connected with the practice of child sacrifice, as 2 Kings 23.10 makes plain: "And he defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech" (*King James Bible)*. Barrett Browning associates the long hours girls would sit at the piano mechanically practicing scales and drilling difficult passages with burning children in a sacrifice to false gods, here to the rigid societal expectations for young women.

Victorians theorized that the piano was the ideal instrument for women: unlike the violin, the piano did not require any sort of contortion to play, and the performer could demurely sit, the instrument blocking her body from view, without being accused of exhibitionism (Gillett 4). Even when playing the piano, women had to make sure their technique did not push the boundaries of feminine propriety: a piano-playing treatise explains that, when practicing, women should avoid keeping their arms close their sides, as it is an "ungraceful attitude" (Mary 15), and they should avoid being "in danger of playing in [a] hard and violent manner" which is "truly unfeminine and disagreeable and causes the instrument to emit a tone as different from that which a good performer would produce, as the hoarse cries of London are from the

modulations of a scientific singer" (Mary 31). A woman was therefore expected to play in ways befitting her gender as well as her class to avoid charges of impropriety. Coventry Patmore encapsulates his wife's character through a description of her "correct" and ladylike performance at the piano in "The Course of True Love" from *The Angel in the House* (1854):

> I held the half-shut door, and heard
>
> The voice of my betrothed wife,
>
> Who sang my verses, every word
>
> By music taught its latent life;
>
> With interludes of well-touch'd notes,
>
> That flash'd, surprising and serene,
>
> As meteor after meteor floats
>
> The soft, autumnal stars between. (5-12)

The speaker's wife proves her worth not only by playing piano and singing, but also by singing her husband's words and bringing to the fore their "latent life" (8).

These associations then led to higher musical expectations for women: they were encouraged to practice for hours a day, regardless of their feelings about the instrument. According to Webster, playing piano has nothing to do with art or pleasure and is instead an exercise in submission to conventional morality and gender roles on the part of young women who would prefer "to write our epic or our recondite treatise on political economy".[37] Webster also acknowledges the expectation that women should "seek and value musical acquirements as

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[37] Some women also objected to piano playing as a required accomplishment because it took them away not from artistic or intellectual achievements, but from their duties in the home, complaining that "Fathers will continue to gratify their pride and vanity by buying second-hand pianos instead of sewing-machines, and mothers will urge slipshod daughters to sit down to them, instead of teaching them to mend stockings" (June 101).

a means of winning a husband" (22), although she views this popular adage as a false justification for a "barbarous custom" of making women "martyrs to music" (24):

> Girls who consciously go to work to get married know very well that a well-placed sigh is worth fifty sonatas and that no amount of major or minor prestidigitation can win a triumph over the rival who, though a dunce at the music-book is an expert in smiles and dropped eyelids. (22)

For all these criticisms, some women pianists found within the gendered restrictions of the time a creative power that they considered akin to the composition of poetry:[38]

> Both these delightful arts call into being a thousand beautiful imaginations, tender feelings, and passionate impulses. . . . The delights of music are our own creation. We become for the time poets ourselves and enjoy the high privilege of inventing, combining, and diversifying, at pleasure, the images which harmonious sounds raise in our minds. (Mary 55)

Piano playing provided women with a socially acceptable outlet for their compositional abilities; whereas poetry and musical composition were often considered the domain of men, women could use the instrument to create their own art to rival that of their masculine counterparts. Overall, then, piano playing enabled some women to become musical poets and to find an emotional outlet, while forcing other women to practice futilely for hours a day in order to impress a mate; regardless of the manifold feelings women had regarding the instrument, middle- and upper-class women were all expected to play it.

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[38] Other writers, including George Eliot, felt that piano playing gave women an over-inflated sense of their own skills and artistry: "Ladies are wont to be grossly deceived as to their power of playing on the piano; here, certain positive difficulties of execution have to be conquered, and incompetence inevitably breaks down" (107).

Despite the piano's status as the dominant instrument for women, Victorian poems rarely show female pianists: in fact, if they feature a scene of performance, they often involve a male pianist, even though Trillini insists that, in piano poems, "the male speaker touches a single key or chord—he does not, of course, actually play, let alone perform on the piano" (119). A glance at these works that privilege men performing on the keys most associated with women more fully illustrates how these poems attempt to silence musical women who nonetheless haunt the text.

Robert Browning's "A Toccata of Galuppi's" (1855) invokes the connections between music and silenced women in his tale of a scientific speaker who hears a piano composition that helps him to experience Venice and to critique its offerings of sexual pleasure as luxurious and fleeting. The poem itself performs the overt difficulty of the piano music through its complex rhythm: the poem's incessant trochaic octameter echoes the fast fingerwork characteristic of the Toccata style: "Oh Galuppi, Baldassaro, this is very sad to find! / I can hardly misconceive you; it would prove me deaf and blind; / But although I take your meaning, 'tis with such a heavy mind!" (1-3).[39] For a toccata, or "touch piece," the poem actually has very little touching or emphasis on the physical virtuosity of piano playing. The closest approximations to the corporeality of music in this poem are the speaker's comment that Galuppi "sat and played Toccatas" (18) and the description of an imagined eighteenth-century aristocrat "finger[ing] on

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[39] Most criticism that addresses music in this poem likewise highlights the blurring of boundaries between the two arts: Marc Plamondon argues that the poem has a fugal section (311), David Parkingson claims that each of the eight feet of a line represents a note of a scale (Plamondon 309), Stephen Ford insists that the poem has a double octave form (Plamondon 309), and Wendell Stacy Johnson believes that "The airy speed of these lines, the regular rhythm, the triple rhyme suggest something graceful, artificial, and light, and embody the grace, artifice, and lightness of a clavierpiece" (204). While these observations shed light on the ways in which the poem dramatizes the virtuosity of the music, they overlook the connections between virtuosity and gender.

his sword" (17) during the music. Plamondon argues that the aristocrat drums his fingers "in imitation of the toccata," "an example of a habit that is often considered to be a simplistic appreciation of music" (317); why, then, does the speaker displace the scene of musical performance onto an imaginary figure, who, during this scene, flirts with a young woman? In this poem, as with its fellow piano poems, the speaker conflates musical expression with sexual desire: to him, fingering a piano is essentially the same as fingering a different sort of pleasurable instrument.

Lest we miss the association between sword, phallus, and music, the poem gives us embodied women in place of embodied music: "Was a lady such a lady, cheeks so round and lips so red, — / On her neck the small face buoyant, like a bell-flower on its bed, / O'er the breast's superb abundance where a man might base his head?" (13-15). The speaker cares more for the physical work involved in kissing a woman's chest than he does for the music he supposedly masters.[40] Although the musical embodiment is essentially projected onto the sexualized woman, an implicit acknowledgment of the gendering of music in the Victorian period, the woman remains silent. The speaker does imagine her conversing with her companion ("they'd break talk off" (16)), but the poem makes it clear that the ensuing words are the music, translated into speech, instead of her actual words. Rather than record her (imaginary) conversation, the speaker narrates her actions: she "bite[s] her mask's black velvet" (17), a gesture that might seem seductive or flirtatious, unless the significance of the mask itself is considered. In Carnival, women often wore a black velvet mask that covered much of the face, usually called a "moretta." Ostensibly to cloak the identity of its wearers, these masks obscure both face and

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[40] As Herbert Tucker has pointed out, reading the phrase "breast's superb abundance" out loud effectively forces its performers to pucker up as part of a different kind of acoustic performance (8).

voice. They lacked ribbons or holding sticks to keep them in place, and instead had a button that the wearer would bite, or hold with her teeth, thus ensuring that she would be unable to speak or enunciate (Burgin 26). The punctuation enacts the silencing, or "buttoning up" inherent in this image: "--She, to bite her mask's black velvet" (17). The combination of the comma between the stressed and unstressed syllable and the opening dash disrupts the poem's perpetual motion. The speaker, then, projects the music's embodiment onto a silenced, sexualized woman.

Browning's poem is one of a chorus of works in which men play a feminized instrument and wish for silent women. John Todhunter's "Cäcilchen at the Piano" (1876) adapts the famous story in which Saint Cecilia's beautiful playing "drew an angel down" from Heaven, and inverts it, such that "the Master" takes her place at the piano to show her how the instrument ought to be played:

> What her flippant fingers
> Dashed at anyhow,
> On the ear it lingers
> Ravishingly now. (33-36)

His divine music, rendered decidedly sexual, highlights Cecilia's supposed immaturity and lack of true understanding of music: although she can play a wide variety of music, including the "Valse," "Toccata / Rondo, fantaisie, / Saraband, sonata" (9-11) by composers including "Weber" (7), "Mozart and Haydn," and "Beethoven" (17), the speaker explains that "the little sloven . . . murdered" (19-20) these works. Only when the male angel renders Cecilia silent by "waving her from her seat" "With imperious gesture" (27-28) does the music have "immortal passion" (39) and "mysteries of emotion" (47). "The Master" who takes over the keys ostensibly refers to the angel who came from Heaven, and therefore this poem remarks on the inferiority of

earthly music in comparison with the divine; however, the gender of the two figures invites a second interpretation. Since Saint Cecilia, the patron saint of music, is the paragon of women's musicianship, this poem's condescending insistence on a woman's musical inferiority to a man by extension sounds dismissive of all women pianists. It registers unease at women's increasing musical control over the home and suggests a desire to seize that control and reappropriate it for men.

Edwin Arnold's "To a Lady Singing" (1853) likewise complains about a woman's performance and demands silence, but his speaker argues that there is too much, rather than too little, emotion:

> Cease the rich tide of that silver tone,
> Though its accent be sweeter than seraph's own;
> Echo no more with those quivering lips
> The sounds flashing up from thy finger-tips. (5-8)

The rise and fall of the melody's "tide" and performer's bodily presence—the "quivering lips" (7) and "finger-tips" (8)—give rise to his own passions; her sexual music haunts his mind as the rhyme of "lips" with "tips" haunts the poem's soundscape. Deeming his physical response of "half-drawn breath and the flushing brow" (10) to be proof that he is bound by the sexual "chains of [her] witchery" (12), he insists that he has had "Enough! enough" (1) of her piano playing, fearing that his heart will be "impress[ed] / With a mark too deep for forgetfulness" (23-24). Although a woman was supposed to play for a suitor with the hope of encouraging him to select her, thereby adopting a passive position, this poem registers fear at the power women can wield in courtship at the piano: since men must sit and listen during that time and cannot control or shut out the sounds they hear, women can actually leave a mark and be remembered, even after

death, giving them a type of artistic immortality.

Thomas Hardy's "The Haunting Fingers, A Phantasy in a Museum of Musical Instruments" (1923) renders this mark literal in its description of a clavier "filmed with fingers" (33). "The tender pat / Of her airy finger-tips" (25-26) will remain even though the woman herself is gone. Another Hardy poem, "The Re-enactment" (1914), shows a Gothic fascination with the ghostly mark of a woman pianist: a man enters the speaker's abode, claims that a woman, presumably a past lover, is in the room, and demands that the speaker put the furniture in its old arrangement, which she once preferred. Only after the speaker "feigned to push the old piano where he had shown" (60) does the man declare "Aha—now I can see her" (61): her ability to linger in his present is determined by her association with the piano. Even when speakers or years try to silence women piano players, the musicians often respond from beyond the grave.

The piano is particularly well-suited to depict women lingering after death because of how the instrument itself produces sound. Unlike string or wind instruments such as the violin or the flute, which sustain notes through continuous movement of the bow on a string or of breath through an opening, the piano produces sound when a hammer, attached to a key, gently hits a string: once the string sounds, it starts to fade, as the piano has no means of prolonging a note (other than through the damper pedal, which was not commonly used until the nineteenth century (Elson 627)). The sense of a legato passage or sound connecting from one note to the next is a function of echo and memory, which holds the past note alongside the present note. Remembered women, therefore, become like sound from a piano: they make their mark on the instrument, and then fade away, only brought to life through the memory of sound. This association between women and sound that haunts men also provides one outlet by which

women can achieve artistic immortality, albeit of a muted type: although women's musical compositions, and sometimes their poems, were disparaged while they lived, the ghost of their music haunts speakers, poets, and instruments long after they are gone, and it cannot be exorcised.

Unlike other piano poems composed by men, Oscar Wilde's "In the Gold Room—A Harmony" (1882) embraces, rather than fears, a woman's sexual presence at the piano:

Her ivory hands on the ivory keys
    Strayed in a fitful fantasy,
Like the silver gleam when the poplar trees
    Rustle their pale leaves listlessly,
Or the drifting foam of a restless sea
    When the waves show their teeth in the flying breeze.

Her gold hair fell on the wall of gold
    Like the delicate gossamer tangles spun
On the burnished disk of the marigold,
    Or the sun-flower turning to meet the sun
When the gloom of the jealous night is done,
    And the spear of the lily is aureoled.

And her sweet red lips on these lips of mine
    Burned like the ruby fire set
In the swinging lamp of a crimson shrine,

Or the bleeding wounds of the pomegranate,

Or the heart of the lotus drenched and wet

With the spilt-out blood of the rose-red wine.

Wilde, unlike earlier writers of piano poems, foregrounds the woman's musicianship: her hands "Strayed in a fitful fantasy" (2) over the keys. While this line seems to imply that her fingers move aimlessly, it actually shows her musical abilities. A fantasy is a type of musical piece based on improvisation. Since women were not expected to have abilities in composition—in fact, they were widely considered incapable of creating music[41]—Wilde's pianist displays uncharacteristic musical agency. The poem's meter demonstrates this improvisatory quality, as the occasional triple pattern ("hands on the" (1), "Strayed in a" (2), and "foam of a" (5)) creates variation in the tetrameter. The comparison of her playing to "the silver gleam when the poplar trees / Rustle their pale leaves listlessly" (3-4) portrays her compositional abilities not as monstrous or abnormal, but as a part of nature. The poem's music itself echoes this natural music through the repeated "s" and "le" sounds that whisper through these lines like wind through leaves. Wilde's pianist is neither deposed from her piano bench nor castigated for her sexual attraction, but rather celebrated for her physical presence: the speaker luxuriates in the description of "Her ivory hands on the ivory keys" (1) and "Her gold hair" as it "fell on the wall of gold" (7). Her hands match with the keys, and her hair with the decorative gold casing of the instrument so that she becomes a part of the piano. Wilde's repetition of "ivory" and "gold" instead of their synonyms further accentuates the similarity between the woman and the instrument, as does the consonance between "fell" and "wall" when describing the woman's tresses. Her physical presence becomes most sexually apparent when she plays on her lover

[41] For an extended discussion of this stereotype, see the *Armgart* section of this chapter.

rather than the piano: "her sweet red lips on these lips of mine" (13). This movement from piano music to kissing echoes Shakespeare's sonnet 128 in which the speaker, after an innuendo-laden complaint that the keys of the virginal are more intimate than he with his virginal pianist-lover, concludes by requesting a compromise: the keys can have "thy fingers, me thy lips to kiss" (14). Wilde's poem concludes by making Shakespeare's request a reality. The woman actually kisses the speaker, harkening back to the Renaissance celebration of the sexuality of the woman instrumentalist rather than a fear of it, even though the juxtaposition of her red lips with "bleeding wounds" (16) and "spilt-out blood" (18) makes her carnal desire appear cannibalistic and reflects a small degree of the fear of women's sexuality that earlier piano poems, from "A Toccata of Galuppi's" to "To a Lady Singing" exude.[42]

The poem primarily celebrates rather than fears her beauty, however, as its connection to lily and the sunflower, Wilde's favorite symbols for his artistic vision, demonstrate. While on tour in the United States, Wilde insisted that he loved

> the lily and sunflower . . . because of their perfectness of form and adaptability for decorative purposes. What is more beautiful than the gracefully flowering outlines of the lily and the symmetry of the sunflower with its large round disk of rich reddish brown surrounded by its beautiful rays of yellow. . . It always looks to the sun, never dropping its head toward the cold shadows of earth. (qtd. in Hofer and Scharnhorst 143).

Wilde incorporates both the "gracefully flowering outlines of the lily" (it "is aureoled" (12) with yellow petals) and the sunflower's "turning to meet the sun" (10) in his comparisons to the

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[42] Although the pianist is certainly physically present and alive, Wilde does invoke the trope of dead women pianists in the final stanza through a comparison to Persephone: he associates the pianist's lips with the pomegranate seeds that condemned the deity to spending months at a time in the underworld. However, since Persephone's death is cyclical rather than permanent, even this allusion alters the trend.

pianist at the piano, and also paints the scene with the same color scheme as this prose passage. The poem also conveys the "symmetry of the sunflower" and of the woman's beauty, as every stanza follows the same rhetorical structure: it starts with a description of the woman that begins with the word "her" and then compares her with nature through phrases beginning with "like," "or," or "when." Ultimately, then, the poem embraces rather than fears the pianist's physicality by adapting the symmetry of her face into the rhetorical symmetry of its structure. The woman pianist becomes an embodiment of Wilde's aesthetic principles.

Mary Elizabeth Coleridge's sonnet "To a Piano" (1908) initially appears to be a recapitulation of the tropes of the pianist as desexualized and dead:

O casket of sweet sounds, wherein there lieth
A sound to lull the weary man to sleep,
A sound to make the hard and tearless weep,
A sound that every sound on earth defieth,
And only to one hand on earth replieth,
What time her fingers varied measure keep,
To drag it wooingly from out the deep
That, softly wooed by others, only sigheth!
If I might win me that remembered strain
By reverent lifting of thy gleamy lid,
I could forget the sorrowful refrain
Of all the world shall do---is doing---did.
Pandora's prisoned hope was not more vain.
The casket's there, the melody is hid.

The woman's music had calming qualities: it helped the insomniac reach repose, the emotionally stunted feel, and the finicky piano cooperate. As in Patmore's poem, the woman performs and the man happily listens. The poem's slippage between the piano as a precious, decorative jewelry box and as a coffin highlights the opposing uses for women playing piano in poetry: as with Wilde's poem, it alludes to women playing to show off their accomplishments and wealth as they would a piece of jewelry, and, as in so many other poems, the woman who played is dead. Unlike Wilde's work, this poem refuses to dwell on her appearance, instead showing us just "one hand" (5) and "her fingers" (6). While Trillini argues that "The closed instrument stands in for the objectified female body, which, thus safely displaced and locked up, can be allowed to be erotically responsive to the male touch" (119), the speaker's mourning that the music is imprisoned in the piano and thereby inaccessible contradicts such a reading. In fact, unlike the other piano poems where women's music still haunts the speaker, this music is pointedly silent.

Although both the pianist and her music are dead, the speaker attempts to revive the woman's music through allusions to musico-literary precursors, and specifically, the poem "Kubla Khan" (1816), by her great-granduncle, Samuel Taylor Coleridge:

> Could I revive within me
> Her symphony and song,
> To such a deep delight 'twould win me,
> That with music loud and long,
> I would build that dome in air,
> That sunny dome! those caves of ice! (42-47)

Mary Coleridge's poem echoes the concluding conditional structure of her relative's poem. She invokes his desire to gain greater happiness by reviving a phrase of music produced by a woman on a stringed instrument (like the dulcimer of "Kubla Khan"): she wishes to "forget the sorrowful refrain" (11) of the world, and he wishes for the music's "deep delight" (44) that will inspire creativity. She even faintly reproduces the earlier poem's sound, since her phrase "win me" (9) brings its "within me" (42) back to life. In both poems, however, this quest for transcendent music is for naught: for Mary Coleridge, "The casket's there, the melody is hid" (14), and the abrupt conclusion of "Kubla Khan" likewise implies that no such prophetic moment is possible.

Although the piano's lid traps the melody associated with her friend, this poem, in giving voice to the sound, structure, and sense of its precursor, revivifies a different "remembered strain" (9). By using the piano and its gendered tropes, Mary Coleridge creates a new version of her ancestor's famous visionary poem, replacing divine music with domestic music, and the freedom of the masculine Romanticist visionary with "flashing eyes" and "floating hair" (50) with the "prisoned hope" (13) of the feminine, turn-of-the-century domestic music maker. More than just the piano is gendered in this poem: while "Kubla Khan" addresses the vast, mythic landscape of Xanadu and the actions of Kublai Khan, "To a Piano" has so narrow a scope that it makes no mention of the domestic space of the parlor that surrounds the piano, and not much mention of the woman who once played it. The poem's form likewise addresses questions of freedom and restraint: unlike "Kubla Khan," which features an open and irregular form, "To a Piano" features the fixed form of the Petrarchan sonnet. In fact, to make the sonnet more restrictive, Coleridge's sestet eschews the expected "e" rhyme in favor of the more condensed cdcdcd pattern, as did Barrett Browning's sonnet 32, discussed in the first chapter. The poem,

then, acknowledges the musical and physical restrictions that women faced, while finding beauty and also freedom (by choosing to alter the conventional sonnet form) within those restrictions. The poem also creates an acoustical space associated with women: it features feminine rhymes ("lieth," "defieth," "replieth," "sigheth") in places where the less antiquated form of the words ("lies," "defies," "replies," "sighs") would more appropriately fit the meter and century. These words, then, create a feminized soundscape, and because they are "dead" words, in that they are no longer spoken, they enact the speaker's wish for the woman pianist: these dead words create feminized music that resounds from beyond the grave.

Although Trillini insists that "The allusion to Pandora's box is, of course, another reminder that it is not only sad but safer if the sensual attractions of music remain locked away" (119), this interpretation overlooks the purpose of the box according to the myth: in addition to all the evils in the world, the box also contained hope. Since Coleridge describes as a "sorrowful refrain" "all the world shall do---is doing---did" (12), she implies that such evils have already escaped and that she wishes to open the box again to release hope. Playing piano was thus a more complicated and contradictory activity than Augusta Webster's comments implied: it granted women an outlet for expressing emotions, with results ambivalently evaluated: on one hand, it released "evil" into the world, whether that evil be considered a sexualized presence or the long hours of practicing, but on the other hand, it enabled women to make a difference in shaping the world, and thereby gave them hope.

"Singing in her song she died": "The Lady of Shalott," *Armgart*, and the Perils of Public Performance

While piano playing occasionally gives hope to women, singing, and especially public singing, often has a less optimistic result. In Tennyson's "The Lady of Shalott" (1842) and

George Eliot's *Armgart* (1871), the singing heroines are forced to relinquish their chance at public performance: the Lady of Shalott dies while singing on the river to Camelot, and Armgart loses her voice within a year of her operatic debut. Their narratives restrain them to performances in homes: the curse falls on the Lady when she tries to transition from singing at home to singing in public, and Armgart decides to teach others how to sing when her voice is gone. These narratives invoke the rhetoric that musical periodicals and treatises use to explain to young women the importance of singing and to justify domestic as opposed to public performances. While both poems acknowledge the freedom and agency singing can bring to women, they object to the ways in which musical restrictions silence them: although the women themselves are silenced, their artistic productions live on—the Lady's through her song and Armgart's through her teaching—showing that despite gendered proscriptions, these women cannot be fully silenced.

Throughout the Victorian period, music critics considered singing an inherently feminine art, and writers presented several reasons for the supposed natural preeminence of women in this domain. Madame Mudie-Bolingbroke explained in 1880 that, "regarding music then as the language of emotion, and seeing that woman's chief power dwells in the affections, it seems that singing lies essentially within her sphere" (54). This connection between women and singing quickly made singing obligatory, as Fanny Ritter insisted: "Every woman possessed of a passable voice and ear, and untroubled by absolute physical infirmity, should devote some part of her time to the practice of singing" (203). Singing became a sign of womanhood, and its absence implicitly became a sign of infirmity or deformity, as though in failing to sing one failed to meet the requirements for being a woman. Like piano playing, singing was also considered an essential skill for a bride: Maria Edgeworth's *Practical Education*, republished in 1835,

explained that singing was "supposed to increase a young lady's chance of a prize in the matrimonial lottery" (117).

Singing was not only a social requirement, but also a moral duty, as it was assumed to "exercise[] a positive moral force on the human organizer" (Ritter 204). The singing woman became an instrument of moral good who must perform not for her own enjoyment, but because her musical performances of emotion were thought to benefit society. Frederick Crowest believed that "the trained female voice is an elegant and valuable instrument, always worthy of being kept in practice—a moral agent of no mean order, which, when strengthened by the trainer's art, and reflecting, as it should, a pure and healthy life, may charm many a kindred soul, and bring home an ennobling and elevating sentiment in many a sunken breast" (174-175). He presented singing as not just a skill, but also a "valuable" commodity that could help determine the purity of the singer's soul as much as it could help others achieve that purity. Some also argued that a woman's voice reflected aspects of her own soul in addition to bringing joy to others. Others even thought that it was the job of women to educate men in the ways of music appreciation:

> If our young ladies, who after all are the principal interpreters of our domestic music, would accustom their fathers and brothers to hearing a little bit of Beethoven or Haydn occasionally, . . . the listeners would be soon prepared to hear the same kinds of things with delight when they happened to come across them at a concert. ("Classical Music" 389)

Women had the dubious honor of being responsible for the musical tastes of their husbands: they were expected to be more instructors than performers and to select works not based on their

own enjoyment or personal expression, but on what would give their husbands the most cultural capital.

In order to prove one's worth as a singer and, by extension, as a woman, Victorian musicologists insisted that one had to practice complete self-denial: "The great secret of the singer's power over the hearts of her hearers lies in her total forgetfulness of self and surroundings, and in entering heart and soul into the conceptions of the poet and composer" (Mudie-Bolingbroke 54). According to this definition of musical success, the performer must become nothing more than an instrument or vessel for the original creators. To do otherwise would risk charges of pride and impropriety, especially for women singing in public: "The life of a successful singer or an illustrious instrumentalist is full of peril—peril to virtue, peril to society; and this is not owing at all to the exigencies of the executive gift in itself, but entirely owing to the conditions imposed upon the artist from without" (Haweis 65-66). Elizabeth Eastlake agreed, expressing her concern about even talented amateur performers, as their success could lead them astray:

> We know that superiority of all kinds must have its penalties, and none more keenly felt than in the ranks of private musical excellence; and though the first-rate amateur may . . . be spared all the hardships and many of the temptations which lie so thick in the path of her professional sisters, yet the draught of excitement is pernicious to all alike, and one which we instinctively shrink from seeing at the lips of those we love. (264)

To Eastlake, any skill that might lead women to exhibit themselves, whether in public or private, was either a dangerously intoxicating or a poisonous brew. Behind her association of

"temptations" with "professional sisters" and "lips" lies an accusation that professional women singers are akin to prostitutes from whom she thinks decent people should shrink.[43]

At the same time, self-abnegation carried with it risks of self-abandonment, and thus of corruptibility. Haweis posed a solution to save women from the dangers of the immorality of performance: they should select songs to preserve a moral message. He specifically recommended "songs which stir within us the finest impulses" and "characters . . . which not only do not shock decency, but tend to promote the highest and most generous sentiment" (66). Haweis did begrudgingly accept songs of an "un-moral description" as long as they were "perfectly harmless, and calculated to produce the utmost enjoyment" (66). He also conceived of music as a semi-divine cathartic hobby that enabled women to then return to their daily lives: "Some outlet is wanted . . .To women—and how many thousands are there in our placid modern drawing-rooms!—who feel like this, music comes with a power of relief and a gentle grace of ministration little short of supernatural" (103). Women's singing was also expected to be cathartic for the family patriarch, as Eastlake made clear: "Happy hummings these for wife or sister, whose voice or piano he is for ever a petitioner for pleasures it is a pleasure to give, and who lead him with 'that exquisite bit of Beethoven' as with a silken string" (490). Ultimately, women were expected to sing for others rather than themselves, and to express themselves only as a means of again becoming docile, and thus, a better companion for a man.

Although the Lady in "The Lady of Shalott" is most commonly associated with strings of cloth rather than strings of melody, this connection illustrates how scholars' investment in poems

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[43] Kirsten Pullen has helpfully detailed the long history on the assumed connections between performing women and prostitutes from the seventeenth through twentieth centuries: "At particular historical moments, the body of the actress (assumed to be an object onto which male desires were projected) and the body of the prostitute (assumed to be an object onto which male desires were enacted) slipped discursively into one: whore/actress" (2).

that reference visual art rather than music has warped our view of the poem. The Lady, who sings (and weaves) in her tower, hears and sees Lancelot, leaves the safety of her domestic performance space, and dies while singing on her way to Camelot. Her role as an artist depicts more than just "female helplessness, aesthetic isolation, and virginal vulnerability carried to deadly extremes" (Gilbert and Gubar 618), as her tragic fate as often been read. Building from Joseph Chadwick's claim that "despite the feudal setting of the poem . . . it is Tennyson's own social order, not the one from which he drew the Lady and Lancelot" that creates "the problems of autonomy and privacy [the poem] confronts" (86), this section regards the poem's fairytale tower as a displaced version of a familiar Victorian bourgeois space, the parlor. Unlike Carl Plasa, who argues that the poem addresses the "Woman Question" "in a systematically ambivalent manner, at once upholding and dislocating patriarchal assumptions about the issues which the question entails--those of gender, sexuality, the institution of marriage, and the space occupied by women in society" (248), I argue that the poem's gendered discourses on singing are not ambivalent: instead, "The Lady of Shalott" questions the idea that women must sing in the parlor to find an ideal husband and should not venture into larger arenas. Reading the Lady's musical career and her death during a public performance against the Victorian discourses cited above about women singing can lay bare the poem's contrast between "feminine" music, its restrictions and its silencing, and "masculine" music and its freedom – a contrast showing that men have greater power in what was supposedly women's musical domain.

Although the poem most pointedly describes the Lady as a weaver, the villagers know her for other artistic abilities:

Only reapers, reaping early

In among the bearded barley,

Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,
    Down to towered Camelot:
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers "'Tis the fairy
    Lady of Shalott." (28-36)

Although her voice carries beyond the confines of her room, it does not give her a greater public presence. As Chadwick has argued, "The only evidence the outside world has of her existence is the song—disembodied sound—that reapers hear in the wee hours of night and morning" (87): when the poem asks "But who hath seen her wave her hand? / Or at the casement seen her stand?" (24-25), we know that the answer is "no one," as the reapers only "hear," not see her. While the reapers listen and only "whisper" so as not to interrupt the music, they conceive of her voice as a part of nature and the supernatural: she is a "fairy," not a human, a description that emphasizes the disembodiment of her singing. Her disembodiment also conveys her self-evacuation, as though she has so thoroughly lost herself in her sound that she has no physical presence. As such, she is the ideal domestic singer, according to Victorian musicologists.

The poem further connects the Lady with women's music through the loom. The seated position necessary for the Lady to weave her "magic web" (38) on a medieval handloom resembles the posture necessary to adopt while playing piano. John William Waterhouse's 1915 painting, "'I Am Half Sick of Shadows,' Said the Lady of Shalott," demonstrates this similarity: the shape of the loom and tapestry echoes the shape of a Victorian upright piano, both the loom and the nineteenth-century piano have pedals, and the Lady's distance from the loom and

position of her feet match those of someone about to play piano, even though her hands are on her head rather than on her work.[44] Weaving has long been considered women's work, with Penelope as a famous ancient practitioner and the eighteenth-century invention of the power loom cementing the correlation. Since the piano, like the voice, was considered a woman's instrument in the Victorian period, this poem associates the tapestries of medieval women with the music of Victorian women to dramatize the history of gendering of art.

Like the Lady, Lancelot's appearance is also characterized by music:[45]

The bridle bells rang merrily

As he rode down to Camelot:

And from his blazon'd baldric slung

A mighty silver bugle hung,

And as he rode his armour rung,

Beside remote Shalott.

Unlike the Lady's music produced in the domestic space of the tower, Lancelot's music is martial, produced by the jangles of the bells on his "war-horse" (101) and the motion of his "armour," while his "bugle" holds the promise of producing music should he need to signal other knights. Whereas the Lady's disembodied music is never seen or described,[46] Lancelot's

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[44] Franz Schubert's most famous song, "Gretchen am Spinnrade" (1814), connects textile creation with the piano through a repetitive motif in the piano that enacts the repetitive motion of the spinning wheel.

[45] Kathryn Sullivan Kruger is one of the few critics to address Lancelot's singing, although she claims words are "meaningless, nonsensical, and gratuitous in that they revel merely in sound" and she compares this to Kristeva's theory of a "fundamental language" (132). Shannon ("Poetry" 215) and Hollander ("Tennyson's Melody" 685) also observe the musical connections between Lancelot and the Lady but do not theorize about its significance.

[46] The utter lack of a personal description of the Lady or of the interior of the tower has in part led to the wide variety of appearances and postures she is given in the manifold works of visual art that depict this tale.

pointedly embodied music (Hill 427) is described in conjunction with the armor that encases him, the horn at his side, and the bridle, the portion of a horse's headgear to which the reins he holds are fastened, all tools of his vocation. His music appears to hold the promise of a relationship as much as his shield: the homophony of "bridle bells" with "bridal bells" (Hood 59) implies that he will rescue the damsel from her tower and lead her to wedded bliss. Even the lyrics to his song show his greater musical agency: the poem does not report the lyrics of the Lady's song, but it transcribes Lancelot's words: "Tirra lirra" (107). By preserving his words, the poem gives him greater narrative power and verbal embodiment on the page to match the embodiment of his music, even though his words themselves are nonsense, not narrative. Since Lancelot's words are preserved rather than the Lady's, even though singing was supposed to be women's music domain and means of interacting with the world, the poem shows that singing does not grant women the freedom or agency it promises.

The poem's own verbal music enacts the connection between the musical tower and a feminine performance space. The stanzas alternate between "feminine" and "masculine" rhymes, setting up a dichotomy between feminine and masculine music that the poem itself explores through the Lady and Lancelot.[47] Whereas the Lady and her domestic space are feminized from the poem's opening—the first occurrence of the refrain "The Lady of Shalott" is as embowered by feminine rhymes as the Lady is by the walls of her tower—the "bearded barley" emphasizes the supposedly masculine character of laboring outside the feminized

[47] Paul Turner has remarked that the "The "four grey walls, and four grey towers" of this space are "echoed in the quadruple rhyme-scheme" (62), but he does not consider the gendered implications of this reading.

tower.[48] The Lady's singing, consequently, occurs inside a feminized domestic space where she performs for an audience of men: the medieval corollary of the Victorian parlor. In accordance with Victorian theories of women singing as with those of piano playing, the Lady should be able to attract a suitor by her musical performances. Such a strategy is impossible in this case, as the Lady has no contact with her audience outside the tower.

Her inability to reach a suitor through her singing leads to her decision to follow Lancelot's voice:

> She left the web, she left the loom,
>
> She made three paces through the room,
>
> She saw the water-lily bloom,
>
> She saw the helmet and the plume,
>
> She looked down to Camelot.
>
> Out flew the web and floated wide;
>
> The mirror cracked from side to side;
>
> "The curse is come upon me," cried
>
> The Lady of Shalott.

Although singing is supposed to be the means by which women interact with the outside world and gain both a voice and a husband, here that trend is reversed: the woman pursues the singing man.[49] The instant the Lady adopts the role of suitor and leaves her loom, all her domestic work is undone as the curse begins. Tucker and others have observed that, in the 1842 version of the

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[48] That "bearded barley" is itself a feminine rhyme shows the superficial nature of such binary designations.

[49] Rather than seeing "the declaration 'I am half sick of shadows' [as] symptomatic of a suggestive--and subversive--demystification of the institution of marriage" (Plasa 252), I see the line as demonstrating her frustration with waiting and her resolve to take action.

poem, "the curse seems to apply equally to the cessation of her art and to its continuance . . . Damning her if she does and damning her if she doesn't" (108). While Tucker views this "double bind" as self-negating, claiming that it "undoes itself as a threat in any recognizable sense" (108), it also echoes the situation facing women singers, who were expected to sing and play piano well to appease an audience and find a suitor, and yet were condemned for being too good at their craft or for actively searching for a suitor. Given that the curse activates when she follows Lancelot's voice to the window, it appears to be society's condemnation of her refusal to follow the prescribed rules of behavior for singing women.

In a rebellious gesture, instead of representing the Lady as self-evacuating or disembodied as Victorian musicians insist a good soprano should be, the poem insists on her presence with its anaphoric "She" and corresponding verbs that focus on her motions: in her moment of resistance, she becomes embodied rather than a disembodied voice. Her announcement, "The curse is come upon me," is in dialogue with Lancelot's lyrics from the previous stanza, as both occur at the same spot in the stanza: whereas Lancelot's words demonstrate the greater narrative and social power he holds, the Lady's words instead show how much she lacks power. The passive voice in her exclamation, in obscuring the agent, diminishes her agency in leaving the loom, and thereby shows her helplessness in the face of societal expectations.

Despite the helplessness of her position, the Lady puts her musical training to work by leaving her role as a singer in a domestic space in favor of the public stage and by singing to find

a husband.[50] Before she enters the boat to sing down the river, she christens it: "And round about the prow she wrote / 'The Lady of Shalott'" (125-126). With this gesture, she does more than gain property or claim her identity: she makes a name for herself as a singer, and her name advertises her public performance as a concert program or announcement would. Whereas previously, the reapers knew her as a voice without a body, this naming identifies her body, claims ownership of it, and associates it with her voice, since she sings "her last song" (143) as she dies. The reapers

> Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
> Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
> Till her blood was frozen slowly,
> And her eyes were darkened wholly,
> Turned to towered Camelot.
> For ere she reached upon the tide
> The first house by the water-side,
> Singing in her song she died,
> The Lady of Shalott. (145-153)

Although the poem did not describe her earlier song, it now informs us of her final song's style, sound, and inherent contradictions. This "carol," although "holy," is also "mournful": since carols are religious songs or hymns celebrating God and salvation, the song's sad character instead resembles that of a funeral dirge or requiem. Her final song has become the "funeral, with . . . music" (67-68), and her boat, the "funeral barge" described in the poem's opening. The

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[50] James Hood correctly claims that "The Lady does something about her imprisonment, even though her act of rebellion leads to her death" (53), although this rebellion is musical as well as more generally artistic.

account of her performance is likewise replete with opposing forces: she sings both "loudly" and full of confidence, and "lowly," and therefore quietly and humbly.[51] Her final song, then, combines the musical expectations that faced women at the time—they should sing religious and "domestic" songs in a humble manner that deemphasizes the self—with the Lady's desire to break free from her confining life and confidently assert her own identity.[52] Nevertheless, the concessions to domesticity do not save her, and she dies, her eyes turned not to God, but to Camelot, the place that promised freedom from her restrictive life. Even the verbal music of this stanza shows us a division between the woman's music in the home and man's music outside: the "feminine" rhymes occur on lines that describe her song and its connection with domestic music, while the shift to "masculine" rhymes occurs on lines that describe her death from trying to break free of women's musical restrictions.

In moving his Lady from the parlor to the stage and then having her die while performing in public, Tennyson dramatizes the contemporaneous musicological warnings espoused by Haweis and Eastlake about women singing in public. The Lady's life is "full of peril," the curse that leads to her death is "imposed upon [her] from without" (Haweis 65-66), and her taste of the "draught of excitement" (Eastlake 264) of public performances, in the form of Lancelot, leads to her demise. Ultimately, although she asserts herself musically in performing outside the house, she never performs in front of an audience that can see her: although the reapers "heard her

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[51] Although Shannon acknowledges that the song is "mixed with sadness," he privileges its description as "carol," "a hymn of joy and praise, which is traditionally associated with the birth of Christ—the representation of hope and eternal life" and thereby sees the song as "a symbol for the highest form of poetry" ("Poetry" 220-221) rather than a representation for the punishment women face for their transgressions.

[52] As Plasa has argued, the Lady's decision to clothe herself in a white, flowing dress portrays her as a bride and elides marriage and death, a juxtaposition that implies that marriage "is tantamount, for women, to a form of self-annihilation" (260).

singing her last song" (143), she dies "ere she reached upon the tide / The first house by the water-side" (150-151). In Tennyson's tale, even the attempt to become a suitor and to sing publicly results in the woman's downfall.

Tennyson responds to Victorian theories voiced by Haweis at the century's end in his description of the Lady as sad and "half-sick of shadows" (70) but singing "cheerly" (30); he appears to obliquely support the notion that singing was a necessary emotional outlet for young women: "That girl who sings to herself her favorite songs of Schubert, Mendelssohn, or Schumann, sings more than a song: it is her own plaint of suffering floating away on the wings of melody" (Haweis 103). Whereas Haweis believed such singing dispelled suffering and enabled women to return to their duties of ministering to the family, Tennyson implies that music provides only a brief respite from the Lady's pain, as the path of her song foreshadows her fate. Her voice echoes and dies away as it goes "down to towered Camelot" as the Lady herself does at the poem's end. The repetition of "reapers" throughout the poem heightens this effect, as the word, like an echo, carries through the stanza, and, through its connection with the grim reaper, is associated with her impending musical demise. Since the poem first mentioned the riverway to Camelot in conjunction with "the heavy barges" (20) for funerals that travel it, the river and death become linked through her song, an association that suggests the fate to which her singing will lead her.

The description of the riverbank as the "margin" against which the funeral barges travel and the tower lies marginalizes the Lady in her own poem, emblematizing the minimal power she has throughout. The image simultaneously emphasizes the metapoetic character of the poem, as pages themselves have margins, and suggests that, while the Lady may be on the margins, her song as she dies will be central to the poem. The centrality of her song to this story

has been mostly overlooked by the few critics who discuss the Lady's songs in depth, as their comments primarily focus on the "multiple echoes of Romantic poetry in this introductory portion of the poem" (Tucker 102). While Lionel Stevenson first observed the connections between the figure of the Lady singing unseen and Shelley's figure of a poet, the "high-born maiden / In a palace-tower" (41-42) from "To a Skylark" (126-127), Tucker augmented this line of inquiry by noting similarities between her singing and "Yon solitary Highland Lass!" of Wordsworth's "Solitary Reaper" and the nightingale's song which reaches "the sad heart of Ruth" (66) in Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale" (105). Tennyson, unlike these literary precursors, places the woman and her music as the central, rather than a marginal, character of the poem. Shelley's singing woman, while a metaphor for the poet, occupies only one of four stanzas theorizing the bird's metaphorical correlative and is mentioned as a part of his larger project to learn from the songbird's music: "Such harmonious madness / From my lips would flow, / The world should listen then, as I am listening now" (103-105). Likewise, Wordsworth's speaker makes only a minimal attempt to understand the girl and her music.[53] His poem values her for the effect her music has on him and his poetry, and not for herself alone: "The music in my heart I bore, / Long after it was heard no more" (31-32). Tennyson's poem reconfigures this Romantic interest in using women singers to educate the poet's soul, and instead considers the importance of a woman's music, her life, and her own art. In fact, critics, such as Shannon, who conceive of her singing as merely "a by-product of her primary artistic concern with weaving" ("Poetry" 212), reinscribe her in the Romantic tradition of women singers. Rather than being "shallow,"

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[53] Although he asks "Will no one tell me what she sings?" (17), his attempts to answer his question are limited: he neither asks her himself nor asks a friend to identify the tune he memorized ("in his heart" (31)), nor can he even tell if the tune is a ballad, a popular tune, or a battle song, all of which sound entirely different.

evidence of "her own self-centered pleasure," and demonstrative of "the narrowness of her emotional range" (Shannon, "Poetry" 212), the music actively participates in Victorian theories regarding women and music.

Tennyson's description of the Lady's final song echoes his language in an earlier poem, "The Dying Swan" (1830). In dying like a swan, who according to legend sings a beautiful song as it dies, Tennyson's Lady, who "Singing in her song . . . died" (152), performs a thematic duet with this poem.[54] The poems feature remarkably similar language to describe the song and the riverbanks. Both poems feature active winds, willow trees, yellow plants, both Lady and swan sing "loudly" and "low," and the swan's "hymn" or "carol" is as "holy" as the Lady's. Both songs also convey an internal opposition: the Lady's song is voiced both "loudly" and "lowly," and the swan's is "Sometimes afar, and sometimes anear" (27). In spite of these similarities, the emotions the songs convey and the receptions that they receive markedly differ. At first, the swan's song sounds as full of "sorrow" as the Lady's is "mournful," but then the swan sings with a "jubilant voice" (28):

> As when a mighty people rejoice
>
> With shawms, and with cymbals, and harps of gold,

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[54] Tennyson made the comparison between the Lady and a swan more explicit in the original 1832 publication of the poem:

> As when to sailors while they roam,
> By creeks and outfalls far from home,
> Rising and dropping with the foam,
> From dying swans wild warblings come,
> Blown shoreward; so to Camelot
> Still as the boat-head wound along
> The willowy hills and fields among,
> They heard her chanting her deathsong,
> The Lady of Shalott. (qtd. in Ricks 360)

And the tumult of their acclaim is roll'd
Thro' the open gates of the city afar,
To the shepherd who watcheth the evening star. (31-35)

The swan's song conveys a celebratory as well as melancholy affect, as the mention of the "acclaim," "open gates," and listening "shepherd" suggest that the swan's music convenes an appreciative audience. Although the swan sings a solo, its music resembles an international orchestra. The swan's music then enacts this forecasted symphony, as the rest of nature takes up the song:

And the creeping mosses and clambering weeds,
And the willow-branches hoar and dank,
And the wavy swell of the soughing reeds,
And the wave-worn horns of the echoing bank,
And the silvery marish-flowers that throng
The desolate creeks and pools among,
Were flooded over with eddying song. (36-42)

The weeds, willows, reeds, flowers, water, and banks are then filled with this song, and the mention of "reeds" and "horns" dramatizes that the rest of nature has become the swan's accompaniment. Unlike the swan, the Lady does not experience such harmony or transcendence: she dies before she reaches an audience, and, instead of joining in her song, the townspeople in Camelot suddenly hush: as she died, so "Died the sound of royal cheer" (165). Rather than "having unknowingly released her from a death in life" and being "the instrument of her

apotheosis" ("Poetry" 222) as Shannon claims, Lancelot never acknowledges her musicianship.[55] Ultimately, then, the swan, who can sing "free and bold," has not only more joy, but also more support and understanding from its community (nature) than does the Lady, who sings in solitude as a disembodied voice and dies when she tries to perform on the public stage in front of an audience (Lancelot and the townspeople). By alluding to this earlier poem, Tennyson shows that singing, which was supposed to be a freeing and natural pastime for women to enable them to connect to potential suitors, in fact could lead to a death that has less happiness and fewer social connections than an animal's.

Although the Lady's song fails and leads to a joyless death, Tennyson does give us some hope. The poem, the Lady, and the boat share the same title, a detail that becomes relevant in the lines "They heard her singing her last song, / The Lady of Shalott" (143-144). Initially, this repetition of the refrain "The Lady of Shalott" seems merely to remind readers of who sings these lines and to continue the established pattern. However, the slippage between the refrain and the title of the poem can suggest, surprisingly, that the Lady sings the words of the poem, and, by extension, the story of her last few hours. By extension, Tennyson's poem becomes a transcription of the Lady's song. Although the Lady is unable to reach an audience with her song, Tennyson's poem implicitly gives her song (and her story) the audience she could not have in life. As a man, he can perform publicly, both in song and in print, and can grant the Lady the artistic immortality that she, as a woman, could not claim. Although the Lady is still silenced at the end of the poem, her song lives on.

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[55] Even if Lancelot seems blameless in having less knowledge of the Lady's musical expertise than the reapers who have heard her sing, the narrative structure of the poem encourages readers to find his concluding remarks about her lacking.

George Eliot's *Armgart* (1871), like "The Lady of Shalott," provides another example of a woman singer performing in public whose voice is ultimately silenced: the German opera singer Armgart, after a stunning opening performance as Orpheus in Christoph Willibald Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* (1762), loses her voice and career. She makes a failed attempt to perform the role of Leonore in Beethoven's *Fidelio* (1805), but, after suicidal despair, gives up her stage career, decides to teach other young women to sing, and moves to the hometown of her disabled cousin and confidant. Although her fall from stardom echoes that of Eliot's other heroines, leading some critics to read this closet drama as an example of a narrative that punishes ambitious women to teach them sympathy (Gilbert and Gubar 453, Boyd 92-93, Carpenter 165), Armgart's career so closely echoes remarks made by Victorian musicologists on the dangers of women's singing professionally that this work instead dramatizes those predictions as a part of the realist project so common to Eliot's fiction. The poem also demonstrates the transgressive joy of singing on the stage, and of cross-dressing in particular, and the agency it gives to women who would otherwise have only minimal power. Despite Eliot's awareness of the importance to women of being on stage, this closet drama conforms to more traditional representations of women, as it omits the actual scenes of cross-dressing and, by its very genre, refuses to perform: this lack of performance is a gesture of solidarity with women who remain at home and on the sidelines rather than on the public stage.

Armgart's defense of her singing adopts the gendered discourse so prevalent amongst Victorian musicologists: she associates her voice with femininity. She claims that since "Nature . . . .gave me voice / Such as she only gives a woman child" (128), she is following the correct role for women. Armgart also uses her singing as an outlet, as Haweis advised: Walpurga describes her companion's voice as the "channel to her soul." Haweis imagined the emotional

outpouring of music only as the equivalent of a fit of tears: "Blessed recreation, that brings back freshness to the tired life and buoyancy to the heavy heart! Happy rain of tears and stormy wind of sighs sweeping the sky clear, and showing once more the deep blue heaven of the soul beyond! Let no one say that the moral effects of music are small or insignificant" (103). Armgart's musical outlet keeps her from becoming monstrous: without it, she believes she would become "a Maenad" who would "snatch a brand / And fire some forest, that her rage might mount / In crashing roaring flames through half a land" (117). She casts herself as a Maenad, one of the followers of Dionysus who dismembered and decapitated Orpheus: for Armgart, then, music truly appears to preserve the safety of gender relations, as it keeps her docile and stops her from destroying Orpheus, the ultimate classical, musical patriarch. Armgart imagines this state as universal, as she believes that, for "any murderess," the explanation of her violence is that "the world was cruel, and she could not sing" (117). The text appears to endorse this correlation, since she thinks of committing suicide when she loses her voice. Walpurga herself invokes the connections between Maenads and raving when she calls Armgart "fevered, mad" (139) because of her fear of being "Russet and songless as a missel-thrush" (140). Armgart only becomes "calm" again when she determines that music can still be a part of her life.

By having Armgart lose her voice, Eliot acknowledges a common Victorian notion about women singing on the stage rather than in the home: Haweis complains that audiences "are content to demand the sacrifice of fresh, girlish constitutions, and the shattering of the young, manly frames, and the general wreck of mind, and sometimes of morals, through overfatigue and overexcitement, and unhealthy conditions of activity" (69). In fact, the famous Victorian singer Pauline Viardot, to whom the closet drama alludes in the final act, "blamed the early decline of

her vocal quality squarely on her own determined efforts to push the upper part of her range beyond its natural limits: ‘ Don’t do as I did,’ she counseled a young singer; ‘I wanted to sing everything and I spoilt my voice’” (qtd. in Gillett 154). In having Armgart lose her voice due to illness after only one year, Eliot invokes these warnings to women singers as part of her realist project and implies that Armgart pushed herself too hard and took overly taxing roles in pursuit of stardom. Armgart’s turn to teaching at the drama’s end also conforms to Victorian theories about the appropriate careers for singing women: Crowest insisted that “The work of imparting [musical] knowledge is, indeed, an honourable one, and should be peculiarly acceptable to women who, while seeking a livelihood, shun the glare of a public appearance in any form,” especially for a woman who has “lived to learn—alas! Too late—the folly of allowing pride to chain her affection and capacity towards an uncertain and unsuccessful public career, when her whole energies and time might have been more constantly, and most profitably, employed as an in-door instructress” (175). By silencing Armgart and giving her the exact trajectory music professionals used to scare women into remaining in the domestic rather than the public sphere, Eliot demonstrates her investment in adhering to realism and also shows the difficulties that faced women who wished to take a more active role in public.

Although Eliot endorses ideas of singing as the women’s domain and comments on its dangers, she sees singing as a necessary way to transgress conventional restrictions on gender: public singing enables Armgart to refuse to “crush [herself] within a mould / Of theory called Nature” (129-130), because such a career presented one of the few “way[s] for women to reach individual distinction in the public arena” (Beer 209). Eliot also does not endorse the idea that women sing only to attract or to appease a husband. In what Bodenheimer considers “the most compact and effective attack on patriarchal arguments to be found in George Eliot’s work” (23),

Armgart rejects the Graf's argument—that women's calling is "to be a mother" and that women should "not desire / To do aught best save pure subservience" (128)--and insists that her ambition is nature-given. She also rejects his implicit suggestion that she should sacrifice her opera career to sing for him at home:

> What! leave the opera with my part ill-sung
> While I was warbling in a drawing-room?
> Sing in the chimney-corner to inspire
> My husband reading news? Let the world hear
> My music only in his morning speech
> Less stammering than most honourable men's? (129)

She refuses to be the woman behind the man, Dorothea's path at the end of *Middlemarch* (783), and instead insists on being a performer for herself, claiming that she is "an artist by [her] birth" not in spite of her femininity, but "by the same warrant that I am a woman" (129). Her rejection of song as feminine courtship is absolute: she concludes her refusal of Graf's proposal by claiming that she can "live unmated, but not live / Without the bliss of singing to the world" (134). While her later claim about Graf—"I sang him into love of me" (140)—suggests that singing is the way to find a husband, it also demonstrates that he, and not she, followed the prescribed social script: she cares for the quasi-religious aspects of her skill ("my song / Was consecration" (140)) rather than for the followers she attracts. In fact, Armgart rejects heteronormative relationships entirely when she figures singing as her spouse in a description of her performance as Orpheus: "I *was* a bride, / As nuns are at their spousals" (121). As a result of her semi-divine relationship with her song, she feels self-sufficient, an attitude which never changes throughout the course of the verse drama.

Armgart's role as Orpheus further enables her to break free of the confines of gendered singing. Although Orpheus, in Gluck's original opera, was sung by a castrato, Hector Berlioz's revised version (1859) altered the role to the mezzo soprano range.[56] As Grace Kehler has observed, "The collaboration of Berlioz and Viardot-Garcia overwrites, literally and figuratively, the castrato history" (71): this opera's history then shows a woman permanently taking over a man's role. The Graf appears to think this too much agency and power for a woman, as he implies that Armgart has adopted the gender of the character she plays: "Too much ambition has unwomaned her" (117). His words echo those of Victorian music critic Paul Scudo, who commented that he despised the notion of a woman performer who transgresses her gender expectations: "A singer . . . ought to carry into the art [she] profess[es] the distinctive qualities of [her] sex. Forgetfulness of this fundamental rule not only wounds decency, which is [her] *prestige*, but troubles the economy of God's work . . . and her fall is inevitable" (qtd. in "The Feminine in Music" 522). While one might be tempted to read Armgart's fall from stardom and turn to domestic singing after the loss of her voice in support of the Graf's and Scudo's comments, the drama's insistence on the Graf's ignorance and foolishness instead shows the wrongheadedness of such ideas and celebrates the freedom that can arise for women from ignoring the supposedly "distinctive qualities of their sex" (522).

Eliot's decision to have Armgart play Orpheus instead of Eurydice further foregrounds the agency this character gives her: Orpheus's music famously creates the world around him, including rocks, trees, and other elements of nature, and thereby epitomizes masculine artistic

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[56] Berlioz wrote this version for Pauline Viardot-Garcia, the performer who takes the role of Leonore in the place of Armgart at the end of the closet drama (Kehler 71).

power. For a woman to take on this role, even while pretending to be a man,[57] is to argue for women's creative musical abilities and artistic abilities more broadly. The drama again argues for Armgart's own creative abilities when she insists that a trill she added to the opera despite her vocal coach's wishes was the correct artistic choice. Her coach's impassioned exclamation, "Orpheus was Armgart, Armgart Orpheus" (121), further associates her with musical creativity, as the boundary between the two musical innovators disintegrates. This idea is especially radical given that, over a decade later, *The Musical Times* insisted that "Woman, as a creative musician, can hardly be said to exist" (521). In fact, during the 1882 meeting of the Royal Musical Association, Stephen Stratton's keynote posed the question of whether women could ever be good composers: most of the scholars in attendance insisted during discussion that it was impossible (115-146). For Eliot to have her main character explicitly reject part of her gendered role as a singer and temporarily adopt the role of composer is surprisingly transgressive for its historical moment. However, the narrative lets Armgart demonstrate her creative abilities only while she plays the role of a man. Since Eliot is herself "an artist clad in a man's name" (Da Sousa 167), the drama suggests that such artistic cross-dressing is the only way to exercise creative agency as a woman.

Orpheus and Leonore also present other advantages: both roles enable the woman singing them to be the hero. Orpheus braves Hades to rescue his wife (successfully in Gluck's version of the myth), and Leonore disguises herself as a man to rescue her husband, Florestan, who has been illegally imprisoned. In a dramatic scene, Leonore jumps out from her place of

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[57] Kehler points out that the tradition of women's singing male roles was not an oddity at the time: "Breeches or trouser roles were not unusual in this century's dramas or its operas, for the many transvestite roles encompassed female Hamlets, Iagos, Don Giovannis, and Romeos" (76). For Eliot to make such a role paramount to her plot foregrounds the gender slippage.

concealment and physically shields her husband while revealing her true identity, and threatens to shoot the captors. In both cases, only by donning men's clothing can women exercise agency. In having Armgart adopt these transvestite roles, Eliot gives her greater agency than she would otherwise have had, both on stage and in life. While singing the role of Orpheus, she rejects the rules that require women to be docile: instead, she becomes an elemental force who can hold "the house . . ./ As if a storm were listening with delight / And hushed its thunder" (118) and can also refuse a marriage proposal from the Graf. Conversely, after she loses her voice and her career, Armgart loses even that minimal aspect of personal agency: the Graf does not renew his suit, so the narrative does not give her the chance to refuse him again.

While the parallels in style between Gluck's *Orfeo* and Eliot's *Armgart* have been well-addressed,[58] the similarities in plot between this closet drama and *Orfeo* and *Fidelio* have been neglected. Whereas Orpheus lost his spouse, Armgart lost her voice, which she figured as her spouse in her description of herself as its bride; both Orpheus and Armgart experience suicidal despair after the death of their loves (Kehler 86), and both question what purpose their lives will serve after this trauma: Orpheus sings "What shall I do without Eurydice ? / Where shall I go without my love?" (10-11), while Armgart asks "What am I now? / . . . Why should I be, do, think?" (137). Like Eurydice, who is permanently resurrected in Gluck's opera, Armgart gets a second chance at life and music: she plans to "Teach music, singing—what I can—not here, / But in some smaller town" (150). Armgart's decision to return with Walpurga to her hometown and to live with her also echoes Orpheus's happy ending with Eurydice; both the opera and the closet drama conclude with the creation of a community of women (as both singers who would

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[58] Kehler observes that "Armgart resembles Orfeo in its avoidance of (baroque) excess: severe simplicity and focus of plot, a limited number of characters, and scenes apposing the title character with other characters link the nineteenth-century drama with its operatic forebear" (85-86).

play Orpheus and Eurydice are women). Armgart also has striking similarities to Leonore, the heroine of *Fidelio*: when Armgart realizes that Viardot is about to sing the role of Leonore in her place, she dramatically jumps up and goes to rescue her reputation as the foremost prima donna, saying "I go to Leo—to rehearsal—none / Shall sing Fidelio to-night but me!" (135). The description of her shock at seeing the opera bill further connects the two, as the description "It was a wasp to sting her" (134) subtly evokes the dagger that impels into action the character she wishes to play.

None of Armgart's reenacted moments results in the happy endings of the operas themselves: Armgart confirms through the Graf's decision not to renew his proposal that heterosexual love does not conquer death or difficulty as it does on stage and discovers that being as fully restored to voice as Eurydice was to life only happens in fiction. Her Leonore-like attempt to save her musical reputation also fails, and she imagines herself imprisoned, albeit by social conventions, not by a nobleman as Florestan was:[59] "Prisoned now, / Prisoned in all the petty mimicries / Called woman's knowledge, that will fit the world / As doll-clothes fit a man" (144). In the world off-stage, the villains are not as easy to defy as they are in opera, and the operatic technique of "transvestism becomes a body in diminutive dress" (Bashant 235). Without the stage and the chance to defy gender roles, Armgart instead adopts more conventional rhetoric associated with the domestic sphere: she incorporates language of maternity when she speaks of her singing voice as a "little corpse" that she must "bury," and her vocal coach continues this language when he tells her to think of her career teaching girls to sing as a form of adoption: "Mothers do so, bereaved; then learn to love / Another's living child"

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[59] For Renata Miller, "Armgart's failure in the title role of Beethoven's *Fidelio*—a woman who assumes a male disguise in order to aid her imprisoned husband—underscores her lost ability to enter the masculine public world" (40).

(151). This mention of children, in conjunction with the description of "doll-clothes," suggests that Armgart's only contact with cross-dressing from this point on will be in the home as a form of child's play. As cross-dressing is represented as a vital part of Armgart's agency, once she loses her opportunity to adopt men's clothes, her ability to change her life and reject social norms disappears as well.

Armgart's inability to perform opera is reinforced by the poem's refusal to show us any scenes of her musical performance: although the poem opens with her coach and Armgart describing her just-concluded performance of *Orfeo*, the poem never quotes lines from the arias, describes scenes in any depth, mentions particular arias by name, or describes Armgart's appearance in her costume as Orpheus. Such omissions are especially surprising since Eliot depicted Caterina singing the most famous aria from *Orfeo* in "Mr. Gilfil's Love Story"[60] (Bashant 228) and, according to her letters, considered having Mirah also perform it in *Daniel Deronda* (Dellamora 134). Even the poem's genre, a closet drama, shies away from performance: although the poem has written stage directions such as "She crowns the bust of Gluck" (118) and descriptions of the scene ("A Salon lit with lamps and ornamented with green plants" (115)), it was never performed nor intended to be. The poem's setting also takes place in one room only--the salon--as the scene directions indicate ("The same Salon" (125)), and so, even though the drama mentions Armgart's performances on stage and characters who travel, it restricts itself to the home and domestic performances. Although Renata Miller has convincingly argued that "Armgart's vocal talent allows her . . . to inhabit a masculine role both in the sense

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[60] "But now it was not near nine, and Caterina must sit down to the harpsichord and sing Sir Christopher's favourite airs from Gluck's 'Orfeo', an opera which, for the happiness of that generation, was then to be heard on the London stage. It happened this evening that the sentiment of these airs, '*Che faro senza Eurydice*?' and '*Ho perduto il bel sembiante*', in both of which the singer pours out his yearning after his lost love, came very close to Caterina's own feeling." (332)

of playing a role on stage and in the sense that she assumes the power of a man in the public sphere" (40), the play itself does not show her wielding that power. This avoidance of the scene of performance is not a complete silencing, however, as this verse drama shares Armgart's fate: it bears the marks of performance, but instead of taking to the stage, it instructs others about proper vocal technique, the possible fate of performers, and the transgressive power of public singing.

Departed Bodies and Present Music: Amy Levy's "To Sylvia" as Sapphic Song

Amy Levy's "To Sylvia" from *A Minor Poet and Other Verse* (1884) rounds this chapter off by bringing together ideas of women both playing piano and singing. It portrays the bitter end of the speaker's lesbian relationship with the poem's eponymous character through the description of a song Sylvia used to sing to her own accompaniment that haunts the speaker's memory. Music haunts the poem's typography as well: a four-bar phrase of music is printed underneath the title, a characteristic found in only a handful of nineteenth-century works because of the typesetting difficulties involved.[61] This musical excerpt is more than just a decorative demonstration of the sort of song Sylvia might have sung: it is evidence for how to read the rest of the poem, since it functions as a microcosm of the whole. This musical fragment is the subject of the poem and a symbol for Sylvia, the dissolution of her relationship with the speaker, and the performative nature of memory. Most importantly, it encapsulates the intersections of the two sister arts, which Levy punningly figures as a metaphor for lesbian relationships, and comments on the societal restrictions governing women's singing.

The poem begins with the words of the song "Sylvia" once sang:

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[61] Robert Browning's poems "With Charles Avison" (1887) and "Pietro of Abano" (1880) and George Egerton's short story collection *Discords* (1894) appear to be the only British examples of this trend.

"O Love, lean thou thy cheek to mine,
And let the tears together flow"—
Such was the song you sang to me
Once, long ago. (1-4).

These lines thematize the blending of self and other that the song's words suggest. The song describes a mixing of their "tears" (2) that makes Sylvia's bodily fluids indistinguishable from the speaker's. In providing lyrics of a made-up song,[62] the stanza also blends together the real and imaginary. It combines song lyrics with presumably spoken poetry, a characteristic that the very presence of the phrase of music at the top of the poem accentuates; thus the stanza, like the rest of the larger poem, mixes music and poetry. The stanza furthermore mixes words with tears: it intermingles the quotation in the opening two lines, which Sylvia once sang, with the speaker's own words. By blending their words, the stanza enacts the ideas expressed in the song: as their tears flow together, so their words of sadness combine. Although the speaker later claims that "Sylvia and song divinely mixt / Made Paradise" (12), the mixing described in the song is hardly joyful. This moment, then, is simultaneously the past ("once, long ago" (4)) and present (on the page and in the speaker's memory), sad and joyous, Sylvia and speaker, and poem and song.

The music's placement and rhythm further unite the two arts. The excerpt occurs immediately under Sylvia's name in the title and further combines Sylvia and song; the music by extension represents the title translated into notes and echoes the "divinely mixt" (12) blending of beloved and music that the text goes on to describe. Its presence immediately before the quotation of the song's lyrics seems to imply that that these four bars comprise the melody for the opening words:

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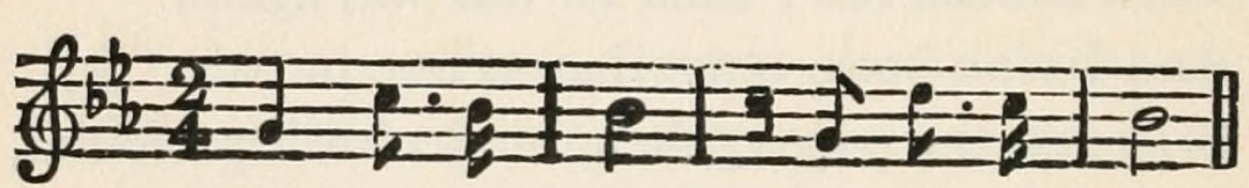
[62] I have been unable to find a source for these words.



Ex. 1: Musical Excerpt from Amy Levy's "To Sylvia" (*A Minor Poet and Other Verses*)

However, the meter of the lyrics and the musical excerpt do not fully match: although the lyrics are predominantly iambic tetrameter, the music has a quasi-trochaic opening gesture because the phrase begins on a downbeat and the first note is of longer duration than its successor. The final line of the stanza--"Once, long ago" (4)--most closely approximates the musical phrase. The punctuation of this line further associates the two: the caesura after the word "Once" slightly disrupts the first foot by giving it extra emphasis and time and thereby makes the line more closely resemble the opening musical phrase. This connection strengthens rather than diminishes the connections between the poem and the song. While the lines that purport to be lyrics of the song do not fully match the song's rhythm, the words of the speaker do, thus further mixing song and poem.

The anonymity of the musical excerpt complicates this association with Sylvia: it lacks any attribution, and, although the layout of the page suggests that Sylvia sang this excerpt, the speaker claims that she cannot remember the music: "I scarcely knew / What sounds flow'd forth; I only felt / That you were you" (6-8). Levy links the music and tears through the shared word "flow," which would appear to further unite Sylvia and song, but although the speaker can recognize Sylvia, she cannot recognize the music. But the poem can and does, by placing the music on the page. The mismatch between the music and the poem's rhythm, and its lack of attribution (and real world corollary) initially enact the speaker's confusion about the music and perform the mismatch of the two lovers. However, the later stanzas clarify this confusion:

These things I scarcely knew; to-day,

When love is lost and hope is fled,

The song you sang so long ago

Rings in my head. (13-16)

As Sylvia's song haunts the speaker's mind, so the music's presence on the page makes the "song ring in [the] head[s]" of those who can read music. The stanza's repetition of similar sounds—the alliterative "t" and "th" sounds in the first line, the repeated "o" in the second and third lines, the sibilant "s" sounds in the third, and the "i" in the final line—enact the acoustic remembering the stanza describes. Likewise, the repetition of the phrase "long ago" (15), first mentioned in the first stanza to describe the song, appears again when she remembers the song, performing a linguistic and auditory demonstration of the song's staying power.

The music also performs the meeting of minds and bodies involved in Sylvia's relationship with the speaker:

Clear comes each note and true; to-day,

As in a picture I behold

Your turn'd up chin, and small, sweet head

Misty with gold. (17-20)

As in Browning's "A Toccata of Galuppi's" (1855), in which music brings to mind a vibrant carnival scene from eighteenth-century Venice, the speaker's memory of the song, musically rendered on the page, conjures up an image of Sylvia's face. Previously, Sylvia's singing prevented the speaker from fully recognizing her appearance: she "scarcely knew" (6) that Sylvia's "hair was gold" (9) and that her eyes were "of the heavens' own blue" (10). With the help of music, the speaker can recollect not only Sylvia's hair color, but also the exact "misty"

(20) effect produced by the light shining on it. While the poem does not include a picture of Sylvia as it does an excerpt of her song, its sound attempts to further the metaphor: the unrhymed final words in this stanza ("to-day" (17) and "head" (20)) appeared as the ending words of lines in the previous stanza as well, thereby creating a frame of similar sounds and words surrounding the description of Sylvia. The final word in the stanza, "gold" (20), also concluded the first line of the third stanza of the poem. Gold frames these three stanzas that describe Sylvia "as in a picture" in the same way it frames Sylvia's face. Since the word "gold" lingers in the acoustical memory of the poem's auditors, it also "rings" in our ears as the song rings in the speaker's.

The speaker's inability to know Sylvia's face in the earlier stanza further unites the two sister arts: the speaker's confusion about Sylvia's identity calls to mind an earlier, more famous Sylvia poem, namely Shakespeare's "Who is Silvia?" from Act 4, scene 2 of *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Shakespeare's Silvia section is actually a song in which musicians explain that she is beautiful, kind, "holy, fair, and wise" (40), and that they will sing their love of her (38-51). By alluding to a song which itself sings of singing, Levy further unites her poem with music.

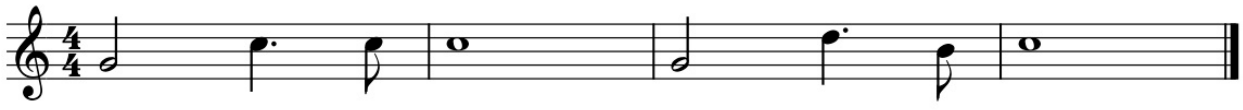
The speaker describes Sylvia and her music as so intertwined that playing on the piano and singing give her a degree of sexual gratification:

> I see how your dear eyes grew deep,
> How your lithe body thrilled and swayed,
> And how were whiter than the keys
>
> Your hands that played. . . . . (21-24)

Sylvia merges not only with the song, but also with the piano, since her hands nearly blend in with the keys. As her body metaphorically becomes one with the piano, her fingers, in traversing

the keys, metaphorically traverse her own body. The sexual character of this passage becomes more apparent through Sylvia's physical reaction to her music: her eyes dilate with pleasure and her flexible body moves sensually. The ellipsis after the word "played" (24) heightens the sexual nature of her experience, as it implies that neither the surface on which her fingers move nor the desire she experiences could be mentioned politely in a poem for public consumption. Here, Sylvia and song have truly mixed, bringing her sexual "Paradise" (12). Although the speaker does not tell us how this passion affects her, we could imagine this encounter between Sylvia and the piano as enacting the speaker's physical relationship with Sylvia. The sound of the stanza likewise embraces this analogy: reciting the opening line--"I see how your dear eyes grew deep" (21)--makes the performer move through multiple vowel sounds ("I," "E," "OW," "O," "OO"): this vocal performance not only enacts the exercises a singer might go through to practice enunciation, but also emphasizes the physicality of sound, as one must move the mouth to make these sounds. The sound of the verse, the speaker's music, is as flexible and "lithe" as Sylvia herself.

As the lyrics to the song itself forecasted through the "tears" that "together flow," this lyric does not have a happy ending. The speaker calls Sylvia "cruel" (25) and claims she has "robbed [her] life" (26) "Of love and hope, of fame and pow'r" (30). Although the words do not explain the dissolution of their relationship, the musical excerpt can help. The outline and rhythm of the melody echo that of the "Bridal Chorus" (popularly known as "Here Comes the Bride") from Wagner's *Lohengrin* (1850):



Ex. 2: Melody of "Here Comes the Bride" ("Bridal Chorus)

This tune became popular as the bride's processional after the marriage of Princess Victoria to the Prince of Prussia in 1858 (Pleck 212). The melody in Levy's musical phrase deviates from this pattern while invoking it, however: the repeated notes occur a whole step rather than a half step below the previous note, and the second phrase has a rest rather than a note on the downbeat. Consequently, these four bars sound like a broken or demented wedding march. This deformed wedding march might initially seem to encapsulate their relationship--they were in love, but wedding bells in their future rang false—but it can also have a more subversive interpretation. Viewing the speaker not a man, but a woman expressing her love for another woman[63] casts this allusion as a critique of the Victorian institution of marriage as inherently exclusionary as well as a forecast of the end of their relationship.

A final glance at the gendered theories about singing in the Victorian era demonstrates the radical politics of this poem's use of women and song. While Sylvia does sing a song with suitable lyrics, play piano, and find a partner, her partner is a woman, not a man. The speaker's gender, coupled with the deformed bridal chorus melody, implicitly rejects the notion that women must sing and play piano to attract a husband or to placate or comfort a brother or father. Levy also plays with the expectation that a woman singer should empty herself of all thoughts, feeling, and personality while performing: instead of Sylvia's forgetting herself in the act of singing, the speaker forgets Sylvia, or specifically, Sylvia's sounds, hair, and eyes. Although the

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[63] By assuming that the speaker is a woman because of the gendered conventions of the lyric "I," I am following in the footsteps of Sarah Minsloff (1322) and Naomi Hetherington and Nadia Valman (2) instead of Deborah Nord (748): "Nord's reading ignores (and has led followers to ignore) the reoccurring theme of unconventional desire that runs throughout the collection by replacing it with conventional heterosexuality. Doing so confines Levy's speaker to a concrete, legible gender category, heedless of the poet's pronounced intentions of obscuring and problematizing conventional perceptions of gender" (Minsloff 1322).

speaker describes the merging of the song, piano, and Sylvia, she does so not to show self-effacement, but to show Sylvia's presence and self-pleasure, in many ways the opposite of self-abnegation.

Sylvia's response to the music opposes the message such music supposedly conveyed. While the music does give her "the utmost enjoyment" in the form of sexual satisfaction and an "outlet" for her feelings, her reaction would have been considered "un-moral" and a "shock" to "decency," as it expresses carnal desires rather than a conventional moral. The idea that music's emotional outlet could be sexual is equally rebellious: William Acton and others famously argued that women were incapable of desiring intercourse. Levy's use of music is further affiliated with queer desire, as many of her contemporaries also used music as a coded reference to same-sex desire.[64]

Levy's poem thereby encapsulates common trends in Victorian poems about women singers and pianists. It acknowledges the gendered tropes of both musical occupations and responds to their larger societal implications. As in Wilde's poem, the pianist openly celebrates the sexual pleasure of producing music. Like almost all other such works, the performer is absent from the poem's stage, even though women were allowed and expected to be musically proficient in these areas, an absence that implicitly demonstrates society's hypocrisy in placing so many restrictions on women's musical voices as to render them inaudible on the only instruments on which they could be heard. Like Eliot's *Armgart*, the poem uses a musical allusion to a widely recognized composition (in this case, "Here Comes the Bride") to overturn the conventional association between marriage and music and instead privilege relationships

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[64] See critic Emma Sutton for an extended discussion on *fin de siècle* sexologists and poets who posited an inherent connection between music and homosexuality, a common theory at the time (215).

between women. Like Coleridge's dead words whose rhymes resound beyond their grave, or Tennyson's Lady's name which haunts the poem's soundscape and title, Levy's poem bears the mark of its departed music: in this case, this mark is literal, as the song, printed on the page, remains even though its performer is gone. Whether writers of poems featuring women pianists and singers fear and try to excise women's musical agency, or whether they embrace it, they ultimately preserve the music, thereby ensuring that women's musical productions on the instruments permitted them can have an artistic afterlife.

Chapter 3

Gendered Genres and the Music of Lyric: Victorian Women's Literary Songs

Lyric poems participate in an elaborate metaphor that harkens back to the genre's musical and etymological origins: "lyric" comes from "lyrikos," the ancient Greek word meaning "for the lyre," since these short poems were once sung and accompanied by such an instrument (Brewster 2). This metaphor, however, often leads critics to dismiss all claims that poems can be influenced by music. David Lindley argues that any reference to a poem's musicality is "metaphoric . . . not a statement about a poem's actual genesis," because of the subtlety and nuances of musical and poetic meter (41). Jonathan Culler also denies that poems entitled "Song" have any generic signification or connections to music: such poems are "scarcely more susceptible of precise definition than the lyric itself" (202). Eric Griffiths's claim that "poets like calling their works 'songs'" (71) similarly dismisses such titles as mere whimsy. The *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* attempts to define "Song" poems, but focuses mainly on generalities about music and emotion: "Song" is "any poem actually set or intended to be set to music . . . [and] any poem focusing on the arousal of emotion as would be characteristic of the kind of poem typically sung to the lyre (or to any other musical accompaniment)" ("Song").

Because such dismissals are a critical commonplace, no substantial study of poems bearing the title "Song" exists, either across literary history or during the Victorian period.[65] The poems themselves are rarely discussed,[66] and on the few occasions where they receive attention,

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[65] Jahan Ramazani's excellent chapter "Poetry and Song" from his forthcoming book *Poetry and Its Others: News, Prayer, Song, and the Dialogue of Genres* examines poems that incorporate song in contemporary Caribbean and post-colonial literature and helpfully details critical theories about the intersections of the two arts, but does not consider poems entitled "Song."

[66] Christina Rossetti's "Song" more commonly known as "When I am Dead, My Dearest," however, has received substantial critical attention.

they are frequently dismissed as "mere song" (Tucker 534), assumed to have lesser merit because of their generic marker. Instead, I shall show here that the Victorian literary "Song" is not a metaphoric mark of simplicity (or inferiority) but rather a response to many of the societal issues of the time, such as the increase in print culture, the popularity of hymns, the rise in women's musical productions, the subsequent association of music with femininity, and the "domestication" of the lyric (Tucker 530).

Literary songs can appear in multiple genres, and Victorian poets famously embedded songs in longer poems and in verse dramas, like Robert Browning's *Pippa Passes* (1841), George Eliot's *The Spanish Gypsy* (1868), and Tennyson's *The Princess* (1847). An examination of embedded song and its simultaneous dichotomy and incorporation of narrative and lyric would certainly refine a definition of song in nineteenth-century lyric: in fact, Elizabeth Helsinger has studied embedded songs and convincingly argued that they can function as "multi-personal multiply voiced" social critiques (158) characterized by repetition and a proliferation of "schemes of sound and sight and figures of meaning (especially metre, rhyme, alliteration, and assonance; stanzas and refrains; and syntactic and semantic parallelisms and contrasts)" (154). However, lyric interludes primarily function in conversation with the larger works into which they are embedded, and their label of "Song" generally functions as a descriptor rather than a title; such differences fundamentally separate embedded songs from the literary songs addressed here. Many Victorian poems also included the generic marker as one word among others in the title. From Thomas Hood's "Song of the Shirt" (1843) to Thomas Hardy's "Drinking Song" (1928), such poems explicitly discuss politics, military engagements, and nationalism, whereas poems with the sole designation "song" directly address more traditionally lyric themes, such as love, death, ephemerality, nature, and implicit, rather than

explicit, political or social causes.[67] The addition of nouns or adjectives in the title also makes a substantial difference: works that exclusively bear the title of their generic marker usually have strict fixed verse forms, as do the sonnet, the villanelle, and the sestina. Literary songs, therefore, by their very title, claim to have unifying formal characteristics that they do not share with poems with longer titles.[68]

Victorian literary songs[69] have more than just their title in common: they tend to be short lyrics, from one to six stanzas of equal length[70] written in iambic tetrameter or common meter with a couplet or abab rhyme scheme. Richard Le Gallienne's short song "She's somewhere in the sunlight strong" (1895) exemplifies one strand through its meter, rhyme scheme, and subject:

She's somewhere in the sunlight strong,
Her tears are in the falling rain,
She calls me in the wind's soft song,
And with the flowers she comes again;
Yon bird is but her messenger,
The moon is but her silver car,
Yea! sun and moon are sent by her,
And every wistful, waiting star.

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[67] The Chartist Circular, however, published the occasional poem entitled "Song" that addressed political causes (584).
[68] For an in-depth discussion of "genre-titled" poems, see chapter 5 of Anne Ferry's *The Title to the Poem* (1996).
[69] Since all these poems are entitled "Song," I will refer to them by their first lines throughout the chapter.
[70] Emily Bronte's "What rider up Gobeloin's glen" (1838) is an anomaly, with seventeen stanzas of four lines each.

The poem's strict iambic tetrameter and simple alternating rhyme scheme embody one strain of the tradition, as does its focus on the connections between the speaker's beloved and nature. Emily Brontë's "Song" "The linnet in the rocky dells" (1846) emphasizes a second strain:

The linnet in the rocky dells,
    The moor-lark in the air,
The bee among the heather bells,
    That hide my lady fair:

The wild deer browse above her breast;
    The wild birds raise their brood;
And they, her smiles of love caressed,
    Have left her solitude! (1-8)

The common meter, simple abab rhyme scheme, sentimental description of mourning a beloved's death, and willingness of the female poet to adopt the role of a male speaker encapsulate the themes and styles of many literary "Songs" composed by women, as this chapter will demonstrate. Both songs additionally feature a high degree of alliteration, assonance, internal rhyme and repetition, acoustical properties that help the poem earn its musical designation.

This chapter will examine Victorian poems marked "Song" to defend literary songs as a genre and to elucidate their gendered history and sociopolitical importance, since men and women followed vastly differing paths when composing such poems. I address six literary figures--Alfred Lord Tennyson, D.G. Rossetti, George Meredith, Felicia Hemans, Christina Rossetti, and Michael Field—and, although I discuss the male poets first, I do not mean to imply

that they were the dominant voice in the genre of literary songs, as that honor rests with the women. Rather, the male authors of literary songs use techniques similar to those used in their other, non-song poems, and they thereby represent the tradition that the songs by women writers critique. While the genre enabled men to link themselves to literary and musical predecessors, such as the troubadours, Petrarch, Shakespeare, and the Romantics, the genre enabled women to ally themselves with the female-centric hymn tradition to find a way to critique both the more dominant masculine literary tradition and the limitations traditional gender roles placed on women and women's art.

Poems called "Song" are hardly an exclusively Victorian phenomenon, although they did dramatically increase in popularity during the nineteenth century: the twelfth and thirteenth centuries introduced the troubadours, composers of songs from the south of France, renowned for their contributions to lyric poetry and to music. Their songs created new verse forms (the sestina is just one example) and popularized a particular version of courtly love in their *cansos* (love songs) known as *fin' amor* (Kehew 1). *Fin' amor* is an expression of sexual desire directed towards a woman (usually already married or engaged) of higher class than the composer (Kehew 3). The women in *cansos* were usually highly praised but not permitted to respond to their suitors. In the next century, Petrarch furthered a troubadour aesthetic by writing lyric poems that focused on his love for a woman, but with two notable distinctions: first, he focused almost exclusively on his love for a woman named Laura, and second, as Gordon Braden argues, "the Petrarchan lover is not merely the frustrated lover but to a new degree the paralyzed lover, incapable not only of satisfying but even of acting on his desire" (24). Shakespeare was also an importance influence for Victorian writers of literary song. Many of his plays feature embedded

songs, such as "Sigh No More" in *Much Ado About Nothing* and "When Daisies Pied" from *Love's Labour's Lost*, which joined music with poetry.

Romantic poetry also incorporated song, but at a level removed from its predecessors. Blake, Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats all wrote poems entitled "Song," and many of them had direct connections to performance. Blake famously imagined his *Songs of Innocence and Experience* (1794) as a collection of songs (Fairchild 89), and in fact, according to his friend John Taylor Smith, Blake performed them regularly with melodies he composed himself: although "he was entirely unacquainted with the science of music, his ear was so good, that his tunes were sometimes most singularly beautiful, and were noted down by musical professors" (qtd. in Fairchild 5). Sadly, none of these tunes survived (Fairchild 90), but the poems' indebtedness to hymn meter still resonates (Fairchild 2). Coleridge, too, wrote a number of literary songs, such as "Though veiled in spires of myrtle-wreath" (1828) and "'Tis not the lily-brow I prize" (1830), that describe love and its glory or destructive aftermath in iambic tetrameter with simple couplet-based rhyme schemes. Shelley's song "Rarely rarely comest thou" (1820) is based on a ballad stanza that demonstrates its debt to music, while Keats's two song poems were written with musical models in mind. Keats describes "I had a dove, and the sweet dove died" (composed December 1818 or January 1819 and published in 1848), which laments the death of a forcibly domesticated bird, as "a little thing I wrote off to some Music as it was playing" (Stillinger 453). He also claims that he wrote "Hush hush tread softly" (1818) as lyrics to a Spanish air that Charlotte Reynolds used to play, a tune he later attributed to Daniel Steibelt (Stillinger 453). Even though Romantic poets describe music more abstractly in their other poems, as with the aeolian harp or "unheard melodies," their literary songs invoke actual musical models.

Medieval and Romantic literary songs ghost throughout the Victorian literary songs that Tennyson, Meredith, and Rossetti composed. They emulate troubadour love lyrics, incorporate the structure of Shakespeare's songs, and allude to their Romantic predecessors to present themselves as inheritors of the literary tradition.

Tennyson's Self-Referential Sounds and Altered Songs

Alfred Tennyson, the earliest male composer of literary songs in this study, wrote the majority of his literary songs for the volume *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical* (1830), although very few were actually published. Even though he has been called the most musical of poets (Vlock-Keys 227), he composed literary songs that initially seem to have little relationship to music: they usually lack a consistent rhyme scheme or metrical pattern and would therefore be hard to sing. Tennyson wrote literary songs not to emulate actual songs or to invoke the political power of music, but to thematize song, sound, and the translation from words to music by incorporating self-referential music and alluding to earlier literary songs.

Unlike many other writers of literary songs, Tennyson explicitly alters the sound of his verse to echo the music he depicts. In "Song--The Owl," he describes a rooster that "hath sung beneath the thatch / Twice or thrice his roundelay" (10-11). To enact the rooster's roundelay, or song with a refrain or repeated line, Tennyson repeats line eleven in line twelve and so converts the rooster's song into a recognizable, manmade musical form. Tennyson further portrays animal sounds as composed musical performances in "Second Song," the companion piece to the previous poem, when he calls the owl's song a "chaunt" and claims he cannot imitate it. Yet his poem attempts to render it onomatopoeically in spite of his claim:

I would mock thy chaunt anew;

But I cannot mimick it;

Not a whit of thy tuwhoo,

Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,

Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,

With a lengthen'd loud halloo,

Tuwhoo, tuwhit, tuwhit, tuwhoo-o-o.

As with the rooster-song-turned composition, here Tennyson turns nonsensical animal noises into a type of "chaunt," as he rhythmically repeats the same sounds to give them a human, musical counterpart. Tennyson's transcription of the owl's call differs from those of his iconic poetic predecessors: Shakespeare records the owl's cry of "tu-whit! Tu whoo" (5.2.916) in the concluding song of *Love's Labour's Lost*, and Coleridge's owl in "Christabel" (1816) agrees (3). In translating the owl's cry into more conventional English and in punning on it with "thee to woo" and "wits" and in using "whit" in a sentence, Tennyson foregrounds poetry's ability to transform unintelligible sounds of nature into more regular, composed songs about nature.

Tennyson's allusion to *Love's Labour's Lost* goes beyond the owl's cry, however: he borrows the structure of his song from Shakespeare's original, which is in iambic tetrameter and contains extensive anaphora:

When icicles hang by the wall,

And Dick the shepherd blows his nail,

And Tom bears logs into the hall,

And milk comes frozen home in pail,

Then nightly sings the staring owl:

Tu-whit, tu-whoo! A merry note,

While greasy Joan doth keel the pot. (V, 2, 902-909)

Tennyson's song follows the same pattern of anaphora with "when" as well as "and" and follows the same rhyme scheme for the first half of the stanza:

When cats run home and light is come
And dew is cold upon the ground
And the far-off stream is dumb,
And the whirring sail goes round,
And the whirring sail goes round;
Alone and warming his five wits,
The white owl in the belfry sits. (1-7)

Instead of trying to imitate the sounds of nature and portray daily life on the farm, Tennyson's song again uses the sound of the verse to enact the sense of the poetry. The altered rhythm of the repeated line ("And the whirring sail goes round" (4)) with its anapestic opening echoes the whirring gesture of the sail. In his Victorian recasting of a Renaissance song, Tennyson takes a poem originally designed for musical performance and instead has the music of the verse perform the ideas of the poem.

Like "Song—The Owl," Tennyson's song "It is the solemn even-tide" describes the music in the world of the poem while alluding to a historical piece of music:

It is the solemn even-time,
And the holy organ's pealing:
And the vesper chime, oh! The vesper chime!
O'er the clear blue wave is stealing.

It is the solemn mingled swell

Of the monks in chorus singing:

And the vesper bell, oh! The vesper bell!

To the gale is its soft note flinging.

'Tis the sound of the voices sweeping along,

Like the wind through a grove of larches:

And the vesper song, oh! The vesper song!

Echoes sad through the cloistered arches.

In addition to the manifold descriptions of religious music--"the holy organ's pealing" (2), "the monks in chorus singing" (6), and "the vesper song" (11)--each stanza also contains a third line that functions as a refrain, converting the poem into the "vesper song" it depicts. Like the earlier owl songs, it also combines natural music with manmade music, as the sounds of the organ, monks, and bells melt into the "clear blue wave" (4), "the gale" (8), and "the wing through a grove of larches" (9). The song's irregular meter, most noticeable here in the refrain, makes performing it difficult at best and renders it a written rather than a musical song. Whereas his earlier poem about the owl converted nature's music into composed song, this song describes composed music dissolving into nature. The cyclical relationship between natural and composed music more closely ties Tennyson to his Romantic predecessors who particularly theorized on the connections between poetry, nature, and music.

The poem also alludes to an earlier musical work, but this time Tennyson chooses a song by Thomas Moore instead of Shakespeare. Moore's "Hark! the Vesper Hymn is Stealing," from *National Airs* (1818), features many of the same images as Tennyson's version:

Hark! The vesper hymn is stealing

Over waters soft and clear;

Nearer yet and nearer pealing,

Now it bursts upon the ear.

Jubilate, Amen, Amen.

Farther now, now farther stealing,

Soft it fades upon the ear.

Jubilate, Amen, Amen.

Farther now, now farther stealing,

Soft it fades upon the ear.

Jubilate, Amen, Amen. (1-11)

Tennyson borrows phrases that describe the "vesper" song that is "pealing" and "stealing" over "clear" water, and his one-line refrain functions as a compressed version of the three-line refrain of Moore's original. In composing his poem, then, Tennyson takes an actual song that is part of the hymn tradition (which, as I will show later, is associated with women composers of song), and alters its meter to meditate on spiritual music and its dissolution in nature.

Tennyson's allusion to a national air does not stop with Moore, however, as Moore himself explicitly labeled his song a "Russian Air" to show the heritage of the melody and to remind his listeners that it is not Irish. Tennyson's allusion to Moore does not emphasizes Irish nationalist arguments that are subtly cloaked by a sentimental and nostalgic surface, and instead could be read as an imperializing appropriation that ignores politics in favor of thematizing adaptations of early songs. By alluding to a foreign song that itself alludes to a foreign song, Tennyson self-consciously performs his own compositional method while transforming and translating musical effects into words.

George Meredith's Troubadour Lyrics and Romantic Inheritance

Unlike Tennyson, George Meredith has a very consistent formal conception of song, and is more interested in traditional love lyrics than in acoustical experimentation and translation. He wrote fifteen poems entitled "Song" in his first volume, *Poems Written in Early Youth* (1851), and abandoned the genre immediately thereafter. They feature fairly straightforward meter and rhyme schemes that merge the troubadour love song tradition with Wordsworthian Romanticism and function as an optimistic prequel to his 1861 sonnet sequence "Modern Love." When read with the knowledge that Meredith's wife probably co-authored the volume (Joukovsky "New Manuscript" 257), however, they appear surprisingly in tune with the tradition of women's literary songs.

Unlike Tennyson, Meredith composed his literary songs almost exclusively in iambic tetrameter with a wide variety of rhyme schemes, and each song perfectly follows the pattern created in the first stanza. His poems also reflect his investment in troubadour poetry, as all his literary songs address a speaker's love for a woman. While they span the spectrum of feelings in a relationship--from a promise to immortalize the beloved musically in "Love within the lover's breast" to lamenting love's dissolution in "Fair and False! No dawn will greet"--they are not part of a larger cycle like "Modern Love." In fact, although some are printed consecutively, most are separated by poems of other kinds: here, song is a solitary, non-narrative expression, rather than as part of a narrative cycle.

Meredith's song poems, in addition to their indebtedness to troubadour aesthetics, reflect Wordsworthian ideas regarding nature's revivifying properties and use a Shelleyan barrage of metaphors to demonstrate Meredith's affiliation with the masculine Romantic heritage. In the final song in the volume, the speaker sings of his happiness upon returning to a familiar spot:

Deep in the forest where the foliage droops,

I wander, fill'd with joy.

Again as when a boy,

The sunny vistas tempt me on with dim delicious hopes. (21-24).

Here, as in "Tintern Abbey" (1798), the speaker returns to a spot that brought him joy in his youth, but, unlike Wordsworth, the speaker can immediately regain that lost emotion without needing to experience it vicariously through the presence of another. Meredith's homage to the Romantics is even more apparent when he channels Shelley's love of imaginative comparisons in the first song of the collection:

Love! thy love pours down on mine

As the sunlight on the vine,

As the snow-rill on the vale,

As the salt breeze in the sail;

As the song unto the bird,

On my lips thy name is heard. (7-12)

His series of similes, in which the speaker compares love to linked characteristics of seasons and nature—winter ("snow-rill"(9)), spring ("sunlight on the vine" (8)), land ("vale" (9)), ocean ("salt breeze in the sail" (10)), and sky ("bird" (11))--as well as to natural art, nods to Shelley's "To a Skylark" (1820), in which the speaker compares the skylark to a poet, a maiden, a glow-worm, and a rose in quick succession. To ensure we spot the allusion, in the poem's final stanza Meredith invokes the very bird Shelley's song addresses: "As a skylark to the sky / Up into thy breast I fly" (15-16). Whereas Shelley's speaker dreams of becoming the skylark and, by extension, the ideal poet, Meredith's speaker announces his affinity with the bird, and claims that

his goal is not the sky, but rather his beloved. The sublime "harmonious madness" (103) that Shelley believed would constitute his own poetry and would compel the world to listen is in Meredith's poem a love song. Like Wordsworth in his own "To a Skylark" (1827), Meredith "demystifies the metaphysical and political reach of Romantic nostalgia, and enshrines in its stead the rising ideology of the hearth" (Tucker 535). With these allusions, Meredith portrays himself as the Victorian inheritor of the masculine Romantic tradition, albeit one that values domestic, interpersonal relationships over sublime prophecy.

Interestingly, Meredith may not have written his literary songs alone: he and his first wife, Mary Ellen Nicolls, collaborated on many early works together. They met while both contributing to "The Monthly Observer," a manuscript periodical (Joukovksy, "New Correspondence" 488); they also collaborated on a cookbook and on a handful of poems published in *Household Words* and *Fraser's* (Priestly 14). After the dissolution of their marriage, Meredith distanced himself from the entire volume, claimed that his wife had written many of the poems, and even destroyed unbound sheets for nearly three hundred copies of the volume and its many manuscripts, as well as the manuscript for a second volume of poems entitled *British Songs* (Joukovsky, "New Manuscript" 257).[71] As Nicholls was also an author in her own right, published multiple articles anonymously in *Fraser's Magazine* (Madden 36), and functioned as an unofficial editor for Henry Thoby Prinsep's poetry (Jouvokvsky, "New Correspondence" 506), she had the history, opportunity, and expertise to collaborate with her husband. The preponderance of poems entitled "Song" in *Poems Written in Early Youth* (and

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[71] Meredith's dedication of *Poems* further connects the volume to his marriage: "to Thomas Love Peacock, Esq., with the profound admiration and affectionate respect of his son-in-law" (Joukovsky "George and Mary" 474).

Meredith's later condemnation of the volume) suggests that Nicholls may have been more involved in their creation than Meredith was willing to acknowledge.

If these poems were collaboratively composed, then many of the ideas they express sound a new note of dissimulation. The poem "Song—Spring" seems to compare selecting a wife with selecting a scrumptious fruit, as one must "choose her warily . . . / For the choicest maids are those that hide / Like dewy violets under the green" (7-9). Its companion poem, "Song—Autumn," claims that all men need a woman to tend to the stockpile of food from the harvest as winter approaches:

> O then is the season to wed thee a bride!
> Ere the garners are filled and the ale-cups foam;
> For a smiling hostess is the pride
> And flower of every Harvest Home. (6-9)

Initially, the songs might appear to be genuine (and disturbing) expressions of masculine desires for ownership and consumption of women, and in fact one of the many positive comments on the volume endorses that perspective and adopts its language: "some of the most *delicious* little love-poems which we have seen born in England in the last few years" (qtd. in Ellis 68 emphasis added). Although society in general interpreted these works as sentimental and domestic glorifications of finding a wife, Nicholls (and potentially Meredith) may have written them as sarcastic critiques of that very attitude. Nicholls was close friends with Mary Shelley (Joukovsky, "New Correspondence" 487) and worked with a small Christian Socialist group that tried to form a school to educate female domestic servants (Joukovsky, "New Correspondence" 491). In this context, an earlier section of "Song—Autumn" that describes the season's weather invites a second interpretation: "When nuts behind the hazel-leaf / Are brown as the squirrel that

hunts them free / . . . O then is the season to wed thee a bride!" (1-2, 6). The opening lines thematically associate the squirrel's search for a nut with a man's search for a wife, but the word "hunts," rather than "searches," implies a more predatory relationship between the two, especially as the inanimate "nut" cannot try to run away as can most hunted animals. The poem's argument about gender relations becomes more apparent through the juxtaposition of "nut" with "brown": the song "The Nut-Brown Maid" was collected in Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765) and addresses the importance of women's purity and obedience to God and to their husbands. That Meredith's poem, like "Nut-Brown Maid," is presented as a song strengthens the connection between them and the association between the hunted nut and a young woman. The description of the bounty of the harvest is likewise open such a reading: "the fields are rich with the sun-burnt sheaf" (3). The fields are not golden, as the word "rich" and literary tradition might lead us to expect. Instead, they are "sun-burnt," and therefore damaged from overexposure. Likewise, the rest of nature, "the blue cornflower and the yellowing tree" (4) appears alive with color, but the "yellowing" occurs because the leaves are dying as winter approaches and not because the sun illuminates them. Although nature is dying and suffering, the farmer happily and obliviously celebrates the harvest: "the farmer glows and beams in his glee" (5). His lack of concern for the pain of nature is in keeping with the poem's insistence that a man's happiness is contingent upon finding a woman to function as a servant (and, implicitly, to provide a harvest of children for him), regardless of her feelings on the matter. Meredith's songs, then, can function both as conventional, sentimental endorsements of patriarchal ideas of women's roles, and as subtle critiques of those very notions, a doubleness that protects them from charges of transgression.

D.G. Rossetti: Romantic Allusions and Feminine Hymns

D.G. Rossetti's conception of literary songs has striking similarities to Meredith's, both rhythmically and thematically. His only experiment with the genre occurs in the 1870 edition of *The House of Life*, which features eleven poems, grouped under the heading "The Songs," each numbered as a part of the collection with its own title. Rossetti's songs generally exclude hymn meter or musical sources, and instead allude more optimistically to Wordsworth to outline their Romantic masculine inheritance; he incorporates common meter only once to allude to a feminine acoustical style that his sister's work made familiar to him.

Like Meredith's songs, Rossetti's feature iambic tetrameter and simple rhyme schemes. Rossetti and Meredith's literary songs even share thematic similarities, as both describe the spectrum of feelings in a relationship; Rossetti, in keeping with themes from the sonnets in *The House of Life*, focuses on blurring the boundaries between self and beloved, body and soul, on comparing his beloved to various objects in nature and longing for sexual union with her, and on feeling nostalgia and regret for the relationship's dissolution. These common topics portray Rossetti, like Meredith, as a participant in the troubadour tradition, although Rossetti spends the final few poems pondering nature and its meaning instead of his beloved, an interest that Meredith demonstrates only in the last of his fifteen literary songs. The difference actually becomes a similarity, as his literary songs likewise allude to Romanticism. In "The Sea-Limits," his final song, Rossetti, like Meredith, invokes Wordsworth:

> Gather a shell from the strown beach
>
> And listen at its lips; they sigh
>
> The same desire and mystery,
>
> The echo of the whole sea's speech.
>
> And all mankind is thus at heart

Not anything but what thou art:

And Earth, Sea, Man, are all in each. (22-28)

Listening to the description of the sea shell that imparts the world's mysteries, one hears the echo of not the sea, but rather of Wordsworth's *Prelude* (1850), from the scene in which an Arab hands him a similar shell:

. . . and at the word

Stretched forth the shell, so beautiful in shape,

In colour so resplendent, with command

I should hold it to my ear. I did so,

And heard that instant in an unknown tongue,

Which yet I understood, articulate sounds,

A loud prophetic blast of harmony;

An Ode, in passion uttered, which foretold

Destruction to the children of the earth

By deluge, now at hand. (5.89-98)

Rossetti's shell, instead of explicitly prophesying destruction like Wordsworth's, brings a message of universal humanity and interconnectedness, albeit an interconnectedness that demonstrates "the mournfulness of ancient life, / Enduring always at dull strife" (9-10). As with Meredith's forest, the shell channels the spirit of Wordsworth and Romantic poetry and depicts Rossetti as an inheritor of the Romantic tradition.

Rossetti deviates most from the masculine literary song tradition in "First Love Remembered," which details the speaker's attempt to imagine his beloved's bedroom:

Whether it still be small and light,

A maid's who dreams alone,
As from her orchard-gate the moon
Its ceiling showed at night:

Or whether in a shadow dense
As nuptial hymns invoke,
Innocent maidenhood awoke
To married innocence:

There still the thanks unheard await
The unconscious gift bequeathed;
For there my soul this hour has breathed
An air inviolate. (5-16)

Although his love song might appear to harken back to the troubadour tradition, Rossetti incorporates a new strain into his poem with common meter, the hymn meter preferred by women writers of literary songs (as the next section will demonstrate). Rossetti therefore aids his speaker's attempts to recreate the beloved's metaphorical cloister through the music of his verse; by using common meter, he creates a matching feminine, religious acoustical space, an allusion that suggests that poets of the time, regardless of their sex, were cognizant of the gendering of this genre. Although he imagines himself inside this feminine acoustical and physical space, the words with which he describes it are far more explicitly sexual than any woman would have been permitted to publish, as he imagines a woman waking up after a marriage has been consummated: "As nuptial hymns invoke, / Innocent maidenhood awoke / To

married innocence" (10-12). Even though Robert Buchanan famously accused him in *The Fleshly School of Poetry* of writing erotic scenes and of confusing the sacred and the sexual (343), Rossetti, as a man, could still continue to publish without too much harm to his reputation, and thus to exercise a freedom that women writers of literary songs did not have.

While Tennyson, Meredith, and Rossetti wrote literary songs to cast themselves as the culmination of the troubadour, Shakespearean, and Romantic musical and literary traditions through direct allusions and experimentation with the sounds of verse, women writers of "Song" poems followed a different path. Felicia Hemans, Christina Rossetti, and Michael Field, the most famous practitioners, wrote seemingly domestic and simple poems built on hymn meters to critique restrictive gender roles, the limitations on what they could publish, and the problematic, sexist nature of the troubadour tradition and its corresponding literary techniques.

The Gendering of Music and Hymnal History

To understand fully the gendering of the genre, we must first examine another, political strain of the history of literary songs, starting with Thomas Moore and Robert Burns. Both musician-poets wrote and collected songs, but unlike the songs of their Romantic counterparts who are now more famous, theirs were designed for performance. Moore himself performed his *Irish Melodies* (1821) in English parlors (Langan 43), and Burns also sang and recited his works (Hall 73). Their works simultaneously appealed to British imperial taste by performing Scottish and Irish identities and enacted a nationalistic and anti-colonialist project: Burns collected Scottish folk songs, whose Scottish dialect is more a "literary language" than spoken vernacular, to critique English provincialism and sentimentalism (Bentman 80, 93), while Moore's own imitations of Irish folksongs "brought Irish patriotism from the podium to the parlour" (Davis 23) and were designed "both to create and keep a positive image of Ireland for his compatriots

and to entertain the English who had controlled them for centuries" (Davis 20). Both used their music to claim a national, non-threatening and socially acceptable voice with which to critique British rule.

In the Victorian period, however, Romantic nationalistic songs became associated with a feminine aesthetic. Matthew Arnold, in *On the Study of Celtic Literature* (1867), portrayed the composers of such songs in a distinctly feminized and inferior light:

> Some people have found in the Celtic nature and sensibility the main root out of which chivalry and romance and the glorification of a feminine ideal spring . . . no doubt the sensibility of the Celtic nature, its nervous exaltation, have some feminine in them, and the Celt is thus peculiarly disposed to feel the spell of the feminine idiosyncrasy. (344)

Arnold's belief that Celtic art conveys a "glorification of the feminine ideal" and his essentializing assumption that a "nervous exaltation" is a mark of "the feminine" show a problematic view of women that was fairly emblematic of the culture at large and that implicitly devalues such works for their connections to femininity. Once these songs for masculine performance entered the Victorian parlor, critics dismissed them as not only feminized, but also designed for women to perform. In fact, many publishers designed song collections specifically for women (McCue 43) in a shift from Romantic to Victorian philosophies and from male- to female-imagined audience and performers. As my ensuing discussion of Hemans in particular will demonstrate, women poets adopted the technique of their nationalistic predecessors, and not only because such techniques were considered acceptable for women to use: their literary songs often appear to conform to ideas of sentimentality and domesticity in order to achieve popularity and readership while actually simultaneously critiquing restrictive gender roles and limitations on what women were allowed to publish.

Although women were expected to have musical expertise, they faced restrictions on what they were allowed to play and to compose, as the earlier chapters have demonstrated. Richard Wagner's friend, Ferdinand Praeger, unambiguously insisted that "women, whose strength was in instinct and intuition, had weak powers of reasoning; it is these powers that enable a man to work logically through sustained mental effort. Lacking these powers, women composers cannot go beyond small-scale works, most notably, songs" (qtd. in Gillett 25). Unsurprisingly, once women began to compose songs more frequently, songs themselves "underwent serious cultural devaluing, as the divide opened up between classical and popular taste" (Weber 319). Poems entitled "Song," then, simultaneously granted and denied women poets a voice, as they enabled women poets to allude to music that was considered exclusively their purview yet constrained them within the genre that was considered socially acceptable.

Hymns were a subfield of songs considered particularly acceptable to women composers. Although the earliest hymns were ancient Greek songs of praise to various deities, a tradition in which many of the great Romantic hymns participate, the Christian hymn tradition is more directly relevant to Victorian women's poetry. Whereas in the early days of Christianity hymns were written in Latin with strictly Biblical texts, in the 1700s Methodists such as Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley composed hymns that featured original texts in English inspired by passages from the English Bible, a radical departure that strove for a more personal religious experience as part of the Dissenting tradition. The *Olney Hymns* (1779), written by John Newton and William Cowper, and "Amazing Grace" in particular, provide the prime example of such songs (Lee

168). The Church of England began to sanction hymns in the 1820s,[72] and the first hymn book unofficially approved by the church was *Hymns Ancient and Modern* in 1861 (Arnold 80).

> As hymns became more accepted, more women performed and composed them:
>
> On the face of it, female authors contributed only a small proportion of the contents of Victorian hymn-books--just 10% in the case of the 1875 edition of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* and a little under 20% in the 1898 edition of *The Church Hymnary*. Yet among hymns by contemporary authors, the proportion written by women was very much higher. . . Hymn singing was seen very much as a female activity and, in a church culture that was overwhelmingly male dominated, hymnody provided women with a rare outlet for expressing their creative talent and giving voice to their spirituality. (Bradley 90)

The most prevalent hymn meters in literary "Songs" are the common meter, or four lines that alternate between eight and six syllables (represented as 8.6.8.6.)[73] and short meter, or two lines of six syllables followed by one of eight, then another of six (represented as 6.6.8.6.) (Johnson 84). But according to hymn critic Nancy Jiwon Cho, the Victorian female hymnody tradition, practiced by Charlotte Elliot, Marianne Farningham, and many others, rebelled against the more regular meters of Wesley, Watts, and other men (543-546). Cho argues that Elliot popularized the verse form of "three equal length lines followed by a shorter fourth line" (544), like the 8.8.8.4 and 8.8.8.6 pattern found in her most famous hymns: "My God and Father, While I Stray," "Jesus, My Saviour, Look on Me," and "My God, is Any Hour So Sweet." Departing

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[72] As Richard Arnold explains, "The Church of England subscribed primarily to the Calvinist rather than the Lutheran position on this important Reformational issue, thus restricting sung worship to the metrical Psalms. This liturgical practice persisted throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and did not relent to include hymns until the middle of the nineteenth century" (2).

[73] Common Meter has marked similarities with ballad meter, as they both have an alternating pattern of tetrameter and trimeter lines and a rhyme between the second and fourth lines. In its technical, musical definition, however, Common Meter should be counted with syllables and not feet.

from the strict hymn tradition dominated by men, Elliot's more irregular metrical patterns became a model for many other women hymnodists in England, America, and across Continental Europe (Cho 545). Although hymns were culturally coded as simple, domestic, and feminine, they also gave women the chance to create a new, unique voice that was already affiliated with a tradition of dissent. In fact, Susan Van Zanten Gallagher argues that many hymns composed by women in the 1800s actually subtly critiqued the "cult of domesticity" (qtd. in Morgan 36). By invoking hymn meters, common or otherwise, women poets accessed a form that simultaneously limited and expanded their musical options, and they found in Dissenting affiliation a means of dissenting against the restrictions of women's roles, both in life and in literature.

The gendered politics of the Victorian hierarchy of poetic genres gave them in itself something to dissent against. Given the Victorian association of music with women, literary song likewise became denigrated as it was considered a gendered, feminine form. That more women than men wrote such poems further genders the genre: Elizabeth Barrett Browning, L.E.L., Edith Nesbit, Felicia Hemans, Christina Rossetti, Charlotte Mew, Michael Field, Dollie Radford, Mathilde Blind, Dora Greenwell, Agnes Robinson, and Emily and Anne Brontë all wrote poems entitled "Song," whereas John Clare, William Morris, Richard Le Gallienne, and Robert Browning are the few male poets I have found besides Tennyson, D.G. Rossetti, and Meredith who did so. Like the songs of Moore and Burns, which critique the imperialist ideology they adopt, the "Song" poems composed by women pointedly invoke the gendered history of song and hymn meters and the corresponding stereotypes of women's abilities in order to write against them.

Felicia Hemans's Domestic Transgression and National Songs

Felicia Hemans's literary songs exemplify this strand of musical nationalistic poetry that critiques the dominant tradition. Her works are steeped in music, from poems with "song" in the title to those that use song thematically. She wrote many poems that incorporate historical music, such as "English Soldier's Song of Memory" (1834), based on the German song "Am Rhein, Am Rhein." She also imagined some of her poems as songs for performance, such as "A Farewell to Wales" (1834) designed to be sung to the Welsh tune of "The Ash Grove." Additionally, Hemans's sister set all but one of the poems from "Songs of Captivity" (1833) to music (*National Lyrics* 159). In the year before her death, she published *National Lyrics, and Songs for Music* (1834), whose advertisement explicitly announces its connections to music:

> This Volume contains, besides a few poems on subjects of national tradition, all those of the Author's pieces which have, at different periods, been composed either in the form of the ballad, the song, or the *scena*, with a view to musical adaptation. (xiii)

The advertisement demonstrates not only the multiple musical genres that Hemans incorporates in her poetry and the manifold works designed for musical performance, but also the idea that, for Hemans, "the song" is as unified and recognizable a form as the ballad, a claim that an analysis of their characteristics supports: Hemans's early works from *Poems* (1808) and *Domestic Affections* (1812) use poems titled "song" to refer to short lyrics that primarily feature four-line stanzas of iambic tetrameter[74] with a couplet-based or an alternating rhyme scheme. Her literary songs incorporate hymn meters to address, at least implicitly, the power women can

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[74] Although literary songs tend to be either strictly iambic or trochaic, Hemans wrote a few exceptions, such as the anapestic "Success to the heroes of gallant Castile." She also composed many poems with the occasional catalectic line; the combination of full with shortened lines makes more of her poems sound like common meter than actually fit the template.

wield, and the formal assimilation, in concert with Hemans's linkage of women's rights and nationalism, ultimately leads to the creation of a new feminine hymn form.

Many of Hemans's "Song" poems directly incorporate or allude to hymn meter. In "Song--The Smile" from *Domestic Affections*, Hemans adopts the 8.7.8.7. hymn pattern, a cousin to the common meter, and to that extent, a marker of decorous sentimentality, to render socially acceptable her otherwise subtly transgressive comments about smiles. After mentioning conventional markers of feminine beauty, like a woman's "pearly tear" (1) which graces her "blushing cheek" (2), or her "pensive mien" (6), the speaker claims that the "winning charm" (15) and "illumin[ed]" "lovely face" (16) that a smile produces are superior to all other facial expressions. However, as James Najarian argues, Hemans's "poems seem at first glance entirely complicit with nineteenth-century feminine expectations and simultaneously witheringly doubtful about them" (524). Although the song initially seems to endorse the domestic cliché that a woman should be happy and beautiful at all times, Hemans evacuates it of its traditional associations in the final four lines:

> 'Twas Hebe taught fair beauty's queen,
>
> The gay, bewitching wile;
>
> And still her glowing lips are seen,
>
> To wear a playful smile. (17-20)

The poem's emphasis on the "bewitching" effect of the smile and its ability to trick others, which in poetry written by men is an established trope that complains about the supposedly deceitful nature of women, is far less expected in a Victorian woman's poem that initially sounds like a passage in an etiquette manual. The classical allusion in the passage further complicates matters: if "fair beauty's queen," in light of the allusion to Hebe, refers to Aphrodite, her smile was taught

by the cup-bearer of the Gods to the goddess of love and lust who is famed for her trickery and is far from the Victorian ideal of a docile, domestic woman. The description of Aphrodite's "glowing lips" not only emphasizes her smile, but also suggests that her lips are wet from drinking ambrosia from Hebe's cup and that they glow as the light hits them. The cup, therefore, contains knowledge about sexual manipulation that is passed between women, as Hemans, through her poem, passes the transgressive knowledge to her (presumably female) audience. Hemans's hymn meters thereby augment the sentimental, conventional surface of her poem and cloak her subtle critique of the expectations for women and her desire to find the power that women can wield.

Hemans's song **"**Hail! Fairy queen adorned with flowers" (1808) also focuses on women's power, as it celebrates the life-giving potential of spring:

Hail! fairy queen, adorn'd with flowers,
Attended by the smiling hours,
'Tis thine to dress the rosy bowers
In colours gay;

We love to wander in thy train,
To meet thee on the fertile plain,
To bless thy soft propitious reign,
Oh! lovely May. (1-8)

Hemans describes May as a decidedly female other-worldly sovereign whose retinue includes the speaker, all readers (because the "we" interpellates us into the poem), and time itself. May's job as a queen is to "dress" the world with flowers and greenery as a maid would clothe her mistress,

or a dutiful wife would decorate her home. The descriptions of the "fertile plain" and her "soft" governance likewise foreground stereotypical feminine characteristics while granting them a sense of grandeur and power and an outlet beyond the home. Hemans conveys a scene of natural harmony acoustically in her verse as well as pictorially, as the incessant long "a" rhymes create a soundscape that emphasizes similarity. The repeated final line of each stanza functions as a musical refrain that either ends with or rhymes with "May," a repetition that emphasizes the theme of the cyclicality of the seasons as well as the poem's song-like qualities.

The poem's song-like qualities, rhyme scheme, and meter derive from an actual Welsh tune: the three lines of trochaic tetrameter followed by a line of trochaic dimeter with an aaax rhyme scheme most famously appears in the second half of "Ar Hyd y Nos," the Welsh folk song known by its English title of "All Through the Night":

Golau arall yw tywyllwch
I arddangos gwir brydferthwch
Teulu'r nefoedd mewn tawelwch
    Ar hyd y nos. (5-8)
Soft the drowsy hours are creeping
Hill and vale in slumber steeping,
I my loving vigil keeping
    All through the night. (5-8)

The lullaby emphasizes another important connection of music with femininity, as women would be most likely to sing songs to comfort their children as they sleep. In using a famous lullaby's rhyme and meter, Hemans incorporates a musical form sung by women and applies it to a song

that describes women's agency outside of the home and child-rearing, in a gesture that enacts the poem's own project.

Hemans knew "Ar Hyd y Nos" well and was extremely interested in Welsh music: she lived in Wales from 1800 until 1828 (Ockerbloom) and, as mentioned earlier, wrote "Farewell to Wales" to be sung to the Welsh folk tune "The Ash Grove." She also wrote a volume of songs entitled *A Selection of Welsh Melodies* (1821), for which she wrote new words to traditional tunes, and occasionally translated the original Welsh into English (Aaron 2). Hemans wrote one of these poems, "A Sea-Song of Gavran,"[75] with the explicit instructions that it should be sung to "Ar Hyd y Nos" (*Transactions* 96). Its use of the same meter as "Hail fairy queen" solidifies her literary song's connection with the Welsh lullaby.

Hemans's interest in Welsh folk tunes was more than just a part of the Romantic interest in ballads, demonstrated in Wordsworth and Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads* (1798): she, like Moore and Burns, was interested in the nationalistic and political import of national lyrics and especially of seemingly domestic songs. Like Burns's "Scots Wha Hae" (1793), which speaks of Scottish medieval uprisings against the British, some of Hemans's "Welsh Melodies," such as "Chant of the Bards Before Their Massacre by Edward I," give voice to those who "t[ook] up arms on behalf of the Welsh nation, in its struggles against its thirteenth-century conquerors and its later rebellions against English rule" (Aaron 2). As Gary Kelly has argued, Hemans's *Welsh Melodies* discuss people who "may be invaded, oppressed, and even occupied by an (implicitly corrupt and rapacious) alien power, but they are inspired by the tradition of patriotic song to

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[75] 'Tis no night of hearth-fires glowing,
And gay songs and wine-cups flowing;
But of winds, in darkness blowing
O'er seas unknown! (5-8)

continued or renewed resistance led by their national bard" (33). In this context, "Ar Hyd y Nos" likewise becomes a Welsh nationalist ballad associated with fighting against oppression and tyrannical rule, and music the ideal weapon. By extension, "Hail fairy queen," in embedding the most famous Welsh nationalistic ballad, associates the struggle of women to obtain power and to "reign" (7) with an anti-colonial struggle.[76]

This literary song's history enacts the shift from Romantic to Victorian songs. Like the songs of Burns and Moore, it harbors political goals, but it also anticipates the Victorian period, when songs became less overtly political, pastoral, and expansive, and more overtly sentimental, domestic, and interior by association with women and the parlor. Even Hemans imagined her project as bringing national songs into the home, as her quotation upon hearing "Tyrolese minstrels" makes apparent:

> What a spirit of the Alps breathes through all their wild mountain music; but it should be heard out amid rocks and torrents. It is like transplanting a forest pine into a parterre, to bring it into a room crowded with all the beauty and fashion of the vicinity. (qtd. in Chorley 66)

Although she sounds critical of the project of transforming national music into a poem or song for consumption in England, Hemans did just that, not only with her poem "Evening Song of the Tyrolese Peasants," but also with Welsh music and "Hail fairy queen."

"Hail! Fairy queen" plays a role in the history of hymns as well as in the transformation of Welsh music. The poem has an 8.8.8.4 syllable count in hymn meter, and is therefore an early instance of what later became a standard hymn meter, made famous by Charlotte Elliot in 1835.

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[76] This investment in politics is characteristic of her larger poetic interests, as "Hemans responded passionately to the unfolding national and international politics of her day" (Kelly 15).

Since this meter became associated with the female-centric hymn tradition and with a feminine acoustical voice, the poem's metrical afterlife is a fitting summation of her poetic and political project: the form Hemans adapted from a famous Welsh tune to argue subtly for women's rights and the power of domesticity rather than sublimity became firmly associated with a feminine musical voice, and one that defined itself in opposition to the masculine hymn tradition.

Christina Rossetti, Diminished Commemoration, and Transgressive Love

Although Christina Rossetti, like Hemans, incorporates earlier music, her songs focus more on religious music and on criticizing particular literary traditions than on invoking nationalistic music to critique male literary chauvinism. Like Hemans, Christina Rossetti published most of her poems entitled "Song" in her earliest volume, *Goblin Market and Other Poems* (1862), although she composed at least four that she never published. Her songs have a greater degree of formal consistency than do song poems by other figures: they frequently contain four lines per stanza with regular meter (usually iambic with at least one line of tetrameter) and regular rhyme scheme (usually abab or abxb), and she based many of them on actual hymn models. I argue that although her poetry incorporates religious-musical meter, it does so to critique male literary traditions and overt statements of artistic immortality in order to claim a musically-based female voice, which in her unpublished songs also incorporates various forms of queer desire.

Rossetti's published song "Oh roses for the flush of youth" alludes to a well-known hymn to argue subtly for women's music and poetry. Charlotte Elliot's famous hymn "Just as I Am" (1835), which John Julian's *Dictionary of Hymnology* (1892) calls one of "the finest hymns in the English language" (qtd. in Cho 544), introduced the 8.8.8.6. pattern into the world of hymn meters (544):

Just as I am--without one plea,

But that thy blood was shed for me,

And that thou bid'st me come to thee--

O Lamb of God, I come! (*Invalid's Hymn Book* 84, II. 1-4)

By using Elliot's meter, Rossetti associates her poem with a female-centric musical voice. Her song also invokes the subject matter of "Just as I Am," since both works exhibit confidence in their own choices and fate:

Oh roses for the flush of youth,

And laurel for the perfect prime;

But pluck an ivy branch for me

Grown old before my time.

Oh violets for the grave of youth,

And bay for those dead in their prime;

Give me the withered leaves I chose

Before in the old time.

These two works might seem diametrically opposed, since Elliot's speaker confidently asserts that she will enter Heaven, while Rossetti's speaker, "grown old before [her] time" (4), awaits her diminished reward of "withered leaves" (7), presumably the shriveled remains of the bay or laurel, the traditional prizes for artistic achievement. In spite of these differences, both speakers have equal conviction in their fates and in their refusal to change, a surprising portrayal of self-assurance for women in an age that encouraged them to be obedient and subservient.

In spite of the apparent insignificance of the "withered leaves" (7), Rossetti's speaker does find beauty in diminished things. At first glance, the song portrays youth and beauty as

fleeting, a fate enacted by the progression of flowers from the reduced grandeur of the romantic rose to the shy violet, and from the laurel and bay to dried leaves. The shift from the living ivy, which to the Victorians signified friendship and fidelity (Seaton 181), to its "withered leaves" might also depict a world where not even our human ties or promises remain steadfast. At the same time, however, the poem argues for the beauty and utility of the desiccated leaves: the "withered" leaves, if they come from the laurel or bay, embody not dead inspiration, but rather the vital spice of cooking (Beeton 120), a domestic activity that was the purview of women. Even the "withered leaves" of the ivy can have a positive interpretation. Living ivy grows on other objects, such as trees and walls, a characteristic that explains its association with friendship, but this relationship is often destructive, as the vine damages that on which it lives. The dying ivy is no longer destroying the surface on which it fastened, although it looks less majestic. The stanza form itself values diminution, as its shortened final line enacts the dwindling the lines describe. The poem, then, alludes to a famous hymn meter composed by a woman, itself a denigrated, diminished art form, to praise stereotypically diminished domestic art, and it enacts the connection metaphorically in its meter, with a closeness of reference that disproves the merely metaphoric understanding of lyric song that constitutes the chief tradition within contemporary criticism.

Although "When I am dead, my dearest," the most famous of Rossetti's "Song" poems, does not have a direct relationship to hymn meter, it still alludes to it in order to deviate more directly from the tradition:

When I am dead, my dearest,

Sing no sad songs for me;

Plant thou no roses at my head,

Nor shady cypress tree:

Be the green grass above me

With showers and dewdrops wet;

And if thou wilt, remember,

And if thou wilt, forget. (1-8)

The song initially appears to follow a modified ballad rhyme scheme pattern, implicitly dividing the stanza into two groups of four lines each, with a rhyme between the second and fourth lines of each group. The internal rhyme of "dead" (1) with "head" (3) and the rhyme of "me" (2) with "tree"(4), however, allude to the more conventional abab rhyme pattern of hymns. Even the meter alludes to the hymn tradition, as the pattern of three iambic trimeter lines that encase an iambic tetrameter line (1-4) echoes the 6.6.8.6. syllable count of the short meter hymn. Ultimately, however, the song alludes to a musical model only resist the expected syllable count. Since the poem begins with the command to "sing no sad songs" (2) and concludes with an indifference to being remembered or commemorated, its deviation from the expected meter enacts that request as the poem fights against its genre and refuses to be a song.

Although Rossetti herself was religious, she, like most other writers of secular literary songs, uses the form to write about resignation and death without the promise of religious transcendence or the traditional comfort of memorial culture or artistic immortality. She devotes the second strophe to descriptions of sensory deprivation and oblivion:

I shall not see the shadows,

I shall not feel the rain;

I shall not hear the nightingale

Sing on, as if in pain. (9-11)

After her death, the speaker will not see, feel, or hear, either on earth or in the afterlife, a surprisingly anti-transcendent gesture for a religious poet obliquely referring to the religious hymn form.[77] Although the speaker claims indifference regarding her fate, the poem's compulsive internal rhymes suggest otherwise. In addition to the rhymes that preserve a hymnal connection, the poem also uses a high degree of alliteration ("dead . . . dearest" (1), "sing . . . sad songs" (2), and "through the" (13)) and assonance ("Be . . .green . . .me" (5), "Sing . . . .if in pain" (12), "doth not . . . nor" (14). The acoustical connections emphasize the repetitive soundscape that we also find in the repetition of particular phrases, such as "And if thou wilt," "I shall not," and variants on "Haply I may," and in the final two lines of each stanza, which function as a type of refrain. The repetitions both emphasize the song-like quality of the poem (as refrains originate in song) and function as miniature acts of acoustic remembering: readers are not permitted to forget the previous words or sounds as they continuously recur. Although her act of acoustic remembering might seem to contradict the message of the song, which forbids such grandiose gestures of commemoration as songs dedicated to individuals or traditional acts of mourning, it actually posits a different, more subtle culture of commemoration. In opposition to traditional poems, especially those by male poets such as Shelley or Shakespeare that explicitly state claims for artistic transcendence, her song concedes that such grand claims are not deemed appropriate for women, yet by the same token proposes that acts of self-commemoration when explicitly renounced may nevertheless be supported in the music of the words, for such music is the voice of Victorian women.

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[77] In another "Song" poem, "Two doves upon the selfsame branch," Rossetti denies the idea of life or love after death: she dwells on the innocence of "never giv[ing] a thought to night" (8) and argues for the ephemerality of happiness and relationships.

Rossetti's unpublished poem "We buried her among the flowers" appears to present her most traditional expression of hymn form and content. She describes a woman who has died and imagines her happiness in Heaven while encouraging the mourners not to be sad:

> We buried her among the flowers
>
> At falling of the leaf,
>
> And choked back all our tears; her joy
>
> Could never be our grief. (1-4)

Her traditional religious sentiment, that one should not grieve after the death of a loved one who now resides in Heaven, conforms to the poem's conventional religious hymn meter. Nevertheless, subtle hints of doubt trouble the poem's sentimental surface. The speakers must "choke[]" back their tears (3) during the burial, and they imagine the deceased as "the only thing / That perishes" (6) among the "living flowers / And grass" (5-6). Since flowers and grass also perish, her statement contradicts 1 Peter 1.24-25, which compares mankind and human actions to grass as a demonstration of their ephemerality when compared with God:

> 24 For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:
>
> 25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. (*King James Bible*)

Although the speakers proceed to imagine the deceased's ascent to Heaven with the question "or is it that / Our Autumn was her Spring?" (7-8), and therefore to support the idea of God's supremacy, the very fact that the stanza poses her salvation as a question subtly subverts the traditional solace.

The metrical inversion that begins the next stanza further unsettles the poem. Instead of beginning with an iamb, Rossetti begins the line with a trochee on the word "doubtless," a metrical hiccup that draws our attention to the forced certainty of the line that discusses the body in the coffin:

Doubtless, if we could see her face,
    The smile is settled there
Which almost broke our hearts, when last
    We knelt by her in prayer. (9-12)

The speakers' certainty in the imagined situation conveys their internal struggle to convince themselves that her death will lead to a better place, rather than their actual confidence in Christian transcendence. Even the poem's collective voice, the "we" of the poem, supports this idea: it is unlikely that multiple people would have had exactly the same emotional and psychological responses to the woman's death, so the collective voice enables the speaker to legitimize her feelings by claiming that a choir of people feel them. The poem, while it has the meter, rhyme, and surface of a traditional hymn, actually expresses not religious certainty, but a desire for religious certainty.

Other unpublished "Song" poems enabled Rossetti to critique the traditionally masculine literary tropes of the blazon and the unrequited lover. In "It is not for her even brow," she writes a poem in the blazon tradition without the similes. The speaker lovingly details the beloved's "even brow" (1), "shining yellow hair" (2), "tender eyes" (3), "rounded cheek" (7), and "the simple voice / Whose love makes many hearts rejoice" (17-18) while using the language of conquest to describe the desire to "win" her (8). Such images challenge the tradition of the blazon, since the speaker frequently insists that the woman's beautiful soul has greater value than

her physical beauty with descriptions of her "tender," "frank[]" eyes (6) and the "honest blush" (9) that comes "straight from the heart" (10). The poem does not refuse to praise her beloved's physical beauty like Shakespeare's parody of the tradition, sonnet 130, but rather accepts it and moves on to other concerns: Rossetti chose to write her unembellished blazon, like the woman's blush, "straight from the heart." The change from tradition implies that Rossetti believes the conventional literary patterns are too hyperbolic; they, like her brother as portrayed in "In an Artist's Studio," focus on praising not the individual, but the ideal. The song, then, in its critique of the masculine blazon, posits a new, female version.

The "Song" poem "I saw her, she was lovely" again incorporates a female response to the blazon tradition to describe a beautiful woman, but here the song form enables the expression of queer desire in a socially acceptable format. The poem depicts a beautiful woman with "eyes of blue" (2) whose "white white hands"(3) elegantly play the harp. Her harp playing matches her angelic personality, when with "a quiet smile and holy, / Meet for a holy place" (14-15) she walks down the aisle for her wedding and acts the dutiful widow when her husband dies: she "kneel[ed] beside [his] bed" (18) and "gazed on him without a tear, / And hailed the coming day" (23-24) as though through God's light (the sun), "Earth's gloom" is "chased away" (22). Hidden by the conventional consolation lies a different interpretation. We know that the speaker loves her, although the beloved is a married woman and unable to directly reciprocate this affection: "I loved her for my pain, / For her heart was given to another / Not to return again" (6-8). Surprisingly, the poem leaves open the possibility that this love is in fact reciprocated: she "paced" down the aisle as though nervous, and her lack of tears at her husband's death and her "hail[ing] the coming day" (24) could be signs that she loved another the entire time. The poem's emphasis on the widow's religious convictions set her above the reproach that would

certainly fall on her should it be discovered that she loved another, especially during the mourning period. The love becomes even more transgressive when the speaker's gender is considered. As with the earlier song, this poem never specifies the speaker's gender and therefore leaves open the possibility that a woman speaks these words. While Victorian women often expressed their platonic love for each other in terms a contemporary reader might interpret as sexual desire, the language of the poem makes the romantic intent clear. She laments her friend's marriage, not because they will spend less time together as friends, but because she fears her feelings will never be reciprocated: "I loved her for my pain, / For her heart was given to another / Not to return again" (7-8). In focusing on a form of queer desire, adopting and critiquing the traditionally masculine stance of the blazon, and enabling the woman to "hail[] the coming day" after her husband's death, Rossetti wrote seemingly simple and religious literary songs to give voice to unconventional women's narratives written against the male-dominated literary tradition.

Rossetti's unpublished song "I have loved you for long long years Ellen" best exemplifies her interest in using a musical and literary form to address transgressive ideas of queer desire and literary critique; it also argues against the limitations society imposes on women and the subjects they are allowed to address in their writing. Initially, the speaker appears to lament his unrequited love, but its named addressee and plot, in light of Rossetti's own biography, challenge such a reading:

I have loved you for long long years Ellen,
    On you has my heart been set;
I have loved you for long patient years,
    But you do not love me yet.

Oh that the sun that rose that day
Had never and never set,
When I wooed and you did not turn away,
Tho' you could not love me yet.

I lay lands and gold at your feet Ellen,
At your feet a coronet,
I lay a true heart at your feet Ellen,
But you do not love me yet.

Oh when I too lie dead at your feet,
And in death my heart is set,
Will you love me then, cold proud Ellen,
Tho' you will not love me yet?—

Although the song's alternating tetrameter and trimeter and abab rhyme scheme allude to common meter, its irregular combination of anapests and iambs fit better with the ballad tradition, which allows for greater flexibility than does its religious counterpart.[78] Likewise, lines one and three and lines nine and eleven express similar sentiments, and the final line of each stanza ends with a slightly varied refrain, all characteristics of the ballad tradition. The shift from a hymn to a ballad tradition signals not only a greater emphasis on the narrative of the

[78] These metrically irregularities often occur to enact the ideas of the poem, as in the first line when the words "have" and "long long" draw out the line to demonstrate the duration of the speaker's wait.

poem, since ballads tell stories, but also an allusion to an earlier, highly narrative work: "Ellen" (1819), by George Crabbe. Crabbe's poem is a cautionary tale about the dangers of educating young women and of giving them the right to reject suitors: Ellen, against her father's wishes, learns from and falls in love with a tutor, who leaves her broken-hearted. Upon his return, years later, she spurns him, regrets her decision, and they both die alone and desolate. Rossetti's poem adopts the tutor's perspective, but her version, especially in light of her own biography, implicitly argues against its source. As an educated woman and poet, Rossetti would not have agreed with the poem's moral, and the very existence of this poem shows the benefits that can come of women's skill. Her biography also argues against Crabbe's ideas of the role women should play in relationships. By 1853, when this poem was composed, Rossetti had already accepted and then refused an offer of marriage, and had none of Ellen's regrets (Flowers xli-xlii). Although the poem portrays the angst her suitors might have felt, it does not present a good reason why Ellen should forgive the tutor and respond in kind; the speaker points out that he has loved her for a long time and has offered her wealth, love, land, and power, but he never asks what she wants or needs, as he instead assumes that she owes him her love. Her poem implicitly critiques the Petrarchan notion that a woman should reciprocate a suitor's feelings solely because she is adored.[79]

As with earlier song poems, by writing from the perspective of the speaker, however problematic his arguments may be, Rossetti inhabits the traditionally masculine role of the pursuer (and of her former suitors). The repetition of "I" in the poem marks a dramatic shift from some of her more self-evacuating songs that either only use a first-person pronoun in one

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[79] Rossetti's *Monna Innominata* (1881) also reflects her "anti-Petrarchan style" (Billone 97), in which she writes "love lyrics from the position of the silent object in the complete awareness that she is attempting to reverse centuries of tradition when she does so" (Homans 574).

line or focus on imagining herself insensate. Although the poem does end with a desire for death, and much of it discusses ceding power, control, love, and money, the speaker (and, by extension, Rossetti) does get to "woo" and to "set" his heart and thus to be a more active participant than most women were allowed to be. Rossetti also uses this male viewpoint to express queer desire for another woman, whose name she mentions four times in a sixteen-line stanza. Like "I saw her, she was lovely," and "It is not for her even brow," her unpublished song poems give voice to emotions that could not be expressed publicly.

The name "Ellen" hints at the poem's metapoetic character and also at Rossetti's own sense of an enforced chasm between her public and private poetry. In 1850, three years before Rossetti wrote this poem, she published seven poems in *The Germ*,[80] the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood's journal that her brother Dante Gabriel Rossetti helped form. Her pseudonym, which her brother selected, was "Ellen Alleyne" (Rosenblum 46), a name that obscured her identity and relation to her brother, but not her gender. This detail invites a more autobiographical reading of the poem, in which Rossetti writes to her own literary persona, begging for recognition and acceptance. The repetition of "at your feet" that occurs throughout the last few stanzas becomes an even more obvious poetic pun, as she argues that she has put her money, time, and heart into the poems which "Ellen" refuses to acknowledge, or, by extension, publish. The final stanza that imagines her dead at Ellen's feet becomes a more direct meditation on her literary reception and specifically on the fate of her unpublished poetry, like this very poem, which she hopes will be put into print so that a part of her other than her "cold proud" socially acceptable public front can survive her. The poem's combination of queer desire, critique of the male-dominated literary tradition, and the expression of the tension between what

[80] Her "Song" poem "Oh roses for the flush of youth" was one of those poems.

a woman wants to write and what is socially permissible perfectly encapsulates the transgressive conformity of Rossetti's literary songs.

Michael Field and Remediated Collaborative Songs

Michael Field, the pen name of lesbian couple Katharine Bradley and Edith Cooper, wrote multiple literary songs that seem to defy many of our expectations about the form: they do not have formal consistency, like Christina Rossetti's, nor do they allude to nationalistic songs or hymn meters. Their dominant unifying characteristic is that they appeared as actual songs in Field's verse dramas and were then republished as poems without titles in a volume of collected works. Since their songs have no formal common characteristics and yet were all originally sung, they are simultaneously more abstract and more literal in their invocation of music than the songs just considered. They bring together the single and the collective, the printed and the sung, the performed and the quietly read: this proliferation of possibilities for the previously formally limited genre of "Song" correlates to Field's thematic interest in expanding opportunities for women.

Many of Michael Field's volumes of poetry have "Song" either in the title or as a central component: *Sight and Song* (1892) provides the most obvious example, but *Underneath the Bough* (1893) consists of five books, each of which is called a book of "songs,"[81] and *Long Ago* (1889) features multiple poems based on Sapphic fragments. Since, as Yopie Prins's *Victorian Sappho* convincingly argues, the Victorians conceived of Sappho as "the first women poet, *singing* at the origin of a western lyric tradition" (3, emphasis added), and since these poems continue that trend, Field implicitly marked them as song as well, even though they are untitled.

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[81] They also referred to it as a "new & beautiful Elizabethan song-book--wh. aspires to treat of Victorian themes in Elizabethan temper" (qtd. in Thain 92).

Katharine Bradley wrote the exception in two books that feature poems explicitly entitled "Song": *The New Minnesinger and Other Poems* (1875), written before her collaboration with Edith Cooper and under the pen name Arran Leigh, and *Mystic Trees* (1913), written after Cooper's death (and still written with the "Michael Field" signature). In *The New Minnesinger and Other Poems,* Bradley's "Song" consists of seven shorter poems. Thematically, they focus on love and mourning and on the difficulties of living after one's beloved has died, and they provide an intensely personal description of grief that contrasts with the song poems Michael Field composed. They also have metrical similarities. Every song poem has a consistent meter and rhyme throughout; and, as with Christina Rossetti's literary songs, at least one line in every stanza contains an extra syllable, an elongation and contraction reminiscent of common meter. In fact, three of the seven poems actually use common meter, the first adding an extra line of eight syllables to the pattern. The poems also have fairly simple rhyme schemes: all of them are built on some form of alternation, whether it is straightforward abab or some more complicated alternating pattern. Thus, Bradley's formal conception of literary songs harmonizes with those of Hemans and Rossetti.

Bradley has a different relationship to religion and song from the earlier female poets, as she published many religious songs in both verse dramas and in *Mystic Trees*. *Mystic Trees* uses explicitly Catholic language in its song poem to describe being selected as an angel and a bride of Christ:

> Playmates, on my head, behold,
> He hath set a crown of gold!
> Feel them, stone by stone,
> These jewels—they are all my own.

He hath decked me with flowers of spring;

He hath set on my hand a ring;

To me as a Bridegroom He speaks,

And His Blood is red on my cheeks.

Although the poem has a straightforward couplet-based rhyme scheme, its metrical irregularities distance it from the more regular hymn tradition: many of the lines are tetrameter, but the poem refuses to maintain any particular pattern of feet, and the final three lines can just as easily be perceived as trimeter. Since the hymn tradition attempts to provide regularity to enable a congregation to sing together in praise of God, Field's decision to privilege an idiosyncratic pattern that would be difficult to set or to sing in unison writes against that simplicity. In rejecting the purpose of the hymn's meter, the poem becomes more literary than musical (and more like Tennyson's literary songs than Hemans's or Christina Rossetti's): designed for reflection rather than performance.

Although during their collaboration Michael Field avoided granting any stand-alone lyrics the title "song," their verse dramas feature multiple songs, almost all of which are republished in *Underneath the Bough* without a title.[82] They tend to feature couplets or an abab rhyme scheme, although they can include odd combinations of the two.[83] The most prominent metrical patterns are strict tetrameter (seven songs) and strict trimeter (three songs), but, surprisingly, only two songs feature common meter ("Ah, Eros does not always smite" and "She

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[82] *Canute the Great* (1887) and *Stephania, a Trialogue* (1892) are the only verse dramas of the twelve composed before the publication of *Underneath the Bough* to omit songs altogether. *Callirrhoë* (1884) includes seven songs, three of which reappear in the later volume; *Fair Rosamund* (1884) includes two songs, both of which are reprinted; *The Father's Tragedy* (1885) includes three songs, two of which are republished; *William Rufus* (1885), *Loyalty or Love* (1885), *Brutus Ultor* (1886), and *The Cup of Water* (1887) each include one song, later reprinted; and *The Tragic Mary* (1890) contains two reprinted songs.

[83] "Where winds abound" has an idiosyncratic abbacddceffe rhyme scheme.

was a royal lady born"). Their omission of hymn meter and iambic patterns self-consciously rejects the formal principles of literary songs composed by earlier women poets, and instead posits a new type of song, based not on religious meters deemed appropriate for women, but rather on Field's own music, as they wrote the songs that they then republished. Such self-conscious self-quotation demonstrates their comparative independence, as they can worry marginally less than did earlier women poets about following the rules of social acceptability.

These poems not only reject the meter of earlier literary songs but also share an interest in overturning the conventional literary relationships between men and women. Field neither critiques the blazon, as did Christina Rossetti, nor upends etiquette guidelines, as Hemans did: rather, Field's few songs about heterosexual relationships render the man rather irrelevant. In "Ah, I, if I grew sweet to man," from *Tragic Mary*, the Queen explains that she cares more for being herself than for finding a husband:

> No art I used men's love to draw;
> I lived but by my being's law,
> As roses are by heaven designed
> To bring the honey to the wind. (9-12)

Although the Queen does imply that women exist to entice men, her lines also announce her independence from traditional gender roles, and in a surprisingly metapoetic fashion. The Queen's insistence that she will not use "art" to "draw" men's love also functions as Field's claim that their poetry will not attempt to attract the attentions or praise of men, and will instead follow their "being's law" (10). Another "Song" poem from the same play, "She was a royal lady born," further critiques traditional gender relations. It tells the story of a "royal lady" (1) who is single-mindedly devoted to her "shepherd lad" (2). Once the shepherd boy is murdered,

she forsakes her throne to become a shepherd herself, and instead of mourning his death or pining away, she spends the rest of her days in happiness and comfort. While she was a Queen, no one respected her authority--instead, they tried to "cross[] her" (21) or "to bend her will" (22)--but as a shepherd she can control her own life and complete a traditionally masculine job. She can even create art, since she serenades the sheep with her lute. Field's idiosyncratic tale uses ballad meter, the predecessor of common meter, to imagine women who are not defined solely by their relation to men and to critique, as old-fashioned, narratives that conceive of heteronormative relationships as the goal of a woman's life.

These songs give voice not only to women and their passions, but also to non-human life forms: fauns sing two songs from *Callirrhoë*, and fairies sing two songs from *Fair Rosamond*. Although such creatures frequently sang in dramas (notably Shakespeare's), they usually do not appear in literary songs, as the genre privileges a level of personal reflection and subjectivity not normally granted to fantastical creatures. In using a song to grant non-humans voice where they previously had none, Field implicitly acknowledges the role "Song" poems have played in granting voices to those previously denied them, such as women.

Michael Field wrote choral songs in their verse dramas in addition to the solo songs. The aforementioned fantastical creatures perform some of the group numbers, as do military victors ("Let us wreathe the mighty cup"), Norman nobles ("To the forest, ho!"), and children ("Ave, most fair," "Ave, most meek," and "Dear mother, hail" from *Noontide Branches* (1899)). Although the songs from *Noontide Branches* are choral, they are actually the least song-like, in that they have the most irregular rhyme schemes and have no clear metrical pattern, like the religious song excerpted above from *Mystic Trees*. "Ave, most fair" provides a prime example of the genre, as it contains some couplets amidst its otherwise bizarre rhyme scheme, and its

lines, ranging from two to five feet, are indebted more to the irregular meter of the Greek chorus than to hymn meter:

> Ave most fair,
>
> Queen of our bowers,
>
> Queen of the woodlands, and the white-thorn air,
>
> Of furzy reaches,
>
> Wave-breaking, solitary beaches,
>
> And the lone farmstead in its shaded nook. (1-6)

This irregular pattern would not lend itself to a Victorian musical setting, and it would be even more difficult to sing it with others. The allusion to the Virgin Mary in this poem makes its rejection of collective singing even stranger: the song, like the others from *Noontide Branches*, praises a "spotless virgin" ("Ave most meek" 15), pictured with a "Babe for ever on thy breast" ("Dear mother hail" 19), to whom the speakers pray through their "sweet rosary" ("Dear mother hail" 20). Although the "Dear mother" has much in common with Mary, she is in fact a sylvan figure, or earth goddess, "Queen of the woodlands, and the white-thorn air." This figure continues the thematic interests of earlier literary songs like Hemans's through its focus on women's power, as the sylvan Queen, like an earth goddess, embodies the life-giving potential of the world. The subject matter, however, explains the apparent rejection of a consistent meter, and especially hymn meter: although its religious allusions and the women's literary song tradition would lead us to expect hymn meter, the song refuses to use a Christian musical form to perform a non-Christian ceremony. Their allegiance to the irregularity of ancient Greek choral meters rather than hymn meters also demonstrates both their feminism and their lesbian identity: although women were discouraged from learning Greek, Cooper and Bradley studied it and

wrote *Long Ago*, a volume of poems inspired by Sappho's fragments in which each lyric begins with an excerpt of the original. As Prins points out, "by imitating Sappho's Greek fragments, Michael Field enters into a domain often coded as masculine, and, by the end of the nineteenth century, increasingly homosexual" (*Victorian Sappho* 77). Field's allusions to the meters of Greek tragedy rather than Victorian hymns enables them to express their knowledge, their affiliation with a masculine poetics, and also "a lesbian eroticism distinct from the troping of homosexual desire" (Prins, *Victorian Sappho* 77).

Field's refusal to title their printed poems as "Songs" shows them embracing instead a new, hybrid form that reconciles dichotomies: the previously performed song becomes a written poem, the lyric moment of drama becomes a poem without context or characters, and the public display becomes privately read. In the case of choral songs, the collective voices of the victors, fauns, and children become one. The reduction of multiple voices to a single written voice parallels the merging of Bradley's and Cooper's own voices. Prins describes their collaborative voice for their volume *Long Ago* as "a complex performance of the Sapphic signature: simultaneously single and double, masculine and feminine" (*Victorian Sappho* 74) and as an explicitly musical "chorus of voices" that "pluralizes and textualizes the lyric voice" (*Victorian Sappho* 177). Field's reprinted songs in *Underneath the Bough* do just that through choral songs and multiple publication contexts. The "double nature" of printed poetry, which Eric Griffiths describes as the "printed voice" (60), becomes tripled in these musical and textural repurposings that simultaneously vocalize the text and textualize the voice: every written poem that rhymes, according to their definition, can be a song, and actual songs become text. Their repurposed songs do more than just argue that the "lyric must ultimately be detachable" and reflect "the bonds that are made and broken with each reading" (Harrington 231): they argue that the

boundaries between song and poetry are porous, a stance that harkens back to the poet-musicians Moore and Burns and the Romantic notion of "Song" as both poem and music.

Field addresses the connection between song and poetry as well as individual and collective voice in a deceptively simple song from *Callirrhoë* republished in *Underneath the Bough*:

I dance and dance! Another faun,
A black one, dances on the lawn.
He moves with me, and when I lift
My heels his feet directly shift:
I can't outdance him though I try;
He dances nimbler than I.
I toss my head, and so does he;
What tricks he dares to play on me!
I touch the ivy in my hair;
Ivy he has and finger there.
The spiteful thing to mock me so!
I will outdance him! Ho, ho, ho!

Although the poem initially appears to be the thoughts of a naïve faun unable to understand that the black faun is his shadow and therefore himself, it actually meditates through dance on the boundaries between self and other. The faun insists that the black faun is a separate entity, and one that has more talent than he: "I can't outdance him though I try; / He dances nimbler than I" (4-6). The competition inherent in that line implies that the relationship between the individuals that compose a collective is necessarily fraught, but that from such tension comes greater art, as

the faun will continue dancing with more dedication out of a desire to "outdance him" (12). Field emphasizes the dexterity involved in such an artistic competition through the word "nimbler," which must be stretched to three syllables to fit the regular meter. The poem further links dancing with composing poetry: the faun's dancing causes the shadow faun's "feet" to shift. The line's punning nod to the feet of poetry depicts a collaborative voice such as that of Michael Field as a competitive dance between two distinct, yet similar voices. The poem, through its metaphoric association of dance and poetry, is also a meditation on the relationship between different art forms, and therefore metapoetically acknowledges the combination of song and poem that this work represents. The two "copies" of the faun also allude to the two publication contexts of the poem, and the tensions and play between the verse drama song and the silent, printed poem.

Their literary songs also unite both the men's and women's style of the genre: although Field's ballad meter poem, with its similarity to common meter, challenged gender roles, Field refused to use hymn meters as their female contemporaries had, and instead wrote poems in multiple meters and rhyme schemes and even incorporated a collective voice as well as the traditional solitary voice in their republished songs. While alluding to but mostly rejecting the feminine hymn tradition, Field simultaneously incorporated elements of the masculine Romantic tradition: these republished stand-alone songs, which originally appeared as songs from verse dramas, harken back to Keats and Shelley, who created literary songs to accompany musical works. Their songs also invoke Tennyson's interest in the same project, as his repurposing of Shakespeare's and Moore's songs demonstrated. Field, then, combines both the masculine and feminine song traditions, a gesture that reflects their genderqueer pseudonym: a masculine pen name for two female poets.

The shift in literary songs from a predominantly masculine Romanticism (invoked by Tennyson, Meredith, and D.G. Rossetti) to a musically-inflected feminine Victorianism (composed by Hemans, Christina Rossetti, and Field) is encapsulated by the reception history of one of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "Song" poems, occasionally known as "To a Lady":

> 'Tis not the lily-brow I prize,
> Nor roseate cheeks, nor sunny eyes,
> Enough of lilies and of roses!
> A thousand-fold more dear to me
> The gentle look that Love discloses,--
> The look that Love alone can see!

That Coleridge composed the poem in the 1820s "extempore on hearing a song which contained the words 'lilied Brow'" (Mays 1075) perfectly fits Romanticism's investment in titling poems "Song" when they were inspired by a particular piece of music. Coleridge then published it in the 1830 issue of *The Keepsake*, an elaborately illustrated anthology of poetry and prose printed every Christmas from 1828 to 1857 designed to appeal to a middle-class female audience for display in the parlor ("Keepsake"). Thus, Coleridge's song was explicitly designed for women and the parlor, but, by the same token, it risked appearing as a degraded art form, printed in a commercial annual catering to women and largely written and produced by them. Although Sir Walter Scott and William Wordsworth as well as Coleridge published in it, many others felt a stigma associated with it: Thomas Moore was hesitant to publish with *The Keepsake* because he feared his "name would suffer by accepting them" (Moore 1125). Victorian women poets' experiments in song emerged from such a climate of opinion. Women composed their denigrated literary songs and incorporated hymn meters to critique the works of a predominantly

masculine Romanticism while nominally preserving their submissive, sentimental stance. This denigration explains why, even today, critics tend to theorize about the lyric and all its subgenres without examining these literary songs. They should instead be reinstated as legitimate objects of study, both for their inherent appeal and because they are in harmony and also in discord with our current theories of lyric.

Such theories tell us to disregard song poems, assuming that any connection to real music must be merely metaphorical, as Culler has argued, or just a posture that shows sentimentality. Victorianists in particular tend to assume that such a title either participates in cultural notions about music that led to Walter Pater's famous claim that "all art constantly aspires to the condition of music" (55) or claim that women title their poems as "Song" as proof of their membership in the poetess tradition. Still others might say such titles demonstrate nostalgia for the bygone days of the Middle Ages or the Renaissance when music and poetry were composed together. Even vital figures in the historical prosody movement, like Yopie Prins, who have addressed the connection between music and poetry consider those connections to be predominantly metaphorical, since no one musical setting, recitation, or private reading could ever actually recreate the (fictive) original voice ("Voice Inverse" 131-132). Although Prins is right that music cannot actually grant the silent page its absent voice, the silent page can still allude to particular music or musical styles (such as hymns) through the meter that gives to the poem a voice more than only metaphorical. Without attending to such literal if skeletal metrical music, we miss the gendered social and political argument of these songs and their critique of other literary traditions.

Histories of lyric that attend to the connections between music and poetry have also ignored Victorian literary songs, and in fact they almost always omit the Victorian period

entirely. Most studies, like James Winn's *Unsuspected Eloquence: A History of the Relations between Poetry and Music* (1981) and Henry Tompkins Kirby-Smith's *The Celestial Twins: Poetry and Music through the Ages* (1999), move from ancient Greece all the way up to modern (and sometimes contemporary) poetry, but skip over the years between the Romantic period and the first world war. Lawrence Kramer (*Music and Poetry: The Nineteenth Century and After* (1984)) and Susanne Langer (*Feeling and Form* (1953)) theorize about song, but conceive of it in accordance with its traditional musical definition—a musical work with words—rather than imagine the genre could be a literary phenomenon. Since Kramer's book explicitly pairs musical and literary works from similar periods to show the interconnectivity of the two arts, it is especially surprising that he overlooks an entire subgenre of poems and that his musical examples of song all come from the supposedly "high-brow" art song tradition rather than from the hymn or parlor song tradition, both of which enjoyed a dramatic increase in popularity during the Victorian era.

Bias against such supposedly "low-brow" art forms is likewise present in literary criticism and helps explain the dearth of studies of literary songs. The otherwise invaluable essay collection *Meter Matters* omits any serious consideration of hymns even though it discusses a plethora of other meters. Jason David Hall provides the only mention of the genre. While proving that Emily Dickinson was knowledgeable about Victorian discourses on prosody, he disparagingly claims that she was not the "'self-taught prosodist' whose metrical training was grounded principally in hymns" (13), as though a knowledge and use of hymns were somehow inferior. Hymns, literary songs, and parlor songs are all often considered lesser art forms, perhaps because they appear sentimental, simple, and supposedly designed for a "less educated"

audience. That all these works were also designed for (and often written by) women historically increases the likelihood of their devaluation.

Since literary songs do constitute a subgenre, and since women used a musical metrical model for their denigrated form as part of a political and social project, it is time to reevaluate literary songs. Until we do so, we shall misunderstand a substantial portion of Victorian women's writing, its vital place in the study of historical prosody, and the entire history of connections between music and poetry within the period, and therefore within the history of the lyric itself.

Chapter 4

Songs of the Victorians: Parlor and Art Song Settings of Victorian Poetry

[Please read this chapter at <http://songsofthevictorians.com/chapter4/analysis.html>. It addresses musical settings of Victorian poetry, and since such arguments require audio to be understood, I have invented a publishing framework where each observation about the music is accompanied by an icon of a speaker: when the user clicks the icon, the site plays the corresponding excerpt of the score and highlights each measure in time with the music. This digital format enables even scholars who cannot read music follow the threads of my argument.]

Victorian poems reached their audience not only through silent or public readings, but also through song: although critics disparaged Tennyson's poem *Maud* (1855), Michael William Balfe's and Sir Arthur Somervell's wildly popular settings of "Come into the Garden, Maud" gave the monodrama a vibrant afterlife in song. Such musical settings, premiered in ballad concerts by the most famous artists of the day, gave voice to the silent song of printed poetry and put it on the stage, while the increased availability of affordable sheet music and pianos enabled Victorians to bring these songs to their own parlors. As a result, much of the British public may have been more familiar with now-canonical poems through their musical versions than through the silence of the page. These song settings are not mere ephemera or quaint historical oddities: each musical setting is "a reading, in the critical as well as the performative sense of the term: an activity of interpretation that works through a text without being bound by authorial intentions" (Kramer 127). The addition of a musical dimension to the text enables the song setting and its performers not only to endorse, but also to critique, the words expressed by the poem's speaker. These songs often participate in debates surrounding the meanings of poems themselves, and since these musical readings were at least as well known as contemporaneous literary

interpretations, they more fully elucidate the poems that served as their lyrics.

Although critics recently have focused attention on the connections between music and poetry, few have addressed the relationship between Victorian poems and their musical settings. The pioneering rehabilitation of the scholarly perception of Victorian music by musicologists Nicholas Temperley, Cyril Ehrlich, and Ruth Solie has been followed by a burgeoning collection of publications and international conferences on the topic, and Yopie Prins, Linda Hughes, and Michael Allis have made influential interventions in literary studies by claiming musical settings of Victorian poems as legitimate grounds for inquiry. However, these studies focus primarily on the art song rather than the parlor song. The works of Derek Scott and Sophie Fuller do examine parlor songs, but even their scholarship often overlooks these songs' literary importance.

Building on this rich foundation, I examine parlor and art song settings of Victorian poems, their connections with gender, and their vital importance to the literary and cultural record. Musical settings comprised women's primary musical output, as they were expected to sing and accompany themselves on the parlor piano to prove their marriageability to male suitors, as the second chapter demonstrated. Because of this expectation, performances could include only sentimental songs that encouraged the status quo in gender relations. In spite of this limitation, women could in fact display transgressive conformity by questioning those relationships through their performances: by singing songs from the perspective of a man, women could critique the very practice of performing for men's admiration while gaining greater agency and expressing queer desire. Likewise, by selecting songs with words by well-known feminists, they could align themselves with a movement that they could not readily support in the normative public space of the parlor.

This chapter addresses four such songs using Victorian poems as lyrics, works that

women frequently performed and that were popular in their time: Caroline Norton's "Juanita" (1853), Michael William Balfe's and Sir Arthur Somervell's settings of Tennyson's *Maud* (1857 and 1898 respectively), and Sir Arthur Sullivan's setting of Adelaide Procter's "A Lost Chord" (1877). Although they sound either like sentimental love songs or religious songs, their unexpected dissonances, harmonic progressions, and paratextual material argue against a conventional interpretation. Norton's song, for which she wrote both the poem and the music, resembles a traditional love song from a man to a woman, but because its lyrics involve a woman singing a marriage proposal to another woman, the song critiques the very practice of courtship and traditional gender relations it appears to endorse. Both settings of Tennyson's *Maud* musically dramatize the speaker's violence and instability while also seeming to preserve the rules of sentimental propriety: although Somervell's art song setting sympathizes with the speaker's situation, Balfe's shows the dangers of traditional courtship. When sung by women, these settings also enable them to perform the role of the suitor rather than the pursued. Sullivan's setting of Procter's "A Lost Chord" mediates between its two publication contexts—one a feminist periodical and the other a collected works volume of poems—to critique gender inequality with a socially acceptable song. In examining these musical interpretations, this chapter reclaims the lost music of the Victorians, foregrounds the interpretations of these works, and demonstrates their vital role in helping women gain musical agency.

Subversive Singing: Role Reversals in Caroline Norton's "Juanita"

Caroline Norton's song "Juanita" (1853), designed for performance in Victorian middle-class parlors, tells a simple tale of unrequited love for a young woman. Its catchy, easily sung melody, which imitates traditional Spanish airs, both contributed to its Victorian popularity and has led, despite its composer's fame, to its current critical neglect. Derek Scott argues that

borrowing foreign airs enabled women composers to avoid accusations of impropriety for pursuing the supposedly masculine enterprise of composing music (*Erotic to Demonic* 49). Building on Scott's work, this section addresses the surprisingly transgressive subject matter that the song's conventional characteristics cloak: since Norton wrote "Juanita" for a soprano soloist, this song enabled women to sing of their desire for other women and to adopt the role of the pursuer instead of the passively pursued, while also critiquing traditional gender roles and the Victorian institution of marriage. By examining this seemingly simple tune that middle-class women played extensively during their leisure hours, we can better understand the song, its complex interweaving of the sentimental and socially acceptable with the transgressive, and its involvement in a women's rights movement that led to fundamental changes in the British legal system.

Initially, the song seems unremarkable, an example of a simple, sentimental popular song: the straightforward harmonic progressions focus on tonic and dominant chords, with the occasional subdominant. The broken chords of the accompaniment, echoing a Spanish guitar's strumming, fit easily under beginners' fingers, while the melody line, spanning only an octave and a half, moves with easy leaps and small steps. Even the song's style seems ordinary for its mid-century moment: as Scott has remarked, Britain's involvement in the Peninsular War led to a strong interest in pseudo-Spanish songs that continued until the mid 1850s (*Singing Bourgeois* 65) and that George Eliot may have recalled a decade later when writing her lyrics for *The Spanish Gypsy*. The song's understated "Spanish" style, palatable to even the most xenophobic Brit, sounds only in the strumming effect in the accompaniment, the ornamented turn on Juanita's name, and the grace notes in the piano interlude between verses. The lyrics appear equally simple, as they describe in traditional terms a man's attempt to woo a young Spanish

woman: the words detail the Spanish landscape, Juanita's "dark eyes" (5), and the speaker's desire to linger with his sweetheart, and, in fact, to marry her:

Soft o'er the fountain,
Ling'ring falls the Southern moon:
Far o'er the mountain,
Breaks the day too soon!

In thy dark eyes' splendor [*sic*]
Where the warm light loves to dwell,
Weary looks yet tender
Speak their fond farewell!

Nita! Juanita!
Ask thy soul if we should part?
Nita! Juanita!
Lean thou on my heart.

When in thy dreaming;
Moons like these shall shine again
And daylight beaming
Prove thy dreams are vain:

Wilt thou not relenting

For thine absent lover sigh

In thy heart consenting

To a pray'r gone by?

Nita! Juanita!

Let me linger by thy side!

Nita! Juanita!

Be my own fair bride!

Thematically, too, this work met the criteria for a parlor song, since as Scott has argued, "songs suitable for the parlour or drawing room were wholesome entertainment for family and friends . . . in the drawing room only the barest hint of disruptive female sexuality was tolerated" (*Singing Bourgeois* 78). The sentimental words and music helped the song become both lauded as "the first ballad by a woman composer to achieve massive sales" (*Singing Bourgeois* 66) and damned as a piece of drivel (Disher 113). And yet, for all these concessions to Victorian convention, Norton's song actually subtly critiques restrictive gender roles and the institution of marriage by using its simple exterior to cloak a more subversive message; in dismissing it, we overlook its feminist message and its role in the struggle for women's rights.

Caroline Norton was well-known in England as a leading figure in the fight for greater rights for women, and an understanding of this song requires an understanding of her political involvement. In addition to her career as a poet, novelist, and composer of songs, she also famously had separated from her husband as a result of his abusive behavior and had campaigned to have her children returned to her, as English law at the time gave fathers custody over children in all cases. She published multiple pamphlets arguing for the right to her children,

and advocated so successfully that when the Infants and Child Custody Bill passed in 1839, her detractors referred to it as "Mrs. Norton's Bill" (Prins, *Victorian Sappho* 221). In 1853, the year Norton published "Juanita," her financial situation was dire. Her husband claimed all the money she earned from royalties for her musical and literary publications and refused to pay her the allowance he had promised her, claiming that as a married woman, she had no legal standing, so their contract was void (Chedzoy 232). She faced him in court, but her suit failed.[84] When writing of the trial years later, she described it as

> A mock-trial, in which I do not 'exist' for defence [*sic*]; a gross libel, in which I do not 'exist' for prosecution; a disposition of property, in which I do not 'exist' for my own rights or those of my children; a power of benefiting myself by literary labour, in which I do not 'exist' for the claim in my own copyrights. *That*, is the negative and neutralizing law, for married women in England. (qtd. in Prins, *Victorian Sappho* 220)

Since, at the time Norton published "Juanita," she considered marriage a crooked system that rendered women non-existent in the eyes of the law, this song's investment in marriage--shown in the singer's request for Juanita to "Be [his] own fair bride!" (24)--seems suspect. The emphasis on ownership in the words "my own," in light of Norton's views on matrimony, virtually declares that this marriage would convert the beloved from an independent being into the speaker's possession, and thus supports an entirely different, more subversive reading of the song.

The singer's gender can also encourage a subversive reading. For a woman to sing a song from the point of view of a man serenading a woman is not too unorthodox: other popular

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[84] Her advocacy eventually led to the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857 and the Married Women's Property Act of 1870 that enabled women to own the money they earned.

songs, such as "Come into the Garden, Maud" set by both Balfe and Somervell, do the same. But men premiered both works. Although Norton initially wrote "Juanita" for her son to sing and perform on the guitar (Norton, "Editor" 6), she published it for women's voice, and the first edition title page lists women, "Miss Poole" and "Miss Lascelles," as the singers who premiered the work. This deviation from tradition grants women greater agency[85] by reversing traditional gender roles: as we saw in the third chapter, in both musical and literary traditions from the troubadours through Petrarch and Shakespeare, a man usually sings of his love and pursuit of a woman while the woman remains passive and silent. In "Juanita," the soprano can voice her desire for another and propose marriage: "Be my own fair bride!" (24). Whereas parlor performances primarily enabled young women to prove their marriageability by performing their domesticity and talents, this song undermines that project: it lets a woman, while passively being pursued, become the pursuer.

This gender switch is part of Norton's larger political project, as she used this very technique in a pamphlet published in 1839 after her first court appearance. She responded to personal attacks against her in "A Plain Letter to the Lord Chancellor on the Infant Custody Bill," but instead of publishing in her own name, she adopted the male pseudonym of Pearce Stevenson. In this pamphlet, she argues that, because of her status as a married woman with no legal authority, "she can make no defence [*sic*], although *hers* is the character at issue" (qtd. in Prins, *Victorian Sappho* 221). By explicitly pointing out the hypocrisy of the law and the systematic silencing of women, Norton demonstrates the bitter truth that writing from a masculine point of view gives her greater authority than speaking as a woman, even about her

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[85] The recording included in "Songs of the Victorians" is sung by a tenor—a man—rather than a woman, not because I wish to silence women's voices, but because this recording, which Hyperion Records kindly permitted me to use, is the only one I could find.

own story. As Prins argues, "only by assuming a male pseudonym can Norton reconstruct her character and claim authority to narrate 'the real History' of the bill" (*Victorian Sappho* 221). This song, then, continues this trajectory: like the pamphlet, it disguises its female speaker as a man to gain greater authority.

Although the female singer attains more agency than most women had in parlor songs or real-life courtship, this agency appears less substantial when compared with other songs designed for a male speaker. In "Come into the Garden, Maud," the speaker breaks into Maud's garden to wait for her and sings of his certainty that he will win her, while in "Juanita," the speaker eschews such demands and certainty: she simply states her wish that they remain together and proposes marriage. The speaker even asks permission (albeit in a command) to stay with her ("Let me linger by thy side!" (22)) and puts the future of their relationship in Juanita's hands by telling her to decide their fate: "Ask thy soul if we should part" (10). Although we never hear Juanita's answer, the speaker seems to anticipate rejection: as the dawn breaks, signaling to the lovers that they must part, the speaker sings that her "Weary looks yet tender / Speak their fond farewell!" (7-8). While ostensibly these parting looks occur because they will separate merely for the day, the speaker's next question, "Ask thy soul if we should part?" conveys her fear that Juanita wishes them to part permanently. These deviations from tradition might seem to diminish the female singer's agency: although she can pursue Juanita, she is an uncharacteristically passive pursuer and her suit may not succeed. Instead, these changes highlight Juanita's power by giving her the option to refuse the speaker's proposal. Juanita's increased agency thus echoes the speaker's gender change, as both grant women greater voice.

In addition to augmenting women's voices, "Juanita" also demonstrates the importance of close female relationships through its paratextual material. The cover page provides us the first

visible demonstration, as it prints the names of two women singers, when conventionally covers only list one singer and one accompanist. By mentioning two women with identical billing, "Sung by Miss Poole" and "Sung by Miss Lascelles," Norton presents them as equals in a musical relationship. Other editions of this song also make such musical relations explicit: the publishing company Chappell printed a duet version designed for two female voices singing the same words in harmony in addition to the original solo arrangement. This version might initially appear nonsensical: why have two women propose simultaneously to the same woman? Instead, this arrangement perfectly continues Norton's project as it simultaneously gives women greater voice (it doubles the number of women singing) and enacts the frequency with which women are pursued: by having the performers sing the same words, the song implies that many women have experienced situations like that of Juanita or have been enticed into unfortunate marriages. Norton, aware of the prevalence of her plight, wrote about her predicament in a letter to the Queen two years after the publication of this song: "I combine, with the fact of having suffered wrong, the power to comment on and explain the cause of that wrong; which few women are able to do" (qtd. in Prins, *Victorian Sappho* 224). Because of Norton's high social standing, she had a degree of privilege that enabled her to tell her story and to speak on behalf of less fortunate women throughout England. This song musically exemplifies this ability: "Juanita" allows Norton to introduce a story much like her own, to imply that others have had similar experiences, and to tell of those experiences through a song.

Norton also uses the song's dedication to the Marchioness of Stafford to tell her story. While it again privileges the connections between women (in particular, between Norton and the Marchioness), it also has a more personal meaning. In 1836, when Norton's husband falsely sued her for infidelity, many aristocratic families deliberated over which side of the conflict to

support. The Marchioness of Stafford, Harriet Sutherland-Leveson-Gower (better known later as the Duchess of Sutherland), helped save Norton's reputation and livelihood by publicly showing her support. According to Alice Acland, "the Duchess ordered her carriage and invited Caroline to go out driving with her. She chose to drive round Hyde Park at the most fashionable hour. Caroline sat at her right hand for everyone to see, and there is no doubt that this act of loyalty on the part of the generous-hearted young Duchess did much to ease Caroline's return into the world" (101). Caroline Norton had already dedicated her 1840 volume *The Dream, and Other Poems* to her friend, even writing an entire poem, called simply "Dedication," in which she explains the full extent of her gratitude:

> But thou gav'st me, what woman seldom dares,
> Belief—in spite of many a cold dissent—
> When slandered and maligned, I stood apart,
> From those whose bounded power, hath wrung, not crushed, my heart. (21-24)

Why, since this poem has already explained the circumstances surrounding their friendship, did Norton dedicate "Juanita" to the Duchess seventeen years later? To show the importance of female relationships: the Duchess's support helped Norton stand up to her husband and enabled her to continue writing and publishing without disgrace. As her earlier poem to the Duchess shows, she imagines their friendship in particularly gendered terms and comprehends the differences in power between men and woman and how horribly her story could have ended without her friend's intervention. Thus, this song, in forecasting a marriage that could end as disastrously as Norton's, pays tribute to the importance of female friendship and the feminist struggle that united both friends.

The song, in enabling a woman to sing a marriage proposal to another woman, also lends itself to expressing queer desire. As the previous discussion of *Armgart* demonstrated, in opera, women often performed as male characters in trouser roles, so many auditors of these parlor songs might not have thought such declarations unusual; however, the fundamental difference between the parlor and the stage makes home performances more subversive. On stage, actors perform the identity of others rather than themselves, a difference which enables greater gender fluidity while also casting any declaration of love between actors of the same-sex as a mere performance.[86] In the heteronormative courtship space of the parlor, however, women adopt the role of idealized, docile versions of themselves. Singing this supposed love song in the parlor queers and alters the gender binary: by not following the expected script for gender roles in the parlor, the song transgressively enables women to sing of love for other women while outwardly conforming to the expected script. Certainly, the vast majority of performers and auditors would not have thought of this song as expressing queer desire: the song would never have enjoyed such success had that been the predominant interpretation. But for women who did experience queer desire or for anyone who felt limited by the gender expectations of the time and of the parlor, this song would have enabled them to give voice to these desires and to invert the gender expectations while still seeming to endorse them.

Norton did not limit this song's investment in feminism to the dedication, cover, and gender of the singer: she also incorporated such themes into the music itself. To critique the notion that marriage could lead to the bliss the speaker envisions, Norton added the occasional cadential 6-4 chord into her otherwise ordinary harmony. Conventional Western harmony from

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[86] Opera scholars such as Rachel Cowgill have argued that the cross-dressing of trouser roles, in enabling women to sing love songs for other women, opened up a space for queer desire (442); I carry this line of thought into the domestic space of the parlor.

this period at its most basic (and overly simplified) level progresses from a tonic (the key of the piece) to a dominant chord (a chord built on the fifth note of the scale), and then back to the tonic again, with occasional modulations to other keys and departures to other chords. In a cadential 6-4 chord, a tonic triad in second inversion leads to the dominant, and then back to tonic in an authentic cadence. This suspension creates tension by delaying the resolution until the tonic fully concludes the phrase. In "Juanita," we hear a cadential 6-4 chord on the first syllables of "fountain" (see ex. 1),[87] as well as on "mountain" (measure 14), "dreaming" (measure 42), and "beaming" (measure 46). In each place, the accompaniment continues playing dominant chords for a few beats before progressing to the cadence. This extension of the dominant and delayed cadence stalls the harmonic progress and musically enacts the speaker's lingering and refusal to leave Juanita's side.

Norton provides another musical clue through her allusion to a well-known aria. The melody for the words "Nita! Juanita" and the ensuing two beats (or feet, for our literary readers) musically quotes the soprano aria "Lascia ch'io pianga" from Handel's opera *Rinaldo* (1711). In this song, a woman named Almirena, who has been imprisoned, laments her fate:

Lascia ch'io pianga	Let me weep
mia cruda sorte,	my cruel fate,
e che sospiri la libertà.	and sigh for liberty.
Il duolo infranga queste ritorte	Have pity on me
de'miei martiri sol per pietà. (2.4.1-5)	As I lament my sorrow.

[87] For all musical examples, see the appendix.

Initially, one might think that this allusion to a song about imprisonment and pain would encourage a sympathetic view of the speaker: after all, we hear the speaker's words, not Juanita's, so this melody might imply that the singer feels imprisoned by his (or her) passionate desire. The placement of this melody, however, invites a second interpretation: it occurs only on Juanita's name and the opening of the following measure (see ex. 2). By alluding musically to imprisonment and pain in the setting of our titular character's name, Norton implies that being pursued (and, potentially, married) is like being imprisoned, and that Juanita, like Norton herself, wishes for freedom from a husband. With this quotation, Norton also makes a claim about the worth of parlor songs. She seamlessly incorporates a phrase from a famous Italian aria, a well-known as a concert piece and therefore considered "high art," into her parlor song, a form that was then (and, unfortunately, sometimes is still) considered "low art" produced by untalented women. Her allusion both demonstrates her skill and breaks down the false dichotomies between the traditionally masculine, more "high-brow" opera and art song and the traditionally feminine, "lower-brow" parlor song.

By examining the musical allusions, paratext, and historical context of "Juanita," we can better understand that many parlor songs are actually nuanced works of transgressive conformity, maintaining their positions of social acceptability while subtly critiquing contemporary structures and institutions. Performing this sentimental love song in the domestic space of the parlor, supposedly to attract a suitor, could become a political act that subverts the very ideology of Victorian gender roles, courtship, and marriage. Such transgression is not unique to "Juanita." Balfe's setting of Tennyson's *Maud* likewise questions courtship and enables women performers to challenge conventional gender roles by dramatizing the dangerous obsession that underlies the speaker's declarations of love and also giving women the chance to become the suitor.

Obsession and Instability in Tennyson's *Maud*

Although when Alfred Lord Tennyson's *Maud* was first published in 1855 it met with largely hostile reviews, it became an overwhelming success when its lines were excerpted for songs. While multiple different versions exist, dating from the year of the poem's publication to 1900, two of them have been particularly influential: Balfe's parlor song "Come into the Garden Maud" (1857) and Somervell's *Cycle of Songs from Tennyson's Maud* (1898). Balfe's setting became a staple of home performances, whereas Somervell's cycle is considered one of the masterpieces of the English art song tradition (Hold 91). Although both songs are well known, few scholars have addressed them from either a musicological or a literary standpoint. Those accounts which do exist argue that Balfe's setting and the corresponding section of Somervell's cycle perform a fairly naïve interpretation of the poem, taking the speaker's words of love for Maud as unproblematic and ignoring his madness altogether. These two divergent settings alter the narrative trajectory of the original, but their changes serve to emphasize the threat of violence and instability that undercuts the speaker's every line. In this deceptively simple and beautiful poem, the speaker misreads and misapplies the language of flowers and the garden, and so compulsively repeats his own phrases as to evacuate his troubadour-style lyrics of meaning and to expose them as merely the decoration for his latest obsession. Both Balfe and Somervell augment these poetic distortions in their musical settings. Balfe uses unexpected harmonies that cast doubt on the speaker's actions, making the song both participate in and disrupt the sentimental tradition. Somervell's version subtly avoids cadences and incorporates minor keys to convey the speaker's insanity from within the prison of his own mind.

Both settings feature lyric twenty-two from the end of Part I of *Maud*, in which the speaker has just discovered a rose floating in the rivulet that connects his house to the Hall where

Maud, his beloved, lives. He believes that she has sent it to him as a message to wait for her in her rose garden where she will join him after a dance (to which he has not been invited). This segment occurs as he waits for her in the garden and ends as he spies her approaching.

In order to understand the nuances of the song settings, we need to examine the poem itself:

Come into the garden, Maud,
For the black bat, night, has flown,
Come into the garden, Maud,
I am here at the gate alone;
And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad,
And the musk of the rose is blown.

For a breeze of morning moves,
And the planet of Love is on high,
Beginning to faint in the light that she loves
In a bed of daffodil sky,
To faint in the light of the sun she loves,
To faint in his light, and to die. (1-12)

The poem, especially if excerpted and taken out of context, appears to be a traditional love lyric, in which the speaker invokes the pastoral tradition and extols the beauty of both his beloved and his surroundings. The speaker's later conversations with flowers and his belief that he would still feel Maud's presence even after death further cast the poem as part of the Victorian sentimental tradition, a tradition particularly associated with the domestic sphere. The simple

rhyme scheme (abababab) makes the poem sound song-like, an effect furthered by the occasional anaphora (e.g. “All night” and “She is coming”).

Although the poem belongs to this sentimental tradition, it refuses to conform to convention: the very poetic techniques that make it resemble a simple love song can simultaneously convey the speaker’s mental instability. His compulsive repetition and formal irregularities provide the first clues to his disequilibrium. Throughout the poem, he obsessively repeats himself: he chants “Come into the garden, Maud” twice in the first stanza and “to faint in the light” three times in the second stanza. This repetition occurs on individual words and phonemes as well as phrases:

> Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,
> Come hither, the dances are done,
> In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,
> Queen lily and rose in one;
> Shine out, little head, sunning over with curls,
> To the flowers, and be their sun. (53-58)

This passage conveys the echo chamber of the speaker’s own mind; he becomes stuck on the words “rose,” “queen,” and “sun” as well as on alliteration within each line (“garden of girls,” “dances are done,” and “gloss . . . glimmer”). The rhyme scheme likewise conveys this obsessive repetition, as it consistently chimes with alternating AB rhymes throughout and echoes the speaker’s inability to think about anything other than Maud. The speaker’s mental instability manifests in the lyric’s formal and rhythmic irregularities as well. The poem contains an alternating pattern of trimeter and tetrameter that only fully follows ballad meter in the middle five stanzas. The first three stanzas, as well as the final two stanzas, are predominantly trimeter,

but incorporate one or two lines of tetrameter each at irregular intervals to disrupt the established order and perfectly convey the speaker's own disruptive personality. These metrical shifts, from trimeter to ballad meter and back to trimeter, rhythmically convey changes in the speaker's emotional state: it begins in trimeter as the speaker anxiously awaits Maud, becomes a ballad to echo the conventional pastoral allusions in which he assures the flowers that Maud will always be his, and returns to trimeter as the speaker again thinks about Maud's arrival. The final trimeter pattern is made apparent in Tennyson's one recorded recitation of the last stanza, in which he chants it in the musical equivalent of 3/4 time. He reads it as though there were no endstops, strongly accentuating the three stresses in each line as though it were a demented waltz ("Come into the Garden, Maud"). These metrical shifts emphasize the speaker's overwhelming excitement at Maud's approach and demonstrate yet again that formal constraints are as ineffective in holding him back as are the walls that surround Maud's garden. The stanza's structure likewise cannot contain him: four of the eleven stanzas include two additional lines, and these stanzas occur with increasing frequency throughout the poem as though his overactive imagination bursts free from the preestablished pattern.

The garden includes flowers, such as the woodbine, jessamine, and acacia, and violet, which had deeper significance in the Language of Flowers, the Victorian secret code by which lovers communicated their thoughts; however, the speaker consistently misinterprets their significance, assuming they are natural symbols of the deep love that he and Maud supposedly share. The "woodbine," whose scent disperses throughout the garden, is frequently associated with "chains of love" (Seaton 181), a comparison that casts Maud and the speaker as practically imprisoned by this destructive love. The "slender acacia" was a flower code for "platonic love," or "chaste love" (Seaton 168-169), certainly the opposite of what the speaker desires from their

clandestine meeting. The speaker even misinterprets the violet. In the Language of Flowers, it represents modesty (Seaton 196-197), but the speaker likens it to a piece of fine jewelry: "He sets the jewel-print of your feet / In violets blue as your eyes" (41-42). By referencing violets in his comparison of her footprint to jewelry, the speaker's comparison casts the flowers as decorative or fancy rather than as modest. This disregard for societal codes and for the supposed intrinsic meaning of objects supports his own artistic purposes. The woodbine, jessamine, and violet, all flowers that appear in Milton's "Lycidas," also allude to the tradition of the pastoral elegy and underscore the threat of mortality that haunts the poem (142-148). In both poems, the speaker reads nature as an expression of his own desires: in "Lycidas," the flowers mourn as does the speaker, and in *Maud*, the speaker mistakenly assumes they celebrate his love. In fact, even before this section of the monodrama, the speaker misreads the flower he finds in the rivulet and claims that it "say[s] in odour and color 'Ah be / Among the roses tonight'" (848-849). Since he describes it as on a "blushing mission" (847), this garden rose is of a deep red color, so it signifies not a secret meeting but rather "bashful shame" (Greenaway 37).

The speaker likewise invokes religious language and iconography in ways that undermine his own message. As Alice Chandler has argued, the speaker repeatedly alludes to language from the Song of Solomon to describe not only Maud but also the garden itself (93). The speaker's description of the "woodbine spices" that are "wafted abroad" as well as the "musk of the rose" (5-6) echoes the similar biblical description of the wind "blow[ing] upon [his] garden, that the spices thereof may flow out" (*King James Bible*, 4.16). This parallel conveys the speaker's desire to imagine Maud's garden as transcendent and his relationship with her as spiritual and ideal in spite of contrary evidence. In fact, as Inglesfield points out, the description of Maud as "Queen lily and rose in one" (56) comes from verse 2.1, in which the bride declares

"I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys" (122). Whereas the biblical text emphasizes the bride's embodiment and uses comparisons merely as metaphor, in this text Maud is completely absent and silent, so the speaker uses words and his surroundings metaphorically to recreate transcendent union, unaware of the gap between his dream and the reality. His religious allusions again fall short when he mentions, upon hearing Maud approach, that "there has fallen a splendid tear / From the passion-flower at the gate" (59-60). The passion flower is so named because its physical characteristics supposedly corresponded to elements of Jesus' crucifixion. Since the lyric began with the speaker "here at the gate," the same location as the passion flower, he appears to project his own emotions onto the flower associated with Christ's passion and to view this ordeal as the equivalent. He also employs religious language at the poem's end when he insists that, were Maud to walk by, his "heart would hear her and beat / Were it earth in an earthy bed"; the image of "earth in an earthy bed" alludes to 1 Corinthians 15:47, in which Paul describes Adamic man as "of the earth, earthy." In this allusion, the speaker casts Maud as the messiah who will enable his resurrection, a comparison that demonstrates the desperation that underlies his admiration for Maud. This resurrection, in light of the speaker's allusions to Song of Solomon, also has decidedly sexual undercurrents, as though the pulsing from the "bed" originated from an organ other than his heart.

The speaker's very presence in Maud's enclosed rose garden is itself cause for concern. An enclosed garden, or *hortus conclusus*, alludes to the Song of Solomon 4.12, in which, according to Christian interpretations, Mary's womb is a "garden enclosed," a comparison that associates these spaces with both purity and female sexuality. By extension, the speaker's presence in her garden becomes a violation, especially since he let himself in, incorrectly interpreting the flower as a symbolic invitation. His control over the space makes this violation

more pronounced; his decision to invite her into her own garden further deprives her of agency and echoes an earlier occasion when he spied on her by climbing its walls. Instead of an innocent troubadour pledging his love, he becomes at best a stalker and at worst, a metaphorical rapist. His spying into the garden also alludes to Satan's illicit examination of Eden before he jumps over its walls in *Paradise Lost* (4.174-181), a parallel that likewise condemns the speaker. His final words further clarify the associations between the garden and violence, sex, and imagination: he imagines his "dust . . .Would start and tremble under her feet, / And blossom in purple and red" (71-74). As Robert Inglesfield has argued, this conflation of flowers with bruises on a body "reinforces the suggestion of insane, sexually charged fantasy, and anticipates the physical violence and his collapse into insanity in Part II" (123). The image of the speaker's decomposing corpse creating new life in the form of blossoming flowers suggests that he sees himself as a part of the garden even after death. His imagined relationship with the garden, however, does not differ greatly from his current relationship with it, since he already reads the garden as an expression of his own desire and therefore as an extension of himself. This famous lyric from a larger work appears to be a sentimental love song while actually transgressing that categorization: it shows the speaker's dangerous obsession with Maud and the symbolic significance with which he imbues their relationship.

Balfe's "Maud": Sentimental and Subversive

Michael William Balfe (1808-1870) musically renders these poetic effects while preserving the song's domestic propriety. Balfe was an Irish composer and singer best known for his English operatic works, such as *Bohemian Girl* (1843), and his parlor songs (Burton), the most famous of which was his setting of Tennyson's *Maud*. It received both praise and scorn for

its popularity and perceived sentimentality.[88] Although the piece can be played to sound like a naïve love song, its dissonances, unexpected harmonies, and constantly shifting tonal centers subtly undercut the speaker's sense of certainty and sanity, as does the text itself.

Balfe's setting makes some significant changes to Tennyson's original text while remaining true to its spirit. Of the eleven stanzas of the poem, he includes only five—the first two, the antepenultimate, and the last. These changes eliminate the account of the speaker's night in the garden, his discussions with the lily and the rose, and further descriptions of his surroundings. This excerpting focuses the song narrowly on the speaker's entreating Maud to join him. Balfe also excludes the final four lines of the poem, presumably to make the lyrics less risqué: he invokes the image of "earth in an earthy bed" (74) instead of the speaker's more graphic description of the blossoming corpse. The song then concludes with the adapted (unTennysonian) lines "Come my own my sweet, come my own my sweet . . . I am here at the gate alone." He also repeats the opening four lines of the song after the second verse to turn the song into a rondo pattern of ABACA, as Derek Scott has pointed out (*Singing Bourgeois* 139). Although Balfe frequently preserves line breaks, he, like most other Victorian composers setting well-known poems to music, does not try to find a musical equivalence for rhyme or attempt to highlight the repeated words or assonances, alliteration, or consonance by using the same musical phrase or notes to suggest a similarity. Neither does he preserve the metrical

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[88] Charles Villiers Stanford, an English composer and contemporary of Balfe, famously reported in a 1911 musical treatise that Tennyson himself disliked Balfe's setting on the grounds that it "made the notes go up when he wanted them to go down, and go down when he wanted them to go up" (134). Stanford went on to claim that Tennyson objected to Balfe's emphasis on "Come" instead of "into" (134) (he places the first word on the downbeat of the measure, an act that turned it from an unstressed to a stressed word), although we have no further evidence for this claim. In fact, an article in the *Musical Times* claimed that Tennyson applied his critique about notes rising when they should fall not to Balfe's setting but rather to Stanford's own song "The Revenge" (792). This famous anecdote against Balfe's setting may have arisen from competition rather than fact.

alternations between trimeter and tetrameter: Balfe instead composed his piece in a 4/4 time signature by allotting a beat of silence or holding a note for an extra beat at the end of each line with three feet. The effect reduces the dance-like quality, perhaps because the song occurs after the dance music inside the Hall has ceased.

Balfe's setting of "Come into the Garden, Maud" was not the first; John Barnett appears to have that honor, composing his setting in 1856, while the composer Edward Clare wrote one in the same year as Balfe. Balfe's setting differs from its contemporaries in some vital ways, and a comparison with them helps clarify his interpretation of the text. Whereas Barnett preserves Tennyson's original iambic opening by placing the word "into" on the downbeat (as John Blockley also does in 1860), Balfe instead emphasizes the first word, "come." Balfe's most important departure from his predecessors occurs in his rapid harmonic changes; whereas the other settings primarily stay in the original key and use traditional progressions, his setting constantly shifts its tonal center, and this harmonic deviation constitutes a commentary on the poem. Like the poem, Balfe's setting initially seems sentimental. It is in a major key and has a gracefully lilting melody (see ex. 3), and its repetition and ornamentation adhere to the generic conventions of the parlor song: the singer repeats the phrase "I am here at the gate alone," as well as words and phrases such as "come" or "shine out" to dramatize the speaker's desperation. Balfe also wrote a fermata over the word "gate" to indicate the speaker's passion and attempts to restrain himself. In the verse that alludes to Song of Solomon 2.1 to convey the speaker's belief in his beloved's transcendent beauty and in the biblical perfection of their love, the music is marked *dolce* ("sweet") and *pianissimo* ("very quiet"), directions that when coupled with the harp-like arpeggios in the accompaniment, appear to render this section as the idyllic garden that the Song of Solomon describes.

In the final verse, the speaker breathlessly expresses his excitement at Maud's arrival, the anapests echoing his pounding heart:

She is coming, my own, my sweet;

Were it ever so airy a tread,

My heart would hear her and beat,

Were it earth in an earthy bed. (68–71)

Balfe's setting performs the speaker's emotions through a sequence of dissonances followed by resolution (see ex. 4). This pattern, marked accelerando, creates the sense of excitement and forward momentum the speaker feels, and the setting ends on a triumphant cadence that expresses joy at the lovers' impending union.

Behind the veil of propriety, however, lies a more sinister subtext. The song gives voice to the speaker's insanity and violent tendencies and his repetitive, obsessive speech through harmonic instability. The harmonic deviations begin immediately after the first chorus. When the singer begins to describe the "woodbine spices" that are "wafted abroad," the music suddenly shifts from a tonal center of D major (the primary key of the piece) to a new key—G major—and acoustically separates these lines from the ones before (see ex. 5). This shift occurs during the allusion to the Song of Solomon and musically enacts the speaker's desire to imaginatively transform this English garden into an idyllic paradise. This musical gesture also critiques the speaker, as it shows the speaker's willingness to cast himself and his surroundings as biblical figures; since modulations to the subdominant "generally confer[] on the music a more solemn effect" (*Oxford and Cambridge* 5.57), the music conveys sadness instead of the speaker's bliss. The song again shifts to a new tonal center for the lines describing Venus. As one might expect, the melody line rises on "is on high" (see ex. 6), a classic example of word-painting in which the

music performs the action the text describes. Balfe harmonically undercuts that transcendence, however, by having the accompaniment loudly play a series of E minor chords (see ex. 6). This melancholy sound counters the speaker's confidence that Love has ascended and emphasizes the contradiction in the speaker's claims that love is paramount and that love will fade with the sunrise.[89] After returning briefly to D major, the harmony suddenly shifts to B minor when the singer describes Venus's "fainting." This tonicization creates a melancholy sound even though the planet's fading means that Maud will arrive (see ex. 7). Since the Victorian music theory manuals explain that modulations and tonicizations should be used "but sparingly, [. . .] for striking effects" (*Oxford and Cambridge* 1.61), these migrant tonicizations undermine our sense of tonal stability (and thereby our confidence in the speaker). The music wrenches itself back to the opening theme via half steps (see ex. 8) rather than by a perfect cadence, which would have conveyed "a satisfying reposeful expression" (*Oxford and Cambridge* 1.22). This drawn-out, hesitant transition to the opening theme casts the speaker as anything but a confident, innocent troubadour.

Balfe further shows the speaker's dangerous tendencies by translating his obsessive nature into musical terms through repetition and dissonance. The song's rondo structure and return to previous material emulate the speaker's own obsessive return to the same expressions and rhymes in Tennyson's text, while the unexpected harmony enacts the speaker's unreliability. The music abruptly modulates from D-major to B-flat major without any preparation; one might expect this unprepared tonal shift to support the speaker's claim of transcendence, as though this garden so resembles Eden that rules of harmony no longer apply, but a subtle pedal point in the

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[89] Victorian Music theory manuals make explicit the connection between minor chords and sadness: "The effect on the mind of music in the minor mode is *pathetic* and *solemn* when sung or played slowly" (*Oxford and Cambridge* 1.54).

accompaniment complicates this interpretation. By sustaining this note in the bass line while the chords change above it, Balfe produces an insistent but subtle dissonance (see ex. 9), which is considered "a musical expression of unrest" (*Oxford and Cambridge* 1.72). Because the section has been marked pianissimo, this dissonance can be hard to hear, and, in fact, a performer who prefers the song's sentimental interpretation—rather like anthologists who have seized on Tennyson's poem without due consideration of its provenance—can play it so quietly that it sounds consonant and cloaks the speaker's instability.

The song's concluding gesture likewise contradicts the speaker's claims. Although the final verse's repeated pattern of dissonance and resolution does enact the speaker's anxiety and excitement at Maud's approach, as mentioned earlier, it also functions as one final critique of the speaker's thoughts. This pattern, coupled with the dramatic chromaticism on "Maud, Maud, come" (see ex. 10) that echoes the earlier chromatic transition to the opening theme, counteracts the idea that her arrival will provide the speaker with the transcendence he desires, even though the final chords sound triumphant.

The song thus becomes available to performance, and indeed to cultural analysis, on several levels. Because parlor songs frequently address love, gardens, and the sentimental, Balfe's setting seems to fit neatly into the stereotype of that category; the straight-forward accompaniment and simplified lyrics enable a performer to turn the song into the romantic serenade the poem's speaker desires it to be. But this song also resists such easy classification through unexpected harmonization. Throughout, the song's use of transgressive conformity enables it to register both as a domestic, sentimental love song and a critique of the speaker's sense of certainty and sanity, a feature that brings it closer to its source text, as the poem itself fluctuates between them.

This song subverts more than just expected harmony and our sense of the speaker's stability: it also confounds the traditional expectations of courtship. By depicting the speaker's flaws while also giving him rather traditional sentimental language and accompaniment, the song can also imply that dangerous, obsessive desires underlie many courtships and can thereby dramatize the plight of Maud and others like her. Since this song harmonically undercuts the speaker's message, the song enables its performers to critique the speaker's dangerous obsession with a young woman, and, by extension, the objectification and mistreatment of women. When performed by women, this song can further trouble courtship conventions. Although the speaker is explicitly gendered masculine in Tennyson's monodrama, the song contains no such marker: as with "Juanita," this song lets women covertly express queer desire for other women while also letting them adopt the role of the suitor, thereby giving them, if just for a moment, greater agency than they were normally permitted in relationships. By contrast, Sir Arthur Somervell's *Maud*, designed for performance on the concert stage rather than in the parlor, was most famously performed by men, perhaps because of its more sympathetic rendering of the speaker.

Sir Arthur Somervell's "Maud": An Internal Portrait of the Speaker

Somervell was an English composer and educator best known for his song cycles, of which *Maud* and A. E. Housman's *A Shropshire Lad* (1904) are best known (Hurd). Somervell's *Maud* consists of thirteen songs (twelve when originally published and performed), but "Come into the Garden, Maud" is the most famous. Because of the difficulty of the piano accompaniment and the length of the cycle, the work is considered an art song as opposed to a parlor song, designed more for the professional than for the amateur performer. The cycle sets 234 of the 1324 lines of Tennyson's poem: Somervell simplified the narrative by eliminating the rival figure of Maud's approved suitor, and he included explanatory notes for each song

describing the plot to ensure that his audience could follow along (Hughes 117). The cycle attempts to convey the wide variety of the speaker's moods, from wild outbursts at the thought of his father's death to joy at the possibility that Maud loves him, to madness and misery after her death.[90] Although all thirteen songs in *Maud* are worthy of extended discussion, this discussion will focus primarily on "Come into the Garden, Maud," the song that marks the turning point between the optimistic songs of the first part and the melancholy and frenetic songs of the second. Like the songs in the cycle that surround it, "Come into the Garden, Maud" is a musical dramatization of the speaker's mind rather than a critique of his actions.

Unlike Balfe, Somervell incorporates Tennyson's text verbatim with minimal repetition; he repeats only the final two lines.[91] He uses the first three and last three verses of the lyric, thereby including more than just narrative information that applies to Maud's presence; he also compares the sounds of the dance from the Hall with the current silence, describes the flowers onto which he projects his reactions to Maud's arrival, and finally imagines his own blossoming corpse. This change suggests that Somervell is concerned more with showing the speaker's reaction to the situation than with just expressing his love. Acoustically, like the poem and Balfe's setting, this song seems deceptively sweet and innocent. In fact, Linda Hughes argues that "this central song and tour de force of the cycle is remarkable for absorbing and resolving any dissonant notes almost as quickly as they are sounded" (124). But Somervell's setting is more complicated than that. Although it lacks violent dissonance, and although the speed with which the few moments of dissonance do resolve ensures that the speaker sounds genuine and

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[90] Linda Hughes has convincingly written on the cycle as a whole and its participation in contemporaneous discussions on the speaker's decision to fight in the Crimean War (127).

[91] This lack of repetition is a substantial deviation from the other settings of the same text, such as John Blockley's "Come into the Garden, Maud: Serenade" (1860), J.C.D. Parker's "Come into the Garden, Maud," and Miss M. Lindsay's "Maud: A Serenade" (1855).

somewhat stable, the accompaniment's style and the harmonic progressions themselves subtly subvert the expected resolution.

The song's most notable feature is the fast-paced piano accompaniment that dances throughout the piece (see ex. 11). Its lilting time signature brings to mind the waltz and the dancing that occurred in the Hall when the speaker entered the garden. In fact, the accompaniment initially appears to represent the actual music played in the Hall and to suggest that the speaker sings his words to the extant music. Such a performance would be impossible, however, since the third stanza explains that the dance has ended. The waltzing accompaniment instead represents the speaker's thoughts. He remembers, rather than hears, the music, and this mental recording of the music haunts him as much as his exclusion from the dance and his obsession with Maud. This musical detail casts the song not as an external portrayal of the speaker and his words as he waits for Maud, but rather as a representation of his thoughts from within the confines of his own mind.

Just as the speaker replays in his mind the memory of earlier music, so the listeners, on hearing this music recall in their minds a comparable passage from song four in the cycle, "O Let the Solid Ground."[92] In the earlier song, the speaker triumphantly declares that as long as Maud loves him, he does not object to any fate he might face. This allusion would seem to suggest that the later song actualizes his earlier wish: Maud loves and waits for him, so he is unconcerned for his future. In this, of course, he is mistaken, since the rest of the song implies that it is his fate, rather than his beloved, that awaits him. In fact, his very voice part determines his fate: *Maud* was written for and first performed by Plunket Greene, a well-known baritone (Hughes 114);

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[92] It also alludes to Leopoldine Blahetka's setting of the same text, called "Fragment du poema, *Maud* par Tennyson," which likewise featured rapid dance-like figures in the accompaniment.

since baritones frequently played secondary characters, while tenors played the romantic leads, this decision immediately casts the speaker as insecure and unlikely to win Maud, the leading lady in his mental drama.

Although the first verse of "Come into the Garden, Maud" sounds happy and playful, a closer look at the harmonic progressions reveal the speaker's own insecurities. Unlike other settings of this text, the song subverts the musical expectation that a cadence should confirm the key at the beginning of a piece.[93] Since this song is in the key of G major, it should include a dominant chord (D major seventh chord, in this case) and then return to a G major chord to give the audience a sense of tonal stability. Somervell's setting rejects that rule. Between the words "for the" and "black," the phrase does incorporate the expected dominant chord, but instead of returning to G major and confirming the key, it moves to an E minor chord, which is built on the sixth note of the scale (see ex. 12). If this progression from a dominant seventh to a vi chord had occurred at the end of a phrase, it would be a deceptive cadence, and associated with melancholy because it replaces a major chord with a minor chord. Occurring as it does in mid-phrase, the effect is still much the same. In delaying the full cadence, it also emphasizes the song's nearly perpetual motion. Because this subtle subversion occurs so early in the piece, before the key has even been fully confirmed, it immediately depicts the speaker's restlessness and instability. Somervell uses such harmonic subversion throughout the song. These moments pass swiftly, however, as they last for one beat only and are practically buried in the phrases. This musical detail enhances the song portrait of the speaker's interiority. His instability and self-deception are like the quasi-deceptive-cadence: mostly hidden from his own view, and nearly from ours.

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[93] This characteristic demonstrates the song's resemblance to other art songs and continental music of its day.

Somervell's setting again performs the speaker's thoughts through a series of deferred resolutions. Immediately after the deceptive cadence, the accompaniment plays a series of chords in which a dissonant seventh chord resolves to a new chord, which in turn becomes a new dissonant seventh chord before finally resolving to the original key of the piece on the word "Come"[94] (see ex. 13). This pattern, an example of prolongation of the dominant, uses small, almost imperceptible resolutions to defer the primary resolution in order to increase the musical tension. This constantly shifting chordal chain echoes the speaker's quickly changing thoughts as he observes his surroundings, ponders the fate of the moon, and addresses the garden flowers. The delayed resolution to the tonic also enacts the speaker's long wait for the resolution to his anxiety: the appearance of Maud.

Somervell also uses larger-scale harmonic changes to convey the depression against which the speaker fights. For the second verse, as in Balfe's setting, when the words describe Venus's retreat as the sun rises, the music shifts to a new tonal center, namely E minor (see ex. 14). The new tonality gives this section a more melancholy feel that shows the speaker's own fear that he and Maud will never unite.[95] This section also introduces a motive that occurs throughout the song cycle: the bass line descends chromatically from an A to D (see ex. 15). The chromatic descent occurs again later in the piece, and, more dramatically, in the next songs, "The Fault was Mine" and "Dead, Long Dead," where it musically enacts his explicit desire to die and to be buried deeply. The presence of the descending chromatic line in "Come into the Garden, Maud," by extension, expresses the threat of despair and death that haunt him even

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[94] Fin de siècle composers like Somervell often used dominant seventh chords with "great freedom" and "its resolution is often delayed" (*Oxford and Cambridge* 5.22): this song takes delayed resolution to an extreme.

[95] The speaker voices his fear that their relationship is doomed in an earlier section of the monodrama, when he claims that his happiness is plagued by "some dark undercurrent woe" (1.681).

before he goes mad. After this melancholy, haunting section, the music returns to the more uplifting music of the opening to accompany the next verse, but it seems unconvincing, as though the speaker were forcing himself to think on happier topics.

Unlike Balfe's setting, Somervell's uses harmonic changes to convey the speaker's liminal awareness of the gaps between his dream of Maud and the reality. When the singer describes Maud as the "Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls," the song changes key signature from G major to C major (see ex. 16), another modulation to the subdominant that conveys solemnity. Although the key change is marginally prepared for (by turning a tonic chord into a seventh chord which cadences to C major), the new tonality still sounds surprising, and its solemnity further suggests his awareness that his dream of Maud does not quite fit the reality. This passage includes a change in time signature as well as in key signature: the song switches from 6/4 to 9/4 in mid phrase after the word "queen." The addition of three extra beats in the measure throws the music slightly off-balance. After one measure of 9/4, the music returns to 6/4, a change that further augments the listener's confusion. These metrical irregularities allude to the poet's alternation between trimeter and tetrameter to show the speaker's tremulous grasp on reality and imply that the speaker knows that his comparison of Maud to the bride from Song of Solomon is inaccurate, but that he cannot keep it from wavering in his mind. The music changes key and time signature again on the word "sun," shifting from C major to A flat major, and from 6/4 to cut time (see ex. 17). The harmonic shift occurs without any preparation and thus sounds extremely jarring, a musical commentary that discounts his claim that Maud, his "sun," will bring him new life. Simultaneously, the change in time signature lessens the waltz-like feel and demonstrates that the speaker's attempts to preserve the dream of the dance are failing.

For the final stanza, the song returns to the key of the opening, but it provides only a moment of relief. Starting on the words "under her feet," the bass line moves semi-chromatically from a D flat to the D natural an octave below (see ex. 18). This return of the descending motive makes its purpose more explicit: it enacts the burial he imagines while proleptically alluding to the similar motif in the next song, also focusing on his own burial. The song, then, which appears to gesture triumphantly beyond the grave, actually shows the speaker's already present fear of death and of the potential failure of his relationship with Maud. To be sure, the song ends with triumphant chords and harmonic regularity expressing the speaker's belief in the heroic quality of his blossoming corpse. It also gives us a glimmer of hope, as the accompaniment's melody features a semi-chromatic octave-length ascent on A that extends a chance for his relationship with Maud to be transcendent (see ex. 19). However, the sheer violence of the image haunts the passage, and the speaker's confident singing about his own death shows even more fully the depth of his mental unrest (see ex. 20). Somervell's setting for this final line ("blossom in purple and red") deviates from the other two settings that include them. Whereas Blockley's and Barnett's settings feature extensive ornamentation to convey the blossoming described in the text, a decision that takes the speaker's discussion of blooming flowers at face value, Somervell's deliberate plainness instead enhances the threats of violence and blossoming bruises that underlie these lines.

Somervell made his interest in creating musical portraits rather than critiques explicit in a series of pamphlets on music and education. He claimed that art's appeals should be "not to the intellect at all" (43), but rather "the outward and visible sign of and inward sensitiveness of rhythm in all things" (44). Although he believed that "The greatest genius that ever lived can do nothing more than express himself and tell us how the world, life, death and the universe looks to

him," as artists can never truly see beyond their own subjective experience, he conceived of music as "the greatest of humanizing and harmonizing forces" by which the "silent strings" of the subconscious "may be set vibrating and made sensitive" (45). For Somervell, music was the best way both to express one's own feelings and to touch the emotions of others. This song, then, dramatizes that theory: the speaker uses his song to fully express himself and his emotions, while the song enables an audience to feel as he does.

Like the poem, Somervell's setting renders the speaker's mental instability and obsessive nature underneath a confident, romantic surface. While Balfe's parlor song setting enabled its singers to choose whether to emphasize the speaker's instability through harmonic subversion and dissonances, Somervell's setting hides such harmonic oddities. By having these irregularities lurk in the background rather than resound in the foreground, the song presents not a critique of the speaker's actions or of courtship traditions, but rather a musical portrait of the speaker's own thoughts from the prison of his own mind. Although this setting is more intimate than Balfe's, as it puts its auditors within rather than outside the troubled mind of the speaker, it is paradoxically more public, as it was most commonly performed on the concert stage rather in the parlor. As the speaker is haunted, not only by his obsession with Maud but also by the memory of the waltz, so its many readers and auditors were haunted by the ghostly music of the poem, as evidenced by the numerous musical settings of the text and Tennyson's own recording of the concluding stanza. Somervell, in publicly dramatizing the internal struggles of a private mind, aimed to set vibrating the "silent strings" of as many auditors as possible.[96]

Like the poem, both these song settings render the speaker's mental instability and obsessive nature underneath a confident, romantic surface. But one does so from an interior, the

[96] In digitally preserving his song, this web framework continues that project.

other from an exterior perspective. This difference in perspective might prompt us to ask whether Tennyson's speaker is outwardly declaiming his words in the garden setting or inwardly muttering them to himself. Perhaps the paradoxical nature of the silent song--the condition of the Victorian printed lyric, of whose strangeness this particular instance can make us more generally, and sharply, aware—has especially encouraged attempts to give it sound and then preserve it, such as Tennyson's audio recording of the stanza with its relentless rhythm, and the multiple song versions of this text, of which Balfe's and Somervell's settings are only the two most famous examples. In fact, the poem appears to contain the seed of its own reproduction in another way as well; the speaker's obsession with repeating sounds and phrases contagiously compels readers of the poem likewise and obsessively to perform this scene of disturbed love.

In Search of the "Lost Chord": Sounding the Silent Song of Procter's Poem

Like settings of "Come into the Garden, Maud," Arthur Sullivan's "The Lost Chord" has frequently been cast as a straightforwardly domestic and sentimental song: however, the publication history of its lyrics challenge that interpretation. Adelaide Procter's "A Lost Chord," as originally published in *The English Woman's Journal* (March 1860), meditates on the role of women's rights and the possibility of a resolution to issues of domestic disharmony. In the context of its second publication, the collected works volume *Legends and Lyrics* (1861), Procter's poem appears to embody the sentimental ideal, but instead dramatizes the speaker's failed attempt to express in words the importance of lost harmony. Sullivan's musical setting undercuts the expected sentimental solace and grants the poem new access to the political and social message of its two publication contexts while giving voice to the silent song on the page: it brings together both the feminist and the religiously questioning readings. By examining the musical reception history of Procter's poem through multiple incarnations and remediations, we

can find this "lost chord" and its overlooked commentaries on women's lives and religious doubt and reinstate it in the polyphony of critical discourse.

Adelaide Anne Procter (1825-1864) was extremely popular during the Victorian period, and her works were greatly admired by many pivotal figures: Charles Dickens wrote an introduction to the 1866 edition of her collected works, *Legends and Lyrics*, and Coventry Patmore once claimed that the "present demand" for her poetry was "far in excess of that for the writings of any living poet, except Mr Tennyson" (qtd. in Gregory, *Life and Work* 1). She was also Queen Victoria's favorite poet (Gregory, *Life and Work* 62). Her poetry appeared in such prominent periodicals as *Household Words, All the Year Round*, and *The Cornhill Magazine* and was renowned for what Gill Gregory calls her "invariably simple and direct language and strongly affective rhetoric" (*Life and Work* 3). Like Caroline Norton, she also advocated for women's rights: she was a member of the Portfolio Society (an all-female debating group attended by many radicals (Gregory, *Life and Work* 28)) and the co-founder of the "Society for Promoting the Employment of Women" (Lacey 11). In spite of her popularity during the Victorian era, she is generally known today only for "A Lost Chord," which is remembered primarily because of Sullivan's musical setting. "A Lost Chord" is a short poem spoken from the point of view of a young woman[97] who, while absent-mindedly improvising at the organ, plays a chord so transcendent and calming, she believes it must have been sent to her from Heaven. Although she tries to find it again, she fails, and concludes that she may have to wait until the afterlife to hear it, saying "It may be that only in Heaven / I shall hear that grand Amen" (27-28).

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[97] I consider the speaker a woman because of Procter's own gender and the conventions of the lyric "I," the manifold pictorial representations of this poem that feature a woman at the organ, and the original publication context in a feminist periodical.

Although "A Lost Chord" has frequently been cast as a straightforwardly domestic and religious poem, the history of *The English Woman's Journal*, founded in March of 1858 and produced until 1864, complicates that interpretation. The *Journal*'s two editors, Bessie Parkes and Matilda Hays, were Procter's close friends, and she dedicated her first volume of poetry to the latter (Gregory, *Life and Work* 24). Hays herself was quite a revolutionary figure; she translated the works of George Sand, wrote novels, dressed in men's clothing, and lived with Harriet Hosmer, a female sculptor, for a few years in the 1850s (25). The *Journal*, like its co-editors, had a progressive agenda; according to David Doughan, it was known as a feminist journal, and its offices were located in the Langham Place Circle, the unofficial headquarters of the early British feminist movement (2). The *Journal*'s prose covered many different topics, but it tended to feature stories on "women's property rights, conditions in prisons and lunatic asylums and assisted emigration for women," and on women's employment (Gregory, *Life and Work* 25-26).

In its original publication in *The English Woman's Journal*, "A Lost Chord" meditates on women's rights and the problems of gender inequality:

Seated one day at the Organ,
I was weary and ill at ease,
And my fingers wandered idly
Over the noisy keys.

I do not know what I was playing,
Or what I was dreaming then;
But I struck one chord of music,

Like the sound of a great Amen.

It flooded the crimson twilight
Like the close of an Angel's Psalm,
And it lay on my fevered spirit
With a touch of infinite calm.

It quieted pain and sorrow,
Like love overcoming strife;
It seemed the harmonious echo
From our discordant life.

It linked all perplexed meanings
Into one perfect peace,
And trembled away into silence
As if it were loth to cease.

I have sought, but I seek it vainly,
That one lost chord divine,
Which came from the soul of the Organ,
And entered into mine.

It may be that Death's bright angel

Will speak in that chord again,--

It may be that only in Heaven

I shall hear that grand Amen.

Although the poem does not address such issues explicitly, in the context of articles on the trials and tribulations of women's lives, the speaker's description of her feeling "weary and ill at ease" (2) and of her "discordant life" (16) appear to result from the unequal state of affairs between men and women. The "pain and sorrow," "strife" (13-14) and "perplexed meanings" (18) that plague the speaker also resound with her frustration at social discord. Additionally, for a woman to play the organ is itself is a sociopolitical statement, since women were frequently not permitted to be church organists (Barger 38). Either she is a rebel, sneaking into a church to practice, or she is playing on a harmonium, a domestic reed organ, as the only outlet for her musical worship. In this context, the religious turn at the poem's end provides the only glimpse of consolation, and a rather defeatist consolation at that: although inequality may be resolved in the afterlife, it will most likely never be resolved on Earth.

This reading gains strength when the poem is placed in the context of the issue in which it was published. The section in the *Journal* that precedes the poem discussed the cruel effects of ship conditions on women emigrants and ended with an implicit question about the future of these people and this cause: "How the matter will be eventually decided we cannot venture to predict" (36). Procter's own questioning conclusion ("It may be that only in Heaven / I shall hear that grand Amen" (17-28)) therefore hauntingly echoes its predecessor's sentiments and further casts it as part of a feminist project.

The poem also transitions nicely into the ensuing work, a prose piece entitled "Every-Day Ghosts By a Haunted Man," which discusses the dangers of being haunted by memories and

"shadows" and of "nursing up feelings which are meant to grow dim and fade, the perverse refastening of links which are intended to be broken" (37). Since "A Lost Chord" describes the sensation of searching for the ghost of a chord that haunts her memory (she tried multiple times to recreate it) and ends with the idea of death, it seems to be in dialogue with this prose piece, especially since the story itself mentions music (it claims that "forlorn" is the most "musical word in the language") and poetry (it describes writing "a sonnet of a melancholy nature") (37). When the "haunted man" asks "who does not know the power of sound[?]"(40) and describes the sensation of hearing an "old organ" (41) that reminds him of the past, readers likewise may feel haunted by their pasts: this, again, is the experience of reading "A Lost Chord." As the story progresses, the organ tune has a remarkable, transcendent power, as in "A Lost Chord":

> I do not believe I listened one bit to the air which some one in the next room was playing, but it has wound itself around the whole of that scene, it mingles with the perfume of the violets, it floats over the bright blue lake, it melts into every tone of her voice; and never, never shall I hear it without my heart beating quicker, and my eyes filling with tears, and the old dead time rising before me. (41)

However, unlike the speaker of "A Lost Chord," the narrator here can never lose the sound of the chords or the memory it holds for him of his dead wife, although he tries to forget: "But the old magic tune calls up my youth and my lost love, and I am as young and foolish as I was twenty years ago" (41). Ultimately, like the speaker of "A Lost Chord," who decides to stop trying to recreate the chord, the narrator of the story decides to stop trying to replace his memory, choosing "never to try to lay that ghost again" (41). Read in this context, the poem takes on a tone of greater longing, as though the lost chord of the poem is the music that the story's narrator hears; neither the speaker nor the narrator can escape the longing for the past music, but the

narrator's experience demonstrates that this seemingly transcendent organ music brings not enlightenment or freedom from the dissonances of life, but further sadness and complexity. This disappointment in organ music, when carried into "A Lost Chord," can cause readers to wonder, in the words of the article on women emigrants, "how the matter" of the chord "will be eventually decided;" their inability to "venture to predict" the outcome encourages them to work to overcome this uncertainty.

Arthur Sullivan's setting in many ways echoes the poem's feminist project. His decision to set Procter's poem to music also speaks to the poet's popularity, since he often set works by literary luminaries.[98] Sullivan's interest in Procter's poetry was not limited to "A Lost Chord"; they met through his friends, the Leymanns, and this acquaintance led him to many of her other poems (130). His arrangements of four of her other poems, namely "Give" (1867), "Thou Art Weary" (1874), "Will He Come?" (1865), and "A Shadow" (1886), were well-received and "were popular in drawing rooms and concert halls" (130). However, none of these settings achieved the fame of "The Lost Chord," which David Dillard describes as "the most frequently criticized of all his works—and yet undoubtedly one of the most popular songs of Victorian England" (131). Throughout the song, Sullivan carefully conveys harmonically the speaker's unease and desire for gender equality through the search for the chord that she hopes will resolve these issues.

Sullivan's blockbuster, like Balfe's "Come into the Garden Maud," was published by

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[98] In addition to *The Tempest*, he also composed music based on Thomas Moore's *Lalla Rookh* (Dillard 3), six Shakespearean songs (Dillard 19), *In Memoriam*, (Dillard 10), Sir Walter Scott's *Marmion* (Dillard 13), *The Merchant of Venice* (Dillard 22), *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Dillard 27), and "a large outpouring of songs and ballads whose authors were the aristocrats of the world of poetry—Shelley, Tennyson, [and] Byron" (Dillard 10-27).

John Boosey,[99] the preeminent publisher of nineteenth-century parlor songs; unlike Balfe's hit, Sullivan's was premiered at the London Ballad Concerts series (established in 1867), a series that helped Boosey promote the songs they published and helped define the genre. Because of the internationally-known artists who would perform these works, parlor songs became a "loftier, artier conception" (Scott, *Singing Bourgeois* 141). However, they also became more commercial; singers would be paid a royalty for the pieces they performed and for essentially endorsing a song. Antoinette Sterling, the world-famous American contralto for whom Sullivan wrote "The Lost Chord," received such a royalty for performing it (Scott, *Metropolis* 36), and her name appeared on the cover of the sheet music. Such an endorsement would dramatically improve the sales and popularity of a given song, and this marketing strategy provides one explanation for why "The Lost Chord" sold half a million copies between 1877 and 1902 (Scott, *Metropolis* 26) and why it was "known and read of [by] all men" ("Arthur Sullivan" 786).

"The Lost Chord" became an instantaneous success after its first performance at a ballad concert, which featured Sterling as the contralto, Sullivan himself on piano, and Sydney Naylor on the organ (Scott, *Singing Bourgeois* 143). In an attempt to fully recapture that original concert experience, Boosey took the highly unusual step of offering the vocal and accompaniment parts along with a harmonium part for only two shillings. Boosey also produced editions in many different keys and formats to maximize their profits; the vocal version came in multiple keys, and the instrumental versions included a piano-forte-only edition as well as a violin and piano version.

Overall, Sullivan remains true to Procter's original text, with two notable exceptions.

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[99] In 1868, Boosey had offered Sullivan 400 pounds per year for three years plus royalties for the rights to distribute his music (Dillard 15).

The first change occurs not in the body of the text, but in the title: "A Lost Chord" became "The Lost Chord." With this change in title comes a subtle change in meaning; in Procter's version, the "A" signified that this chord was merely one of many, an implication furthered by the dual interpretations of the chord itself (namely, a solution to a feminist and a religious quandary). The title in Sullivan's version particularizes and literalizes the chord, as though now that the song has been set to music, we can better imagine and preserve the chord (even though he never produces it musically).[100] Sullivan may also have wanted to differentiate his version from earlier settings of the text, such as those by George A. McFarren (1866), S.W. Waley (1867), and Catherine Armstrong (1884), all of which used Procter's original title.[101] The other textual difference, apart from punctuation, occurs in the line "I know not what I was playing," which appeared as "I do not know what I was playing" in Procter's poem. This alteration disrupts the anapestic rhythm to make the line easier to sing, and the inverted syntax fits in with the more archaic, hymnic style to which the music alludes.

For the first line and a half, the soprano, or tenor in this recording, sings the same note (an "F," the tonic of the piece) to enact the dejection the words describe (see ex. 21). The music also enacts the fingers as they "wander'd idly / Over the noisy keys": the vocal line absent-mindedly retraces its own path. In the next two lines of text, "I know not what I was playing / Or what I was dreaming then," both the vocal part and accompaniment become highly chromatic and proceed by half steps and by incorporating accidentals (notes not in the key of the piece) to

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[100] Biographer Henry Sullivan provides a second, but unsubstantiated, explanation for the title change: "At first the mother of the dead authoress of the words--Adelaide Procter--objected to its original title, and so it was changed to The Lost Chord" (83).

[101] Carl Bernstein (1880) appears to be the only other composer to use Sullivan's altered title.

accentuate this musical exploration[102] (see ex. 22). Additionally, the accompaniment modulates to the key of C major for this section to enact the described search before it returns to the key of F for the next verse.[103]

To further dramatize the search for the solution the chord promises, Sullivan ventured into even more unexpected harmonic territory for the penultimate stanza; when the words speak of seeking the chord, the accompaniment modulates to the key of D minor (the relative minor for F major) and remains there for the rest of the verse [104] (see ex. 23). To make the search even more pronounced, during the two measures of piano interlude between the penultimate and final verses, Sullivan incorporates a pedal point on C that makes many of the chords include a seventh, a dissonance that promises resolution, but delays the full cadence until the first chord of the final verse.[105]

Unlike Sullivan's setting, earlier settings by George McFarren and S. W. Waley use a C major chord to represent the transcendent chord, which continuously reappears throughout the song. This use of C major to represent a transcendent moment might seem surprising, since the key is in fact the most basic and ordinary one (as Robert Browning himself emphasizes in "Abt Vogler" (1864)), but it also conveys absolute peace and calm, untroubled by accidentals. The stress in such a setting falls on the chord and the peace it brings, not its loss. Conversely, Sullivan's decision to not have a recurring chord stand in for the one that is lost emphasizes the

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[102] Victorian music theorists considered discords like chromaticisms to be "musical expression[s] of unrest" (*Oxford and Cambridge* 1.72).
[103] Since modulations in Victorian music were supposed to occur "sparingly, reserving them for striking effects" (*Oxford and Cambridge* 5.61), the extensive modulations in this song stand out and become thematic elements.
[104] Victorian music theorists believed that such a "modulation from the major mode into its relative minor imparts an air of sadness and solemnity into a passage" (*Oxford and Cambridge* 5. 59).
[105] "The chord of the seventh conveys an impression of incompleteness, and leaves us with a kind of uneasy expectancy" (*Oxford and Cambridge* 5.19).

search and delayed resolution rather than the chord itself.

The vocal part and the accompanying organ also help further a feminist reading. Although the recording included here features a tenor, the song was composed for and made famous by female singers: first Antoinette Sterling (Scott, *Metropolis* 36), then Sullivan's mistress, Fanny Ronalds (Jacobs 110). Likewise, although this recording omits the original song's optional harmonium part, the setting's use of a harmonium rather than a church organ alludes to the musical limitations on women.

The poem's other publication context foregrounds a second interpretation: in *Legends and Lyrics*, the words remain the same, but the absence of a political context augments the poem's contradictory images and dramatizes the speaker's failed attempt to express in words the importance of the lost music. For example, the chord is "the sound of a great Amen" (8), and is therefore associated with prayer and church music, and yet this one chord cannot possibly be "the sound of a great Amen." In the hymn tradition, when the congregation sings "Amen," they sing two chords that together form a plagal cadence. By describing a progression that consists of two chords as one chord, the speaker implies that this one sound confounds not only Western music traditions, but also our ability to describe them. The chord also provides the speaker "with a touch of infinite calm" (12) but hardly lasts at all: it "trembled away into silence'" (19). Likewise, the speaker questions whether so irresolute a chord can really resolve anything: it only "quieted," not eliminated, "pain and sorrow" (13), and, although she likens it to "love overcoming strife" (14), the strife still exists. Even the description of the organ belies its traditional Christian significance: the music "came from the *soul* of the organ" (emphasis added), which gives an inanimate object an attribute supposedly granted only to people. The most surprising contradiction occurs in a description of heavenly transcendence. This chord

appears to be divine, and yet it is "the harmonious echo / From our discordant life" (15-16). This line describes a musical impossibility, since a discordant chord on its own cannot resolve into harmony through its echo. These lines blur the chord's relationship to the divine and the earthly, thus calling into question the consolation of the final claim: "It may be that only in Heaven, / I shall hear that grand Amen" (27-28).

Even the poem's structure defies our expectations of simplicity and its consolations: it is in trimeter but refuses to align itself with any consistent pattern of feet, as it combines dactyls, anapests, iambs, and trochees to emphasize its metrical oddities. Likewise, its rhyme scheme follows the ballad form, but the sonic similarities between the concluding words of unrhymed lines flirt with other patterns: "twilight" and "spirit" and "Heaven and "Amen" conclude with the same consonants, and "sorrow" and "echo" share the same vowel sound. The combination of trimeter with a ballad rhyme scheme would lead one to expect this to conform to the ballad form generally, but the poem never includes the requisite tetrameter lines. This combination of meters and genres echoes the uncertainty of the poem and confounds expectations of sentimental or religious verse as its description of music confounded Western musical traditions.

Sullivan's setting incorporates this religious questioning by combining elements of sacred and secular music to show the chord's earthly connections and by subverting expected harmonic progressions to discount the speaker's claims. The accompaniment invokes divine music by imitating a voluntary, a form of religious organ music designed to imitate improvisation.[106] However, this religious music accompanies the singer's repeated notes from the song's opening, a repetition that conveys the speaker's dejection. These repeated notes also invoke the secular

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[106] James Hamilton's *Catechism of the Organ* (1865) claims that pieces "abounding in suspensions" (48) make the best voluntaries, so this song's opening follows his Victorian definition.

operatic recitative tradition as well as the liturgical chant tradition, and therefore immediately juxtapose the sacred and the secular, the public and the domestic (see ex. 21). In fact, even the poem's ambiguous instrumental specification conflates the earthly with the sacred; the harmonium became a popular Victorian drawing room instrument alongside the piano, so we have no way of knowing whether the speaker plays this divine music in a church as part of a musical prayer, or at home as part of a domestic performance.

In the song's final stanza, Sullivan harmonically subverts our expectations to critique the text's declamatory belief that the speaker will hear the chord again in Heaven. Instead of returning to the key of F major as we would expect, the accompaniment temporarily returns to D minor, the key associated with the earlier futile search for the chord (see ex. 24), before returning to F major for the final chord of the piece. At no point in the song does Sullivan provide us with the expected plagal cadence; the final two measures merely hint at one. This musical hesitance to confirm the chord's transcendence or to enact musically the "grand Amen" further dramatizes the speaker's uncertainty, in spite of her repeated attempts to recreate its sound.

The gender of the singer also helps mediate between the two publication contexts; if a woman sings it, as women did with frequency on the stage and in the home,[107] then we are brought closer to the poem's original publication in the *English Woman's Journal*, where the journal's political leanings encourage its readers to interpret it as a woman pondering her place in a "discordant life" and performing on the domestic organ as the only outlet for her musical

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[107] While Antoinette Sterling's concert performances brought the song its initial popularity for the middle class, Fanny Ronalds's intimate salon performances at her home spread it to the aristocracy: "Her Sunday Salons at 7, Cadogan Place were a feature of London's life. All musicians appeared there, all lovers of music in the highest walks of life were her guests." Even the Prince of Wales claimed "he would travel the length of his future kingdom to hear Mrs. Ronalds sing 'The Lost Chord.'" The song became permanently associated with her voice, and, by extension, with women's voices, when an early phonograph recording of her singing it was recorded in her home (Sullivan 83-84).

worship. Sullivan's decision to compose it for a soprano, and therefore, for women's voices, further supports this reading. However, since Boosey also published the song in the keys of E flat, G, A flat, and A in addition to the original key, F, Sullivan (and the publishers) desired all singers, regardless of vocal range and gender, to perform "The Lost Chord."

If a man performs the song,[108] then the scene imaginatively transforms to an actual church, the harmonium to a full organ, and the musician to a professional organist; this connection with the church might de-emphasize the song's questioning of religious transcendence. In fact, the story of the song's composition further casts this song as a more traditionally religious work. Supposedly, Sullivan had spent substantial amounts of time five years previously trying to set Procter's poem, but had abandoned the project (Scott, "Musical Soirée") until one day he composed the entire work while watching over his dying brother, Frederic, as he slept (Dillard 31). The song's central character would therefore become Sullivan himself improvising a new melody before he suddenly finds the chord that consoles him for the impending loss of his brother. This interpretation of the song is certainly more sentimental (and in some ways, canonical). The tensions between these two differing readings based on the singer's gender help delineate the tensions between the two publications of the poem: that of the politically charged *Journal* and that of the more sentimental, yet religiously questioning *Legends and Lyrics*.

In both publication contexts, "A Lost Chord" addresses many of the same thematic concerns as other Victorian poems set to music. In particular, it thematizes repeatability as a desire to stave off loss: the speaker repeatedly searches for the transcendent chord she once

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[108] After an extensive search of concert programs, biographies, and memoirs, the only evidence I can find that men ever sang this song was that a Bicknell Young, one of Sullivan's former students, sang it once in Salt Lake City (Jacobs 222).

played out of fear that it will remain elusive until her death, much as the speaker in Tennyson's *Maud* obsessively repeats his assurances that Maud will come because he fears she will not. This combination of music, obsessive repetition, and fear of loss also helps to explain the compulsion behind some of the musical remediations of these poems, as though setting them to music makes the silent song audible and repeatable and diminishes the chance that it will disappear.

The poem's obsession with repeating both language and music compels further repetition through proliferation, first in multiple musical settings, of which Sullivan's is the most famous, and then in performances in the parlor and concert stage. This poem is again remediated with the help of new technology in 1888: a version of Sullivan's setting for cornet and piano was one of the first musical recordings ever made ("Historic Sullivan Recordings"). In fact, Tennyson's *Maud* has a similarly technology-laden history: Tennyson recorded the final stanza of "Come into the Garden, Maud," and Balfe's song setting was recorded by Victor records in 1907 ("Encyclopedic Discography of Victor Records"). Victorian sound technologies appear to be the logical continuation of this trajectory; what better way to permanently capture sound than to record it?[109] This connection between poetry, music, and recording technologies is made explicit in the penultimate stanza of "Inscription," a poem by Charles Cros, the Parisian writer and inventor of the first phonograph (he submitted his plans the year before Edison did):

Comme les traits dans les camées

J'ai voulu que les voix aimées

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[109] Margaret Linley sees the whole genre of lyric as an "attempt to conjure dead, absent and lost voices" which "ar[ose] out of the possibility that both industrial-powered print and new communication technologies such as photography, the telegraph and later the phonograph were remapping human coordinates" (Linley 539).

Soient un bien qu'on garde à jamais,

Et puissent répéter le rêve

Musical de l'heure trop brève;

Le temps veut fuir, je le soumets.

Like the faces in cameos

I wanted beloved voices

To be a fortune which one keeps forever,

And which can repeat the musical

Dream of the too short hour;

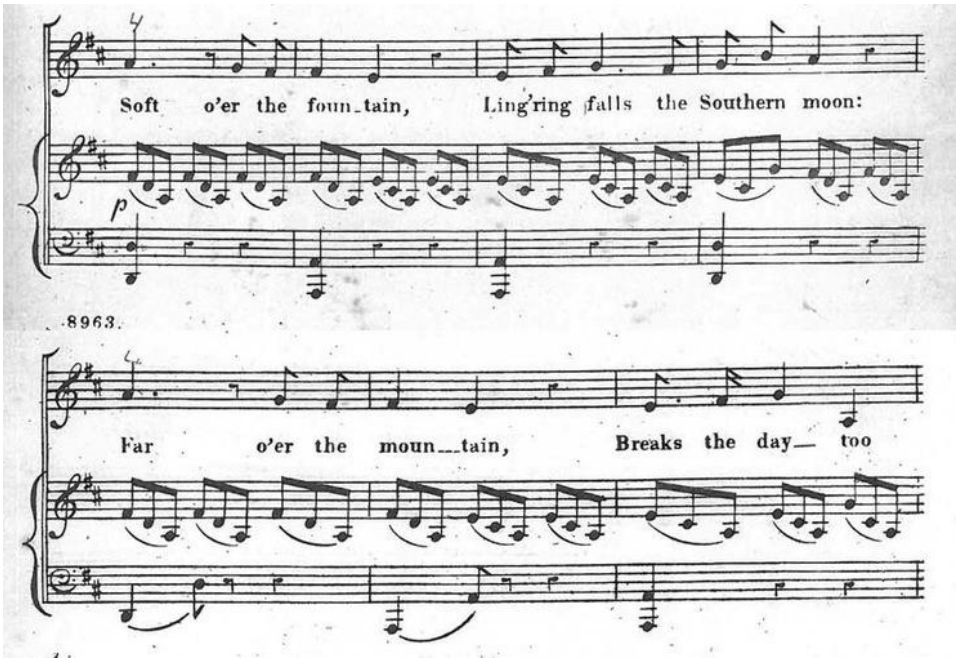
Time would flee, I subdue it. (qtd. in Kittler 235)

In this poem about his inventions, Cros views voices, words, and music as ephemeral, and the process of reproduction and recording as a means of making tangible and permanent the fleeting moment, as though literalizing Keats's dream of a frozen moment in "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (1820).

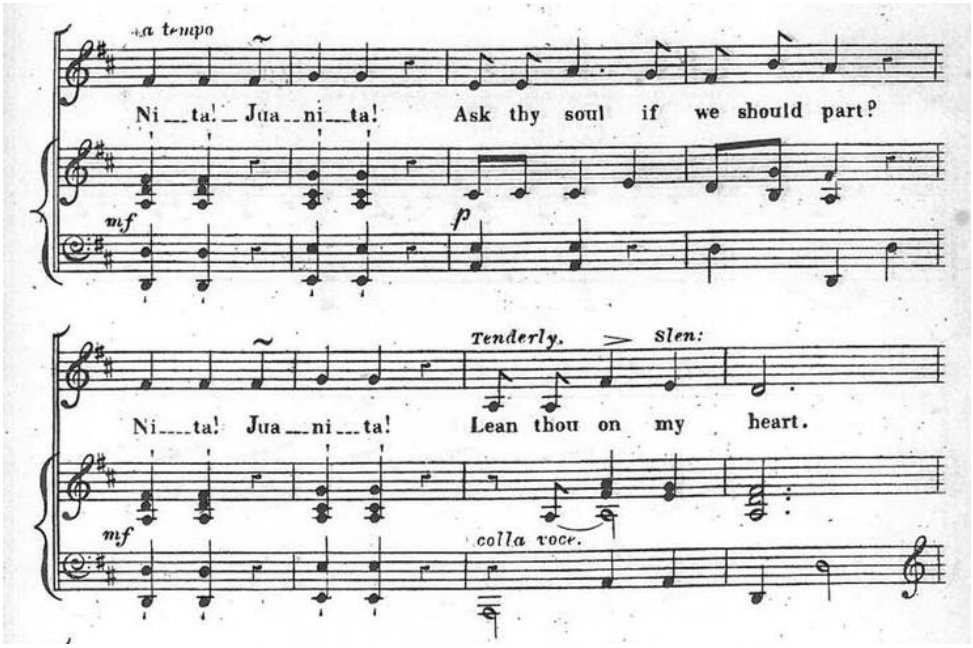
In fact, the very act of recording poetry and composing musical settings of Victorian poetry participates in the same anxieties that concerned poetic voice itself. Eric Griffiths argued that as a result of Victorian print culture, written text instead of a unitary poetic voice (61), has "a mute polyphony through which we see rather than hear alternatively possible voicings" (Griffiths 66); I believe that song settings give voice to certain strands of this mute polyphony. The popularity of both musical settings and recording technology seems to have come out of a desire to affix voice to the silent polyphony of poetry; in a song setting, the pitches and notes will always be the same, while in a recording by the author, the voice is fixed to its "original," as though the authentic voice has been produced. However, neither of these projects can fully

achieve its goal: the individual performer's interpretation breaks free from the printed score's instructions, and the recording distorts the voice by having it be a "mechanical (re)production detached from [the speaker]" (Prins, "Voice Inverse" 49). As the Victorians themselves were aware, the process of fixing sound was doomed to fail; precisely this is what made it a central preoccupation, endlessly repeated throughout the century.

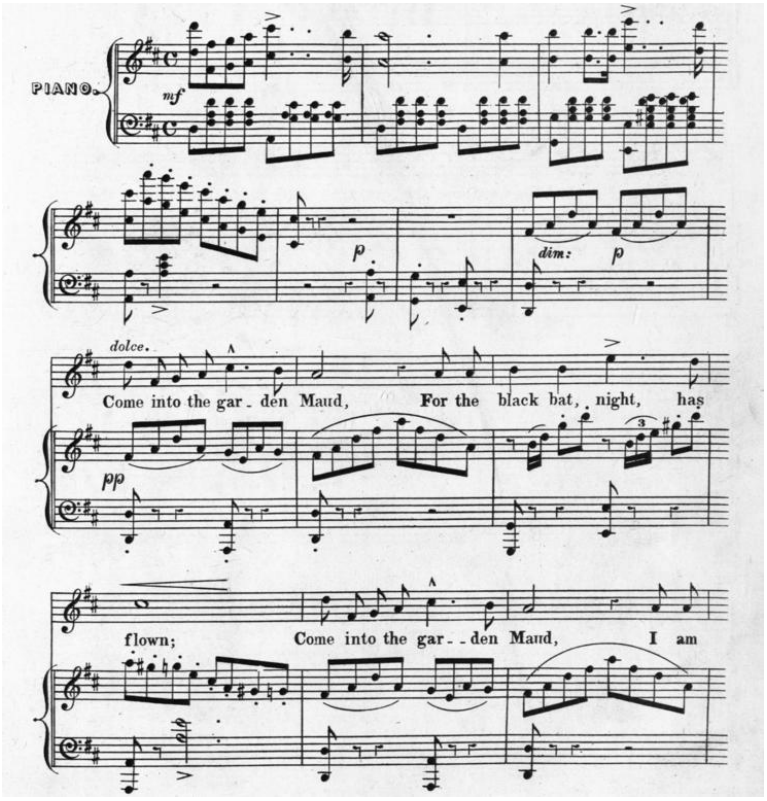
Appendix



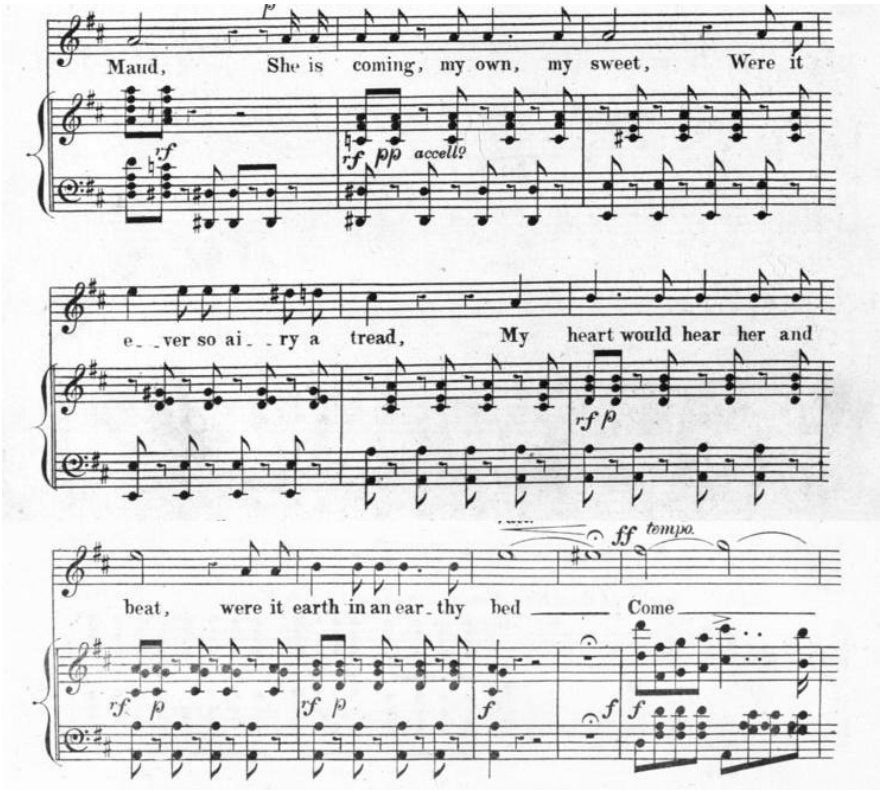
Ex. 1. Caroline Norton, "Juanita," measure 10.



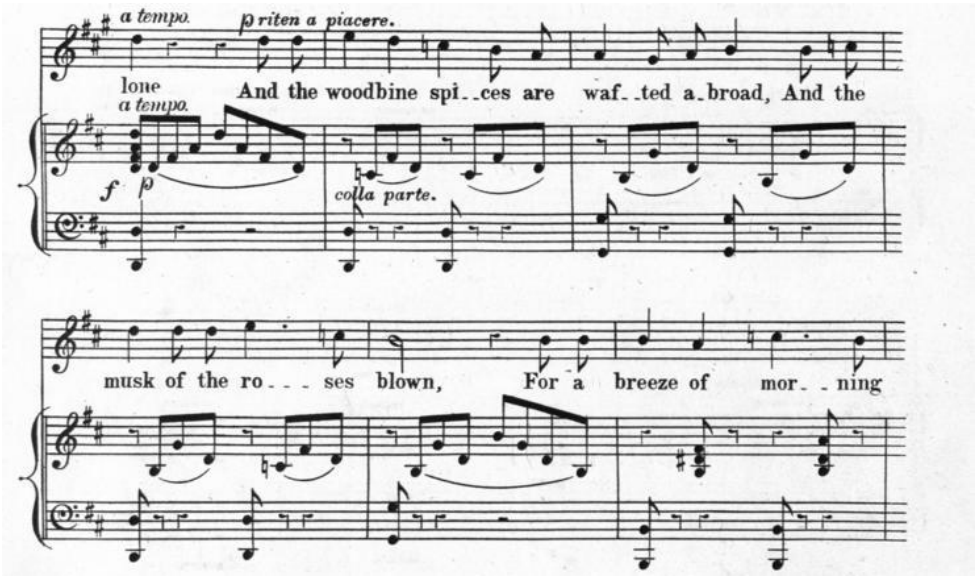
Ex. 2. Norton, measures 25-26.



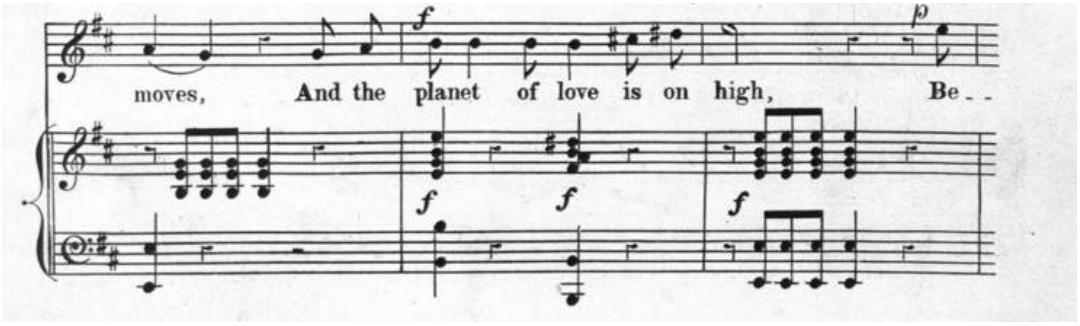
Ex. 3. Michael William Balfe, “Come into the Garden Maud,” measures 1–11.



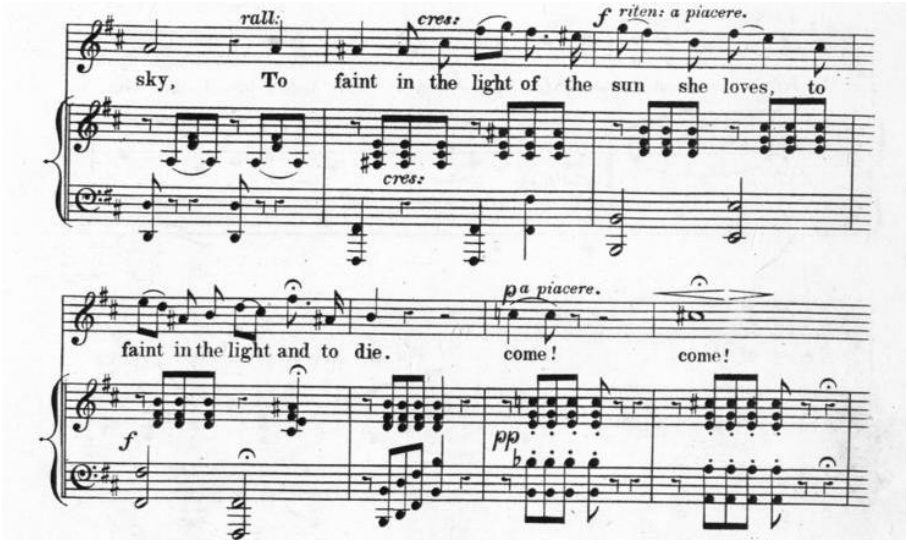
Ex. 4. Balfe, measures 72-80.



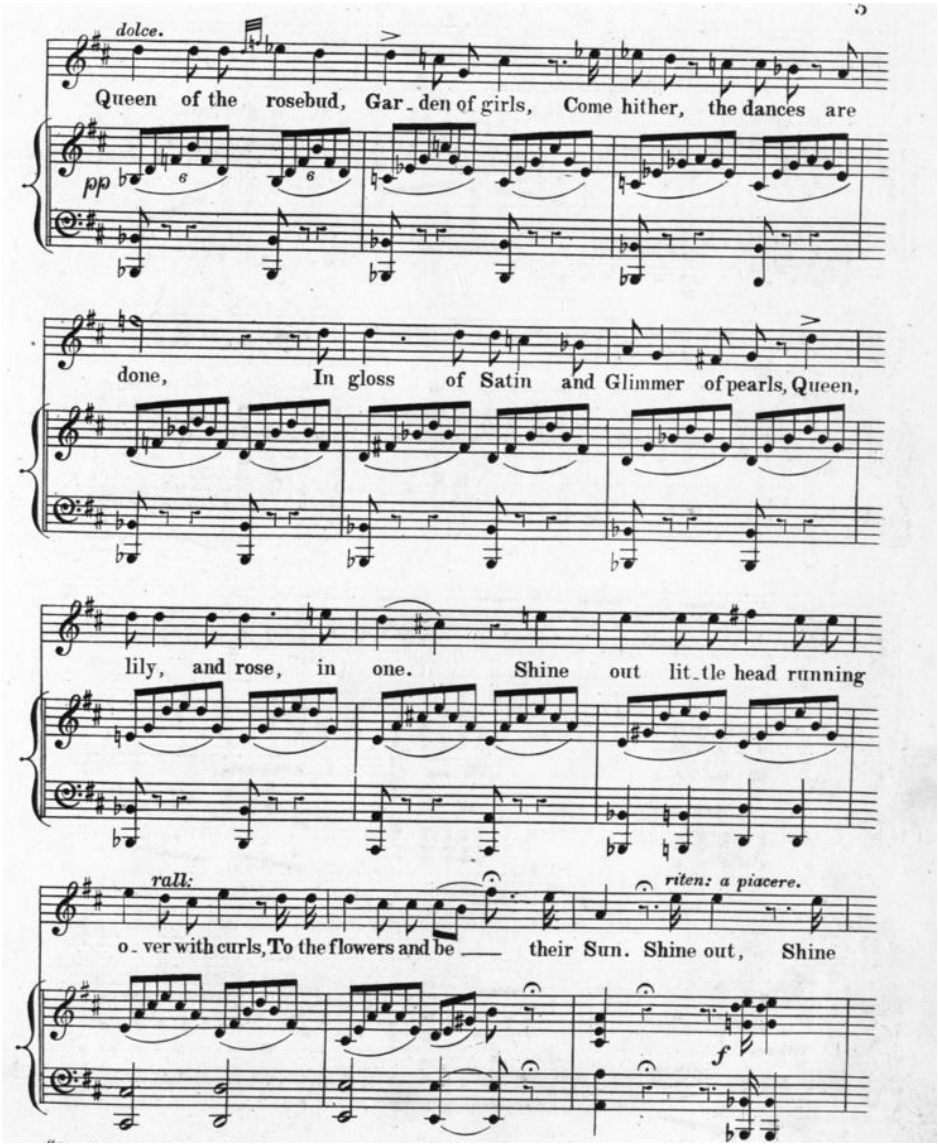
Ex. 5. Balfe, measures 17-21.



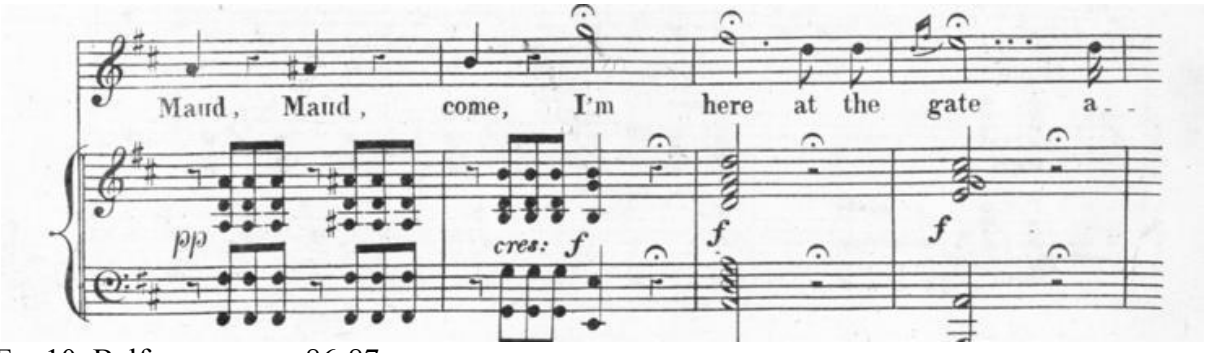
Ex. 6. Balfe, measures 23-25.



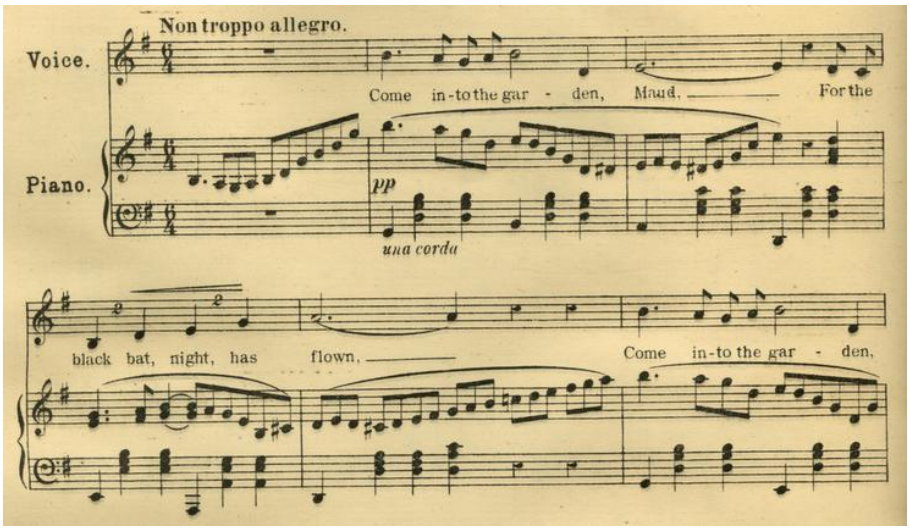
Ex. 7, 8. Balfe, measures 29-33, 34-36.



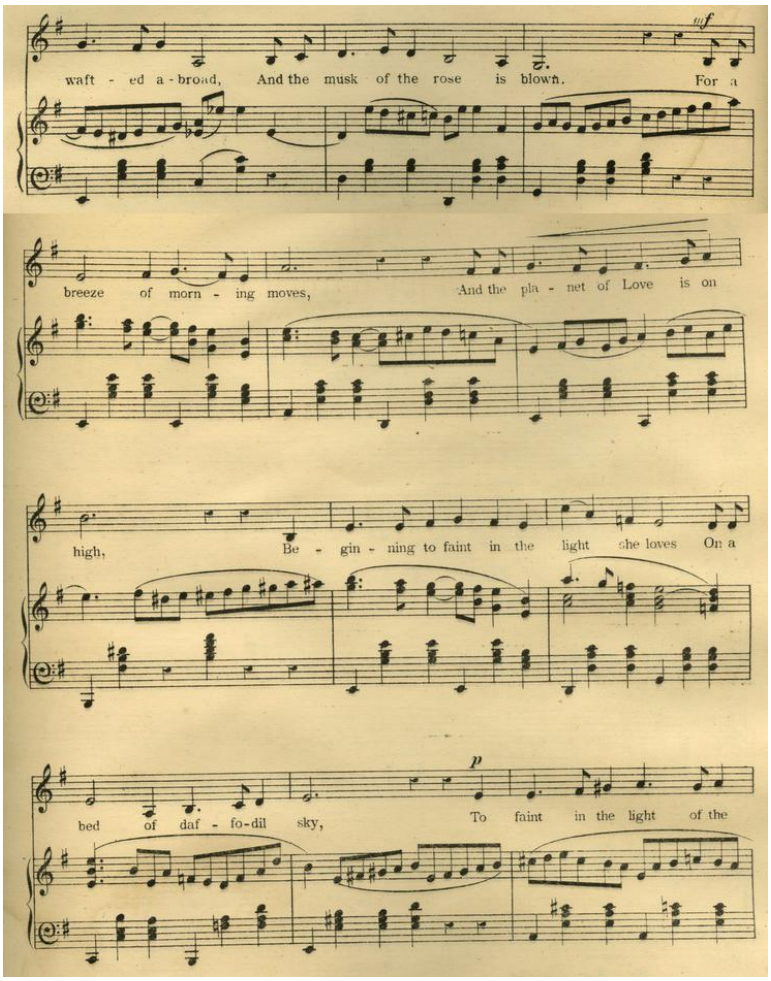
Ex. 9. Balfe, measures 53-63.



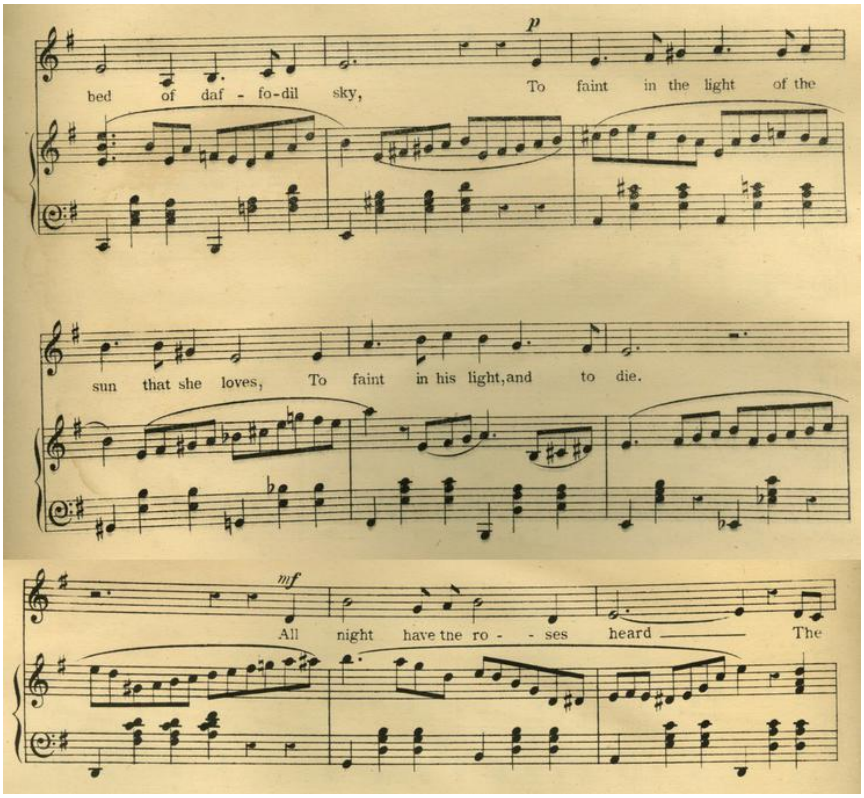
Ex. 10. Balfe, measures 86-87.



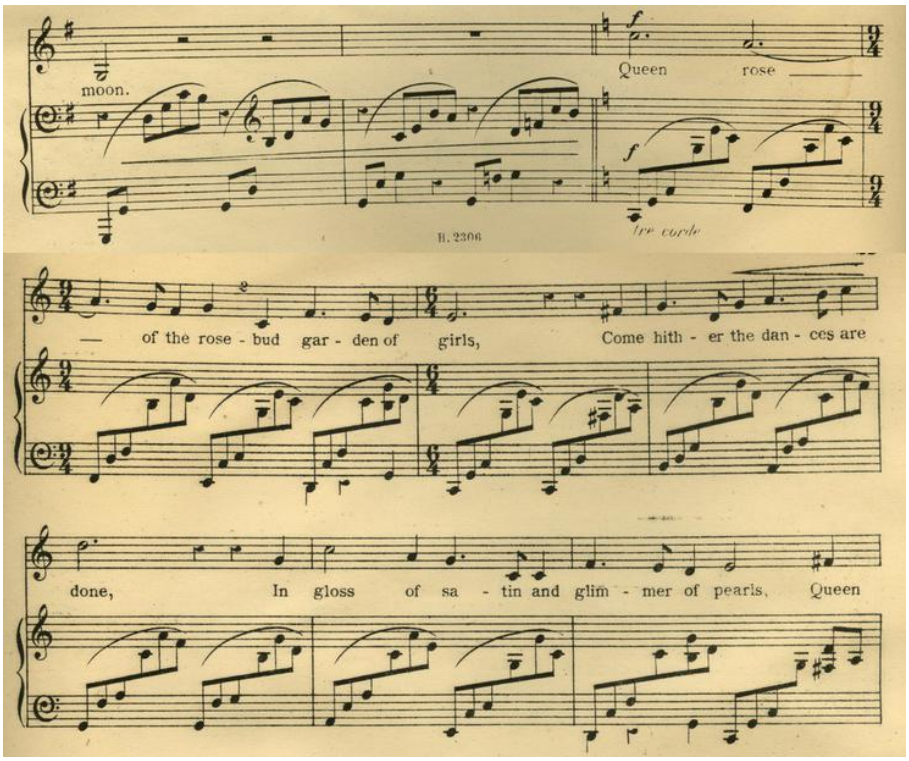
Ex. 11, 12, 13. Arthur Somervell, "Come into the Garden, Maud," measures 1-3, 3-4, 5-6.



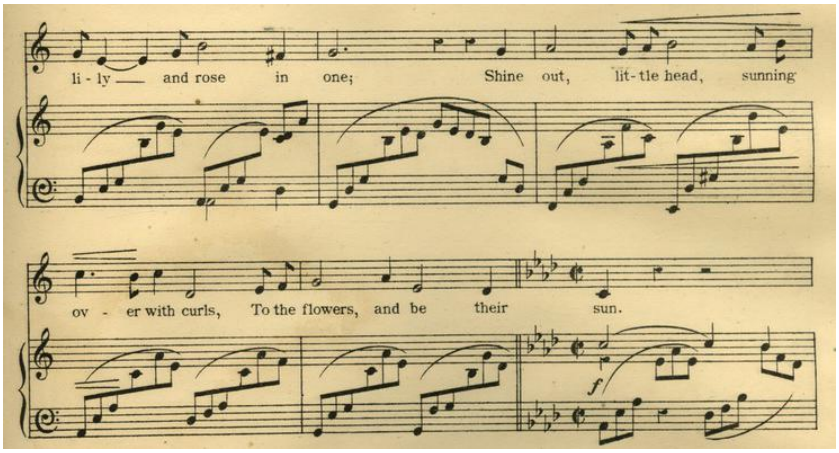
Ex. 14. Somervell, measures 13-21.



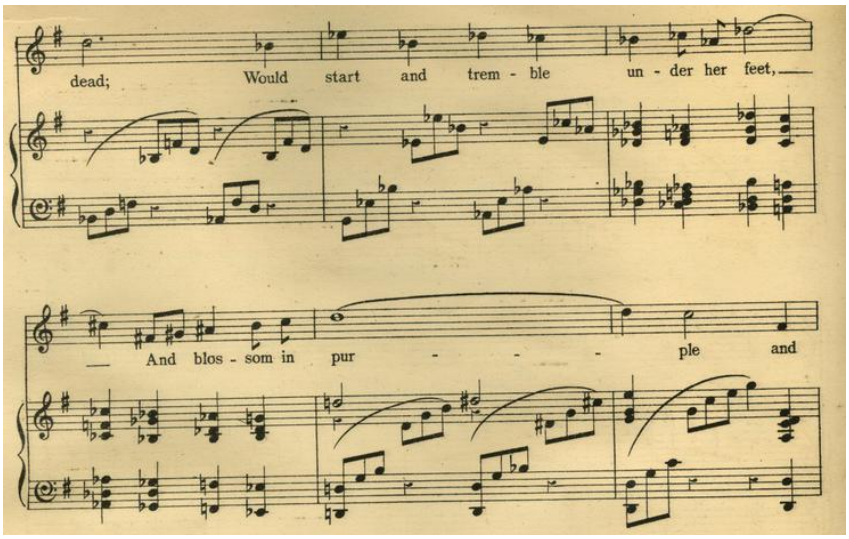
Ex. 15. Somervell, measures 21-26.



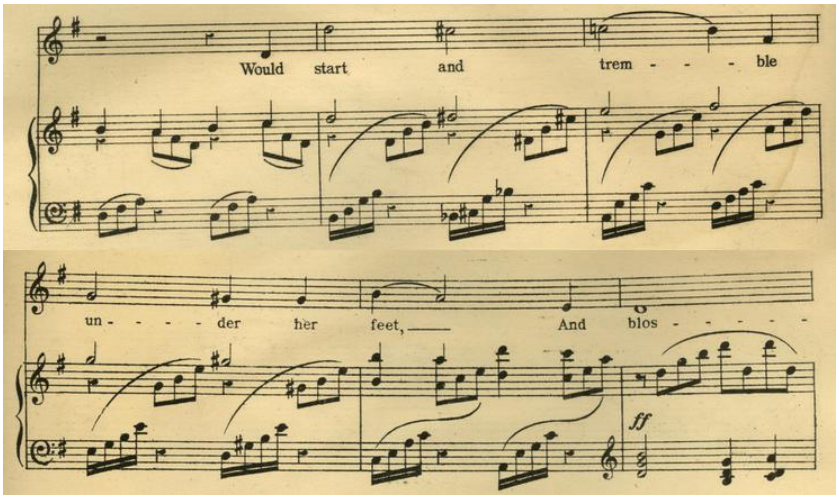
Ex. 16. Somervell, measures 39-44.



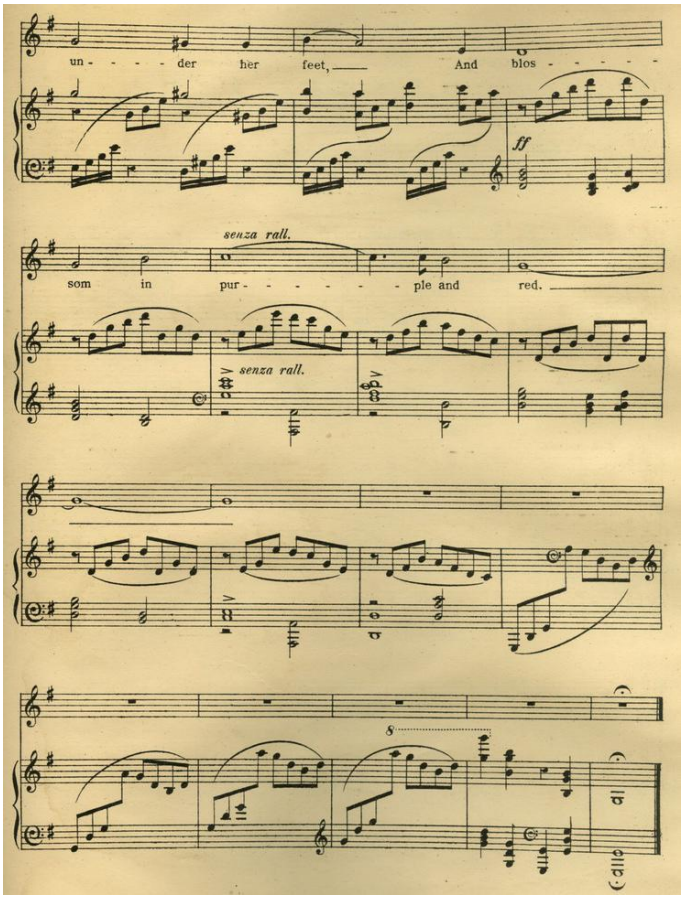
Ex. 17. Somervell, measures 48-52.



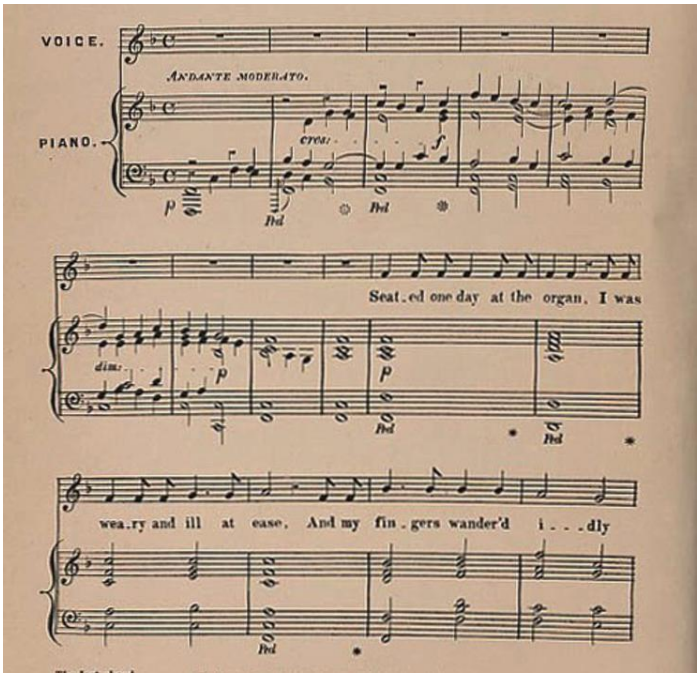
Ex. 18. Somervell, measures 87-90.



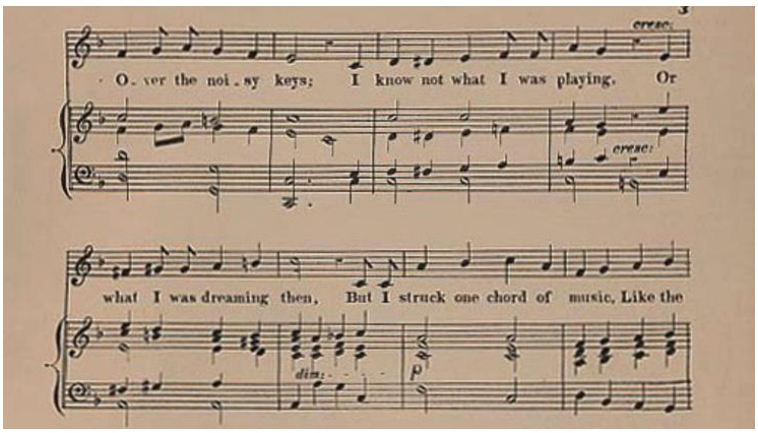
Ex. 19. Somervell, measures 95-100.



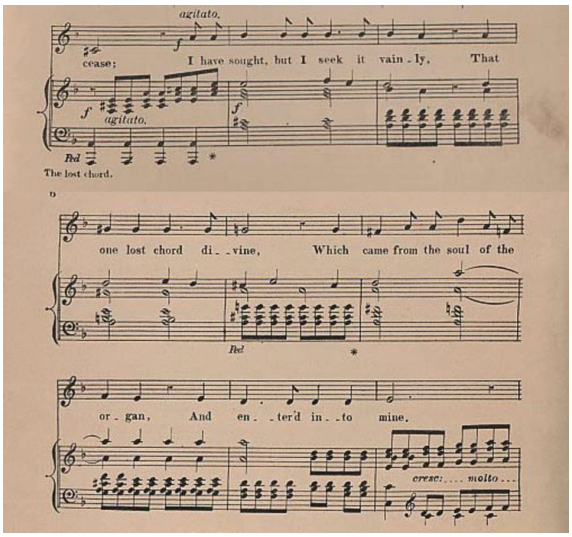
Ex. 20. Somervell, measures 100-113.



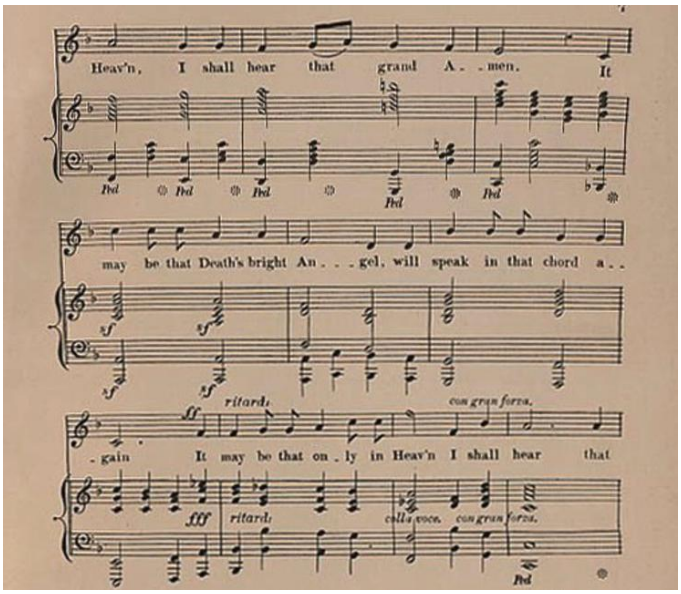
Ex. 21. Sir Arthur Sullivan, “The Lost Chord,” measures 1-13.



Ex. 22. Sullivan, measures 17-21.



Ex. 23. Sullivan, measures 56-64.



Ex. 24. Sullivan, measures 73-77.

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