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MUSICOLOGICAL EXPLORATIONS

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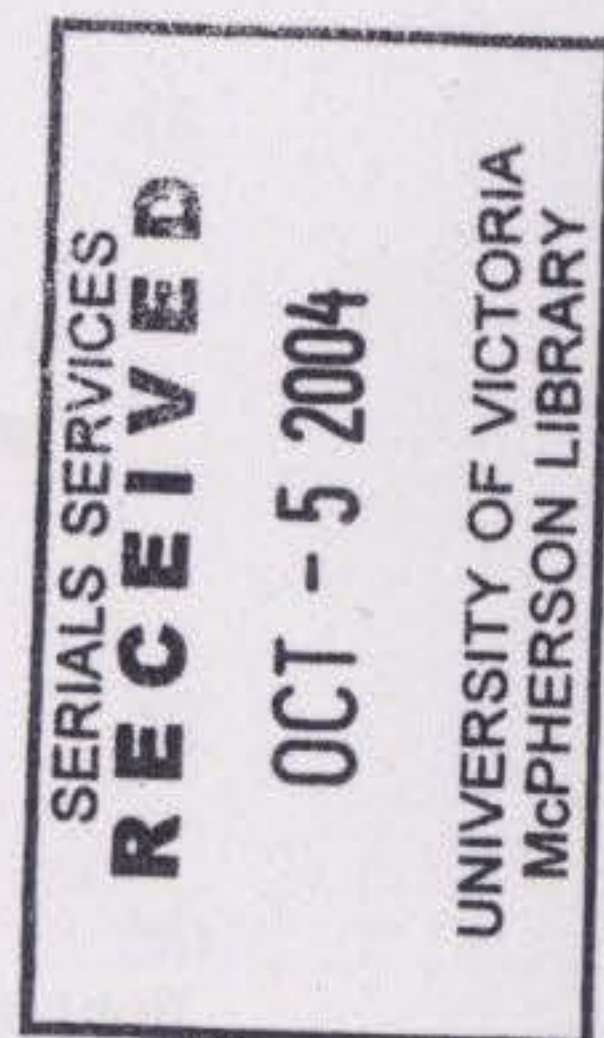
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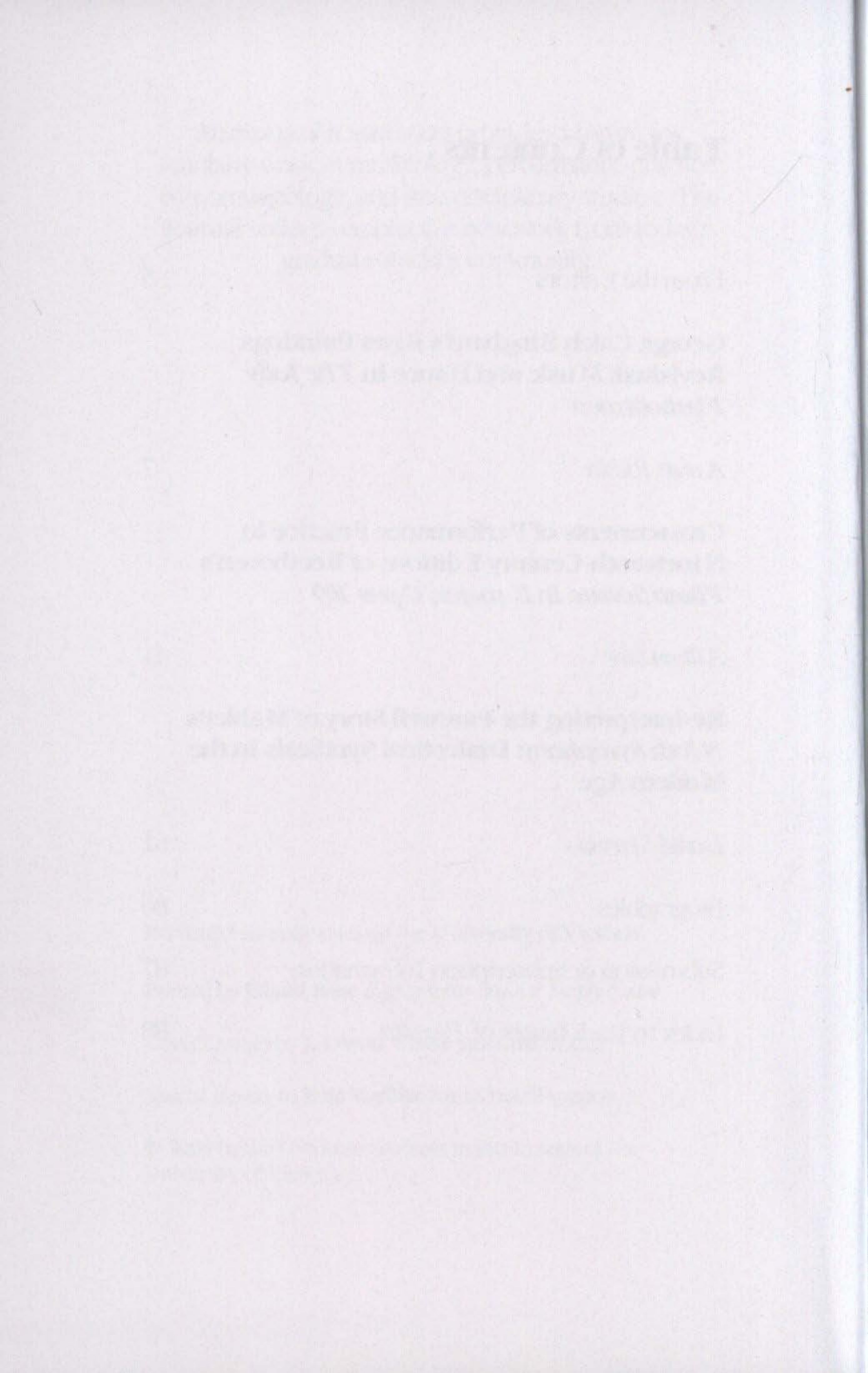
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From the Editors

The Editorial Board is pleased to re-launch *Musicological Explorations*, a journal published by the musicology graduate students at the **University of Victoria**. Now in its fifth issue, the journal's name has changed from its former title of *Fermata*. The new title reflects our mandate to encourage a broad spectrum of musicological research, as well as interdisciplinary work relating to the field of musicology. Our particular aim is to provide a forum for graduate student publication.

We take this opportunity to acknowledge the generous support of the **Faculty of Fine Arts**, the **Faculty of Graduate Studies**, and the **School of Music** of the **University of Victoria**. We are grateful to the Pacific Northwest Chapter of the **American Musicological Society** for the chance to formally re-launch *Musicological Explorations* at their meeting of April 2004. Thank you also to **J. Olson** for the cover design.

The three papers published in this issue reflect both our interdisciplinary focus and our promotion of graduate study. We welcome submissions year round for Spring publication (please refer to page 89 for submission and subscription details) and encourage students and scholars to contribute.

The Editorial Board

The first of these is the fact that the medical profession has been largely unresponsive to the needs of the public. The second is the fact that the medical profession has been largely unresponsive to the needs of the public. The third is the fact that the medical profession has been largely unresponsive to the needs of the public. The fourth is the fact that the medical profession has been largely unresponsive to the needs of the public. The fifth is the fact that the medical profession has been largely unresponsive to the needs of the public. The sixth is the fact that the medical profession has been largely unresponsive to the needs of the public. The seventh is the fact that the medical profession has been largely unresponsive to the needs of the public. The eighth is the fact that the medical profession has been largely unresponsive to the needs of the public. The ninth is the fact that the medical profession has been largely unresponsive to the needs of the public. The tenth is the fact that the medical profession has been largely unresponsive to the needs of the public.

George Caleb Bingham's River Paintings Revisited: Music and Dance in *The Jolly Flatboatmen*

Annett Richter

George Caleb Bingham (1811-79), American local genre painter of Missouri men and manners, wrote in 1871 that art is "the most efficient hand-maid of history" because it possesses the "power to perpetuate a record of events with a clearness second only to that which springs from actual observation."¹

The Jolly Flatboatmen depicts a moment of a period in American history when the presence of large flat rafts and keelboats marked a milestone in the development of transportation at the frontier. Bingham's painting presents a lively portrayal of a group of rivermen on a flatboat moving along the Mississippi river. The 1846 version (see Plate 1) shows eight men on a raft, the central figure engaged in a dance. Bingham captured a moment of relaxation in the life of Missouri boatmen - a recurring subject matter which he had the opportunity to observe frequently in real life.²

The artist, today best remembered as

I wish to thank Wolf Kindermann, Karal Ann Marling and Peter Mercer-Taylor for their invaluable comments and suggestions on various drafts of this article.

¹ John Francis McDermott, *George Caleb Bingham River Portraitist* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1959), 170.

² *Bingham's Missouri* (Jefferson City: Missouri State Council on the Arts, 1975), unpaginated.

America's genre painter of the state of Missouri, probably had his first contact with life on the shore of the Missouri river in the booming town of Franklin, Missouri. We know from documents that Bingham's family had moved there during his childhood.³ During the early years of his career, the artist traveled across Missouri by steamboat, making a living from portrait business.⁴ Later, he maintained various studios in St. Louis that were located near the Mississippi river.⁵ Surrounded by scenes of everyday life here, Bingham was involved in a direct observation of the activities and traits of fur traders, fishermen, and boatmen that served as models for his river paintings.

In the past, historians and art historians have discussed Bingham's river scenes within his overall output and in social, historical, and political contexts.⁶ These paintings have come to be read as the artist's personal expression of the spirit and the economic significance of Western settlement and civilization in nineteenth-century America. While it has been valuable to interpret them as Bingham's definition of

³ *Bingham's Missouri*.

⁴ *Bingham's Missouri*.

⁵ The painter rented studio space "in the vicinity of Main and Market Streets," a part of St. Louis that was two blocks away from the river (Ibid.).

⁶ See John Demos, "George Caleb Bingham: The Artist as a Social Historian," *American Quarterly* 17 (Summer 1965): 218-28; Barbara S. Groseclose, "Painting, Politics, and George Caleb Bingham," *American Art Journal* 10 (Nov 1978): 5-19; McDermott, *George Caleb Bingham River Portraitist*, 56-9; Alan Trachtenberg, "Contesting the West," *Art in America* 79 (Sept 1991): 118-23, 152; and William H. Truettner, "Reinterpreting Images of Westward Expansion, 1820-1920," *The Magazine Antiques* 139 (1991): 542-55.

nationalism in the age of westward expansion, the documenting of contemporary folklore in his *Jolly Flatboatmen* deserves more scholarly attention from a musicological point of view. As the only paintings showing music and dance, the three versions of *The Jolly Flatboatmen* (1846, 1857, and 1877/78) stand out in the artist's overall output. By treating this theme repeatedly, Bingham conveys that these events were not just a pastime but that they defined musical traditions in the West. This paper examines how Bingham's *Jolly Flatboatmen* creates an authentic visual account of music-making at America's frontier. Drawing upon iconographical analysis, this study explores what kind of music and dance may have been represented here and casts light on the socio-cultural context for a musical practice that contributed to the shaping of nineteenth-century folklore in America.

The close-up presentation of the flatboat implies the placement of the viewer on the water, conveying a strong immediacy of the lively scene that is portrayed in an extremely compressed space. This compression causes a flatness in the painting which is resolved into perspective by the two boatmen sitting at the rear end of the raft. The movement of the boat points into the beholder's space. Four of the eight rivermen acknowledge our gaze by looking out of the picture directly at us: "We, the audience, as well as the artist and the whole 'town-life' that [Bingham] represents, are almost as much an object of curiosity to *them* as they are to us. Thus they return our stare. [original italics]"⁷

⁷ John Demos, "George Caleb Bingham," 224. Demos states that the artist particularly emphasized the facial expression of his

The boat crew is presented in front of a cloudless sky in Missouri where Bingham spent the first half of his life. It was in this region where the painter encountered his democratic heroes of the American West. In *The Jolly Flatboatmen*, the dancer's red, white, and blue clothing encodes Bingham's statement of nationalism. These colors are dramatically set against the white sky in front of indistinct outlines of distant water and trees.

Americans regarded flatboatmen as an ambiguous type of people. They were associated with western rivers during the decades preceding the Civil War.⁸ Eastern audiences mainly based their attitude towards rivermen on engravings with the same

rivermen in the three versions of *The Jolly Flatboatmen* which gaze in an inquiring manner "as if Bingham had come up behind these people as unobtrusively as possible." (Ibid.) Even though the artist deeply familiarized himself with the customs and traits of this particular type of American society, the portrayed characters live in a world different from Bingham's, a world which could not be shared between the two. Contemporary accounts in Missouri newspapers referred to the Western boatmen as a "peculiar class" with regard to their habits, manners and clothing. (McDermott, *George Caleb Bingham River Portraitist*, 62.)

⁸ Michael Edward Shapiro, *George Caleb Bingham* (New York: H.M. Abrams, 1993), p. 51 claims that boatmen had often been described "as a boisterous, vulgar lot." They were young and unattached people working on rafts which transported raw materials downstream to markets such as St. Louis and New Orleans. A nineteenth-century traveler wrote that "the manners of the boatmen are as strange as their language. Their peculiar way of life has given origin not only to an appropriate dialect, but to new modes of enjoyment, riot, and fighting." (Ina Faye Woestemeyer, *The Westward Movement: A Book of Readings on our Changing Frontiers* [New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1939], 334.)

subject matter made from paintings.⁹ In their eyes, boatmen had the reputation of having “removed themselves from ordinary social structures.”¹⁰ They were believed to lead a life associated with “roughhousing, carefree idleness on the job, and drunken revelry on shore.”¹¹ Bingham, however, offered a western point of view: “These young men . . . may be interested in fun, but they are not disreputable.”¹² He encouraged Easterners to view them as clever and progressive citizens who were ready to push the frontier and Western settlement forward. “Bingham acknowledges their individuality and their toughness, but he also elevates them to the position of ancient river gods, guardians of commerce.”¹³ For the artist, these flatboatmen stood for the advancement of America’s economy. Thus, Bingham was determined to depict their lifestyle in the West as one that was typically American. His figures were part of his definition of a national class. Furthermore, the artist was an advocate for the westerner’s view of the boatman in a naturally relaxed position, placed in a safe and peaceful environment.

⁹ Bingham submitted *The Jolly Flatboatmen* to the American Art Union in 1846 after which a black-and-white engraving was made the following year by Thomas Doney in New York for distribution to the Union’s membership. More importantly, it was Bingham’s aim with his painting to introduce the reality of Western settlement to audiences in the East. See McDermott, “George Caleb Bingham and the American Art-Union,” *New York Historical Society Quarterly* 42 (Jan 1958): 61, 64; and Shapiro, *George Caleb Bingham*, 55.

¹⁰ Elizabeth Johns, *American Genre Painting: The Politics of Everyday Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 84.

¹¹ Johns, *American Genre Painting: The Politics of Everyday Life*, 83.

¹² Johns, *American Genre Painting: The Politics of Everyday Life*, 85.

¹³ Shapiro, *George Caleb Bingham*, 51-52.

Not only was Bingham familiar with everyday life scenes of rivermen but also with how this type of citizenry preserved music as part of the culture at the frontier. Travel accounts of the time disclose that dancing and fiddle playing were frequent activities in the life of flatboatmen. Americans who visited the West in the 1830s observed the particular appearance of boat crews on the Mississippi in vivid and picturesque terms. Reverend Timothy Flint, for example, who extensively journeyed through the Mississippi Valley, wrote the following:

All the toil, and danger, and exposure, and moving accidents of this long and perilous voyage, are hidden, however, from the inhabitants, who contemplate the boats floating by their dwellings on beautiful spring mornings, when the verdant forest, the mild and delicious temperature of the air, the delightful azure of the sky of this country, . . . the broad and smooth stream rolling calmly down the forest, and floating the boat gently forward, present delightful images and associations to the beholders. At this time, there is no visible danger, or call for labor. The boat takes care of itself; and little do the beholders imagine, how different a scene may be presented in half an hour. Meantime, one of the hands scrapes a violin, and the others dance . . . These scenes, and these notes, . . . present the image of a tempting and charming youthful existence, that naturally inspires a wish to be a boatman.¹⁴

In addition to music-making on rafts and boats, it was

¹⁴ Timothy Flint, *The History and Geography of the Mississippi Valley* (Cincinnati: E. H. Flint, 1833), 1:157.

also at the shore of river towns where boatmen found time for talking, joking, dancing and fiddling, storytelling, card-playing, and whisky-drinking while the boats waited for their freight to be loaded onto larger steamboats. Flint reports: "Almost every boat, while it lies in the harbor, has one or more fiddles scraping continually on board, to which you often see the boatmen dancing."¹⁵

In the 1846 version of *The Jolly Flatboatmen*, originally entitled *Dance on the Flat Boat*, the liveliness of some rivermen and the seemingly relaxed poses of others enable us to hear the sound of the young man tapping on a tin pan or a skillet, the scratchy music of a country fiddle, and the finger snaps and heel-kicking of the dancer. The peaceful silence of the river seems to be suddenly broken by the musical scene in the painting. Its lively rhythm is defined by the fiddler's foot-tapping, a gesture that reminds us of musicians performing at American square and country dances in the nineteenth-century. The tempo of the music provided for such occasions was always set and maintained by the fiddler.¹⁶

Prior to Bingham, the theme of music and dance had been treated by William Sidney Mount (1807-1868) in works depicting rustic scenes in the life of American farmers in the East. The Missouri artist was familiar with Mount's enormously popular genre paintings of rural Long Island from lithographic prints that were distributed among American and

¹⁵ Quoted in Demos, "George Caleb Bingham," 225. See also Flint, *Recollections of the Last Ten Years* (Boston: Cummings, Hilliard, and Co., 1826), 14-18.

¹⁶ Louie Attebery, "The Fiddle Tune: An American Artifact," *Northwest Folklore* 2/2 (1967): 28.

European audiences.¹⁷ E. Maurice Bloch has suggested that “Mount’s *Dance of the Haymakers . . .*, sometimes alternatively titled *Music is Contagious*, comes closest to serving as a pendant to *The Jolly Flatboatmen*. The intimate glimpse of farmers enjoying a moment of relaxation after a day’s toil - two of them dancing while another plays the fiddle - appears almost identical in mood and action to the flatboatmen.”¹⁸

In their paintings, both artists draw upon members of marginal groups of nineteenth-century

¹⁷ Michael Edward Shapiro, “George Caleb Bingham,” *The Magazine Antiques* 138 (July 1990) mentions on p. 146 that Bingham encountered the “portraits of Thomas Sully and Gilbert Stuart, the genre paintings of William Sidney Mount, and the landscapes of Thomas Cole” during a visit to Philadelphia and New York in 1838. Mount’s *Dance After a Sleigh Ride* (1830), *Dancing on the Barn Floor* (1831), *Dance of the Haymakers* (1845), and *The Power of Music* (1845) are exemplifying works of the artist’s treatment of music and dance. An active amateur fiddler and flautist as well as a collector of violin tunes himself, Mount’s most frequently depicted musical instrument became the fiddle, an instrument in increasing demand for the performance of music at country dances and square dances on Long Island in the nineteenth-century.

¹⁸ E. Maurice Bloch, *George Caleb Bingham: The Evolution of an Artist* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 1:91. Mount’s *Dance of the Haymakers* had been exhibited at the National Academy of Design in 1845. The latter painting and *The Power of Music* were available as lithographs in 1849 and 1848, respectively, and were distributed in the United States and internationally by William Schaus, an American agent of the Parisian Goupil, Vibert and Company. See Martha V. Pike, “Catching the Tune: Music and William Sidney Mount,” in *Catching the Tune: Music and William Sidney Mount*, ed. Janice Gray Armstrong (Stony Brook, NY: The Museums at Stony Brook, 1984), 12.

American society. Bingham's choice of western rivermen indirectly corresponds to Mount's treatment of African Americans as character types that lack deeper roots in a society dominated by whites. Mount places people of color into scenes that idealize the peaceful coexistence between both communities. Bingham similarly captures his river heroes at moments of ease in the hope to inspire audiences in the East towards a more positive attitude to the class of western boatmen, townspeople and settlers. After all, they, too, took part in forming the country's national identity.

Michael Edward Shapiro has claimed that "[Bingham's] drawings allowed him to build an inventory of rural characters in stylized, often classical, poses, which became the building blocks of his finished paintings."¹⁹ Bingham's sketched figures reveal a strong resemblance to the characters in his genre paintings. Among them, several types of people can be identified in their common postures, clothing and facial expressions, representing different layers of American society. The happy dancing figure with his up-flung arms in *The Jolly Flatboatmen*, for example, can be found in *The County Election* (1851/52) and *The Verdict of the People* (1854/55). Upon comparison of the three versions of *The Jolly Flatboatmen*, it becomes apparent that the fiddler himself, despite slight changes in his posture, is also a recurring figure in Bingham's paintings.

It is unfortunate that the dancing figure of the 1846 version is not included in the artist's sketchbook. Its origin may reside in William Sidney

¹⁹ Shapiro, "George Caleb Bingham," 146.

Mount's *Farmers Nooning* (1836) from which Bingham borrowed the pose of the African American slave resting on a haystack. Both figures have their arms raised, yet they are engaged in completely different activities. Two characters from contrasting social backgrounds take up the center of each composition.²⁰ If there is a similarity between Bingham's and Mount's dancing figures, it is perhaps *The Dance of the Haymakers* (1845, see Plate 2) that reflects the idea of "borrowing" more convincingly, particularly so since here, Mount also treats the theme of music and dance.

The dancer of Bingham's *Jolly Flatboatmen in Port* (1857, see Plate 3) is part of a composition that marks the artist's transition from his earlier genre painting style to a later, more mature and developed style.²¹ The artist "reveals [his] continuing observation

²⁰ Barbara Novak, *American Painting of the Nineteenth Century: Realism, Idealism, and the American Experience* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1979), p. 153 compares Bingham's characters to Mount's and claims that the first constructs figures that are restricted in movement due to a predominant "geometric structure." In contrast, Mount's characters have the freedom "to move with the organic ease of the Dutch seventeenth-century genre tradition." Bingham's "conceptually conceived" rivermen in *The Jolly Flatboatmen* certainly appear to be less flexible in their individual movements even though the scene as such portrays activities that involve motion. This is because Bingham, in the 1846 version, uses a classical triangle in a relatively strict and traditional composition. In the Düsseldorf version of 1857, this structural stiffness loosens up and becomes much more complex due to a shift in angle and perspective.

²¹ *The Jolly Flatboatmen in Port* is off-center in composition, has more supporting figures than the earlier version, and opens up the view to the distance rather than blocking it. Out of all three *Jolly Flatboatmen* paintings, it appears to be the one painted in

and use of [an] antique model, in this instance paralleling [the] pose and movement [of the] Hellenistic figure of a dancing satyr.”²² Bloch has pointed out that “this classical figure was actually well known in small-scale reproductions which must have ornamented many a parlor in Bingham’s time.”²³ The *Dancing Satyr* is half animal, and is the kind of figure that stands outside the bounds of polite society. This sculpture exhibits more similarities to Bingham’s dancer than to Mount’s African American in *Farmers Nooning* whose arms seem to be merely raised in a pose of relaxation and rest. In addition, the *Dancing Satyr* is actually involved in the same kind of activity as Bingham’s central figure, a dance.

Düsseldorf that scholars usually describe as “large, overcrowded with figures, and dull in coloring.” (Fern Rusk Shapley, “Bingham’s ‘Jolly Flatboatmen,’” *Art Quarterly* 17 (1954): 355). Shapiro interprets this work as a “grand statement . . . [which] updated the river paintings to more accurately depict antebellum Saint Louis” (Shapiro, *George Caleb Bingham*, 120). McDermott, however, argues that, compared to the 1846 version, “the composition and the tone of the picture [of 1857] have been greatly altered, though not for the better.” (McDermott, “Jolly Flatboatmen: Bingham and His Imitators,” *Antiques* 73 (March 1958): 269.) Scholars have voiced disagreement about the geographical location of the river port in the 1857 version. See Marquis W. Childs, “George Caleb Bingham,” *American Magazine of Art* 27 (1934): 598; McDermott, “Jolly Flatboatmen: Bingham and His Imitators,” 269; Shapiro, *George Caleb Bingham*, 118-20; and May Simonds, “A Pioneer Painter,” *The American Illustrated Methodist Magazine* 8/2 (Oct 1902): 76. Between the Missouri and the Mississippi as possibilities, the latter seems to be a reasonable inference. Bingham rented several studios near the shore of the Mississippi in St. Louis during his career.

²² Bloch, *George Caleb Bingham*, 1:93-94.

²³ Bloch, *George Caleb Bingham*, 94. For a reproduction of the *Dancing Satyr*, see Bloch, *George Caleb Bingham*, 1: plate 57.

The dancing figure in *The Jolly Flatboatmen* of 1846 contributes to the musical rhythm of the painting not only with the movement of his feet but also with his finger snaps. The riverman here seems to be much more involved in the activity of the dance itself. He is focused on his own feet and of those of the fiddler, moving his legs to the rhythm of the pan. In comparison to the graceful and elegant steps of Mount's *Haymakers*, the motion of the tall riverman's body with up-flung and widely spread raised arms seems to make the loud stepping and jumping on the shallow boat surface easily audible. In fact, the viewer is inspired to imagine the actual vibration and resonance the steps cause on the wood. *The Jolly Flatboatmen* of 1857 and 1877/78 (see Plate 4) dispense with the idea of the dancer partaking in the music-making with finger snaps. Instead, Bingham equips him with a red-colored handkerchief in his right and a brown hat in his left hand.²⁴ Here, the artist lets his dancer return the viewer's gaze, as if to represent a public performance. The production of melody and rhythm is entirely left to the fiddler and the skillet player. The stylized and elegant posture of the dancer's upper body and his legs resembles Mount's dancers and the Hellenistic sculpture much more closely. The "borrowed" and conceptualized dancer in the 1857 and 1877/78 versions, however,

²⁴ The motif of the handkerchief which releases the tension of the pyramidal group in *The Jolly Flatboatmen* can be found in Jean-Louis Theodore Gericault's *Raft of the Medusa* (1818/19), "a painting Bingham could conceivably have known through engraved reproduction." (See Bloch, *George Caleb Bingham*, 1: p. 94, and plate 58.) Furthermore, the artist could have seen this painting during a two month stay in Paris in 1856 from where the artist and his family moved to Düsseldorf, Germany.

appears to be less convincing in his image as a flatboatman at the American frontier, but perhaps more European instead.

Bingham's choice and the distribution of the color scheme of red, white, and blue are brought to the fore much more distinctly in the last *Jolly Flatboatmen*. Particularly striking is the way in which the colors of the dancer balance with and are reflected in the attire of the rest of the boatmen. Each figure is an integrated part of the color scheme and part of the distinctively American character of the frontier expressed in the clothing of the rivermen, the geographical location, and, last but not least, the musical activity.

Scholars have identified the dance in all three *Jolly Flatboatmen* as a jig or hoe-down without presenting justification.²⁵ What Bingham happened to capture here is only one single step, i.e. one particular moment, of an entire dance. In all three works, the dancer has raised one foot several inches above ground whereas the other foot touches the surface of the wood with the tip of the boot. This position implies that he is performing some kind of stepping or hopping that involves an alternating movement between both the right and the left foot. The dancer in the last two *Jolly Flatboatmen* is placed in perspective, revealing a certain degree of gracefulness in his posture. Considering that this figure is influenced by the Hellenistic *Dancing Satyr*, a figure unlikely to dance a jig, the presentation of plausible evidence toward a specific dance in the painting is difficult.

²⁵ See *Bingham's Missouri*; Childs, "George Caleb Bingham," 598; and Shapiro, *George Caleb Bingham*, 118, caption.

As opposed to round and group dances that were part of life in Ireland in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the jig, like the reel and the hornpipe, comprised solo or step dances which characterized the "height of perfection" in Irish dancing.²⁶ During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, itinerant dancing masters were largely responsible for the cultivation and teaching of these dances in Ireland.²⁷

Each dancing master had his own collection of parishes and townlands which he visited, and the dancing masters respected each other's territory . . . The dancing master would put up in the house of a local farmer . . . He took his pupils as he found them, the usual mixed bag of the naturally gifted and the 'two left feet variety' of dancer. The basic steps taught to the dancers [in Ireland] were the jig and [the] reel. Within each dance, stamping, shuffling, grinding, and skipping and hopping steps were [performed].²⁸

In contrast to Bingham's solo dancer in all three *Jolly Flatboatmen*, the jig was danced "usually by one couple, but the number was not restricted."²⁹ The raised arms of Bingham's dancers do not correspond to the authentic description of a jig, for Irish step dancing in general does not involve any movement of the body above the hips:

²⁶ Breandán Breathnach, *Folk Music and Dances of Ireland* (Dublin: Mercier Press, 1977), 43.

²⁷ Nuala O'Connor, *Bringing It All Back Home: The Influence of Irish Music* (London: BBC Books, 1991), 64-5.

²⁸ O'Connor, *Bringing It All Back Home* . . . , 64-5

²⁹ Breathnach, *Folk Music and Dances*, 43.

A remarkable feature of step dancing was the control or restraint which underlay the vigour and speed of the performance. The good dancer kept the body rigid, moving only from the hips down and with arms extended straight at the side. This restrained type of dancing was apparently the ideal of the dancing masters who discouraged flinging the hands about, or flourishing them at the level of the head.³⁰

It is unknown to what extent the painter was familiar with dances from the British Isles. Breandán Breathnach informs us that “the good dancer danced, as it were, underneath himself, trapping each note of the music on the floor, and the use of the half door and table for solo performances indicates the limited area in which he was expected to perform the elaborate and intricate steps.”³¹ Perhaps Bingham, then, intended the characteristics of the dance to be portrayed merely in the figure’s steps and footwork.

Even though the body posture pertaining to a jig does not entirely coincide with the dance in *The Jolly Flatboatmen*, instructions for it yield some similarities between the painting and the steps described in the rules. The jig exists in various forms, depending on the rhythm of the music per measure: the common or double jig, the single jig, and the hop or slip jig. The double jig was to be performed as follows:³²

³⁰ Breathnach, *Folk Music and Dances*, 53.

³¹ Breathnach, *Folk Music and Dances*, 53-54.

³² The jig, the oldest form of extant Irish dance music, is generally a lively dance in a triple meter which holds true for the

It commences with the 'rising step,' the first step the learner is taught. One form of this step is performed by throwing the right foot forward about twelve inches above the floor, hopping on the left, while the right is withdrawn to tap the floor, and then tapping with the left, right, and left foot. This action, occupying one bar of the tune, is repeated three times. To the fourth or last bar of the phrase the boy performed the *grinding step* on his left foot, the girl the *shuffle*. [original italics] Grinding is performed by striking the floor with the toes of each foot alternately in time to the six notes in the bar, shuffling by giving each foot alternately a light shuffling motion in front of the other.³³

Bingham is unlikely to have portrayed a slip jig since this form involves light hopping, tripping and sliding. Furthermore, it was usually danced by two couples.³⁴ The double and the single jig, however, could conceivably have been dance steps the artist had in mind here. The alternating movement between the right and left foot can clearly be recognized in the painting. Given the process of assimilation through which Irish dancing went after its introduction to the United States, it is possible that the raised arms of Bingham's dancers represent an American adaptation

double jig (in 6/8 time with six eighth notes per measure), the single jig (in 6/8 and occasionally in 12/8 time with every quarter note followed by an eighth note), and the hop or slip jig (in 9/8 time with various groupings of triplets of eighth notes, quarter notes and eighth notes, and dotted quarter notes). (Ibid, 57-59.)

³³ Breathnach, *Folk Music and Dances*, 43.

³⁴ Breathnach, *Folk Music and Dances*, 45.

of a single or double jig.

In Bingham's world, women did not belong to the part of society that was adventurous enough to explore the unsettled areas of the American West on boats and rafts. It would therefore have been unusual to paint a dancing couple that included a female figure. After all, *The Jolly Flatboatmen* were intended to depict moments in the life of a male world in which dancing was most likely not considered a useful social skill but rather a casual activity that distracted from the daily routine of transporting and unloading commodities.

The musical content of the painting is embedded in mid-nineteenth-century America whose culture absorbed folk music traditions transmitted by emigrants from the British Isles. Immigrants who came to the United States in increasing numbers in the 1830s and 1840s due to the Famine and depriving economic conditions in their homeland were mostly peasants from rural areas of Ireland.³⁵ Arriving in a country with an expanded range of economic opportunities, Irish immigrants adapted their cultural and musical heritage to an urban environment.³⁶ In

³⁵ Lawrence McCullough, "A Historical Sketch of Traditional Irish Music in the U.S.," *Folklore Forum* 7/3 (July 1974): 179.

³⁶ According to McCullough, "A Historical Sketch," the first traditional Irish music in the United States may have been played on the fiddle, the instrument of Irish peasantry. It had become a more acknowledged instrument as musical practices of the Irish aristocracy and their instrument, the harp, began to vanish (p. 179). For further discussion of the significance of the fiddle, see also Michael Broyles, "Immigrant, Folk, and Regional Musics in the Nineteenth Century," in *The Cambridge History of American Music*, ed. David Nicholls (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 136-41.

addition, the fiddle, compared to instruments such as the uilleann pipes, was light in weight and easy to transport from overseas. It opened the door for music from the British Isles to find its way into American culture. This assimilation process affected Irish music and dance in that it offered lucrative performance venues for amateurs and professionals: "Traditional Irish musicians and dancers moved smoothly into the popular American entertainment milieu of the time and were frequently employed as performers on riverboats and on pleasure cruises, in hotels, saloons, dance halls, and theaters."³⁷ To itinerant musicians in Ireland who were associated with a lower-class social status, America undoubtedly represented an economic attraction.

Not only did professional Irish-American musicians showcase Irish music in performance, but they also played music for a variety of dances - among others quadrilles, cotillions, strathspeys, and schottisches - some of which came to be ancestors of the American square dance.³⁸ The fiddle was the most popular instrument for the performer of dances.

³⁷ McCullough, "Historical Sketch," 180. Due to the lack of documents and sources, scholars of Irish folk music have found it challenging to define the musical traditions of Irish immigrants that arrived in America before the nineteenth-century. What is presently considered as "traditional Irish music" is the musical heritage that originated in Ireland in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

³⁸ Attebery, "The Fiddle Tune," 24. The author claims on p. 22 that the American fiddle tune and the square dance flourished in particular at the American frontier. This environment provided an ideal setting for these forms of entertainment to thrive and to turn into ingrained parts of American culture. Both artifacts played an important role in fostering entertainment in the mid-nineteenth century, especially since they were "home made."

According to Michael Broyles, "in rural areas a single fiddler frequently provided music for [these events].³⁹ Depending on availability, the fiddle's melody was accompanied by other fiddles, a drum, a banjo, a guitar, a mandolin and an accordion, or any combinations thereof.⁴⁰ It was customary to repeat fiddle tunes as often as desired since the last phrase of each one led naturally to the beginning of another. Traditional fiddlers learned to play the style and the instrument's repertoire by ear while playing tunes "mostly for enjoyment of dancers and listeners in their own region, community, and family."⁴¹

An inscription in Mount's own hand on the 1849 lithograph of the *Dance of the Haymakers* offers a glimpse of the kind of fiddle music that was popular in mid-nineteenth-century America.⁴² The artist transcribed the music for a "Hornpipe" by Shepard S. Jones, a popular contemporary fiddler, on the back of the print.⁴³ This would suggest that Mount was very familiar with both the stylistic traits of this music and the dance steps for a hornpipe. If the painter implies a connection here between Jones's fiddle tune and the barn dance portrayed in *Dance of the Haymakers*, it would indeed depict hornpipe dance steps, and not a jig as suggested elsewhere.⁴⁴ Moreover, Mount's

³⁹ Broyles, "Immigrant, Folk, and Regional Musics," 141.

⁴⁰ Howard Wight Marshall, "The Place of Traditional Fiddling in Midwestern Culture," *The Devil's Box* 22/3 (Fall 1988): 43.

⁴¹ Marshall, "The Place of Traditional Fiddling in Midwestern Culture," 42.

⁴² This particular lithograph is owned by The Museums of Stony Brook at Stony Brook, New York.

⁴³ Pike, "Catching the Tune," 12.

⁴⁴ Alan C. Buechner, "William Sidney Mount's 'Cradle of Harmony': A Unique 19th Century American Violin," *Journal of*

dance steps show some similarities to the dancer's footwork and the position of their legs in Bingham's *Jolly Flatboatmen* of 1857 and 1877/78.

Hornpipes, polkas, jigs, reels, and other dance tunes from the British Isles comprised a large part of the fiddle repertoire at this time. Broyles has pointed out that "the three most common dances in America at the beginning of the nineteenth-century were the reel, the jig, and the hornpipe."⁴⁵ They were performed at social dances and for entertainment on riverboats. The dissemination of fiddle music frequently occurred through observation of other fiddlers playing and the imitation of their tunes. In addition, with the beginning of the eighteenth century, Irish songs and dances were available in printed anthologies of instrumental and vocal music.⁴⁶

the Vidin Society of America 3/2 (1977) claims on p. 41 that the two farmers in the *Dance of the Haymakers* are performing a jig. Unfortunately, it remains unsaid how the author arrived at this conclusion.

⁴⁵ Broyles, "Immigrant, Folk, and Regional Musics," 141.

⁴⁶ Broyles, "Immigrant, Folk, and Regional Musics," 138. Other examples of nineteenth-century dance tune collections for fiddle include Elias Howe's *The Musician's Companion* (1840) and Sydney Ryan's *Mammoth Collection of 1050 Jigs and Reels* (1883). For more nineteenth and twentieth-century publication titles, see Alan Lomax, *American Folk Song and Folk Lore: A Regional Bibliography* (New York: P. E. A. Service Center, 1942), 43-46. In addition, Mount's own output in collecting, transcribing and composing approximately 450 fiddle tunes, including waltzes, polkas, jigs, and reels, has been catalogued by The Museums of Stony Brook, New York (Pike, "Catching the Tune," p. 21, n. 2). Another collection of manuscript fiddle music exists by Isaac Homan, a contemporary of Mount. It contains a similarly wide variety of tunes and is held at the Bellport-Brookhaven Historical Society in Bellport, New York.

Ira Ford's *Traditional Music of America*, a wide-ranging collection of fiddle tunes published in 1940, gives us an idea of what we might have "heard" in a painting like Bingham's *Jolly Flatboatmen*.

Jigs, reels, hornpipes, and other dances from the British Isles are melodically simple, lighthearted, and rhythmically driving. They are usually in major keys and in binary form in which each half is repeated. Both sections can be melodically related to each other. Each part consists of an eight-measure strain in which the downbeats function as a coordinator between the meter of the music and the order of the dance steps. Whereas jigs are usually in fast compound meter (6/8) and have a comparatively bouncy rhythm derived from a quarter note followed by an eighth-note (see Plate 5, *A cross the River*), reels are in duple time (2/4, 4/4, or 2/2) and exhibit "relatively even accents in [each] measure."⁴⁷ Brief cadences in reels (see Plate 5, *McLæd's Reel*) and the subdivision of the eighth-note beat (see Plate 5, *Tennessee Reel*) imbue the dance with an "effect of relatively continuous running motion."⁴⁸ These characteristics made the music ideal for repetition before the fiddler moved on to a different dance tune altogether. Hornpipes (2/4 or 4/4 meter) feature a somewhat slower tempo than reels, and "have a more pronounced accent on the first and third beats."⁴⁹ Arpeggiation and triadic motion are central to the melody here. Cadences in hornpipes often fall on the downbeat of a section's last measure with three eighth or quarter notes (see Plate 5, *Sailor's Hornpipe*), thus

⁴⁷ Broyles, "Immigrant, Folk, and Regional Musics," 143.

⁴⁸ Broyles, "Immigrant, Folk, and Regional Musics," 143.

⁴⁹ Broyles, "Immigrant, Folk, and Regional Musics," 143.

investing the music with more final closure than the last cadence in a reel.

Typically, two or more dance tunes of the same or different type were strung together and played in succession. Their repetition provided opportunities for the fiddler to ornament the music differently each time through. In order to be heard across the dance floor or the wooden surface on a flatboat over the shuffling of feet and kicking heels, fiddlers had to play these dance tunes at an aggressive volume. The physical energy and the rhythmical drive involved in this activity are undoubtedly present in the music-making Bingham portrayed in *The Jolly Flatboatmen*.

The fusion of two cultures exemplified in the introduction and assimilation of Irish music and dance in the United States offers a better understanding of how Bingham and Mount came to observe the ingredients of a folkloric tradition that unfolded in America during the first half of the nineteenth-century. Irish musicians settled in different areas throughout the United States, and spread and preserved their musical heritage under different conditions. Their music thus came to incorporate a diversity of stylistic traits reflecting the variety of provincial, regional, and local styles that were in the process of evolving in different performance venues.

A close examination of the position of the fiddler and his instrument in the three *Jolly Flatboatmen* shows that Bingham, as he intensively studied the realization of human figures in his sketches, became a more experienced painter of the postures and

positions relevant to the models in his artwork.⁵⁰ The 1846 version shows a fiddler using a relatively long bow that is placed on the strings in an unusual angle as well as a fiddle that rests on his shoulder neither naturally nor too securely (see Plate 6). It becomes clear how eagerly Bingham worked on achieving a correct position of the fiddle and the bow in perspective. In contrast, the sketches for the later two versions of *The Jolly Flatboatmen* (see Plate 7) speak for the artist's increased understanding of how a fiddle is held and bowed.

Ethnographic authenticity underlies Bingham's drawings of both the fiddler and the figure playing the skillet. In contrast to the borrowed image of the central dancing figure, the sketches attest to the artist's serious study in an effort to depict the musicians' playing positions as convincingly as possible. It is the fiddler and the skillet player that document performance traditions of nineteenth-century folk music in the American West. Depending on the availability of percussion instruments, the rhythm could be provided by a variety of instruments, such as a round Bodhran drum made of dried animal skin and played with a wooden stick, or simply by a pair of animal bones that were held between two

⁵⁰ *Bingham's Missouri* and more so McDermott, *George Caleb Bingham* reproduce a number of the artist's drawings that were preserved and published by the St. Louis Merchantile Library Association. Among others, the collection contains surviving sketches for six of the eight figures that Bingham portrayed in *The Jolly Flatboatmen* of 1846 and partly reused in 1857 and 1877/78. Today, the Bingham Sketchbook is owned by the People of Missouri and the Bingham Trust. Half of the drawings are located in the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City and half in the Saint Louis Art Museum.

adjoining fingers in either one or both hands. Mount's *Dance of the Haymakers* tells us that percussive sounds could also be produced by two thin drumsticks being played against each other.

The fiddler in *The Jolly Flatboatmen at Port* (1857) shows a playing position and technique that strongly deviate from classical violin playing. Holding the bow adjacent to the frog instead of right on it was typical for country music fiddlers, and a tradition that has been preserved to this day. In fact, reels and jigs are commonly played with only a few inches of the bow. In both *The Jolly Flatboatmen* of 1857 and especially 1877/78, the musician's passion for fiddling is conveyed in a loose and more relaxed body posture. His right arm raised to lead the bow with ease, the fiddler is leaning to his left where the physical tone production takes place and to where the musician's mental focus has subsequently shifted. The brim of his hat has moved into the fiddler's face such that we are unable to see his eyes. The fingerboard of the fiddle is securely cradled in the palm of the player's left hand, a customary playing technique among fiddlers at the time.⁵¹ Fiddle tunes comprised triads or larger intervals that could easily be played in the lower positions of the neck due to the tuning of the instrument.⁵² If pitches of higher registers were

⁵¹ Mount's paintings with musical subject matters provide ample evidence for this technique. See the fiddlers in *Rustic Dance After a Sleigh Ride* (1830), *Dancing on the Barn Floor* (1831), *After Dinner* (1834), *Dance of the Haymakers* (1845), and in *Right and Left* (1850).

⁵² There are always alternative ways to finger a tune on a fiddle. If preferred, the player can change fingerings that are mostly centered around the lower positions and, depending on the piece, move certain passages to higher positions in order to accommodate tone qualities such as vibrato for a more beautiful

needed, the fourth finger of the left hand was still flexible enough to reach up to a higher position in contrast to virtuosic violin playing that requires the entire left hand to be positioned loosely and flexible such that a fast control over all positions could successfully be executed at all times. The fiddler and the pan player, then, represent convincing figures in Bingham's *Jolly Flatboatmen*. They embody the spirit of the music provided by the two instruments. The relative stiffness and frontal presentation of the dancer in the 1846 version is set apart from the natural and relaxed postures of the two musicians. As McDermott has remarked "Bingham seems to have studied their character very closely, with the eye and genius of an artist and the mind of a philosopher. He has seized the characteristic points, and gathered up their expressive features, and transferred them to his canvas with a truthfulness that strikes every observer."⁵³ The fiddler and the skillet player best convey authentic views of nineteenth-century American boatmen on western rivers and imbue the painting with documentary status.

Scholars seeking to rescue Bingham from oblivion have referred to him as the "Missouri artist."⁵⁴ His river portraits account for the fact that

tone. However, keeping up with the rhythmic drive of faster tunes for square dances, the tempo does not allow much time and does not intend for the music to be played in a virtuosic manner: "The ultimate test here is not expertise in playing elegant grace notes or fancy tunes, but in providing a solid 'danceable' musical framework for the people out front." (Marshall, "Place of Traditional Fiddling," 44.)

⁵³ McDermott, "George Caleb Bingham," 62.

⁵⁴ See Childs, "George Caleb Bingham," 595-98; Helen R. Parsons, "Missouri's Greatest Painter: George Caleb Bingham,"

Missouri was the place where Bingham created a record of the history of a region in which traditional music playing was an activity tightly interwoven into the concept of frontier life. William H. Truettner has argued that even though these paintings “may *look* like factual transcriptions of people, events, and landscapes that artists sometimes encountered on western travels, . . . they were actually designed to make viewers believe in the concepts of national expansionism and the frontier heritage of America. [original italics]”⁵⁵ It is certainly true that Bingham’s river scenes stand for the artist’s advocacy for civilization and commerce in the West. The painter has inscribed these ideas *The Jolly Flatboatmen* by depicting scenes on rivers that functioned as important political and economic connections between America’s East and West. However, we must not underestimate how Bingham through real-life observation and deep familiarization with the activities of his subject matters has come to document music and dance on the frontier as a cultural phenomenon which shaped a folklore in the nineteenth-century that was just as truly and typically American.

Kansas City Public Library Quarterly 1 (July 1901): 65-68; Shapiro, “George Caleb Bingham,” 143-50; and Simonds, “A Pioneer Painter,” 71.

⁵⁵ Truettner, “Reinterpreting Images,” 542.

Plate 1

George Caleb Bingham, *The Jolly Flatboatmen*, 1846. Oil on canvas, 38½ by 48½ inches. The Manoogian Collection, on loan to the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Image © 2004 Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, Washington.



Plate 2

William Sidney Mount, *Dance of the Haymakers*, 1845. Oil on canvas, 24½ by 29 7/8 inches. The Long Island Museum of American Art, History & Carriages, Stony Brook, New York. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Ward Melville, 1950. Photography courtesy of The Long Island Museum.

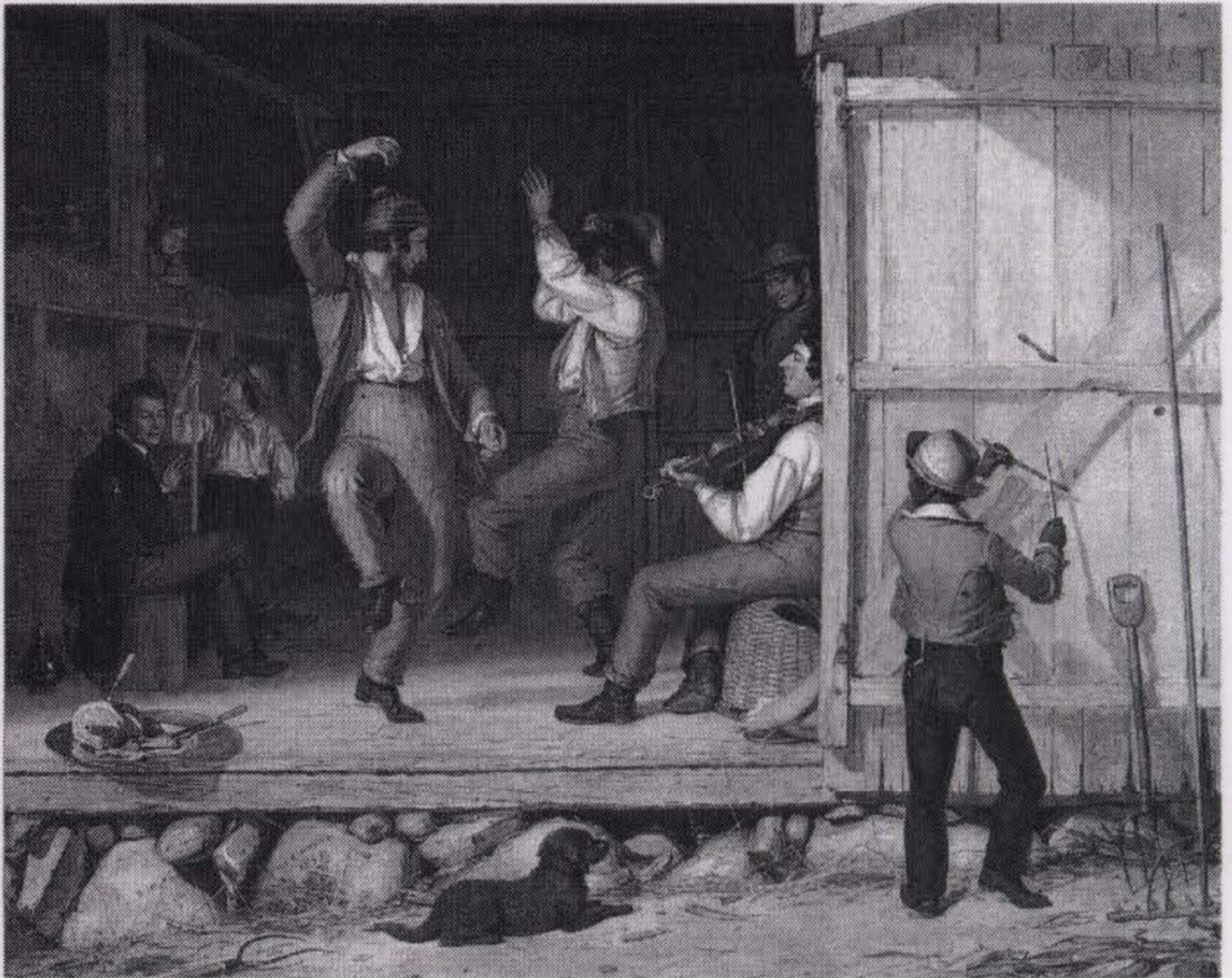


Plate 3

George Caleb Bingham, *The Jolly Flatboatmen in Port*, 1857. Oil on canvas, 47 1/16 by 69 5/8 inches. The Saint Louis Art Museum. Museum Purchase. Photography courtesy of the Saint Louis Art Museum.



Plate 4

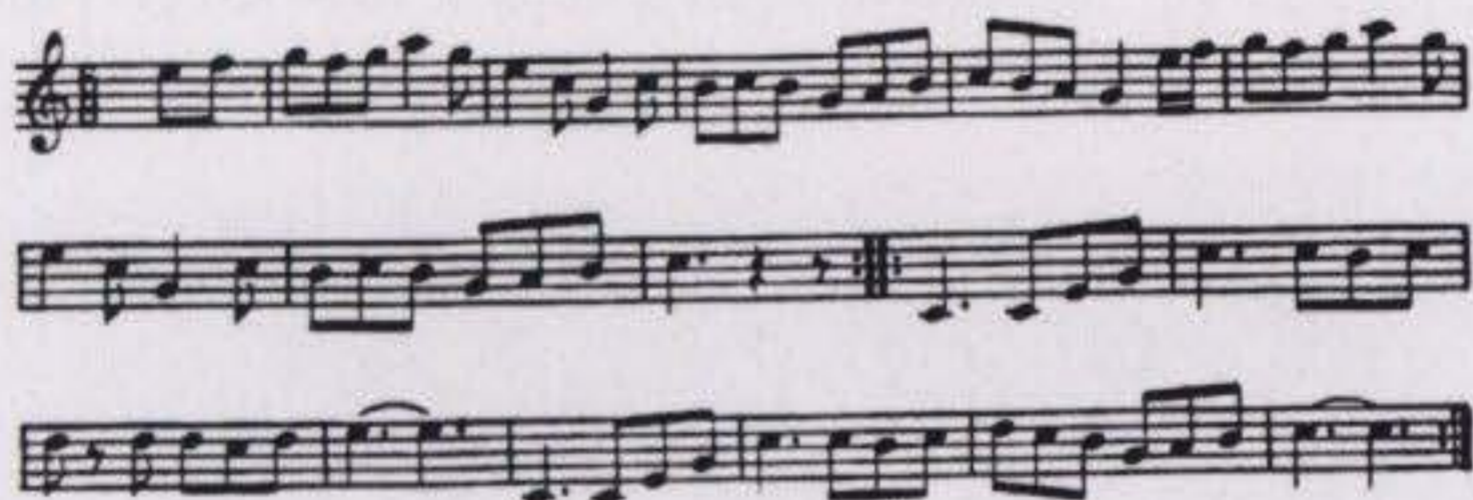
George Caleb Bingham, *The Jolly Flatboatmen*, 1877/78. Oil on canvas, 26 1/16 by 36 3/8 inches. Terra Foundation for the Arts, Daniel J. Terra Collection, Chicago, 1992.15. Photography courtesy of Terra Foundation for the Arts.



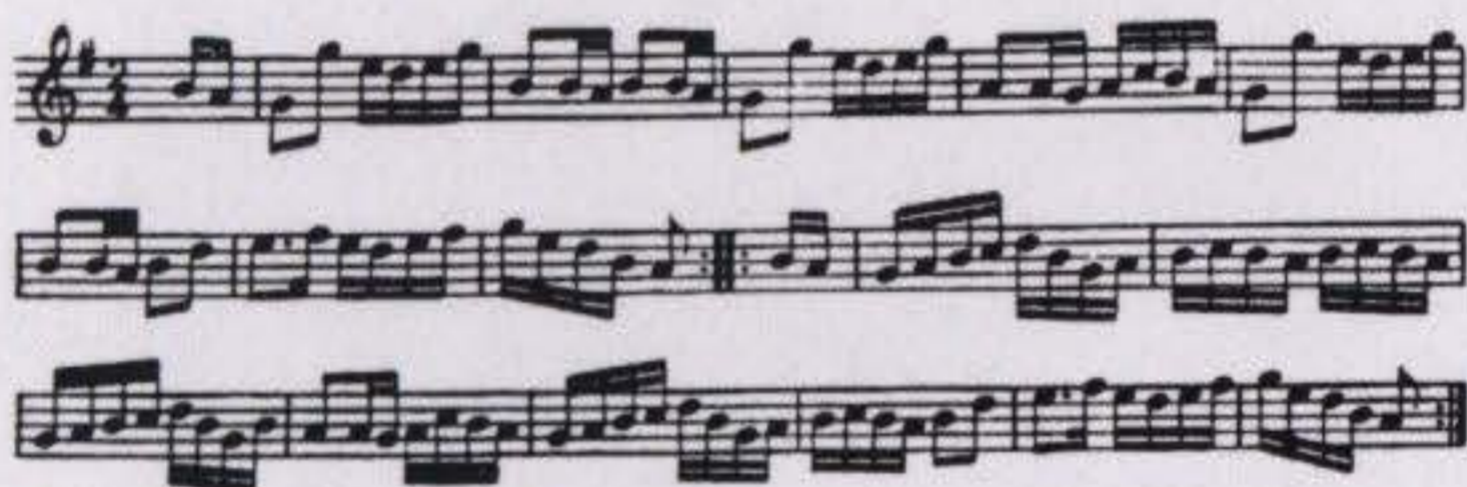
Plate 5

Across the River, McLeod's Reel, Tennessee Reel, and Sailor's Hornpipe.
 Ira W. Ford, *Traditional Music of America* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1940), pp. 49, 31, 90, and 46, respectively.

ACROSS THE RIVER



McLEOD'S REEL



TENNESSEE REEL



SAILOR'S HORNPIPE

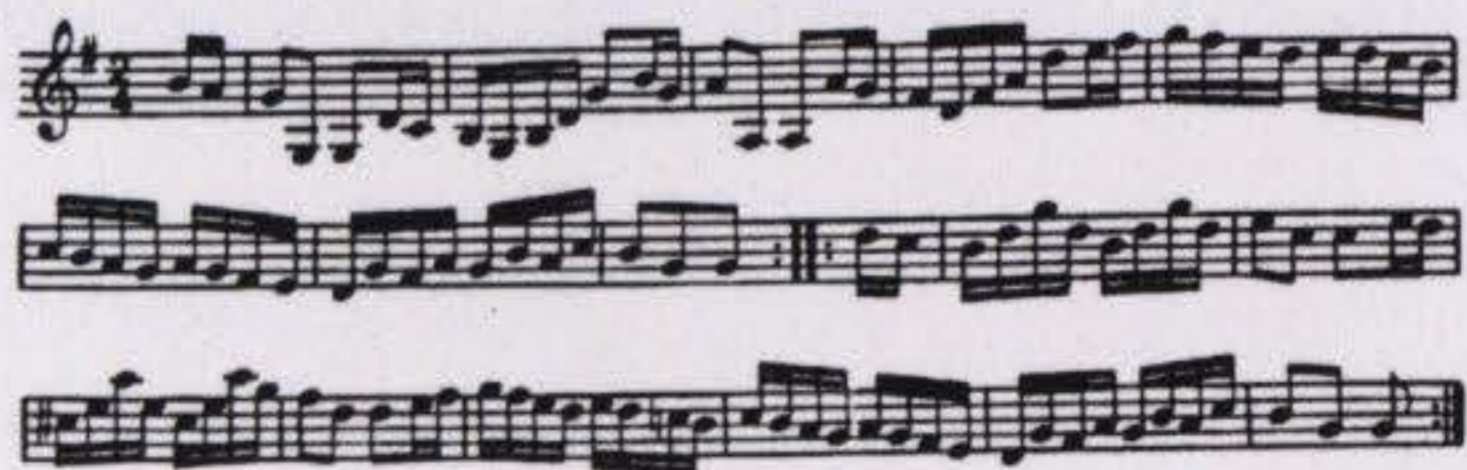


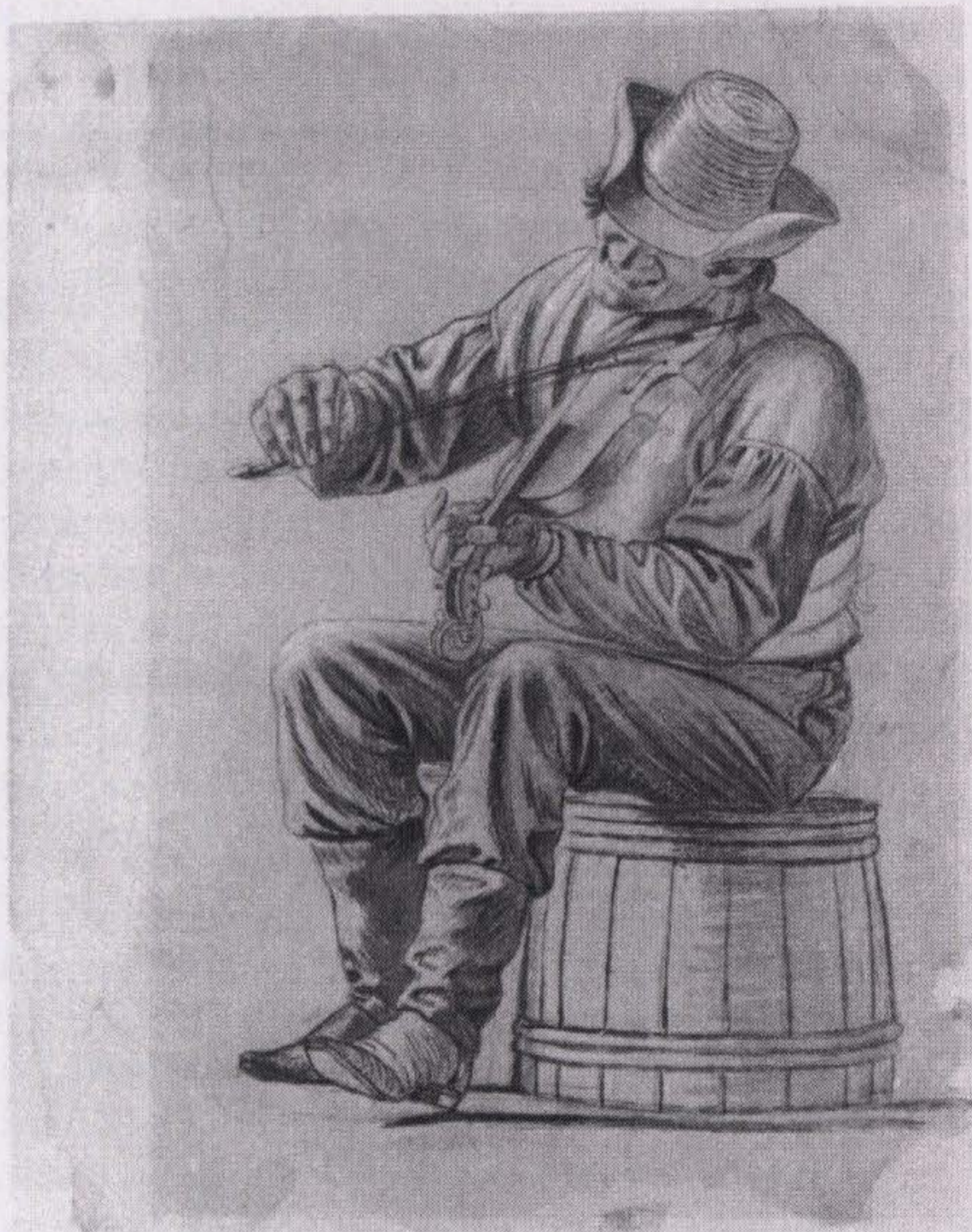
Plate 6

George Caleb Bingham, *Fiddler (nato)*. Black India Ink, Wash, Pencil on Rag Paper, 20 3/4 by 16 inches. Lent by the People of Missouri. Acquired Through the Generosity of the Louis D. Beaumont Foundation. 8-1977/3. The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri.



Plate 7

George Caleb Bingham, *Fiddler (2)*, 1857. Brush, Ink and Wash over Pencil, heightened with gouache, 15 1/8 by 11 3/4 inches. Lent by the People of Missouri. Gift of the Arts and Education Council of Greater St. Louis. Photography courtesy of the Saint Louis Art Museum, Saint Louis, Missouri.



Abstract

At first sight, the painting *The Jolly Flatboatmen* appears to depict life on the river in the American West. Upon closer reading, Bingham (1811-79) presents a record of the history of a region here in which music-making was an activity tightly woven into the concept of frontier life - a recurring subject matter which the artist observed frequently in reality. The 1846 version shows eight boatmen on a flat raft, two of which are playing music and the central figure engaged in a dance. Art historians have placed this work in historical and political contexts. While it has been valuable to interpret it as Bingham's personal expression of nationalism in the age of westward expansion, the documenting of nineteenth-century American folklore in *The Jolly Flatboatmen* deserves more attention from a musicological point of view. As the only paintings showing music and dance, the three versions of *The Jolly Flatboatmen* (1846, 1857, 1877/78) stand out in the artist's overall output. By treating this theme repeatedly, Bingham conveys that these events were not just a pastime but that they defined musical folklore in the West.

This article examines how Bingham's *Jolly Flatboatmen* creates an authentic visual account of music-making in America's frontier. Drawing upon iconographical analysis, this study explores what kind of music and dance may have been represented here and casts light on the socio-cultural context for a musical practice that contributed to the shaping of musical traditions in nineteenth-century America.

**Crosscurrents of Performance
Practice in Nineteenth-Century
Editions of Beethoven's *Piano
Sonata in E major, Opus 109***

Allison Star

Beethoven's Opus 109 piano sonata in E major is a masterful unfolding of dramatic and spiritual ideas, yet most editions of this abiding work of art limit full understanding of Beethoven's vision. Beethoven's innovative notational directions and tight organizational structure are marred in almost all modern editions by text and orthographic mistakes. These can be traced back to the first authorized edition, published by Maurice Schlesinger (Berlin, 1821), which contained, according to Beethoven, "very many serious errors".¹ A thorough study of Beethoven's autograph and sketches, as well as his errata lists and his correspondence with Schlesinger, reveals that the first edition is far from ideal. Many of Beethoven's corrections for Opus 109 have been lost, and the existing sources for this sonata are corrupt: in fact, between the two important sources for editors, the autograph and the first edition, there are over 600 variants. Problematic as the first edition was, the history of the text of this sonata during the second

¹ Beethoven's Letter to Schlesinger, July 6, 1821, quoted in William Meredith's *Sources for Beethoven's Piano Sonata in E Major, Opus 109* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1985): 137.

half of the nineteenth century becomes more complicated by the two different directions taken by nineteenth-century editors.

The corrupt first edition of Opus 109 established a pattern of editorial discord that surrounded the sonata for the rest of the century. It persists in the two traditions of nineteenth-century editions of Opus 109: critical editions prepared by scholars and pedagogical editions prepared by famous piano virtuosos.² These editions represent historical artefacts documenting two crosscurrents of performance practice. They also ultimately reflect a larger polarity in nineteenth-century Beethoven reception: scholarly editors interpreted Beethoven as a classical composer esteemed within the newly forming canon, while pedagogical editors interpreted Beethoven as an innovator, a composer of “Music for the Future.”

The corrupt Schlesinger edition served as the source of choice for many of these editions. However, these two categories of editors, the scholar and the pedagogue, faced additional challenges to interpreting Beethoven’s Opus 109 in the existence of pirated editions. The result—there are more variables in editions of Opus 109 than in any other Beethoven piano sonata. The dissonance between available scores was exacerbated by challenges of interpreting Beethoven’s innovative language. Opus 109 is a paradigm of Beethoven’s late style, and his orthographic directions match the innovative architecture and intense spirituality of Opus 109.

² Refer to Appendix A, pp. 55-59, to determine which editor belonged to which editorial camp.

These include verbal directions in Italian and German, agogic changes, sudden extreme dynamics, complex and dramatic articulation, and an increased use of the pedal. In order to emerge in a manner that is true to Beethoven's intentions, an edition must involve the evaluation of these directions on all authentic sources. But in the nineteenth century, editors often failed to identify the correct authentic sources, and rarely consulted the autograph. The autograph of Opus 109 was for many years in the private collection of publisher Tobias Haslinger, and yet was never used as an editorial source by scholars, such as H. Büssmeyer. Instead, nineteenth-century editors used a variety of early printed sources, including pirated copies.

I. Critical editions

Enormous quantities of music were printed in the nineteenth century, reflecting a boom in middle class commerce and education. Towards the second half of the century, most of society focused increasingly on science and education as the new torch of hope and welfare; yet, as society valued scientific advancements for the betterment of mankind, music was generally valued for upholding standards of the past. In attempts to concretize the musical tradition into a form of text and artefact similar to the other arts, the new scholarly field of musicology established a priority to document, catalogue and edit complete editions. By producing a complete critical edition of Beethoven's piano sonatas, a scholar was recognized within the academy, he contributed to a series of national collections, and

he verified Beethoven's status as a classical composer in the newly founded musical canon.

The ideal of critical editions produced by scholars was to present a score that most closely represented the composer's intentions. Comparative studies reveal that nineteenth-century critical editions of Opus 109 generally fall into two subgroups. First there are those that presented clear copies of Schlesinger's first edition of Opus 109, such as editions prepared by C. Kohler (Berlin, 1869) and Carl Krebs (*Beethoven Gesamtausgabe*, 1898). This type of edition was generally free of editorial interpretation, and aimed to represent scores authorized by the composer. It also duplicated the problems of the Schlesinger edition. By the 1890s, the *Königlichen Akademie der Künste* in Berlin distinguished this particular type of edition as *Urtext*.

A second sub-group of scholarly editions of Opus 109 was claimed to be based on scholarly evaluation of authentic sources, with added editorial suggestions to clarify ambiguities. The principle of critical editing was to reach a balance between the composer's intent and the editor's judgement, with editorial alterations designated separately from the original source and explained within a critical apparatus, either a Preface or through added commentary.

Critical editions largely suited the conservative style of performance practice taught at many newly founded conservatories. One of the most influential was the Leipzig Conservatory, founded by Felix Mendelssohn in 1843. Mendelssohn employed a faculty of classically trained musicians: Ignaz Moscheles (piano), Ferdinand David (strings), and

Moritz Hauptman (composition). The Leipzig Conservatory became the model for a circle of affiliated schools employing faculty who revered Beethoven as part of the musical tradition: the Berlin Conservatory (1850); the Cologne Conservatory (1852) with Ferdinand Hiller as director; the *Berlin Hochschule für Musik*, founded by violinist Joseph Joachim in 1869; and the Conservatory of Frankfurt, established in 1878 with Clara Schumann as head of the piano department.

These schools produced generations of classically trained musicians with distaste for the avant-garde and their "Music of the Future." Precise performances of Beethoven's intricately detailed scores, played at exceedingly fast tempos, became the ultimate test of a player's worth. It was the performer's duty to follow Beethoven's directions down to the finest detail to present a correct and fair interpretation. Conservatory pianists turned to scholarly-prepared critical editions as the most reliable source. However, critical analysis reveals that many of these nineteenth-century editions contain unacknowledged alterations to the score.

Editions in this category include: Moscheles (1858), Büssmeyer (1880), Damm (1890), and the edition of Carl Reinecke (1886). Most of these editions involve orthographic omissions that refine Beethoven's dramatic changes of tempo, articulation and dynamics. To further obscure Beethoven's original intentions, some editions contain errors in notation. The edition of Carl Reinecke illustrates this type of critical edition. His edition (1886), produced especially for use at the Leipzig Conservatory, lacks any critical commentary to explain his many

omissions, refinements and textual errors. This edition is suitable for the conservative style of performance practice advocated at the Leipzig Conservatory that involved a light touch, light use of pedal and metronomic precision. In the first movement of Opus 109, Reinecke's editorial objective appears to draw similarities between the two opposing themes of *Vivace* and *Adagio*. In the Andante theme of the third movement, a classical approach to pulse is illustrated through Reinecke's phrasing and style of ornamentation. His edition is still in print by Breitkopf & Härtel in Leipzig, and has been issued as an *Urtext* by Kalmus of New York since 1968.

Scholars preparing critical editions of Beethoven's Opus 109 often did not follow the editorial ideals they claimed for their editions. Instead, most of these editions reflect an editor's own societal influences and cultural biases, which effected the interpretation of Opus 109 as a classical composition by a classical composer. Silent changes without any critical commentary illustrate that many of these editions tip the balance of authority to that of the editor. As Alan Tyson has documented, many unacknowledged changes in some of these editions were incorporated into the *Neue Beethoven Ausgabe*.³ It is also important to realize that most of these nineteenth-century critical editions are still in use today: including the editions of Moscheles, Zimmerman, Büssmeyer, Pauer, Damm as well as Reinecke.

³ Alan Tyson, *The Authentic English Editions of Beethoven* (New York, 1983): 22.

II. Pedagogical/ Interpretive

A second category of nineteenth-century editions of Opus 109 was labelled pedagogical. In the nineteenth century, the term pedagogical was used interchangeably with the term interpretive to describe keyboard editions that contain added performance directions.¹

In the nineteenth-century, the editorial principle of pedagogical editing was first to understand the work's overall construction and conception, based on stylistic and historical knowledge of the composer and his place in history. Based on this information, the pedagogical editor would then interpret solutions to problems of technique and aesthetics.

Most pedagogical editions were produced by famous piano virtuosos associated with the New German School in Weimar, informally established by Franz Liszt. The New German School emphasized modern repertoire and catholic taste. Liszt advocated artists as leaders for world-improvement, and mentored the individuality of each student as a poet-musician. A range of individual approaches to Opus 109 is illustrated in the Complete Editions of Franz Liszt (1886), Hans von Bülow (1876), Sigmund Lebert (1877), Karl Klindworth (1884), Ernst Pauer (1885), Eugene d'Albert (1902) and Carl Lamond (1923). These editions transmit an oral tradition of each editor's individual style and provide insights gained from working with Liszt.

¹ I prefer the term pedagogical because of their instructive nature and because many editions were published with the term *pädagogische Ausgabe* on the title page.

Pedagogical editions have only begun to be valued by scholars, such as Georg Feder (*Musikphilologie*, 1987). Feder places value on these editions as historical artefacts that document virtuosic performance practice. Previously, scholars accused Weimar's pedagogical editions of making the score virtually unrecognizable by overriding the composer's intent in favour of imposing one's own personality on the score.

On the contrary, evaluation of nineteenth-century pedagogical editions reveals a remarkably scholarly approach to editing Beethoven. Interpretive additions are clearly indicated through any combination of apparatus that includes bold type, separate staves, numbering and lettering footnoted systems, and an explanatory Preface, Appendix or commentary on the page.

Ironically, one of the best editions of Opus 109 is by Franz Liszt, yet unfortunately this edition is out of print. Liszt began to edit the Beethoven sonatas in the 1840s, and published them individually from 1857 to 1861. His Complete Edition, published years later in 1886, illustrates a modern approach to critical editing: additions are clearly marked and discussed in an added Appendix, while the original source remains intact, and high consideration is given to facilitating technique to communicate the poetry of the sonata. Additions include an increase to the use of the pedal, slurs to outline the *grande ligne*, and alterations to bar lines, which correspond to suggestions made by modern sketch researchers William Meredith and Nicolas Marston. Liszt's edition is aimed at an advanced performer, in contrast to the

heavily narrated edition of his son-in-law, Hans von Bülow.

Bülow's edition (1897) has a continuous narrative dialogue directed at a student expected to fall into common technical traps. His goal is to direct the student through technical difficulties considered within the style of Beethoven's poetic language. His editorial suggestions appear clearly separate from the primary source, explained in both lengthy footnotes on the page and a substantial Preface. An increased use of the pedal, dramatic dynamics, agogic inflections and poetic citations, are indicated on the score like medieval gloss around what Lisztians called "The New Testament". Bülow states he has consulted several sources and has corrected the erroneous notation and voicing of the "new Leipzig edition" (*Reinecke*). Bülow stresses that every note in Beethoven is gold, and should therefore be studied with "painstaking accuracy" as a means to understand Beethoven's message.

Bülow's editorial approach to Opus 109 may compare to the previously mentioned editorial examples of Reinecke. In the opening of the first movement, Bülow indicates numerous detailed directions on the score along with editorial commentary culminating in an editorial objective that appears to celebrate the differences between the opening *Vivace* and *Adagio* themes, which correlates with Bülow's orchestral approach to performance practice. Bülow's editorial stress placed emphasis on long phrases, cantabile expression, dramatic dynamics and orchestral voicing.

The value of pedagogical editions as historical documents of reception history and performance

practice has just begun to be recognized by scholars. Unfortunately, most nineteenth-century pedagogical editions are out of print, except for those virtuosos who went to America, including Bülow and d'Albert.

Editing Beethoven's music can never be fully objective. Authoritative decisions must be made at every stage of the editorial process: whether editing from Beethoven's autographs or first editions, problems of detail exist, not all of which can be answered definitively. Donald Tovey stated that where Beethoven's art lacks tidiness, an editor will find amongst Beethoven's discrepancies "innumerable opportunities of learning... what would never have entered into his own editorial mind."⁵ Critical editions should offer a score as true to Beethoven's original as possible. Changes should be explained either in a separate appendix, a preface, or through commentary on the page. Most nineteenth-century critical editions of Beethoven's piano sonatas that are still in print require a critical response to the silent interpretive changes. On the other hand, most nineteenth-century pedagogical editions are out of print, though they present a range of often valuable interpretive insights.

Nineteenth-century scholars and virtuosos fulfilled an editorial ideal in two different ways, each influenced by their own cultural biases that reveal divided attitudes towards how Beethoven fit into society – as part of tradition, or as an innovator. Both types of editions are equally valuable as historical documents of culture, society and reception history.

⁵ Donald Tovey, *The Complete Beethoven Piano Sonatas, Preface* (London, 1931) 5.

The two schools of editing have influenced modern editing: editors today combine research and evaluation of primary documents with a consideration of performance practice and knowledge of the composer's style and his place in history. Yet, while both types of editions of Opus 109 have validity, it is the pedagogical editions that aim to metaphorically express the ephemeral nature and aesthetics of Beethoven's style using commentary addressed to a specific audience. This editorial goal also underlies that of modern musicology: to support a form of culturally sensitive critical analysis aimed at making music accessible to both listener and performer who seek to reach an interpretive vision in the spirit and character of Beethoven.

Appendix A

Nineteenth-Century Editions of Beethoven's *Piano Sonata, Opus 109*

Authentic Edition (Beethoven's authorized first edition)

- Adolph Schlesinger, publisher, Berlin, 1821. Inaugural edition accompanied by a list of errata. Dedicated to Maximiliana von Brentano (daughter of the supposed Immortal Beloved). Equal rights of publication sold to Artaria & Co., and Steiner & Co. (Vienna).

Pirated Editions (no editor)

- Johann Cappi (Berlin, 1822): exact copy of Schlesinger's edition (Berlin, 1821).
- Moritz Schlesinger (Paris, 1822): used corrupted printing plates of his father.
- Sigmund Lebert (Berlin, 1877): original source unknown.

Facsimile editions

- Erwin Ratz (Vienna, 1908). Facsimile of Beethoven's autograph with Preface by Ratz. Reprinted with Preface by O. Jonas (New York: Robert Owen Lehman Foundation, 1965).
- William Kinderman (Indiana: University of Indiana Press, 2003). *Artaria 195: Beethoven's sketchbook for the Missa Solennis and Opus 109*.

Critical Editions (editorial revisions)**Subgroup A: *Urtext* scores** (little editorial intervention)

- C. Köhler (Berlin, 1869): Original source unknown; changes strokes to staccatos and adds fingering. No critical commentary. Reprint 1953, New York: G. Schirmer.
- Carl Krebs (Berlin, 1898). Used authorized sonatas from the *Beethoven Gesamtausgabe*, collected in the 1860s. Krebs was one of the first to consult Beethoven's autographs for many sonatas, but used Schlesinger's edition for Opus 109. Considered the best edition of Opus 109 until Heinrich Schenker consulted the autograph for his edition (Vienna, 1913). Krebs's edition was distinguished as *Urtext*, a term officially recognized by the *Königlichen Akademie der Künste* (Berlin) in the 1890s.
- Arthur Forte (Boston: Arthur Schmidt, 1917). *Urtext*. In print.
- Carl Martiessen (Frankfurt: C.F. Peters, 1948). *Urtext* based on corrupted inaugural edition.
- B.A. Wallner (Munich: G. Henle Verlag, 1952). *Urtext*. In print.
- Leo Weiner (Budapest: Editio Musica, 1959). *Urtext*. In print.

Subgroup B: “Critical” Editions (editorial interpretation)

- Muzio Clementi (London: Clementi & Co., 1826): Claimed to present authorized editions, yet reinterprets orthographic directions. His source for Opus 109 was a pirated edition, although he gained authorization from Beethoven for his editions of both the Opus 110 and Opus 111 sonatas.
- Ignaz Moscheles (London: Cramer & Co., 1839). Reprinted by Hallberger in 1858. Highly altered score to accommodate early pianos. Asserted he used printing plates of Carl Czerny’s edition (Vienna: Haslinger, 1828). His 1858 edition uses the same faster tempos suggested in Czerny’s revised edition of 1850. Did not take opportunity to use Beethoven’s autograph. No critical commentary. Dedicates the Complete Edition to Maxe Brentano, not just Opus 109. Many orthographic alterations were accepted into *Neue Beethoven Ausgabe*.
- Henry Litolff (Braunschweig, 1860): scholarly approach; original source unknown. Alters orthographic directions including bar lines, pedal directions and dynamics; omits German directions. No critical commentary. Praised by Leipzig Conservatory member Moscheles and Paris Conservatory scholars Zimmerman and Fétis. Out of print.
- Agnes Zimmerman (London and New York: Novello, Ewer & Co., 1873). Original source unknown. Principle of editing honestly discussed in Preface, while specific changes unclear and reflective of Liszt’s interpretation. Still in print.
- H. Büssmeyer (Berlin, Paris, 1880): jointly published by Carl Haslinger (Berlin) and Moritz Schlesinger (Paris). Original source is probably inaugural edition; turned down opportunity to use

autograph. Alters many orthographic directions without critical commentary. Still in print.

- Ernst Pauer (London, 1885). Scholarly approach with brief Preface, original source unknown. Probably for use at Royal College of Music, London. Beautifully bound. Basis for edition by G. Buonamici (London: Augener, 1903).
- Gustav Damm (Leipzig, 1890): pseudonym for scholar Theodor Steingraber. Many orthographic refinements and omissions. No critical commentary. Out of print.
- Carl Reinecke (Leipzig & Brussels, 1886). Still in print by Breitkopf & Härtel. Original source unknown. Many incorrect notes and orthographic directions. No critical commentary. Prepared especially for use at the Leipzig Conservatory. Reprinted as an *Urtext* by Kalmus (New York) since 1968.

Pedagogical Editions (instructive and interpretive editing)

- Franz Liszt (Vienna, 1886): Interpretive suggestions kept clearly separate from the score; alterations thoroughly indicated through critical apparatus. Many insights match suggestions of modern sketch researchers. Fluent approach to technical problems. Aimed at advanced performer. Edition organizes sonatas in order of difficulty, with Opus 109 the most difficult, followed by Opus 106. One of the best editions unfortunately out of print.
- Hans von Bülow (Stuttgart, 1872, 1880; New York, 1897, reprint 1903). First edition co-edited with Sigmund Lebert to Op. 53, with added fingerings suggested by Immanuel Faisst, Ignaz Lachner and Franz Liszt. Schirmer reprint (1897) includes

translations and an added Preface by Theodor Baker. Preface discusses elements of Beethoven's style, and suggests sonatas in order of difficulty with Opus 106 as the most difficult, followed by Opus 109. Highly instructive and constant over-the-shoulder narrative demands an intelligent conception of "the great Master" Beethoven's message as a means to solve technical problems. Suggestions clearly separate in Preface and footnotes on the page. Dedicated to Liszt. Still in print.

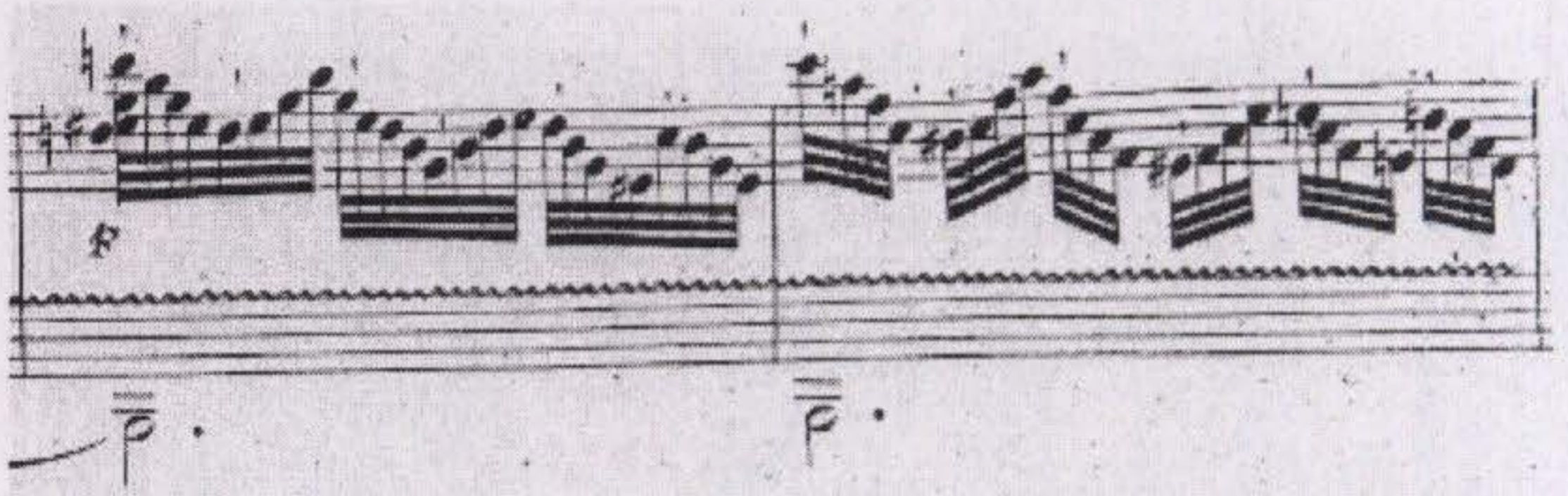
- Sigmund Lebert (Stuttgart, 1877). Scholarly approach with Preface and footnotes; practical fingerings for students. Out of print.
- Karl Klindworth (Berlin, London and New York, 1884). Instruction appears separate in smaller print above the score. Borrows many directions from Bülow. Very difficult fingering. Out of print.
- Eugene d'Albert (Leipzig, 1902; New York, 1915). Many directions from Bülow's edition; poetic inspiration states Beethoven's Opus 109 is spoken "in words, not in pictures...full of consolation and peace". Preface and critical commentary explain general orthographic alterations. Still in print by C. Fischer of New York.
- Carl Lamond (Leipzig, 1923). Scholarly style of Klindworth; yet relies on the edition of Liszt for orthographic directions. Preface and critical commentary explain the highly emotional and dramatic approach.

Appendix B

Beethoven Piano Sonata Op. 109, opening: the Schlesinger edition (shown here) is the only early edition that writes *sempre legato* after the tempo marking. Note the short phrase marks, mm. 12-17. In contrast, Liszt's edition has long phrase marks spanning whole bars.

The image displays a page of musical notation for the opening of Beethoven's Piano Sonata Op. 109. The score is arranged in two systems, each consisting of a grand staff with a treble clef on top and a bass clef on the bottom. The first system is labeled 'SONATE' and begins with the tempo marking 'Vivace ma non troppo. sempre legato.' and the instruction 'p dolce'. The second system includes 'Adagio espressivo.' and 'p Ped.'. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'cresc', 'dimin.', 'p', and 'cresc'. The Schlesinger edition is noted for its use of short phrase marks, while Liszt's edition is noted for long phrase marks spanning whole bars. The score concludes with the tempo marking 'Tempo 19' and the instruction 'dimin.'.

Variation 6, mm. 16-17: the Schlesinger edition of 1821 (shown here) uses strokes at this point while other editions, such as the Reinecke of 1886 use dots.



Abstract

Due to the complex publication history of Beethoven's Opus 109, the first printed edition of the piano sonata published by Maurice Schlesinger (Berlin, 1821) contained, according to the composer, "very many serious errors." The controversial first edition of Opus 109 established a pattern of editorial discord that surrounded this sonata for the rest of the century.

This article examines specific nineteenth-century editions of Beethoven's piano sonata Opus 109 as prepared by two types of musicians: the piano virtuoso/pedagogue and the theorist/analyst. Critical analyses of these two editorial types will draw on specific editions from both schools by Franz Liszt (Wolfenbüttel, 1857-61), Hans von Bülow (Stuttgart, 1872), Carl Reinecke (Leipzig, 1886) and Gustav Damm (Leipzig, 1890) in order to illustrate the marked divide in the reception of Beethoven's innovative ideas. These editions represent two

often-conflicting interpretations of *Werktraue*, and thus become repositories for crosscurrents of nineteenth-century performance practice. Moreover, these interpretative traditions reflect a larger polarity in nineteenth-century Beethoven reception: his dual identity as a classical composer esteemed within the newly forming canon, and as an innovator with a view to the future of the piano. Ultimately, a thorough study of Beethoven's autograph, errata, letters and sketches reveals that there is not one "ideal" edition that matches Beethoven's intended vision.

Re-interpreting the Farewell Story of Mahler's *Ninth Symphony*: Dialectical Synthesis in the Modern Age

Daniel Sheridan

Mahler's *Ninth Symphony* has for so long been interpreted as being about the approach of death, specifically Mahler's "farewell to the world and to life,"¹ that the interpretation has practically become axiomatic. Alban Berg's oft-quoted letter to his wife about the first movement reads "it is the expression of an unheard-of love for this earth, the longing to live in peace upon her, Nature, still to enjoy her utterly, even to her deepest depths—before Death comes. For it comes irresistibly. This entire movement is based upon a presentiment of death."² Dr. Moriz Scheyer, a reporter who attended the posthumous premiere in 1912, considered the symphony a "resigned farewell of an unsteady person who finally went to his rest."³ Willem Mengelberg went so far as to create a program for the symphony after studying the score and sketches; he referred to

¹ Vera Micznik, "The Farewell Story of Mahler's Ninth Symphony," *19th Century Music* XX/2 (Fall 1996): 144.

² Stephen E. Hefling, "The *Ninth Symphony*," in *The Mahler Companion*, ed. Donald Mitchell and Andrew Nicholson (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 467.

³ Constantin Floros, *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies*, trans. Vernon and Jutta Wicker (Portland: Amadeus Press, 1993), 272.

the symphony as a “farewell from all whom he loved...from the world...and from his art, his life, his music.”⁴ In the years since the work’s debut, it seems as if there is not a single piece of writing that does not mention the death-haunted nature of the work.

Nonetheless, there are flaws in these interpretations: for example, those who would interpret the symphony as a farewell often forget that before his death Mahler had completed a draft score of a Tenth Symphony. Also, Mahler’s state of mind was not consistently sombre throughout 1909, when much of the symphony was composed. In a letter to Bruno Walter at the beginning of the year Mahler wrote:

There is so much to write about myself that I cannot even make an attempt to begin. My life is now so infinitely full of experiences...I can hardly talk about it. How should I attempt to describe such a tremendous change! I see everything in a new light—feel so much alive and find the ‘habit of existence’ sweeter than ever.⁵

During that summer, when primary composition took place, Mahler was quoted as saying “I get such pleasure from the world! How beautiful the world is!”⁶ These are not the words of a man anticipating death and resigning himself to his fate. Yet the so-called “farewell story” persists. One of the reasons is the knowledge that Mahler made annotations to the draft score such as “O days of

⁴ Floros, *Gustav Mahler*, 273.

⁵ Micznik, “The Farewell Story,” 155.

⁶ Micznik, “The Farewell Story,” 155.

youth! Vanished! O Love! Scattered!" and "O beauty! Love! Farewell! Farewell! World! Farewell!" Mahler did not die until 1911, but the above passages seem to support Stephen Hefling's assertion that Mahler was "not obsessed by death in 1909", but he was "nevertheless aware of its relentless approach."⁷

In the following pages, I intend to re-interpret this "farewell story;" instead of reading this story as a program, I will situate the story within 20th Century culture, a culture where factories and assembly lines are numerous and music seems to be more of a commodity than ever before (although it is doubtful there was ever a time when music was not a commodity). In a society where sales of CD's are closely monitored, where standards of the classical repertoire are often used to sell hamburgers, where music is used as "background noise" in supermarkets to create a pleasant shopping atmosphere, where does this symphony fit? How does modern culture receive and interpret the work? The symphony creates binary oppositions out of such musical qualities as major/minor, diatonic/chromatic. In addition, the symphony sets descriptors of the music's character, such as simple/complex, sublime/vulgar, in opposition to each other. I will read these oppositions as dialectical and the symphony as an attempt at synthesis of these opposing ideas. The "farewell story" may refer not to Mahler himself, but to the notion of "art for art's sake." The symphony makes a final attempt at dialectical synthesis, to create a work of art that appeals to proletariat and bourgeoisie alike, before the attempt is revealed as

⁷ Hefling, "The *Ninth Symphony*," 468.

impossible. The notion of tonal music as an autonomous work with intrinsic value is laid to rest, with the role of commodity being accepted. To aid my interpretation, I will draw mainly on the writings of Theodor Adorno and his ideas about the commodity character of music and autonomy. My reading of the score will be fairly brief and will not involve a bar-by-bar analysis as I feel that applying meaning to every minute detail runs the risk of essentialism (although I am probably leaving myself open to criticisms of ignoring too many pertinent details). I wish to make it clear that this is by no means a definitive reading of the work, as there are numerous possible interpretations that are equally viable. Nor is my intention to provide some sort of rebuke to popular music, arguing that such music's only value is to the free market, to be consumed with minimal thought, or to suggest that acceptance of music's commodity character is inherently negative. My intention is to theorize how a work of European "art" music, traditionally held up as an objective standard for Western music, remains viable in the modern, industrial age.

Artistic Expression, Commodity Culture, and Dialectical Synthesis

In the 21st Century, the capability of disseminating music is at an all-time high; compact-discs, radio, DVD, and the internet allow almost instantaneous access to virtually every imaginable type of music. Factories mass produce CD's and DVD's, radio stations perpetually play the most popular songs and large arenas and stadiums are routinely filled to capacity for concerts. Clearly, music is a very

lucrative business, but how does this affect the production of music itself? According to Walter Benjamin:

Technical reproduction can put the copy of the original into situations which would be out of reach for the original itself. Above all, it enables the original to meet the beholder halfway, be it in the form of a photograph or a phonograph record. The cathedral leaves its locale to be perceived in the studio of a lover of art; the choral production, performed in an auditorium or in the open air, resounds in the drawing room.⁸

The "beholder" has easier access to a facsimile of the work, but how does the reproduction affect the original work? Benjamin writes that "one might subsume the eliminated element in the term 'aura' and go on to say: that which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art."⁹ The work's aura is its sign of authenticity, its uniqueness; in essence, "the technique of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition. By making many reproductions it substitutes a plurality of copies for a unique existence."¹⁰ Reproduction divides the work between the original source, with its aura of uniqueness and authenticity, and the copy, which

⁸ Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1936), in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1969), 222-223.

⁹ Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," 223.

¹⁰ Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," 233.

serves the express purpose of being a use object for the consumer. In terms of music, one would think of recordings: the composition is performed and recorded. However, one does not purchase a copy of the original composition, but a reproduction of the recording. Benjamin's thinking posits the original work as not devalued by reproduction; it is only the reproduction that assumes the role of commodity. I feel that there is a flaw in his reasoning: if, for example, The Rolling Stones write songs with the express purpose of recording them and releasing them on mass-produced CD's, are the original compositions commodities as well? Similarly, if a classical musician composes an opera so that it may be staged in a theatre, with admission charged, does the opera still have an "aura"? Is the work of art itself a commodity when it is created for the purpose of exhibition?

Theodor Adorno, one of Benjamin's colleagues in the Frankfurt School,¹¹ thought along similar lines as my questions above, although his writings were of a rather dystopian character. His Marxist position was that the commoditization of music was the result of a self-fulfilling prophecy of bourgeois culture; the bourgeois elite produces work that is easily consumable by the masses which results in greater profit and social standing.¹² To use a cliché,

¹¹ An introduction to the Frankfurt School may be found in Richard Leppert's introduction to *Essays on Music*, ed. Richard Leppert, trans. Susan H. Gillespie (Berkeley: University of California, 2002), 5-6, 18-32.

¹² Adorno puts forth this notion (in more elaborate language) in the section "Standardization" of "On Popular Music" (1941), in *Essays on Music*, 441-444.

“we give the people what they want and the people want what we give them.” According to Adorno, “music no longer serves direct needs nor benefits from direct application, but rather adjusts to the pressures of the exchange of abstract units.”¹³ One is reminded of the “boy-band” craze of recent years. Following the success of the Backstreet Boys were a seeming deluge of similar groups like N-Sync and 98°. Similarly, in the late ‘60’s, the success of heavy-rock groups, particularly Led Zeppelin, resulted in such groups as Bad Company and Black Sabbath being signed to record labels and enjoying great success. In these instances, the record labels observed what types of music were selling and provided more examples of such music.¹⁴ The record labels likely did not see this music for its potential value to listeners, but for its market value.¹⁵ Even the music-buying public seems to acknowledge the commodity character of music: we purchase magazines like *Billboard* and *Entertainment Weekly* that contain weekly charts of the top selling recordings. We watch programs on music television stations that count down the most popular videos. In short, we seem to place a great deal of importance on the success of musicians.

The examples above would seem to single out popular music as a commodity. Indeed, much of

¹³ Theodor Adorno, “On the Social Situation in Music” (1932), in *Essays on Music*, 391.

¹⁴ This is, of course, an assumption, but that such similar groups closely followed the success of the original group leads me to this assumption.

¹⁵ I cannot subscribe to Adorno’s view that groups like N-Sync and Bad Company would not serve any direct needs. Artists do not enjoy the level of success of these groups without being of great value to their audience.

Adorno's criticism of commodity culture focused on popular music (which would have been Jazz in his time). Adorno believed that standardized musical form (of which he saw numerous examples of in Jazz) was one of the causes of music's reification as a consumer product. "Popular modern music is obliged to attempt to fulfill two different requirements. The popular work must, on the one hand, be familiar to its audience and, on the other hand, have the appearance of distinctiveness."¹⁶ In other words, popular songs may sound distinctive in that they have an original melody, but other aspects like form and harmony are regimented. Yet the various characteristics of commodity that were applied to popular music have equally viable applications to the art music repertoire. Royal patronage was a significant factor in the production of music in the 18th Century. For example, Haydn spent a great deal of his career in the employ of Prince Esterházy, producing works to entertain his court; music was not regarded as a mode of individual expression, but as entertainment. Franz Liszt, a composer and pianist firmly embedded in the "art for art's sake" aesthetic of the 19th Century, showcased his bravura performances at recitals in front of adoring throngs.¹⁷ Liszt's spectacular performances of technically difficult music would have been the draw for the audience, paying for an opulent show.

¹⁶ Pauline Johnson, *Marxist Aesthetics*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), 90.

¹⁷ See Richard Leppert, "Cultural Contradiction, Idolatry, and the Piano Virtuoso," in *Piano Roles: Three Hundred Years of Life with the Piano* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 252-281.

Liszt's virtuosity commodified the music he performed.

In modern times, works in the repertoire have received numerous recordings, with periodicals like *Gramophone* rating the quality of new recordings. Books like *The Penguin Guide to Compact Discs* contain reviews of recordings of years past, with the authors determining "essential" albums. As Adorno writes, "a great share of supposedly 'serious' music adjusts itself to the demands of the market in the same manner as the composers of light music."¹⁸ Although Adorno puts the word "serious" in quotation marks, indicating his belief that truly serious music does not "adjust to the demands of the market," I would argue that for modern audiences of art music, the works are just as standardized as any pop song.

Traditionally, concerts consist almost exclusively of tonal music from the 17th to the 19th Century. Modern works tend to be in the neo-Romantic idiom, with performances of Modernist works being comparatively rare (in traditional concert halls). To cite an example from personal experience, about two years ago, I attended a concert of a violist (whose name, regrettably, I do not remember) who played such standards as a Bach Cello Suite and Schubert's "Arpeggione" Sonata. Also performed was an atonal piece from the latter half of the 20th Century. The violist felt the need to say a few words about this piece before she performed it, as if she needed to justify its inclusion on the program. Indeed, the review in the newspaper the following week basically asked why she bothered including

¹⁸ Adorno, "Social Situation", 395.

music that no one would understand when plenty of music by composers like Schubert was available. In other words, tonality is what the audience pays for and tonality is what the audience expects to get.

To 21st Century ears, the structures of the works performed are also standardized; when we hear a Bach vocal aria, do we not expect a *Da Capo* repeat of the A section? When we hear the first movement of a Mozart piano concerto, do we not expect to hear two expositions, one with the orchestra and one with the soloist? When we hear a Mahler symphony, do we not expect to hear elaborate contrapuntal writing in a high Romantic idiom? Do we not expect a dominant chord to resolve to the tonic? The audience for Western art music may be smaller than the audience for popular music, but there is an audience and that audience's tastes are catered to.

Art music as a commodity or art music as the creation of the autonomous individual: these are two seemingly antonymous viewpoints. Is there any possibility of dialectical synthesis? Can this synthesis take place within the music? According to Adorno, the supposed autonomy of music is the basis for the attempt to achieve synthesis of individual and society. As Rose Subotnik writes:

Great art since the maturity of the bourgeois era...has been crafted by artists directly concerned not with society...but with the immanent problems of art. Nevertheless, Adorno simultaneously maintains that the more rigorous the exclusiveness with which the artists devote themselves to such immanent problems, the more certain is the resulting art to embody, within its own

structure, an artistic counterpoint to the structure of external human affairs...¹⁹

Subotnik elaborates with:

The fundamental elements of artistic form (by which in musical terms Adorno appears to mean both the physical aspects of sound configurations and the principals of organization that govern them) are ultimately derived not from the artist's own imagination but, unconsciously, from the formal categories and models of the historical world outside of the art work.²⁰

The music's social relevance is conveyed through the dialectical relationship between the subject (individual) and form (society). Adorno argued that Beethoven's second-period style articulated the possibility of dialectical synthesis through the treatment of the subject. "Development is the process through which the musical subject demonstrates its self-generated powers as it 'goes out,' in dialectical terms, from itself into the generalizing world of Other or object."²¹ The expanded development is a signifier of individuality until "the emphatic reassertion of self" that begins the recapitulation.²² However, by Beethoven's third period, Adorno believes that reconcilability of

¹⁹ Rose Rosengard Subotnik, "Adorno's Diagnosis of Beethoven's Late Style: Early Symptom of a Fatal Condition", in *Developing Variations: Style and Ideology in Western Music* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 19.

²⁰ Subotnik, "Adorno's Diagnosis of Beethoven..." 19.

²¹ Subotnik, "Adorno's Diagnosis of Beethoven..." 20.

²² Subotnik, "Adorno's Diagnosis of Beethoven..." 21.

autonomy and heteronomy has been revealed to be impossible. Thus, music can no longer present the illusion of synthesis; the subject must acknowledge its lack of self-determination and disappear into the form. In other words, “to avoid violating its own autonomy, the musical subject had to give up its own place in music by yielding to—or, in effect, taking on—the formal characteristics of objective reality.”²³ The subject’s inability to reconcile its autonomy with the heteronomy of society was demonstrated through the increased contrapuntal activity of Beethoven’s late music.²⁴ The homophony of the second period style, which emphasized the subject’s individuality, gave way to polyphony and placed the subject within a collective of voices. The subject lost its unique identity as it was but one voice among many. If we assume that all tonal music is created for the purpose of exhibition, we can infer that the possibility of autonomous music is illusory and thus the music allows itself to be subsumed within objective reality, in this case commodity culture.

The Archaic *Ninth Symphony*

Returning to Mahler’s *Ninth Symphony*, I posit that as a work originally composed at the outset of the 20th Century, shortly before the First World War and the industrial expansion that resulted, it may be interpreted by a modern audience as a farewell to tonal music as an autonomous art. Two years after Mahler completed this symphony, Schoenberg composed the atonal work *Pierrot Lunaire*, notable for

²³ Subotnik, “Adorno’s Diagnosis of Beethoven...” 26.

²⁴ Subotnik, “Adorno’s Diagnosis of Beethoven...” 27.

its use of *Spredstimme*. More experiments in atonality followed leading to the development of the serial method in 1923 and even more experimental ideas in the following years. If these ideas were the new art music, then tonality would appear to be an archaic form. Composing in the tonal system would practically be a regression. I would argue that in Mahler's *Ninth Symphony*, synthesis between tonality's status as art and as commodity is attempted. The attempts consistently fail and tonality is laid to rest at the symphony's end.

First Movement: *Andante Commodo*

The form of the *Andante Commodo* "has been variously described as a sonata form, as a sonata combined with rondo, and as a sonata combined with rondo, variation *and* strophic song!"²⁵ "The unusual interplay of materials in the movement tends to confute traditional formal categorization"²⁶ as Stephen Hefling writes. The differing interpretations are the result of the constant presence of the key of D: the first theme is set in D major while the second is in D minor. Additionally, throughout the movement's "development," the key of D returns constantly, making it difficult to determine where the "recapitulation" begins. The numerous articulations of the tonic give the movement its rondo character. The unusual structure seems to be an amalgamation of tonal forms as if the symphony were acting as a

²⁵ Christopher Orlo Lewis, *Tonal Coherence in Mahler's Ninth Symphony*, (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1984), 13.

²⁶ Hefling, "The *Ninth Symphony*," 470.

summation of tonality in order to bid it farewell.²⁷ Also, by not adhering to traditional formal principles, the symphony makes its first attempt at autonomy. The two themes, in parallel keys, form a dialectic whose “opposition articulates a permanent state of affairs that has to be constantly reapproached.” This opposition is “presented without mediation or the possibility of synthesis.”²⁸ Indeed, throughout the movement, neither theme is presented in the other mode.

The D major theme begins on the anacrusis to measure 7 in the second violins.

Figure 1: First movement mm. 6-13 (second violin)



The theme is completely diatonic and “for a symphonic work of 1909 it is also a fairly old-

²⁷ I do not say that Mahler is doing this as it ascribes agency over this reading to Mahler. It is not possible that Mahler intended the work to be interpreted this way. For one thing, as I have mentioned, he made significant progress on a Tenth Symphony before his death. Also, he could not have foreseen the development of the serial method as the next phase in art music. Nor am I aware of Mahler ever considering his music a commodity.

²⁸ Julian Johnson, “The Status of the Subject in Mahler’s Ninth Symphony,” *19th Century Music* XVIII/2 (Fall 1994): 109.

fashioned theme, not far removed from nineteenth-century 'popular' music in its simple shape and phrasing."²⁹ The theme's simplicity is such that anyone witnessing a performance could sing along. The instrumental texture is thin enough that the theme is not submerged. This is music for the mass audience.

At measure 27, the mode shifts to D minor, with the second theme entering in the first violin at measure 29 (see Figure 2). This theme is characterized by chromaticism and rhythmic irregularity with agogic accents occurring on metrically weak beats. The counterpoint accompanying the theme is more complex with more instruments present. This theme is not as accessible to the audience as the previous was; singing this melody would require more skill, more musical training. The two themes oppose simplicity against complexity, mass culture against elite culture, self against society. As the movement unfolds, the orchestra expands with the counterpoint becoming more complex, at times seeming completely heterogeneous (for example, measures 178-198). At these moments, thematic material cannot be clearly discerned. As the D major theme re-appears in the development, it becomes more rhythmically and contrapuntally active. For example, at measure 144 the theme is expressed in eighth notes and passed between the second and first violins. The D major subject recognizes that there cannot be a synthesis with its D minor opposite and thus retreats into

²⁹Hefling, "The *Ninth Symphony*," 472-473.

Figure 2: First movement mm. 27-31

The image displays a musical score for five instruments: Violin I (Vl. I), Violin II (Vl. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (cello) (Vlc. (cel)), and Keyboard (Cb.). The score is written in a common time signature (C) and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings. The Violin I part is marked with *Griffbrett.* and *pp*. The Violin II part is marked with *Griffbrett.* and *f*. The Viola part is marked with *pp*. The Violoncello part is marked with *p/espess.* and *p/espess.*. The Keyboard part is marked with *f* and *arcu*. The score is divided into five systems, each containing five staves. The first system shows the beginning of the passage with various dynamics and articulations. The second system continues the melodic lines with slurs and accents. The third system features more complex rhythmic patterns and dynamics. The fourth system shows a transition in dynamics and articulation. The fifth system concludes the passage with a final dynamic marking of *f* and *arcu*.

objective reality and joins society's multiplicity of voices in counterpoint. What was once individual has become part of a mass culture. As the movement ends, a solo violin enters for a final time in D major while the accompanying texture fades to nothingness. D major loses all sense of individuality as the movement closes with only a D in the flute and a D harmonic in the cello. While this occurs, an E in the oboe is held over for one beat, creating a 9-8 suspension that is not resolved; with three more movements, there are still more chances to attempt synthesis.

Second Movement: *Ländler*

The *Ländler* movement begins with the bassoon and violas doubling a staccato 16th note scale before the clarinets enter with the *Ländler* tune.

Figure 2: Second movement mm. 1-6

Im Tempo eines gemächlichen Ländlers. (Fernerhin mit Tempo *L.* bezeichnet)
Etwas tänzerisch und sehr derb.

1. Klarinette in B.
2. 3. Klarinette in B.
4. Bassklarinette in B.
1. 2. Fagott.

Mahler characterized this opening as “somewhat clumsy and very coarse.”³⁰ According to Hefling, “it owes much of its clumsiness to a relentless tonic-dominant and diatonic emphasis on C Major...this

³⁰ Hefling, “The *Ninth Symphony*,” 480.

music proceeds by repetition and seemingly random phrase groupings...driven chiefly by the droning triple time of the peasant dance."³¹ The affect of the opening is comical; the following measures are almost completely diatonic and homophonic with a nearly constant 8th note motion. The extreme simplicity makes the music seem amateurish, as if it were music made by the proletariat. Entering at measure 91 is a waltz in E Major. The peasant Ländler is opposed by the aristocratic waltz. The shift to the mediant key is completely unexpected as the previous measures consisted almost entirely of tonic and dominant in C. This is the first sign that something is seriously amiss in this section. The music remains diatonic and homophonic for a brief period, as if a synthesis of high and low dance forms were being attempted. However, tonal stability becomes tenuous until the first waltz moves into a second one in E-Flat Major at measure 149. Here, "the music becomes truly grotesque: trombones, tuba, and contrabass introduce a banal, bloated dance tune with continuous oom-pah accompaniment by the full orchestra."³² Whereas in the previous movement the simple D major subject retreated into the decadent chromaticism and rhythmic complexity of the rest of the movement, the aristocratic waltz acknowledges the failed synthesis by becoming increasingly vulgarized. The dance is distorted beyond recognition until the Ländler returns in F major at measure 218. Diatonicism and rhythmic simplicity return until the process begins again at measure 261 with the return of the first waltz in D

³¹ Hefling, "The *Ninth Symphony*," 480.

³² Hefling, "The *Ninth Symphony*," 481.

major. Adorno writes: "through its irreconcilable and obtrusive negativity, the movement, despite the traditional dance forms, is miraculously ahead of its time."³³ The music is "merely a collage picture made from deformed clichés: it pillories reified, petrified forms."³⁴ Mengleberg's program described the movement as a "Dance of the Dead"³⁵; given the grotesque distortions of dance forms, it is an understandable label. With its unstable harmony and use of semi-tone key relationships, one could say that it is tonality that is engaged in the dance.

Third Movement: *Rondo-Burleske*

The *Rondo-Burleske* is "Mahler's compositional tour de force of negativity...it is the most syntactically untraditional, contrapuntally complex, and riotously sardonic movement in all Mahler's oeuvre."³⁶ The movement almost completely emancipates dissonance from the opening measures (see Figure 3). The piece is not unequivocally in A minor until the downbeat of the seventh complete measure. On beat two of the previous measure is an augmented-sixth in the key of D. The resolution to A thwarts standard tonal progressions. From there, Mahler builds a movement that constantly threatens to break down into chaos. The tempo is very fast with numerous examples of polyrhythm and woodwinds playing in or near their

³³Theodor Adorno, *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 161.

³⁴ Adorno, *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy*, 161-162.

³⁵ Floros, *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies*, 273.

³⁶Hefling, "The *Ninth Symphony*," 483.

Figure 3: Third movement mm. 1-8

Allegro assai. Sehr trotzig.

1. 3.
Horn in F.
2. 4.

1.
Trompete in F.
2. 3.

1. 2. Posaune.
3. Posaune.

Allegro assai. Sehr trotzig.

1. Violine.
2. Violine.
Viola.
Violoncell.
Kontrabaß.

highest register. Both tonality and the orchestra are taxed to their absolute limits. With the dissolution of tonality fast approaching, tonality protests its fate with its most dissonant music possible. The music attempts to deny its commodity character by attempting to baffle the audience. Subotnik writes that "for art to have any chance of resisting neutralization, in Adorno's terms, it must alienate society by making itself difficult for society."³⁷ At measure 346, the movement finally settles down with string tremolos before the flutes enter with a turn motive that becomes an integral part of the next movement which is often interpreted as "Mahler's soul sings its farewell!"³⁸ Tonality's eventual passing is mourned, but tonality is not ready to be buried yet: numerous times, the turn motive is interrupted by shrill woodwinds before the orchestra returns with its barrage. The movement ends with the entire orchestra striking an A minor chord at a loud dynamic, closing the movement with anger and bitterness.

Fourth Movement: *Adagio*

The *Adagio* that closes the symphony opens dramatically with an octave leap followed by the turn figure introduced in the previous movement.

³⁷ Subotnik, "Adorno's Diagnosis of Beethoven..." 32.

³⁸ Floros, *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies*, 274.

Figure 4: Fourth movement mm. 1-5

The image shows a musical score for the first five measures of the fourth movement. The score is written for five parts: 1. Violine, 2. Violine, Viola, Violone I (get), and Kontrabaß. The tempo and performance instructions are: "Sehr langsam und noch zurückhaltend." (Very slow and still restrained), "a tempo (Molto adagio.)" (at tempo, Very slow), "größer Ton" (larger sound), and "stets großer Ton" (always larger sound). The score includes various performance markings such as "f lang gezogen" (forte, long drawn), "G-Seite" (G string), "dim." (diminuendo), and "p molto espress." (piano, very expressive). The first two measures are marked with "V" and "v" above the notes, indicating bowing or breath marks. The score is in 4/4 time and begins with a key signature of one flat (B-flat major).

The opening two measures are tonally ambiguous; the octave leap initially suggests A-flat major while the next measure implies G-flat. It is not until the third measure that the key of D-flat Major is firmly established. The use of this key in the finale is rich in hermeneutic implication: while Mahler had been known to conclude his symphonies in a key one semi-tone higher than where he began (this technique is called progressive tonality), Mahler ends this symphony a semi-tone *lower* than his original key. This is another example of progressive tonality, but perhaps it could also be considered *regressive* tonality: whereas a semi-tone higher may imply moving forward, a semi-tone lower implies moving back. The possible key symbolism where “D major, key of life, fulfillment, drops to D-flat major, key of solemnity,”³⁹ could be a determining factor in terms of key choice.

³⁹ Floros, *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies*, 276.

Certainly D-flat, with no open strings will contain a dark, brooding sound.

As in the first movement, the finale's thematic material is set in parallel keys: the A theme (the movement is a five part rondo form) is set in D-flat major (the subject) while the B theme is set in C-sharp minor (the object). The movement opposes the two areas through orchestration: the A sections consist of contrapuntal string textures with the turn motive being utilized. The B sections make use of the winds and solo violin, built primarily on an ascending scale in the bass and low winds. Although neither section is of light character, the B material is more bleak; the orchestration is sparser, the harmony more diatonic. The B section suggests resignation while the A section, with its chromaticism and greater rhythmic activity, suggests struggle. Eventually, the D-flat "subject" resigns to its fate; having failed to reassert its identity in the face of the C-sharp minor object, the subject is restated from measures 156 to the end in increasing rhythmic augmentation, while the orchestral texture gradually fades. The score at 159 carries the marking *essterbend* (dying), while an annotation in the draft score reads "Farewell world!"⁴⁰ Tonality, subjectivity and "art for art's sake" have been laid to rest while the modern audience fights back tears and gives the conductor a standing ovation.

Conclusion: Art Music's Relevance and the Social Situation of Music

I have not undertaken this study to devalue Mahler's *Ninth Symphony* as a mere "use" object nor

⁴⁰Hefling, "The *Ninth Symphony*," 489.

do I wish to imply that commoditization of music is inherently bad. Rather, I see the commodity character of music as a simple reality. My goal has been to provide a reading that shows how art music remains relevant in the modern age, where popular music is most widely disseminated, while art music is often dismissed as an archaic, esoteric form. I have attempted to show that a piece of orchestral music from the early 20th Century may be interpreted as a metaphor for the social situation of all musics. My hope is a culture where all “musical activity, production and consumption...unconditionally recognizes its commodity character.”⁴¹ Dialectical synthesis between individual and society may not be possible, but if the Farewell Story of Mahler’s *Ninth Symphony* helps break down distinctions between “high” and “low” culture, then perhaps it is a farewell that need not be mourned.

Abstract

Mahler’s *Ninth Symphony* has most commonly been interpreted as a “farewell story”; specifically Mahler’s farewell to the world and resignation to death. How would this story remain viable to a modern audience, long after Mahler’s death? How would a modern audience receive this work? Modern society has increasingly commodified music, particularly the tonal repertoire, exploiting the profitability of music. This challenges the 19th Century aesthetic of music as an autonomous art. In Mahler’s *Ninth Symphony*, there are numerous binary oppositions such as simple/complex and sublime/vulgar. I read these oppositions as a dialectic between tonal music

⁴¹Adorno, “Social Situation,” 395.

as autonomous "art for art's sake" and as a commodity for public consumption. This dialectic is presented in each movement of the symphony, with an attempt at synthesis between autonomous ("high") music and commodified ("low") music. Each attempt fails, with one side of the dialectic overtaking the other. The symphony ends in sombre fashion; dialectical synthesis has shown to be impossible and tonal music acknowledges its lack of autonomy. Thus, the "farewell story" of Mahler's *Ninth Symphony* may be read by modern culture as a farewell to the notion of tonal music as an autonomous art. Tonality, be it art or popular music, has accepted its commodity character. This problematizes traditional distinctions between "high" and "low" culture. Therefore, Mahler's *Ninth Symphony* articulates a farewell that need not be mourned.

Biographies

Annett Richter holds the equivalent of an M.A. in American Studies from Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Germany. She received an M.A. in Musicology and an M.M. in Guitar Performance from the University of Minnesota and is currently working on her Ph.D. in Musicology at the same institution. She has presented papers at the Midwest Chapter meeting of the American Musicological Society and at the Hawaii International Conference on Arts and Humanities. Her article "An Intimate View of Queen Elizabeth I as a Musician: New Sources in Context" appeared in the *Hawaii International Conference Proceedings*.

Allison Star studied piano at the University of British Columbia with Mary Tickner and Jane Coop, obtaining B. Mus. and B. Ed. degrees, as well as a B.C. Teachers Certificate. She pursued graduate work in piano performance/accompaniment with Jean Barr and Brooks Smith at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles and completed her master's degree with Ted Blair at the Dominican University of San Rafael, San Francisco. In 2002, Ms. Star earned her M.A. in Musicology at the University of Victoria, British Columbia, where she currently is pursuing a Ph.D. in Musicology. Her dissertation explores Beethoven Reception in the 1830s France.

Daniel Sheridan completed a B. Mus. degree at McMaster University in Hamilton Ontario. He is currently enrolled in McMaster's M.A. in Music Criticism program. Among his current projects, Mr. Sheridan is studying the role of the body in conducting and how cultural and social values, relating to the body, shape the conductor's movements and gestures.

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