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**“A Relic of an Age Still Capable of a Romantic Outlook”:  
Musical Biography and The Master Musicians Series, 1899-1906**

CHRISTOPHER WILEY  
Royal Holloway, University of London



Musical biography proliferated in England in the hagiographical climate of the later nineteenth century. The exemplary nature of mature Victorian biography and the hero-worship it correspondingly promoted found much resonance in the field of music in the emerging aesthetic of the idolised Great Composer: the creative genius who ruled the concert hall and (in exceptional circumstances) the opera house, whose pieces continued to be popularly performed even after their own day, while those of more minor individuals lay essentially forgotten to history.<sup>1</sup> This domination of the field by an elite handful of exalted figures and their works led to the construction, and subsequent perpetuation, of canons of wider historical and ideological (rather than merely practical) significance. Encompassing the broad period from J. S. Bach to Mozart to Beethoven to Brahms, and comprising the masterworks of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries now familiarly recognised as “classical”, musical canon remained a largely uncontested phenomenon, at least in terms of the academy at large, prior to the recent critical scholarship of Joseph Kerman, William Weber, and others.<sup>2</sup> Its core constituency was, however, by no means established even by the end of the nineteenth century, and the claims of certain composers and their works to the available cultural ground continued to be fervently debated through the time-honoured method of promotion through the written word, in such forms as music criticism and, of course, biography.

Nineteenth-century England also witnessed the elevation of the genre of biography to institutional status, exemplified in the field of music by such publications as, in their initial incarnations, George Grove's edited Dictionary of Music and Musicians (1879-90)<sup>3</sup> and the 'Master Musicians' series (1899-1906).<sup>4</sup> As we shall see in the course of this article, the latter project represents an early and significant attempt to establish, through a set of full-length composer monographs, a closed musical canon of lasting historical importance. Proceeding via a case study of the Master Musicians series, I examine the methods through which late Victorian writers of musical biography attempted to canonise their subjects. Comparative analysis of the constituent volumes of this metabiography reveals striking correspondences in terms of the biographical and musical paradigms to which its authors consistently subscribed in order to construct the composers as relevant to the interpretative communities for which the texts were produced. Some of these paradigms were relatively new when the biographies were written, and were quite specific to England in the late nineteenth (and early twentieth) century. Others were longer-standing and Continental in origin – though adapted in the present context to Victorian needs, and therefore reflective of their particular values – for at the time, the musical scene was very much dominated by Germany. As such, this investigation also serves the wider purpose of demonstrating how musical biography (and, in certain respects, biography in general) functions, in terms of the stage that the genre had reached by the late Victorian Period. My exposition of the paradigms at work therein acts as a kind of scholarly forensic examination of the assumptions of its practitioners, since the study of biography can reveal as much about its writers and readers as about the subjects themselves. Such an enquiry necessarily hinges not so much on the factual information offered by the authors as on the precise ways in which those details are expressed. I have

therefore endeavoured to provide, through quotation, a representative cross-section of the rich and extensive evidence in support of my reading.<sup>5</sup>

While responding to the general dearth of critical research examining composer biography *per se* and its documentary significance to music historiography, this preliminary article also seeks to situate the form within the wider context of life-writing in theory and practice.<sup>6</sup> To this end, the ensuing analysis places specific emphasis on three interrelated thematic issues of especial importance to musical biography as compared with that of other disciplines (drawing principally on the example of literature, with which field music has a strong tradition of having been associated in terms both of historiography and analysis). Firstly, musical canon essentially excluded women as composers, and biography became complicit in their historical effacement by denying them the possibility of artistic creation, while simultaneously linking them inextricably to such activities undertaken by their associated male geniuses.<sup>7</sup> Secondly, music's great classical canons offered biography no heroes of English origin, owing to the absence of native composers of significance between the late seventeenth-century Baroque school headed by Purcell, and the emergence of the so-called English Musical Renaissance in the later nineteenth century. Finally, the specialist nature of the discipline of music necessarily influenced the scope for discussion within biography of the subjects' works and achievements, particularly in relation to their life, in terms meaningful to the general readers for whom the genre is typically intended.

## **I – The Master Musicians Series: Background**

The Master Musicians series began as a set of twelve biographies edited by Frederick J. Crowest and published between 1899 and 1906 by J. M. Dent & Co. of London and simultaneously by E. P. Dutton & Co. of New York, the long-standing relationship between the two businesses having been established for the purposes of distributing Dent's volumes in America.<sup>8</sup> The editor, who wrote the first book of the set, Beethoven (1899), possessed a background in musical biography evident from such publications as The Great Tone-Poets and his monographs on Cherubini and Verdi.<sup>9</sup> Two other contributors also had notable previous experience in the genre: Stephen Stratton, who prior to his volume Mendelssohn (1901) had co-authored the celebrated dictionary British Musical Biography with James D. Brown;<sup>10</sup> and Cuthbert Hadden, the writer of Haydn (1902) and Chopin (1903), who had previously published monographs on Handel and Mendelssohn in addition to biographical texts outside the field of music.<sup>11</sup> Many of the Master Musicians authors were music critics for provincial and London papers and contributors to musical journals and dictionaries. Notably, Edwin Evans produced Tchaikovsky (1906) towards the start of an influential career as a leading writer of criticism and programme notes; and Eustace Breakspeare, a student of Stratton, wrote many articles for major music periodicals in addition to his volume Mozart (1902). Most of the biographers were performers (notably on the organ) and minor composers, in which latter category Edmondstone Duncan, who contributed Schubert (1905), deserves special mention for his activity and output. Charles Lidgley, the pianist and composer, was little known as a writer except for his early offering to the series, Wagner (1899); Lawrence Erb, author of Brahms (1905), was a music educator of significance in America, and the only Master Musicians biographer not active primarily in the British Isles. Finally, two of the contributors were noteworthy scholars of music: Abdy Williams, author of Bach (1900) and Handel (1901), held a musical post at Bradfield College from 1895 and

published on subjects including rhythm and ancient Greek music;<sup>12</sup> and Annie Patterson, who wrote Schumann (1903), researched and promoted Irish folk music for many years and lectured towards the end of her life at University College, Cork.<sup>13</sup>

The primary publishing house for the Master Musicians series was founded by its eponymous director, Joseph Malaby Dent, in 1888 and was best known at the time for producing popular editions of the classics at affordable prices (notably the ‘Everyman’s Library’ series) as well as biographies.<sup>14</sup> Judging from authorial comments in its volumes and the reviews they received in periodicals including Nation, Athenaeum and The Musical Times, the original Master Musicians series similarly endeavoured to provide a set of inexpensive, accessible books offering the reader a concise yet comprehensive outline of the life, character and works of their subjects.<sup>15</sup> As such, its significance lay primarily in filling a gap in the English-language literary market and, unlike Grove’s Dictionary, it did not purport to present substantial original research or hitherto-unknown information. Indeed, its authors relied considerably on secondary literature previously published both in its country of origin and elsewhere – notably, certain monumental German-, French- and English-language biographies now regarded as classics – and they readily acknowledged this indebtedness within their volumes. Moreover, and eminently in keeping with the spirit of other Dent publications, the series was pitched to appeal to a wide, general readership.<sup>16</sup> Crowest set the agenda in writing of his intention to produce a monograph ‘which, while it would appeal to the average musician, would provide the large public of ordinary readers with a complete and proper view’ of his subject.<sup>17</sup> The frequency of accompanying musical quotations (a relatively expensive venture for publishers at the time) in some of the biographies indicates that a degree of background knowledge in music would have enhanced one’s understanding of the texts. But in

practice, the series' readership was sufficiently broad to justify the frequent reprints of its volumes in succeeding years, not to mention its revival after nearly three decades, under the editorship of Eric Blom. Nine of the twelve biographies were revised by the editor – or, in the case of Evans's Tchaikovsky, by the original author – and republished in 1934-5, together with three (those on Beethoven, Wagner, and Mozart) written anew, the latter by Blom himself.<sup>18</sup>

The original series is especially interesting to the present study for the fact that the subjects featured in its monographs did not simply accord with those repertoires then favoured by the public and receiving performances. In this respect, it differed fundamentally from other sets of composer biographies of the time, including its most celebrated English-language precursor, the 'Great Musicians' series (1881-90).<sup>19</sup> While it is impossible definitively to determine the considerations governing the selection of the Master Musicians canon and the development it received in its volumes,<sup>20</sup> the fact that certain authors had previously produced musical biographies of different subjects, whereas others were assigned to texts that did not intersect with their areas of specialism, alone demonstrates that the choice was not influenced by the availability of suitable writers. Yet several composers then the height of fashion in England, notably Rossini and Verdi, are absent from the set. In fact, its authors repeatedly repudiated music such as theirs, preferring the potentially-alienating pursuit of the highest artistic ideals to the (more lucrative) mere conformance to the popular taste of the day.<sup>21</sup> Conversely, the inclusion of certain monographs indicates that the series actively sought to present subjects of wider historical significance. Haydn's popularity in England was fading by the 1900s, Tchaikovsky's music was only just beginning to become fashionable,<sup>22</sup> and the



works of Brahms remained, as Erb claimed, ‘a matter of the chosen few, the inner circle of the musically elect who can comprehend his message.’<sup>23</sup>

The same trend may be discerned in the biographers’ critical treatment of their subjects’ works, which were discussed primarily in a separate section to that of their life.<sup>24</sup> The massive monuments of art, which were in many cases those most likely to be known to the public through performance, were inevitably explored, for the genre of biography privileges such large-scale forms. But in addition, within the quite limited space allotted to them, the majority of the authors also attempted a comprehensive sweep of their subjects’ output. Two key factors affecting this coverage were the availability of more specific literature to which interested parties could instead be referred,<sup>25</sup> and the likelihood of certain very familiar works needing only brief discussion in comparison to more neglected music. The second point is crucial in determining the difference between a set of biographies that attempted to establish a true canon, and one that merely intersected with, and thus reinforced, current repertoires (in which case, the fashionable works would be the ones written about at length or exclusively). Internal evidence would suggest that the latter was emphatically not the case for the Master Musicians series. Evans devoted around two-thirds of his book on Tchaikovsky to introducing the composer’s works – many of which were still unknown in England at the time of its first publication – and even suggested that, given the dearth of concert performances, his orchestral music could be experienced by interested readers in arrangements for piano solo or duet.<sup>26</sup> And some of the musical quotations were actually removed from the revised version of the Schubert monograph, as these works had become sufficiently familiar to the reading public, in the thirty years since its first appearance, that the excerpts had become unnecessary.<sup>27</sup>

## II – Paradigms of Musical Biography

The original Master Musicians series is therefore unique for its time in that it represents a homogeneous group of composer biographies, unified under a single general editor and associated collectively for nearly thirty years. Owing to its conception as a cohesive, closed set, it had the potential to make far greater impact than could a single biography in terms of establishing a musical canon, especially given that its various volumes were both pitched to a broad, general readership and comparatively long-lived.<sup>28</sup> As the proposed canon was one of lasting historical value, above and beyond the fashionable musical repertoires of more immediate concern, the appearance of the set just years after the deaths of Tchaikovsky and Brahms is surely no coincidence. And since its various monographs drew considerably on previous biographies and other literature for their material, the series may reasonably be said to exemplify late nineteenth-century musical biography insofar as this genre was significant to canonicity, as my wider research in the field has largely confirmed. We may now proceed to an exploration of the paradigms contained therein, by which such canonisation was attempted.

### Genius in Ancestry, Precocity in Childhood

The Master Musicians volumes typically opened with an exploration of composers' ancestry and childhood, incorporating a glimpse of their life to come. This practice served to justify from the outset the subjects' historical importance and their rights to biographical attention, as well as to pique the reader's curiosity and to flesh out a section of the book that may, in comparison with its later content, have been sparse on fact or not

of particular interest.<sup>29</sup> Crowest's biographers seemed especially concerned to 'account for the musical genius of the composer', to use the words of one author, demonstrating its traces in their subjects' forebears and thereby implying a rich inherited musical legacy that further legitimised their claims to greatness.<sup>30</sup> No doubt this practice was partly due to the famous example of J. S. Bach, who was popularly constructed as the grandest member of a line of around sixty professional musicians spanning several centuries, and to Mozart's talented father Leopold, the celebrated violinist and composer.<sup>31</sup> Stratton instead pointed to Mendelssohn's inheritance from his grandfather, the philosopher Moses Mendelssohn – not of the musical variety, but nevertheless a genius.<sup>32</sup> Great Composers born of less exceptional families were discussed with some unease. Patterson, for example, suggested that the encouragement and admiration Schumann received from his father represented a form of passive musicality on his part, even though he was not 'musical in the usually accepted meaning of the term'.<sup>33</sup> This view resonates with Stratton's assessment of Mendelssohn's father who, though situated generationally between two geniuses, was not himself so remarkable: '[f]or a non-musician', wrote the biographer, his 'insight into the art was wonderful.'<sup>34</sup>

That such speculations on the origins of musical genius considered the male line exclusively immediately raises the question of the role accorded to women in the biographies, especially given that Stratton chose to emphasise the tenuous (and non-musical) contributions of Mendelssohn's father and grandfather while marginalising the very side of the family which played the most important part in the composer's childhood years. His mother Lea was responsible for giving him and his exceptionally gifted sister Fanny – who, as we shall presently see, was herself to possess a significant role in her brother's later biography – their earliest musical tuition. Likewise, whereas Williams

explored both Bach's male ancestors and his sons in his lengthy exposition of Bach's family, he simply dismissed the composer's daughters as having shown 'a less positive musical talent' in comparison;<sup>35</sup> and Hadden's assessment of Haydn's forebears similarly privileged his exemplary 'male line' of 'hard-working, honest tradesmen'.<sup>36</sup> As far as the biographies were concerned, female lineage was central to the establishment of composers' genius for entirely different reasons. Hadden alluded to 'the popular idea that genius is derived from the mother';<sup>37</sup> Evans pointed towards the 'mother's side' of the family in the absence of any apparent heredity in the case of Tchaikovsky.<sup>38</sup> (Ironically, though, when a mother did play a demonstrably influential role in the formative development of a subject's abilities, as with Mendelssohn, due recognition was not given.) The authors evidently subscribed to the traditional conception of females as capable only of functioning as a vessel for the inspiration of genius in men, rather than of concrete acts of artistic creation. Genius and musicality were viewed as merely latent in female ancestry but manifest, in some form or other, in male lineages, thereby instituting at the outset of many of the biographies a model that proves crucial, as will be apparent from its subsequent development in the texts.

In discussions of their childhood, composers were typically portrayed as precocious both in performance and composition, which tendency surely followed the celebrated example of Mozart, whose musical talents were so great at that stage of his life that he was literally unbelievable.<sup>39</sup> Breakspere's contention that Mozart had turned to the writing of music owing to his prowess in performance resonates with similar remarks made by other biographers, whose claims that their young subjects were unusually gifted – sometimes, as in the case of Haydn, with direct comparison to the legendary Wunderkind – were more tenuous.<sup>40</sup> Other protagonists were instead presented as precocious in terms of

general musicality, with especial tension surrounding Beethoven, whose slow start as a composer was renowned, and therefore unavoidable. Crowest described him as ‘comparatively slow in unfolding... although he was one of the prodigious piano players of the day, the grandeur and sublimity of his poetic mind had yet to break forth’.<sup>41</sup> Stories of the subjects’ childhood were thus used to marshal notions of destiny and to demonstrate the inevitability of their pursuit of a career in music (even if not specifically as a composer), thereby indicating that the child is to become the adult. This idea necessitated a certain amount of justification in cases such as Chopin and Schumann, the ultimate direction of whose life was not so immediately apparent.<sup>42</sup>

### Industrious Study as the Path to Genius

The Master Musicians biographers considered that talent was latent or nurtured in childhood, and that their subjects’ genius was acquired later in life through nothing other than indefatigable hard work and dedication to their cause – a concept eminently consistent with the Protestant work ethic (which, as we shall later see, was fundamental to the volumes). This paradigm may also account for much of the tension discerned above as to the earliest manifestations of subjects’ later genius, in ancestry and childhood: the former testified to composers’ pedigree and signalled the ultimate origins of their gifts, and the latter demonstrated that these gifts were not wasted even in their formative years, and that their lives were invested with a higher purpose from the outset. In view of certain undeniable examples amongst the Great Composers, it was clearly important to establish these seeds of genius; but it was also problematic in that ideas of genius as merely inherited or inherent run contrary to the work ethic, since no effort is involved in its realisation. The Master Musicians subjects were therefore also constructed as having

engaged from their earliest years in relentless efforts to further themselves and to improve their abilities. Indeed, suggestions were made, in two cases, that they were anxious to commence study even before the time had come for them to be educated. Erb observed that Brahms ‘played scales long before he knew the notes’, and Evans even implied that Tchaikovsky was drawn to music precisely because of his studiousness, writing that ‘as the work expected of him consequently did not absorb all the time at his disposal, he soon occupied himself with the piano.’<sup>43</sup>

The sustained, methodical work commenced by Great Composers in their childhood was charted as having continued, unremittingly, throughout their lives, as the only means (in the eyes of the biographers) by which their genius could be developed and brought to fruition. Williams speculated that, given the ‘prodigious rapidity’ with which Handel wrote music, the composer must have devoted the majority of his time to ‘the most strenuous labour’; Crowest wrote of Beethoven that ‘[a] more industrious, painstaking, earnest student never breathed – one who, instead of hazarding short cuts to perfection... laboured away at his studies as if heaven and earth depended upon his industry.’<sup>44</sup> Such relentless hard work testified to composers’ unwavering dedication to their perceived vocation as it necessitated self-discipline and strict daily routines involving many of their waking hours, notably in those cases where time was divided between these studies and other commendable activities, such as instrumental practice. Suggestions that they worked for the majority of the day and, in fact, the night as well are frequent in the *Master Musicians* volumes, as are indications that they rose early and made specific use of the morning, perhaps to demonstrate the importance of maximising daylight hours. Self-discipline was also significant to the improvement of biographical subjects in terms of the furthering of their musical skills, which involved an enormous amount of work

undertaken alone. This point engendered a certain emphasis on self-teaching, particularly as composers were portrayed as having remained students unceasingly throughout their lives. The associated implication was that autodidactic approaches should be regarded above formal instruction, especially insofar as the subjects under discussion, who were themselves of the highest standard, may not always have been able to find teachers of sufficient merit.

The Great Composers were therefore upheld as exemplary for according with the righteous notion of using one's talents to the full, in that they were presented as never, at any time in their lives, having wasted the gifts that had been bestowed upon them. Indeed, Crowest cited the constant study undertaken by Beethoven in order to bring his abilities to fruition as the reason, insofar as one could be identified, for his greatness:

There is no inexplicable secret in the vast scope and character of Beethoven's muse, nor is it difficult to account for its remarkable ascendancy over the minds of men. Beethoven was a great artist and a tremendous worker... That he was a born genius with [a] wonderful wealth of ideas and creative faculties is admitted, but these would not have made him the greatest of the great composers save for other gifts which he exercised and developed to the full.<sup>45</sup>

These figures were therefore appropriated to indicate the heights to which ordinary people could rise if they were dedicated and industrious in pursuit of their aims, and to demonstrate how they should ideally lead their lives. (More commonplace explanations for subjects' productivity, such as the need for money and the demands of employment,

were inevitably sidelined.) Hadden, for example, indicated why Haydn might have succeeded where others did not in writing that he ‘toiled upwards in the night, while less industrious mortals snored’.<sup>46</sup> It seemed especially important for the biographers to establish their protagonists’ unremitting labour in the case of such crowning achievements as Handel’s Messiah, Mozart’s The Marriage of Figaro, Beethoven’s Missa Solemnis and Wagner’s project to build the Bayreuth Festival Theatre (Festspielhaus).<sup>47</sup> The industry of the Great Composers relative to the lay person also meant that the former could undertake many activities simultaneously – composition, performance, teaching, and so forth – and achieve much in the course of their lives, without affecting either the quality of their work or the meticulousness with which it was carried out.

### Strength through Suffering

Success did not come easily to the Great Composers, despite their phenomenal industry, for they were seen to have encountered many obstacles, throughout their lives, which stood in the way of their accomplishments. According to the Master Musicians biographers, a great life was characterised precisely by such obstructions, and by the exemplary strength its subject exhibited in facing, and ultimately resolving, them. Crowest and Lidgey both claimed that the only respite from such turmoil came with death, thereby demonstrating the extent to which their subjects’ lives were perceived to have been troubled, as well as their commitment to their vocation; the latter wrote that ‘[Wagner’s] whole existence was one long struggle; even the day of his death was clouded by disillusion.’<sup>48</sup> Following the above analysis, it should come as no surprise that composers met such barriers from childhood, thus establishing early in the biography the ability to transcend boundaries that lesser subjects might have found insurmountable.



Such hindrances included familial opposition to their early study of music (Bach, Handel) or to their vocation (Schubert, Schumann), and education being either generally unavailable (Tchaikovsky) or restricted (Brahms). One common theme was the poverty that composers experienced (and overcame) both during their formative years and throughout their life, which demonstrated how, in exemplary fashion, they sacrificed quality of life in pursuit of their art. Such situations typically required them to undertake jobs well below their calling (as with Bach, Wagner and the young Brahms), in order to make possible their ultimate achievements by sustaining them while they engaged in the indefatigable study that offered the only path to true genius. Moreover, the trope of the subject's rise to fame despite humble beginnings, and continued poverty, served to divorce any perceived connection between artistic success, and social status or wealth as potential short cuts thereto. This point may also be situated within the context of late Victorian and Edwardian England, in which professional musicians typically did not have roots in the highest echelons of society, and indeed it was problematic for people from these classes to pursue a career in music.<sup>49</sup>

Composers' ability to overcome adversity was linked not only to their determination to succeed but also to their greatness, which was frequently portrayed as related to the obstructions encountered, or even their direct cause, in accordance with the popular conception of genius as sufficiently ahead of its time as to be misunderstood by the masses. Had they not been such Great Men, it was supposed, their determination to succeed would surely have been challenged, and they would have abandoned the paths for which they were destined. Lidgley, drawing on the stories that originate in Wagner's own autobiographical writings and their interpretations, stated that though most would have been discouraged after so many setbacks, the opposite was true for his exemplary subject:

‘the reverses and disappointments [Wagner] experienced served but to strengthen his character, and to enable him to face without flinching the far greater trials that lay before him. ...far from being discouraged, he was spurred on to redoubled energy.’<sup>50</sup>

In other volumes of the series, the suffering experienced by subjects as a result of such hindrances was seen to enhance not merely their determination, but also their creative prowess, by actively furthering their genius. Handel, for example, turned to oratorio following the failure of his operatic enterprises, rather than give in altogether; as Williams wrote, he was ‘not to be beaten’.<sup>51</sup> In several instances, composers’ misfortunes were presented as either the direct cause of attempts to improve themselves in their chosen direction, or as precluding them from other, potentially distracting activities. Patterson suggested that Schumann’s celebrated maiming of his hand ‘must be regarded as fortunate’, despite its obvious tragedy, since he was thereafter forced to dedicate himself to composition.<sup>52</sup> Crowest even suggested that Beethoven’s deafness was the necessary condition for the composer’s true greatness, writing that ‘for the first time in Beethoven’s great career we witness the matured strength of the giant composer asserting itself in a character and degree which, but for the awful calamity that had settled upon him, might never have been demonstrated’.<sup>53</sup> Indeed, the rhetoric that a genius must also possess a compensatory deficiency by way of counterbalance is a common explanatory strategy in life-writing, and receives abundant exemplification in musical biography, as later instances will confirm.

### Love and Marriage: The Woman as Muse

The Master Musicians authors recognised a time in their subjects' lives at which love was inevitable, and the social expectation of marriage was sufficiently pronounced as to warrant caution over those subjects who remained single, following Mozart's famous remark that 'a bachelor lives only half a life'.<sup>54</sup> In observing that Handel was 'twice nearly married', but that on both occasions his vocation presented a difficulty, Williams drew on a frequently-encountered strategy by which to explain the absence of a spouse, namely the choosing of a life of art over one of marriage.<sup>55</sup> Another familiar ploy is found in the volumes on Chopin and Tchaikovsky, where claims are made that both these subjects felt an enduring love for their mother, over and above 'ordinary filial devotion', which therefore precluded relationships with women of their own generation.<sup>56</sup> This point also arose from the popular construction of Clara Schumann as Brahms's surrogate mother. It was a view to which Erb evidently subscribed, writing that 'in every way their relations were practically those of mother and son'.<sup>57</sup> But even if the ultimate outcome was not marriage (or even a relationship), the Great Composers were portrayed as being ideally suited to being in love, precisely because of their musicality. Moreover, according to the biographers, their creative prowess was actually enhanced by being in this state of mind. Hadden proposed that Chopin's romantic interests might be found inscribed in his music, a claim that assumes an added significance given that attempts to relate life and music so explicitly were rare in the Master Musicians volumes, which sought deliberately to segregate the two.<sup>58</sup>

The most important of the composers' unions prove to be those in which love and music are directly aligned: the woman in question is herself musical, and the protagonist's affection for her is presented as having arisen through their shared art. This condition resulted in a bond perceived to be stronger and more beneficial, as in Tchaikovsky's love

for Désirée Artôt, or that of Mozart for Aloysia Weber.<sup>59</sup> In an extension of the androcentric model explored above, various instances involved the portrayal of specific women as inspiring a composer to greater feats of creativity through the love that connected them. This notion, which I shall term the “muse paradigm”, received its fullest flowering in the exploration of the relationship between Schumann and his celebrated musical beloved, the pianist and composer Clara Wieck.<sup>60</sup> Patterson presented their bond as having arisen through music itself, ‘rather through spiritual communion than by personal intercourse’.<sup>61</sup> Correspondingly, their love was seen as strong, deep-rooted, and able to overcome the many troubles they encountered, not least the fierce opposition to their marriage on the part of Clara’s father. In claiming that ‘[a] more ideal union could scarcely be imagined than that of a creative and an executive artist, both of the first rank’, the biographer upheld the exemplary musical and matrimonial dynamic between the composer and his devoted wife, while relegating the function of the latter to the passive reproduction of her husband’s creations, thereby marginalising Clara’s own compositional ability.<sup>62</sup> Patterson’s observation that ‘the opening years of Schumann’s married life mark the most active, as the most varied, period of his musical output and editorial labours’ exemplifies her portrayal of Clara not just as the person with whom Schumann attained happiness, but also as the inspiration for the greatest fruits of his genius.<sup>63</sup> The view partly originated with Schumann himself, who once wrote to Clara that ‘[y]ou complement me as a composer, just as I do you. Each of your ideas comes from my soul, just as I owe all of my music to you.’<sup>64</sup> Patterson thus constructed the pair as artistically inseparable, as Clara was seen to have brought her husband’s musicality to completion. This point is evidenced by the metaphorical description of her as ‘a right hand to her husband’, which phraseology recalled the injury that ended the composer’s own performing career.<sup>65</sup>

The muse paradigm also operated in the negative. Lidgley drew upon the notion to justify both Wagner's unsuccessful marriage to Wilhelmina (Minna) Planer and his subsequent union with Cosima von Bülow. Since the former wife 'had not the power to understand her husband's genius', it became necessary for him to seek an alternative muse in someone 'who could understand and sympathize with him'; that Cosima was herself the daughter of another Great Composer, Liszt, serves to reinforce the paradigm.<sup>66</sup> The unsuccessful outcomes of two other marriages, those of Tchaikovsky to Antonina Ivanovna Milyukova and Haydn to Anna Maria Keller, were also seen as inevitable precisely because the women involved could not function as vessels for their composers' genius – and, moreover, actively obstructed their creativity. The biographers of both composers drew upon their subjects' own testimonies by way of illustration, specifically, Tchaikovsky's reference to 'his inability to work in [his wife's] presence' and Haydn's oft-quoted remark that 'it did not matter to [his spouse] whether he were a cobbler or an artist.'<sup>67</sup>

Particular females also came into view at crucial junctures in the texts as signifiers of the genius of the composers with whom they were associated. Examples include the surprise appearance of Clara Schumann at the first performance of Brahms's Ein deutsches Requiem,<sup>68</sup> and the fact that Tchaikovsky believed he was writing his Fourth Symphony for his benefactor Nadezhda von Meck.<sup>69</sup> According to Erb, Ein deutsches Requiem 'ranked among the loftiest music ever given to the world', following which Brahms had 'reached his full growth. The struggle for acknowledgement was over, the victory won'.<sup>70</sup> Similarly, Evans wrote that Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony – the work inextricably associated with von Meck's patronage, which enabled the composer to devote himself to

his art – represented ‘the passing from the creation of merely good musicianly symphonies to that of works to which unquestionably the term ‘great’ must be applied’.<sup>71</sup> The fact that Clara Schumann and von Meck were relatively invisible characters within these biographies sets in relief the significance of their sudden rise to prominence in connection with two works of profound importance to the developing genius of their attendant composers.

Crowest’s biographers were similarly preoccupied with the importance of the family. Certain composers were upheld for their idealised domestic relationships, especially in cases in which their loved ones were themselves significantly musical, or when (as with Bach and Schumann) works were composed expressly for their benefit.<sup>72</sup> Williams noted that ‘[t]he clan feeling was very strong’ in the Bach family, and Breakspeare observed the ‘loving regard’ Mozart always held for the musical members of his immediate family, namely his father and sister.<sup>73</sup> Patterson’s romanticisation of Schumann’s union with his wife Clara was reflected in her description of the composer’s fondness for and devotion to their children, and Stratton similarly argued that Mendelssohn’s exemplary familial relations showed his character ‘at its best’.<sup>74</sup> In cases where it was not possible to explore relationships between composers and their close dependent family – if they did not have a successful marriage or had no children – the biographers found it necessary to look further afield in the demonstration of exemplary domesticity. Beethoven and Brahms, for example, were presented as having instead cared for other families – the former adopted his nephew following the death of his brother, while the latter supported Schumann’s family from the time of that composer’s last illness<sup>75</sup> – as well as overseeing their own households upon the deaths of their fathers, thus underlining Victorian notions of the domestic patriarchy.<sup>76</sup>

## Death as Apotheosis

The well-known fact that several Great Composers met with an early death offered another instance of the biographical rhetoric of the genius possessing physical deficiency by way of balance. The Master Musicians biographers revelled in the tragedy of the premature demise of certain subjects, especially when they had both died unusually young and been exceptionally productive, using their gifts to the full in the short time that was available to them. Their creative prowess, which was seen to have become stronger as a direct result of misfortunes experienced in the course of their life, was also presented as having been ultimately responsible for their untimely deaths: in their relentless efforts to bring their genius to fruition, they correspondingly exhausted themselves. Although they were portrayed as being unusually resilient in terms of the strains they suffered – their labours and industry, and their fight against opposition – they were, fundamentally, only mortal. The concept received fullest application with Mendelssohn and Schumann, who engaged in a variety of activities in addition to composition – one as performer and conductor, the other as writer and editor – which took their toll on their (relatively frail) physical frames. Stratton wrote that

With less call upon his vital powers, Mendelssohn might have lived longer; but it was in the blood, this unceasing energy and devouring passion for work, and the spark of life burnt itself out by the time middle age was reached. ...whether he knew it or not, [Mendelssohn] was broken and worn, at thirty-seven.<sup>77</sup>

Drawing on the Romantic ideal of the genius as androgyne, the inspiration that brought about composers' acts of creation – which, as we have seen, was aligned in musical biography with the feminine – was considered to have progressively exhausted their masculine bodies. In pursuit of this point, the biographers of both Schumann and Mendelssohn invoked a metaphor with clear Freudian overtones, that of the sword 'wear[ing] out the scabbard before its time' by its overuse.<sup>78</sup> That their texts provide two of the most developed examples of the muse paradigm – the case of Mendelssohn is to be discussed presently – further reinforces the notion.

Composers' early deaths were linked not just to their greatness, but also to the fruits of this genius in terms of the extent of their corresponding activities and output, which served to resolve the tension over certain subjects having lived longer than others. Hadden justified Haydn's claim to greatness, despite his relative longevity, by reference to his 'sane, sound and, on the whole, fortunate existence'.<sup>79</sup> Moreover, he demonstrated his subject to have taken full advantage of the length of his life, by developing his genius in new and important directions even in his advanced years. And whether short-lived or not, composers were portrayed as having kept active until the bitter end, in testimony to their unwavering commitment to their art. Seemingly ignoring both their own suffering and the troubles unfolding around them, they remained entirely focussed on music and on their studies. Breakspeare, for example, wrote that in Mozart's final year, 'the composer would appear to have determinedly put aside... his worldly anxieties, and to have pursued his art with all the greater intensity and concentration of thought.'<sup>80</sup>

The emphasis placed by the biographers on the hard work undertaken by composers unceasingly from childhood to death, in accordance with the Protestant work ethic, led to



their genius being charted as having evolved progressively throughout their lives.<sup>81</sup> This model, which I term the “paradigm of continual development”, was of major consequence for the opportunities it afforded to relate biographical and stylistic histories, as we shall later see, and to demonstrate that composers had indeed brought their gifts perfectly to fruition. The latter point yields the implication that the last year (or period) of composers’ lives was that in which they necessarily enjoyed their fullest success or produced their greatest music, especially since many (including Mozart and Brahms) were presented as instinctively knowing that death was imminent. Duncan, for example, claimed that

The year 1828, Schubert’s last, saw him at the height of his powers...  
There is but little record of Schubert’s doings in [this year], apart from composition, which so fully engrossed him. He perhaps found himself driven to it by the inner consciousness that he was as yet undelivered of his best message to his fellow-men, or it may be that the creeping shadows of that long night which was so soon to close in on his labours spurred him on to his most strenuous endeavours.<sup>82</sup>

Despite the tragedy of composers’ illnesses and premature deaths (not to mention the paradigm of continual development), the biographers were adamant that had they lived longer, their powers would not have developed further. This notion enabled them to conclude their account of their subjects’ lives when they were at their peak, and served to prepare the reader for this outcome in that having reached the zenith of the protagonist’s powers, the sole episode that remained to be recounted was that of the death. The only real resistance to the paradigms concerning subjects’ development and ultimate demise occurs in the volume on Chopin. Hadden not only claimed that this subject, unlike other

Great Composers, ‘presents no such study of evolution’, but also suggested that a longer life ‘would have strengthened and expanded his genius’ – actually contradicting himself in these two statements.<sup>83</sup> His partial rejection of the otherwise standard life-shapes of the Master Musicians series aided his construction of Chopin as standing apart from its other subjects, which idea receives ample voice elsewhere in the monograph and indeed served to justify the composer’s inclusion within the set.

#### Death and the Maiden: The Woman as Muse (bis)

We have seen above that specific women, invariably loved ones of some description, made appearances at defining moments of the life story, as signifiers of subjects’ creativity. In view of the connections between the height of protagonists’ genius and their death, it is unsurprising that these otherwise marginal females also resurfaced towards the end of the lives of their associated composers. Just as the exertions of their manifold musical endeavours were portrayed as having brought about death, their female muses were similarly seen to have contributed to their demise. One such case is provided by Mendelssohn, whose musically-talented sister Fanny (herself a composer) was cast in the role of vessel for his genius.<sup>84</sup> Stratton described the pair as ‘bound by the ties of art as well as blood’, implying a strong and special union consistent with the muse paradigm.<sup>85</sup> He noted that Mendelssohn was profoundly affected by her passing, which was presented as directly precipitating his final, greatest period of creation, prior to his own demise just a few months (and pages) later.<sup>86</sup> Moreover, Stratton, citing as his source Lampadius’s early German-language biography of Mendelssohn, stated that the composer’s own death was directly caused by the shock at learning of that of his sister – thus making explicit the connection between the demise of the muse and that of an associated composer.<sup>87</sup>

Scarcely had he arrived at Frankfort, when – all too abruptly – [Mendelssohn] received the news of his sister Fanny’s death. With a shriek he fell senseless to the ground. His own death was directly caused by this sad event, for his physician stated that there was a rupture of a blood-vessel in the head at the moment of this sudden shock.<sup>88</sup>

Similarly, Erb concurred with Brahms’s own belief that his final illness was caused by his anxiety to attend Clara Schumann’s funeral, and speculated that its severity was related to the fact of her death.

On 20th May 1896 came what proved to be Brahms’s death-blow: Clara Schumann passed away[.] When he received the news he hastened at once to Frankfort to be present at the funeral, and it was to ‘a fit of anger’ at missing a train... that he attributed the illness which eventually proved fatal. This was an affection [cancer] of the liver... Undoubtedly the shock of Clara Schumann’s death had much to do both with bringing it on and with its fatal issue.<sup>89</sup>

This standard plot is inverted in the cases of Tchaikovsky and Chopin. According to Evans, Tchaikovsky was extraordinarily pained by the decline in the attention paid to him towards the end of his life by Nadezhda von Meck. Her financial backing of the composer ceased, as did the correspondence between them. Evans wrote that his thoughts were of her in his final days, for ‘[o]n his death-bed, even in the height of fever, the name of Nadezhda Filaretovna was perpetually on his lips.’<sup>90</sup> Though von Meck outlived

Tchaikovsky, she had faded from his life and so precipitated his passing; and Evans's observation that she herself died very shortly after receiving news of Tchaikovsky's departure suggests that the composer's death brought about that of his muse, rather than the other way around. Chopin's associated females and his demise were discussed with greater unease. Hadden, despite his endeavours to resist standard biographical paradigms, evidently subscribed to the correlations between association with an artistic partner, inspiration derived therefrom, and ultimate passing. Though he appeared strongly to reject the popularised connection between Chopin's own end and that of his relationship with the novelist George Sand, he nevertheless acknowledged the link between the two events that had been suggested by earlier (Continental) biographers such as Wilhelm von Lenz.<sup>91</sup> However, Sand posed a challenge to the muse paradigm, since she was herself a creative genius rather than a mere executant. This issue was resolved in Hadden's volume by reversing the couple's gender roles, thereby continuing a trend which was well established by the time of writing and which had originated, insofar as biography is concerned, with Franz Liszt's French-language life of Chopin.<sup>92</sup> Of the composer's Polonaises, for example, Hadden wrote that '[t]he Chopin of the popular ideal – the feverish, feminine Chopin of a thousand drawing-rooms – is here; but there is here also a Chopin of the masculine gender, who puts into these energetic rhythms a vigour and a boldness that must arouse the sleepest indifference.'<sup>93</sup> This view preserved the heterosexuality of Chopin's relationship to Sand at the same time as allowing the former creative artist to function, androgynously, as his own vessel.

### Religion as Artistic Motive

The Master Musicians biographers aimed to provide not only an outline of composers' lives, but also a more general assessment of their character. They were particularly preoccupied with matters of religion, which issue merits further discussion for its intersection with themes discussed elsewhere in the present article. While the point no doubt reflects their own faith, since many held church posts as organist or choir director, alternative origins may be found in the beliefs overtly held by a number of the subjects themselves. Notably, Bach and Haydn were both devout Christians, who habitually signed their scores – even those of secular works – with religious phrases such as 'Soli Deo Gloria' ('Glory be to God alone'). The musical genius exhibited by the Great Composers was considered to be a divine gift that had been bestowed upon them, reflective of a higher calling. They were therefore viewed as having worked in the service of God, both in furthering their abilities and in their general activities. These premises allowed the biographers to claim some degree of religious intent and motivation for composers who were not themselves practising Christians, especially in terms of their sacred output, which was correspondingly given an added significance. Observing the lack of knowledge surrounding Schubert's beliefs, for example, Duncan looked to his works as evidence, claiming that '[c]ertainly the Masses breathe forth a piety and deep feeling which none but a devout man could offer'.<sup>94</sup> The paradigm of continual development is again invoked, as several authors commented upon the fact of their subjects having turned to the composition of religious works late in their lives. This point further demonstrated the relative greatness accorded to sacred music in comparison to its secular counterpart; Schumann himself wrote that 'a musician's highest aim is to apply his power to religious music'.<sup>95</sup>

By reinforcing righteous Christian virtues, the biographers also extrapolated their subjects' moral beliefs from the exemplary way in which they conducted their lives. Patterson, for example, claimed that in selflessly promoting contemporaries above himself in his music criticism, Schumann 'put in practice one of the noblest of Christian precepts.'<sup>96</sup> Additional justification for those composers who were not overtly religious came from subscription to the anti-Marian view that considered too strict an adherence to doctrine to be negative. Hadden, citing Liszt's testimony that Chopin 'held his faith without calling attention to it', described the composer as 'refreshingly like the normal sensible man, who shrinks from being too closely catechized' – and it is deeply ironic that the life of a Catholic composer, as written by a biographer who subsequently took minor orders in the Catholic Church, should be appropriated in Protestant England to anti-Roman ends.<sup>97</sup> Drawing on the same notion, Lidgley justified Wagner's attacks on Christianity as being essentially directed toward hypocrisy and dogma.<sup>98</sup>

### **III – English Appropriation and Disciplinary Biases**

The original twelve volumes of the Master Musicians series represented an attempt to establish a musical-historical canon through a set of paradigms that drew heavily on the prevalent ideologies of the interpretative communities for which they were originally written. But since the biographies so strongly reflected late Victorian ideals, not to mention the (often uneasy) reception of their subjects in turn-of-the-century England, they quickly became dated. This point was abundantly apparent by the time of Eric Blom's revisions to the originals in the 1930s. Blom was more concerned with the emendation of matters of fact and prose style than with updating the views and interpretations expressed by the original biographers, arguing that '[i]t is not an editor's duty to interfere with an

author's opinions, as distinct from... statements of fact'.<sup>99</sup> For this reason, the reviewers of the revised volumes repeatedly condemned the archaic portrayal of the subjects they offered, and even the outmoded form of biography they embodied: one critic complained of 'thirty-year-old opinions lying cheek by jowl with lately acquired wisdom which disproves them'.<sup>100</sup> Blom's own description of one such monograph as 'something of a period-piece, a relic of an age still capable of a romantic outlook' would seem to have wider application.<sup>101</sup>

However, the original biographies had not only been tailored to the readership of a specific time, but also that of a particular geographical place. Although published simultaneously in America, and presumably also distributed to the various colonies and dominions of the British Empire, the texts were evidently written primarily for readers situated in Britain itself, consistent with the nationalities and places of activity of its authors.<sup>102</sup> But this endeavour did not merely take the form of discussion of the reception enjoyed by composers and their works in that country. Indeed, certain reviewers, especially those of the staunchly English The Musical Times, felt that the volumes did not meet expectations in this respect. One made the general claim that 'the value of the series... would be increased... were [it] to contain an appendix giving dates, places, and conductors of first performances of the composers' works in England.'<sup>103</sup> Instead, the Master Musicians biographies were made relevant to Britain, notably England, in ways that focussed more immediately on subjects' lives, rather than on the subsequent history of their music.<sup>104</sup>

Though none of the twelve protagonists of the original series were of English descent, there were nevertheless important correspondences to be drawn between these composers

and England itself. The country was presented as having afforded them opportunities and support, even when they had been neglected by their native land. Crowest remarked that the London Philharmonic Society provided the dying Beethoven with the financial assistance unforthcoming from sources closer to home.<sup>105</sup> Lidgely noted that England ‘show[ed] great interest’ in his subject by holding a Wagner Festival comprising a series of concerts in 1877, thereby rescuing this scheme at a time when the composer’s career was otherwise at a low point owing to the financial failure of the Bayreuth Theatre project.<sup>106</sup> Such offers were portrayed as arising as a direct result of the nation’s recognition of the genius of these figures, which could even take place when no actual contact existed between the two. Duncan acknowledged that Schubert, who never visited England, was nonetheless known there by the time of his death; that his music was published and performed in the country thereafter; and most importantly, that English scholars (notably the celebrated biographer George Grove) made substantial contributions to his rediscovery.<sup>107</sup> Patterson referred to Schumann’s strong, albeit unrealised, ‘hankering’ for England; her observation that on leaving Vienna in 1839, the composer ‘thought seriously of crossing the water to settle permanently in England’, further indicated that the country was one of the most alluring places for a Great Composer.<sup>108</sup>

Such identification of musical genius on the part of the English was presented as occurring in advance of similar recognition received elsewhere. Evans claimed that the fact that Tchaikovsky’s music met with greater success in England than all countries apart from his own offered ‘a convincing refutation of the charge... that we are an unmusical nation’, as compared with France – a country repeatedly chided within the *Master Musicians* volumes for its musical philistinism, based on the poor reception accorded to such figures as Mendelssohn and Wagner – and even Germany.<sup>109</sup> Stratton similarly



demonstrated that England, rather than Germany, was the first country to provide Mendelssohn's music with public exposure 'in a manner worthy of his genius'.<sup>110</sup> Moreover, he explicitly suggested that the composer would not have achieved such success had it not been for England, 'the scene of Mendelssohn's greatest triumphs'.<sup>111</sup> Hadden's version of this notion was more extended: Haydn's two journeys to England represent his only excursions abroad, and he was received warmly, his greatness abundantly recognised. Unlike Mendelssohn, Haydn did not visit England until his later years, and the country was therefore portrayed as having provided him with additional possibilities for bringing his genius to fruition, according to the paradigm of continual development. Indeed, Hadden asserted that the limitations placed on the composer in his feudal service in Austria and Hungary actually prevented him reaching the highest levels of creation, which he attained only in the more liberating climate of England's more advanced economy:

...Haydn's genius blossomed so luxuriantly [in England] as to place him with almost amazing suddenness among the very first of composers. There is hardly anything more certain than this, that if he had not come to London he would not have stood where he stands to-day. ...the narrow limits of the Esterházy audience and the numbing routine of the performances were against his rising to the top heights of his genius.<sup>112</sup>

Hadden also suggested that the fact that England did not at the time possess native creative genius in music of Haydn's calibre was the very reason for the country's recognition and fervent support of such greatness in foreigners.<sup>113</sup> The dearth of English Great Composers in the canonical period encompassed by the Master Musicians series

was an issue addressed principally in the biography of Handel, the subject whose connections to the country were the strongest. Of course, Handel differed from the other composers under discussion in that rather than merely visiting England, he lived there for most of his adult life, and indeed took British citizenship in 1727. Nevertheless, his foreign origins could not be denied, and as comparison of the articles on Handel and Mendelssohn in Grove's Dictionary reveals, the biographical rhetoric by which the naturalised composer was claimed for England was not so far removed from that for an indisputably German subject.<sup>114</sup> Williams, however, invoked the figure of Handel in one additional respect, situating him between Purcell and the emergent English Musical Renaissance in order to explain the apparent break in the country's musical tradition.<sup>115</sup> Specifically, he argued that his subject was so great that his 'overpowering grandeur and strength... struck a blow at native English productivity, from which it only began to recover in the latter half of the nineteenth century'.<sup>116</sup> In claiming that the English school of composition was 'nipped in the bud by Handel' owing to this inescapable and far-reaching influence, Williams attempted to justify the aridity of the country's musical scene for some time thereafter.<sup>117</sup>

Through their authors' endeavours to make their subjects relevant to a late Victorian readership, then, the Master Musicians biographies represent to some extent an appropriation of the Great Composers for England by virtue of their connections thereto. The same was true of their music, for the ultimate aim of the series, as I have shown above, was to promote its subjects' output to the target communities.<sup>118</sup> Certain works were upheld for having been written specifically for England, such as Haydn's 'London' Symphonies – which epitomise the composer's vast output in the genre he is universally recognised as having established – as well as his late English-language choral works The

Creation and The Seasons, which similarly rank among his greatest music. In other instances, significant musical corpuses were justified by reference to existing English traditions. Breakspere attempted to explain the apparent inanity of Mozart's comic operas, as perceived from a late nineteenth-century English perspective, through analogy to that of Shakespearian clowns and Gilbert and Sullivan operetta.<sup>119</sup> He also provided a lengthy comparison of the standard texts used in the composer's Latin Masses with the liturgy of the Anglican Church – which he noted was largely identical, excepting the different language – in order that anti-Roman feeling might not discourage the listener.<sup>120</sup> Evans observed that in Tchaikovsky's Russia, ballet music was on a par with opera in terms of quality and corresponding reception, unlike that heard at the time in England.<sup>121</sup> And Duncan, by way of resolving the difficulty surrounding the absence of explicit associations with the country in the case of Schubert, appropriated his song-settings to translated texts by native poets including Scott and Shakespeare.<sup>122</sup>

Although the Master Musicians authors collectively followed formats that consciously separated life and works, there were nevertheless many points of intersection between biographical paradigms and those at work in discussions of the music.<sup>123</sup> The traditional pairing of Haydn and Mozart in musical biography, for example, hinged on the contrast between a genius that evolved slowly and uneventfully across a long, stable life and one that developed at a phenomenal rate from prodigious childhood to premature death. We have already seen that the paradigm of continual development functioned at the biographical level to aid the construction of subjects as exemplary by revealing endless hard work as the only laudable means by which to achieve success and to bring one's gifts to fruition. But the notion was similarly invaluable, especially given the biographers' practice of discussing their subjects' works by genre, as a strategy by which to chart

stylistic evolution according to a teleological model. In addition to fostering the historical unilinearity upon which biography is ontologically dependent, the paradigm allowed the authors to explain the relative greatness of specific works to their target non-specialist readership without resorting to technical language, through relating them to the stage of life at which they were composed.

An added emphasis was correspondingly given to subjects' later output, and to their final works in particular, as reflecting the fullest flowering of their genius, especially when they served to reinforce two of the biographers' other preoccupations, namely correspondences to England (a point already considered with respect to Haydn) and matters of religion. Handel's move from (secular, Italian) opera to (sacred, English) oratorio not only marked a late change of direction in his career, but also led to the fullest realisation of his genius, resulting in the celebrated Messiah which, in the words of Williams, was 'a household word with all English people, whether music-lovers or not'.<sup>124</sup> Likewise, Mendelssohn's oratorio Elijah – his last great composition and, according to Stratton, his 'crowning effort' – was written for England and represented the 'greatest glory' of the Birmingham Musical Festival, which gave its premiere in 1846.<sup>125</sup> The Requiems of Mozart and Schumann were both late works (and Brahms's Ein deutsches Requiem, though early, was a turning-point in his career). Mozart's remained unfinished at his death – an obvious potential problem when privileging an artist's final output – and an elaborate mythology quickly emerged surrounding the work and its mysterious commission, fuelled by the composer's conviction that he was writing the piece for himself.<sup>126</sup> Practitioners of musical biography have amply exploited the irony that several last works were either on themes of death – most explicitly in the aforementioned Requiems, and in Schubert's melancholic song cycle Winterreise – or

connected thereto, especially when (as with Mozart) the composer believed that death was impending.<sup>127</sup> A performance of The Creation, Haydn's last major sacred work, provided the setting of the composer's final appearance in public, frequently embellished in biographies as a faux death scene;<sup>128</sup> and the reception of Tchaikovsky's enigmatic Sixth Symphony is inextricably tied to his untimely demise.<sup>129</sup>

The issue of religion was also important to the paradigm of continual development for another reason, for it was related to Protestantism in terms of the work ethic. The notion would have been essentially contradicted by many Marian Continental texts of the later 1800s, which privileged more immediately-inspired compositional genius;<sup>130</sup> and, as recent studies by Linda Colley and David Hempton have shown, the Protestant religion was a key agent in the establishment and enforcement of distinctly British identities (as against those of the Continent) in the eighteenth as well as the nineteenth century.<sup>131</sup> But the paradigm is not only significant to the present study for the fact that it may be read as reflecting Victorian values by virtue of its religious affinity. It also received pronounced application within musical biography, especially given its implicit relation to the obstructions that composers were portrayed as having endured, without respite, throughout their lives, and which correspondingly strengthened their artistic powers. This biographical trajectory departs from standard nineteenth-century life-shapes, in which subjects were presented as having encountered an initial struggle in early adulthood following which they attained their ultimate aims, leading to a sustained period of success and distinction. As Paula Backscheider has written, many biographies follow the stereotypical plan of 'youth [a]s a preparatory period, early and middle adulthood induction and struggle to attain specific, individual goals, and mature adulthood and old age as full achievement and later consolidation and appreciation of success.'<sup>132</sup> The trials

faced by the protagonists of musical biography were therefore much more marked and prolonged than for those in other disciplines (and other tropes, such as the prodigious childhood and the premature death, similarly did not accord with traditional models). It was as though the practice of grafting the lives of foreigners onto the existing Victorian mould, as abundantly demonstrated in the above analysis, required biographers to overstate the case for the validity of the Great Composers as subjects.

For the figures at the heart of the great canons of classical music were, of course, predominantly Germanic; and although English biography had previously circumvented this potential problem by emphasising either native composers or those currently in fashion in the country, the Master Musicians series necessarily considered those of wider historical importance – hence the need to construct associations with England via other means. The former trends date back to the origins of modern music history and biography in this country: John Mainwaring’s 1760 volume on the naturalised Handel is understood to have been the first full-length composer biography in any language;<sup>133</sup> the classic early histories by John Hawkins and Charles Burney possess a strong English bias;<sup>134</sup> and John Sainsbury’s watershed biographical dictionary (1825) claimed as its *raison d’être* the perceived inadequacy of Continental counterparts in the treatment of British musicians.<sup>135</sup> In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, English biography fostered national personages in such centrally canonical works as the Dictionary of National Biography and the ‘English Men of Letters’ series,<sup>136</sup> and this movement was similarly discernible in the field of music in publications including Grove’s monumental Dictionary.<sup>137</sup> Even amongst the original Master Musicians authors themselves, Crowest had written extensively on British music and musicians;<sup>138</sup> Hadden’s 1887 monographs of Handel and Mendelssohn were conceived as the earliest volumes in a projected but unrealised set

of 'Biographies of Great Composers'; Evans was later to produce a celebrated series of articles on British composers in The Musical Times (1919-20); and most strikingly, Stratton's co-authored British Musical Biography claimed that '[a] country is musical only by the music it produces for itself, not by what it takes from others.'<sup>139</sup> The same tendency to commemorate national heroes through biography may be seen in other countries at the time: in France, for example, the renowned 'Les musiciens célèbres' series included volumes on such figures as Hérold, Boïeldieu and Félicien David, alongside those of broader historical value,<sup>140</sup> and French scholars had worked in their own ways to defend their country's musical reputation in light of complaints such as those of Mendelssohn.<sup>141</sup> The absence of English protagonists amongst the greatest subjects for musical biography – a problem unknown to biographers of British novelists, painters and playwrights – therefore presented a substantial difficulty for a venture such as the Master Musicians series, written not only in a distinctly Victorian vein, but also within a general environment of increased nationalist feeling and contemporaneous with the emergent English Musical Renaissance.<sup>142</sup>

No doubt partly for this reason, musical biography frequently drew on the discipline of literature – which was not only conveniently mainstream, but also possessed a much stronger English tradition – in investigating the genius exhibited by its subjects in areas other than composition. The Master Musicians series incorporated discussion of the multitude of prose writings of Wagner and the music criticism of Schumann – both of which were portrayed as having strengthened their respective compositional activities – as well as the correspondence of Mendelssohn and others.<sup>143</sup> The importance accorded to composer's words, rather than their music, in the context of biography had associated implications for discussions of the works: literary creations could be examined with

relative ease through the medium of narrative in the way that purely musical counterparts could not, even when accompanied by music examples. Bearing in mind the audience of non-specialists for whom the series was written, works that incorporated extra-musical elements could be discussed in literary terms and thereby made more accessible to the general reader; hence the space devoted to the music dramas of Wagner (in addition to his writings), the operas of Mozart, and the operas and ballets of Tchaikovsky, exploration of which proceeded largely by way of plot summary.<sup>144</sup> An added irony presents itself in that nineteenth-century musical aesthetics idealised the purity of “absolute music”, which was ostensibly free from the external reference of texts and plots; thus the works considered the greatest of all by virtue of their autonomy were, by the same token, also more difficult to discuss within the context of (and canonise through) biography written for a general readership.

The traditional predication of music history on a small number of Great Composers – a top-down conception that lends itself perfectly to biography, especially when volumes are collected into series – meant that there existed much less room for minor figures in its canons relative to those of a discipline such as literature.<sup>145</sup> Correspondingly, hegemonies have been more strongly enforced in music than elsewhere, as exemplified by the relative invisibility of women among composers. By the end of the nineteenth century if not before, the presence of female creative genius in literature could not be ignored – indeed, biography had begun to celebrate such figures as George Sand, Jane Austen, George Eliot, and the Brontë sisters – and yet, women remained inadmissible to musical canons internationally.<sup>146</sup> The point was reinforced in biography through the establishment of the muse paradigm, which effectively denied female composers, such as Clara Schumann, the potential for musical creation.<sup>147</sup> At the same time, it functioned as a signifier denoting



the relative greatness of individual works, and its associated biographical tropes additionally underlined the domination of society by the patriarchy, through their emphasis on such issues as marriage and domestic propriety. Significantly, the only notable resistance to these notions in the Master Musicians series, found in the volume on Chopin, was brought about by the prominence in the composer's biography of a female creative genius. I have already noted Hadden's separation of this subject from the other Great Composers of the set, based on the biographer's departures from standard life-paradigms, and it is surely no coincidence that Chopin – one of only two non-Germanic subjects out of the original twelve – was similarly detached in terms of his musical output, having composed small-scale works for piano almost exclusively. Hadden, following the opinion of the writer on music Sir Henry Hadow, anachronistically constructed Chopin as having 'approached our Western key system from the outside and never [having] wholly assimilated himself', which legitimised his situation within musical canons in that he 'struck out on his own path' rather than conforming completely.<sup>148</sup>

In attempting to establish just such a canon, rather than merely writing about those composers of more immediate interest to the reading public, it became even more important for the Master Musicians authors to construct texts that explicated the relevance of their subjects to their intended audiences. Perhaps it is true of all biographical endeavours, especially when the historical significance of their protagonists is not firmly recognised at the time of writing, that they represent an appropriation of those figures and their works for the wider community. But in the case of the Master Musicians series, this practice of appropriation additionally responded to the problems surrounding both the apparent infertility of England's own musical tradition and the consequent contention that

the country was ignorant in such matters. Indeed, it seems likely that the strength of connections to England, and continued popularity in that country, provided much of the reason for the relative greatness accorded to such figures as Handel, Mendelssohn, Haydn and perhaps also Tchaikovsky within the series and its correspondent canon, if not also influencing the order in which its constituent volumes were issued.<sup>149</sup> Moreover, by demonstrating that England was sufficiently culturally-sensitive to have recognised musical greatness in specific individuals, as well as to have nurtured their genius when other nations would not, the biographies served to promote the image of a surrogate national tradition in which foreign composers would flourish. The project embodied by the Master Musicians series may therefore be read not only within the context of late Victorian sensibilities, but also against the backdrop of the emergent revitalisation of music as a truly English institution.

## **Abstract**

Musical biography proliferated in England in the hagiographical climate of the later nineteenth century, partly as an outcome of the rise of the aesthetic of the idolised Great Composer and the corresponding emergence of musical canons (whose constituency was, however, by no means certain at this time). This article presents a theoretically-enriched demonstration of the paradigms through which its late Victorian authors attempted to canonise their subjects, focussing on three interrelated thematic issues that are of especial importance to musical biography as compared with that of other disciplines: the relative invisibility of women, the absence of national heroes, and the scope for discussion of the works. My investigation proceeds via an analytical case study of the metabiography of the Master Musicians series (London: Dent, 1899-1906), whose original twelve volumes together represent one of the earliest significant attempts in England to establish and

maintain a musical-historical canon through a unified set of full-length composer monographs.

In determining the relevance of their subjects to the interpretative communities for whom they were writing, the Master Musicians authors appealed heavily to the prevalent values of the day, for their volumes quickly became discernible as period pieces. They typically offer a teleological charting of their protagonists' creative genius, from mere talent exhibited in their (often prodigious) childhood to death at the height of their compositional powers, which are brought to fruition – in accordance with the Protestant work ethic – only through industrious and unremitting labours throughout their self-disciplined career. The representation of specific women as muse to their attendant composer, capable only of inspiring or realising (but not exhibiting) musical genius, and their corresponding rhetorical function as signifiers of subjects' productivity and developing creativity, enforced the androcentricity of musical canon as well as the patriarchal hegemony of contemporary society.

The Master Musicians biographers also foregrounded any connections that could be drawn with England, thus to an extent appropriating the Great Composers and their music for that nation, counterbalancing its relative dearth of native genius. This endeavour served to demonstrate the country's cultural awareness, and its capability (over and above Continental counterparts) to recognise and support greatness in music, against the backdrop of the emergent English Musical Renaissance and a general environment of nationalism. The resulting biographical paradigms had profound implications not only for the membership of the proposed canon but also for discussions of the music itself, employing such factors as continual creative development, female inspiration and

connections to England as markers of greatness within discursive contexts where life and works were consciously separated and technical descriptions kept to a minimum for the benefit of the non-specialist readership.

## Endnotes

This article is drawn from my doctoral thesis 'Rewriting Composers' Lives: Critical Historiography and Musical Biography' (Royal Holloway, University of London), two chapters of which are dedicated to analysis of the original twelve volumes of the Master Musicians series, in terms of the paradigms of musical biography they exemplify through their treatment of both the life and the works of their subjects. An earlier version of this article was delivered as a paper at the Institute of Historical Research, London, on 18 November 2002, as part of the 'Music in Britain' series. My thanks to the members and conveners of that seminar for a valuable discussion, to Katharine Ellis and Matthew Mills for many helpful comments on preliminary drafts of the present article, and to the Arts and Humanities Research Board for providing financial support to enable me to pursue this research.

<sup>1</sup> On the rise of the creative genius in music in the nineteenth century, see Jim Samson, 'The great composer', in The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music, edited by Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 259-284.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Kerman, 'A Few Canonic Variations', Critical Inquiry, 10 (1983), 107-25, reprinted in idem, Write All These Down: Essays on Music (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 33-50; William Weber, 'The History of Musical Canon', in Rethinking Music, edited by Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 336-55. See also Disciplining Music: Musicology and Its

Canons, edited by Katherine Bergeron and Philip V. Bohlman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

<sup>3</sup> A Dictionary of Music and Musicians (A. D. 1450-1889) by Eminent Writers, edited by George Grove, 4 vols., with an Appendix by J. A. Fuller Maitland (London: Macmillan, 1879-90).

<sup>4</sup> The twelve volumes of the original Master Musicians series, edited by Frederick J. Crowest, are as follows: Frederick J. Crowest, Beethoven (London: Dent, 1899); Charles A. Lidgey, Wagner (London: Dent, 1899); C. F. Abdy Williams, Bach (London: Dent, 1900, rev./1934); Stephen S. Stratton, Mendelssohn (London: Dent, 1901, rev./1934); C. F. Abdy Williams, Handel (London: Dent, 1901, rev./1935); Eustace J. Breakspeare, Mozart (London: Dent, 1902); J. Cuthbert Hadden, Haydn (London: Dent, 1902, rev./1934); idem, Chopin (London: Dent, 1903, rev./1934); Annie W. Patterson, Schumann (London: Dent, 1903, rev./1934); Edmondstone Duncan, Schubert (London: Dent, 1905, rev./1934); J. Lawrence Erb, Brahms (London: Dent, 1905, rev./1934); Edwin Evans, Tchaikovsky (London: Dent, 1906, rev./1935). Significantly, both this venture and Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians have continued, in some guise, to the present time, and remain fundamental to the discipline of music today.

<sup>5</sup> Where available, the 1930s revised editions of the Master Musicians volumes (see n. 4) have been used for the purposes of citation in the present article. The original texts have, however, been consulted to ensure that they are not at variance, and any discrepancies over and above trivial points of prose style or punctuation have been separately noted.

- <sup>6</sup> The one full-length (and largely historical) study on the subject that has appeared to date is Hans Lenneberg's Witnesses and Scholars: Studies in Musical Biography (New York: Gordon and Breach, 1988). See also Maynard Solomon's article 'Thoughts on Biography', 19th Century Music, 5/3 (Spring 1982), 268-76, reprinted in Beethoven Essays (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1988), pp. 101-15. The Royal Musical Association recently held its 37th Annual Conference on the subject of 'The Theory and Practice of Musical Biography' (King's College London, 19-21 October 2001).
- <sup>7</sup> The watershed study of the various agents through which women have historically been excluded from musical canon (though without extended critical discussion of the specific role played by biographies) is Marcia J. Citron's Gender and the Musical Canon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).
- <sup>8</sup> The former publishing house did not assume the name by which it is now better known, J. M. Dent & Sons, until 1909.
- <sup>9</sup> F. Crowest, The Great Tone-Poets: Being Short Memoirs of the Greater Musical Composers (London: Bentley, 1874); Frederick J. Crowest, Cherubini (London: Sampson Low, 1890), in the 'Great Musicians' series (see n. 19); idem, Verdi: Man and Musician: His Biography with Especial Reference to his English Experiences (London: Milne, 1897).
- <sup>10</sup> James D. Brown and Stephen S. Stratton, British Musical Biography: A Dictionary of Musical Artists, Authors and Composers, born in Britain and its Colonies (Birmingham: Stratton, 1897; reprinted, New York: Da Capo, 1971).
- <sup>11</sup> J. Cuthbert Hadden, George Frederick Handel (London: Allen, 1888); idem,

Mendelssohn (London: Allen, 1888). Hadden's other biographical publications include George Thomson: The Friend of Burns: His Life & Correspondence (London: Nimmo, 1898); Thomas Campbell (Edinburgh: Oliphant Anderson & Ferrier, [1899]), in the 'Famous Scots' series; and Prince Charles Edward: His Life, Times, and Fight for the Crown (London: Pitman, 1913).

<sup>12</sup> Amongst Williams's most important scholarly publications are A Short Historical Account of the Degrees in Music at Oxford and Cambridge. With a Chronological List of Graduates in that Faculty from the Year 1643 (London: Novello, [1893]), The Rhythm of Modern Music (London: Macmillan, 1909), and The Aristoxenian Theory of Musical Rhythm (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911).

<sup>13</sup> The biographical information in this paragraph is taken from Brown and Stratton, British Musical Biography and various other sources. For citations of the original volumes referenced above, see n. 4.

<sup>14</sup> On the early history of the business, see J. M. Dent and Hugh R. Dent, The House of Dent 1888-1938, being The Memoirs of J. M. Dent with Additional Chapters Covering the last 16 years by Hugh R. Dent (London: Dent, 1938). Dent's Everyman Library series, which was initiated in 1904 under the editorship of Ernest Percival Rhys, quickly ran to hundreds of volumes of literary classics, selling for just one shilling each.

<sup>15</sup> The Master Musicians volumes sold for 3s. 6d. each, a comparable price to many works of fiction at the time, and cheap for biography, especially given that these books were bound in cloth and contained printed music as well as text.

<sup>16</sup> On the activities of Britain's communities of lay readers and their responses to the

texts they perused, see Jonathan Rose, The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

<sup>17</sup> Crowest, Beethoven, p. v

<sup>18</sup> Citations for the revised volumes are given in n. 4 above; those for the biographies newly written are as follows: Marion M. Scott, Beethoven (London: Dent, 1934); Eric Blom, Mozart (London: Dent, 1935); Robert L. Jacobs, Wagner (London: Dent, 1935). By the time of the revival of the series, most of the original biographers had passed away, with the exception of Erb – who was called upon to approve Blom’s emendations to his volume – and Evans.

<sup>19</sup> Edited by Francis Hueffer, the Great Musicians series (London: Sampson Low, 1881-90) included the following monographs: Sir Julius Benedict, Weber (1881); William H. Cummings, Purcell (1881); H. Sutherland Edwards, Rossini and His School (1881); H. F. Frost, Schubert (1881); Francis Hueffer, Richard Wagner (1881); W[illia]m Alex[ander] Barrett, English Church Composers (1882); Reginald Lane Poole, Sebastian Bach (1882); F. Gehring, Mozart (1883); Mrs Julian Marshall [Florence Ashton Marshall], Handel (1883); J. A. Fuller Maitland, Schumann (1884); W. S. Rockstro, Mendelssohn (1884); Pauline D. Townsend, Joseph Haydn (1884); Frederick J. Crowest, Cherubini (1890); H. A. Rudall, Beethoven (1890).

<sup>20</sup> As far as I have been able to ascertain, no relevant archival materials have survived. The J. M. Dent & Sons archives, held at the Manuscripts Department of the Library of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, contain no documentation on the original Master Musicians series, nor was any such material moved to Oxford University Press on its recent purchase of the series from Dent.



- <sup>21</sup> See, for example, Crowest, Beethoven, pp. 29-30; Lidgey, Wagner, pp. 19, 116; Patterson, Schumann, pp. 112, 146. Handel's wealth – a result of the phenomenal success of his Italian operas in England – was however considered acceptable, not least because he donated substantial earnings to charitable and musical causes, and ultimately turned away from this “popular” genre.
- <sup>22</sup> Musical biography reflected this growing interest in Tchaikovsky through the publication of a number of English-language volumes at around this time, notably Rosa Newmarch's Tchaikovsky: His Life and Works (London: Richards, 1900) and her edited translation of Modeste Tchaikovsky's Zhizn' P. I. Chaykovskovo (Moscow: Jurgenson, 1900-2) as The Life and Letters of Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky (London: Lane, 1906).
- <sup>23</sup> Erb, Brahms, p. 116
- <sup>24</sup> Many of the original Master Musicians biographies followed a tripartite structure comprising sections on the composer's life, character and works, with the latter incorporating assessments of other activities (in the musical domain and elsewhere) undertaken by the subject.
- <sup>25</sup> Williams's volume on Handel, for example, contained only limited discussion of the music, as the author observed that there already existed three 'exhaustive treatises... full of details and discussions of the greatest interest and value to the student who wishes to go deeply into the works of the great composer.' Williams, Handel, p. v.
- <sup>26</sup> see Evans, Tchaikovsky, pp. 182-4
- <sup>27</sup> See Blom's preface in Duncan, Schubert, pp. vii-viii. Notably, many of the quotations of themes from Schubert's last two symphonies (the 'Unfinished' and the 'Great' C

major Symphony) were not included in the revised monograph.

- <sup>28</sup> Even the shortest-lived volumes of the series survived for over thirty years in their original form, without either being superseded or achieving the status of dated classic, which is somewhat unusual for biography. Evans's Tchaikovsky was revised in 1935 and again in 1966; Hadden's Chopin was reprinted by AMS Press of New York in 1977, and is still available today.
- <sup>29</sup> Of course, the childhood of some of the more precocious Great Composers, notably Mozart, may be more appealing to the reader, as well as better documented, than that of biographical subjects in other disciplines.
- <sup>30</sup> Hadden, Haydn, p. 4
- <sup>31</sup> On the musical families of Bach and Mozart see, for example, Karl Geiringer and Irene Geiringer, The Bach Family: Seven Generations of Creative Genius (London: Allen & Unwin, 1954) and Ruth Halliwell, The Mozart Family: Four Lives in a Social Context (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998).
- <sup>32</sup> See Stratton, Mendelssohn, pp. 1, 25 (see further, below, n. 77). On genius in the Mendelssohn family from Moses to Felix, see also Herbert Kupferberg, The Mendelssohns: Three Generations of Genius (London: Allen, 1972).
- <sup>33</sup> Patterson, Schumann, p. 3
- <sup>34</sup> Stratton, Mendelssohn, p. 7. The point is made more emphatically in the original text, which reads 'simply wonderful' (p. 8) instead of just 'wonderful'.
- <sup>35</sup> Williams, Bach, p. 19. Williams gave concise biographies of Bach's distant male relations (ibid., pp. 5-15) and of his sons (ibid., pp. 15-20), yet cast his daughters aside without due consideration of the historical factors that limited their possibilities for

development in the field of music. The original volume was even more cutting in its treatment of the females of the family: ‘The eight daughters of [Bach] showed none of the musical talent of their brothers’ (p. 18).

<sup>36</sup> Hadden, Haydn, p. 4

<sup>37</sup> Hadden, Haydn, p. 4; the author, however, continued by acknowledging that this view did not hold in the case of Haydn. The origin of the ‘popular idea’ to which Hadden referred is not stated.

<sup>38</sup> Evans, Tchaikovsky, p. 1

<sup>39</sup> Such was the scepticism that the young Mozart provoked that he was repeatedly subjected to musical experiments designed to put his phenomenal abilities to the test, notably by Daines Barrington. See Breakspeare, Mozart, pp. 15-16; Barrington, Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society, 9 (1770), 54-64, reprinted in Otto Erich Deutsch, Mozart: die Dokumente seines Lebens (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1961), translated by Eric Blom, Peter Branscombe and Jeremy Noble as Mozart: A Documentary Biography (London: Black, 1965), pp. 95-100.

<sup>40</sup> see Hadden, Haydn, p. 6

<sup>41</sup> Crowest, Beethoven, p. 7

<sup>42</sup> See Hadden, Chopin, p. 51; Patterson, Schumann, p. 8.

<sup>43</sup> Erb, Brahms, p. 5; Evans, Tchaikovsky, p. 3.

<sup>44</sup> Williams, Handel, p. 152; Crowest, Beethoven, p. 120.

<sup>45</sup> Crowest, Beethoven, pp. 119-20. Crowest’s description of Beethoven as a ‘born genius’, which contradicts the notion of Great Composers as initially talented and only subsequently attaining genius, is explicable in the tension surrounding Beethoven’s

slow development as a composer relative to more prodigious figures such as Mozart and Schubert.

<sup>46</sup> Hadden, Haydn, p. 14

<sup>47</sup> See Williams, Handel, p. 189; Breakspeare, Mozart, p. 168; Crowest, Beethoven, pp. 28-9; Lidgey, Wagner, pp. 62-5.

<sup>48</sup> Lidgey, Wagner, p. 77; compare to Crowest, Beethoven, p. 52.

<sup>49</sup> On this point see Cyril Ehrlich, The Music Profession in Britain since the Eighteenth Century: A Social History (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985).

<sup>50</sup> Lidgey, Wagner, pp. 16, 31-2. Of Wagner's various autobiographical writings, the most important is Mein Leben, which was dictated to his wife intermittently in the years 1865-80 and published privately, entering the public domain only in 1911. Richard Wagner, Mein Leben, 2 vols. (Munich: Bruckmann, 1911), translated as My Life, 2 vols. (London: Constable, 1911).

<sup>51</sup> Williams, Handel, p. 124

<sup>52</sup> Patterson, Schumann, p. 16. Around the age of twenty, Schumann had used a mechanical device in order to strengthen his fingers and thereby improve his piano-playing, but the result was permanent injury to his right hand. See further, Peter F. Ostwald, 'Florestan, Eusebius, Clara, and Schumann's Right Hand', 19th Century Music, 4/1 (Summer 1980), 17-31.

<sup>53</sup> Crowest, Beethoven, pp. 16-7

<sup>54</sup> '[E]in lediger Mensch lebt... nur halb' ('[a] bachelor... is only half alive'; the above quotation uses the translated form typically found in nineteenth-century biography). Mozart to his father, 15 December 1781, Mozart: Briefe und Aufzeichnungen, edited

by Wilhelm A. Bauer, Otto Erich Deutsch, and Joseph Heinz Eibl, 7 vols. (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1962-75), III, 181; The Letters of Mozart and his Family, edited and translated by Emily Anderson, 3 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1938; third edition, revised by Stanley Sadie and Fiona Smart, 1985), I, 783.

<sup>55</sup> Williams, Handel, p. 165

<sup>56</sup> Evans, Tchaikovsky, p. 5; compare to Hadden, Chopin, p. 5. We shall presently see that Tchaikovsky did in fact take a wife, though the marriage was extremely short-lived.

<sup>57</sup> Erb, Brahms, p. 21. The exact nature of Brahms's association with Clara Schumann – the wife of his late friend – represents dangerous biographical territory. On their relationship see, for example, Nancy B. Reich, 'Clara Schumann and Johannes Brahms', in Clara Schumann: The Artist and the Woman, second edition (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), pp. 169-89.

<sup>58</sup> see Hadden, Chopin, pp. 39-40

<sup>59</sup> See Evans, Tchaikovsky, pp. 26-31; Breakspeare, Mozart, pp. 51-6. Both women were singers who took husbands shortly after the episode involving their associated composer – indeed, in the case of Tchaikovsky, Désirée Artôt's marriage precluded further involvement with her. Mozart was ultimately to marry Aloysia Weber's sister Constanze.

<sup>60</sup> There is a certain irony in the fact that the androcentric muse paradigm should receive its fullest exegesis in the one volume of the original twelve written by a woman. Patterson's sensitivity to the importance of women to Schumann biography is exemplified by the inclusion in her monograph of dedicated sections on Clara

(Patterson, Schumann, pp. 100-7) and on other females associated with the composer (ibid., pp. 87-99). The fact that apparently the only way to explore such characters in detail, and to enhance their role in the life story, was to invoke this paradigm perhaps offers an indication of its stranglehold within musical biography.

<sup>61</sup> Patterson, Schumann, p. 29. The quotation refers to the fact that Clara Wieck was on tour at this point in the biography, so personal contact with Schumann was literally absent as their relationship was necessarily epistolary.

<sup>62</sup> Patterson, Schumann, p. 42

<sup>63</sup> Patterson, Schumann, p. 42

<sup>64</sup> ‘Du vervollständigst mich als Componisten, wie ich Dich. Jeder Deiner Gedanken kömmt aus meiner Seele, wie ich ja meine ganze Musik Dir zu verdanken habe.’ Robert Schumann to Clara Wieck, 10 July 1839, Clara und Robert Schumann Briefwechsel, edited by Eva Weissweiler and Susanna Ludwig, 3 vols. (Frankfurt: Stroemfeld, 1984-2001), II, 629, translated by Hildegard Fritsch and Ronald L. Crawford as The Complete Correspondence of Clara and Robert Schumann, 3 vols. (New York: Lang, 1994-2002), II, 307. Schumann’s output offers various demonstrations of the point: his piano piece Impromptus, Op. 5 is a set of variations on a theme by Clara; his song-cycle Myrthen, Op. 25 is dedicated to her; and his set of songs, Zwölf Gedichte aus ‘Liebesfrühling’, Op. 37 was written jointly with her.

<sup>65</sup> Patterson, Schumann, p. 105. This point is made explicit in the original volume, which included the word ‘literally’ (p. 124) immediately prior to the quotation as given above.

<sup>66</sup> Lidgley, Wagner, pp. 21-2, 57. The irony here is that Wagner’s second marriage was

hardly exemplary, as Cosima had left her existing husband Hans von Bülow, a strong friend of Wagner, for him. Lidgely was clearly anxious not to be detained by the matter (see ibid., p. 57).

<sup>67</sup> Evans, Tchaikovsky, p. 40; Hadden, Haydn, p. 33. The latter comment was made by Haydn to G. A. Griesinger and recorded in his Biographische Notizen über Joseph Haydn (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1810), p. 15, translated with introduction and notes by Vernon Gotwals as 'Biographical Notes Concerning Joseph Haydn' in Joseph Haydn: Eighteenth-Century Gentleman and Genius (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1963), pp. 3-66, at p. 16. On Tchaikovsky's perceived difficulty in engaging in work during his brief period with his wife see, for example, Tchaikovsky to von Meck, 28 July 1877, 'To my best friend': Correspondence between Tchaikovsky and Nadezhda von Meck, 1876-1878, translated by Galina von Meck, edited by Edward Garden and Nigel Gotteri, with an Introduction by Edward Garden (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), p. 30.

<sup>68</sup> See Erb, Brahms, p. 41. Clara Schumann had told Brahms that she would not be present at the event, but when the composer conveyed his dismay at this fact to a friend, Albert Dietrich, he contacted Clara and she was persuaded to attend.

<sup>69</sup> See Evans, Tchaikovsky, pp. 112-3. As Evans observed, Tchaikovsky frequently referred to the work in such terms in letters to von Meck; see Correspondence between Tchaikovsky and Nadezhda von Meck (cited above, n. 67), passim. The score famously carries the dedication 'To my best Friend'.

<sup>70</sup> Erb, Brahms, p. 45

<sup>71</sup> Evans, Tchaikovsky, p. 112

- <sup>72</sup> Notably, J. S. Bach wrote two Clavierbüchlein volumes for his wife Anna Magdalena and one for his son Wilhelm Friedemann, for whom he also composed his six Trio Sonatas, BWV 525-30; and Schumann wrote his Drei Clavier-Sonaten für die Jugend, Op. 118 for his daughters, in addition to those pieces for Clara cited above (see n. 64).
- <sup>73</sup> Williams, Bach, p. 20; Breakspeare, Mozart, p. 246.
- <sup>74</sup> See Patterson, Schumann, p. 107; Stratton, Mendelssohn, p. 138.
- <sup>75</sup> See Crowest, Beethoven, pp. 80-2; Erb, Brahms, p. 18. In fact, Beethoven's relationship with his nephew, like that of Brahms and Clara Schumann (for which, see n. 57), is a hazardous area of his biography. See, for example, Maynard Solomon, 'Beethoven and his Nephew: A Reappraisal', in Beethoven Studies, vol. 2, edited by Alan Tyson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 138-71.
- <sup>76</sup> See Crowest, Beethoven, p. 54; Erb, Brahms, p. 90.
- <sup>77</sup> Stratton, Mendelssohn, pp. 25, 124. The reference to Mendelssohn's work ethic being 'in the blood' recalls his grandfather Moses; the original text has 'ripe manhood' (p. 32) instead of 'middle age'.
- <sup>78</sup> Patterson, Schumann, p. 81; compare to Stratton, Mendelssohn, p. 116.
- <sup>79</sup> Hadden, Haydn, p. 1
- <sup>80</sup> Breakspeare, Mozart, p. 83
- <sup>81</sup> See, for example, Crowest, Beethoven, p. 121; Breakspeare, Mozart, p. 93; Hadden, Haydn, p. 154.
- <sup>82</sup> Duncan, Schubert, pp. 60, 61. The first sentence of this quotation is phrased differently in the original biography: 'With the dawn of our composer's last year (1828), his powers are discovered at their best' (p. 67).



- <sup>83</sup> Hadden, Chopin, pp. 177, 2
- <sup>84</sup> On the musical relationship between Felix and Fanny Mendelssohn, and the eclipsing of the latter by the former, see Marcia J. Citron, 'Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel: Musician in Her Brother's Shadow', in The Female Autograph: Theory and Practice of Autobiography from the Tenth to the Twentieth Century, edited by Domna C. Stanton (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 152-9.
- <sup>85</sup> Stratton, Mendelssohn, p. 139
- <sup>86</sup> Mendelssohn's last major work was the String Quartet in F minor, Op. 80, written at this time as a Requiem to his departed sister; his final song, 'Vergangen ist der lichte Tag', is also associated with her.
- <sup>87</sup> Lampadius wrote as follows: 'Auf die erste Kunde von Fannys Tode soll Mendelssohn einen lauten Schrei ausgestoßen haben. Es war aber nicht blos ein geistiger Schmerz, sondern auch ein physischer, der ihn so heftig ergriff. Wie der Nerv seiner geistigen Verbindung mit der Schwester durch diesen plötzlichen Todesfall abgerissen wurde, so zersprang nach der Ansicht des Arztes in diesem Momente heftiger Gemüthsbewegung vielleicht auch in seinem Kopfe ein kleines Blutgefäß... Mittelbar war also in der That der Tod der Schwester auch die Ursache seines frühen Scheidens'. ('The first news of Fanny's death drew a loud shriek from Mendelssohn. Nor was this all. His physician declared that his own death, which followed soon, was caused by the rupture of a blood-vessel in the head, at the moment of this sudden shock... The death of the sister was thus the cause of the death of the brother.') W. A. Lampadius, Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy: Ein Denkmal für seine Freunde (Leipzig: Hinrichs'sche, 1848), p. 187, edited and translated by William

Leonhard Gage as Life of Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (New York: Leypoldt, 1865), p. 150.

<sup>88</sup> Stratton, Mendelssohn, p. 129

<sup>89</sup> Erb, Brahms, p. 73

<sup>90</sup> Evans, Tchaikovsky, pp. 50-1

<sup>91</sup> Hadden, Chopin, p. 106. Lenz wrote of Sand that 'Chopin war verblendet, von vornherein eingenommen für die Giftpflanze... Chopin starb an Seelenkummer und Betrübniss, nicht an Schwindsucht' ('Chopin was dazzled and blinded from the first for the poisonous plant... Chopin did not die of consumption. He died of a broken heart'). W. von Lenz, 'Chopin', in Die grossen Pianoforte-Virtuosen unserer Zeit aus persönlicher Bekanntschaft: Liszt – Chopin – Tausig – Henselt (Berlin: Behr, 1872), pp. 19-50, at pp. 38, 48 (italics in original), translated as Wilhelm von Lenz, 'Frédéric Chopin', in The Great Piano Virtuosos Of Our Time, edited by Philip Reder (London: Kahn & Averill, 1983), pp. 27-58, at pp. 45, 56.

<sup>92</sup> F. Liszt, F. Chopin (Paris: Escudier, 1852), translated by John Broadhouse as Life of Chopin, second edition (London: Reeves, 1912). On Chopin and his gendered music, and critical response thereto, see Jeffrey Kallberg, Chopin at the Boundaries: Sex, History, and Musical Genre (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996).

<sup>93</sup> Hadden, Chopin, p. 192

<sup>94</sup> Duncan, Schubert, p. 74. In the original volume (p. 85), the word 'good' is used in place of 'devout'; nevertheless, as the quotation appeared within the context of a discussion of religion, its sense is faithfully rendered in the form in which it is given

above.

- <sup>95</sup> ‘Der geistlicher Musik die Kraft zuzuwenden bleibt ja wohl das höchste Ziel des Künstlers’. Schumann to Lieutenant Strackerjan, 13 January 1851, Robert Schumann’s Briefe, edited by F. Gustav Jansen (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1886), p. 281; translation as quoted in Patterson, Schumann, p. 173.
- <sup>96</sup> Patterson, Schumann, p. 127; the original text (p. 150) contains the word ‘maxims’ instead of ‘precepts’. Schumann founded the Neue Zeitschrift für Musik (initially, the Neue Leipziger Zeitschrift für Musik) in 1834, as a forum in which contemporary composers and their music might be discussed without prejudice. His early recognition of such composers as Berlioz, Chopin and Brahms is well-known, but he only rarely wrote about his own works.
- <sup>97</sup> Hadden, Chopin, p. 152. On Chopin’s religion, Liszt offered the following: ‘Sincèrement religieux, et attaché au catholicisme, Chopin n’abordait jamais ce sujet, gardant ses croyances sans les témoigner par aucun appareil. On pouvait longtemps le connaître sans avoir de notions exactes sur ses idées à cet égard.’ (‘Chopin was sincerely religious and attached to Catholicism, but he held his faith without calling attention to it, and never touched upon this subject. It was possible to be acquainted with him a long time without knowing what were his religious views.’) Liszt, F. Chopin, p. 114; Liszt, translated by Broadhouse, Life of Chopin, pp. 137-8.
- <sup>98</sup> See Lidgley, Wagner, p. 90. The composer’s writings on religion include his famous essay ‘Religion und Kunst’, Bayreuther Blätter, October 1880, translated and edited by William Ashton Ellis as ‘Religion and Art’ in Richard Wagner’s Prose Works, 8 vols. (London: Kegan Paul, 1892-99), VI, 211-52.

- <sup>99</sup> Hadden, Chopin, p. 187, n. 1 (inserted editorially); see also Blom's preface in Duncan, Schubert, p. vii.
- <sup>100</sup> W. Glock, Music & Letters, 16/2 (March 1935), 147, in the context of a review of four of the revised Master Musicians volumes (those on Schumann, Chopin, Mendelssohn and Schubert).
- <sup>101</sup> Blom's preface in Patterson, Schumann, p. xii. Blom made this assessment in the context of observing Patterson's assimilation of Clara Schumann's views on her husband, which assumes an added irony given the extent of the development of the muse paradigm therein, according to the present reading (see n. 60).
- <sup>102</sup> The majority of the Master Musicians biographers were English and worked in their native country, predominantly in London, though Stratton and Breakspeare were based in Birmingham, and Williams in Bradfield. Hadden, who was Scottish, was active in Edinburgh; Patterson was Irish, though of French Huguenot ancestry; and Erb spent his life in America.
- <sup>103</sup> The Musical Times, 48/767 (1 January 1907), 33. See further the more specific comments found in the review of Williams's Bach (1900) in The Musical Times, 41/687 (1 May 1900), 316, and that of Patterson's Schumann (1903), in The Musical Times, 44/724 (1 June 1903), 401.
- <sup>104</sup> In addition to exploring Chopin's time in England, Hadden presented some previously-unknown information concerning the composer's visit to Scotland in 1848. See Hadden, Chopin, pp. 117-27. The author's preoccupation with Scotland – his own country of origin – is demonstrated even more strongly in his biographies of non-musical subjects (for citations, see n. 11).

- <sup>105</sup> See Crowest, Beethoven, pp. 41-2. Crowest also excerpted Ferdinand Hiller's account of the composer's death, where it is written that '[s]peaking of the noble behaviour of the Philharmonic Society, and praising the English people, [Beethoven] said that as soon as he got well he should go to London and compose a grand symphonic overture for his friends, the English'. Hiller, Monthly Musical Record, 1 June 1874, quoted in Crowest, Beethoven, p. 43.
- <sup>106</sup> Lidgley, Wagner, p. 69. Ironically, in so doing, England nearly did Wagner a disservice; the demand for such a series had been considerably overestimated and its projected scope had to be dramatically reduced, so the financial gain for the composer was much less than anticipated.
- <sup>107</sup> See Duncan, Schubert, pp. 111-5. Grove famously wrote an extensive essay on the composer for inclusion in his Dictionary; G[rove], 'Schubert, Franz Peter', in idem, Dictionary of Music and Musicians, III, 319-82, reprinted, together with his two other major contributions to that publication, as George Grove, Beethoven – Schubert – Mendelssohn (London: Macmillan, 1951). On the significance of Grove's article on Schubert to the composer's inclusion within musical canon, see David Gramit, 'Constructing a Victorian Schubert: Music, Biography, and Cultural Values', 19th Century Music, 17/1 (Summer 1993), 65-78.
- <sup>108</sup> Patterson, Schumann, pp. 51, 34
- <sup>109</sup> Evans, Tchaikovsky, p. 104
- <sup>110</sup> Stratton, Mendelssohn, p. 45
- <sup>111</sup> Stratton, Mendelssohn, p. 20
- <sup>112</sup> Hadden, Haydn, pp. 116, 155

- <sup>113</sup> see Hadden, Haydn, pp. 66-7
- <sup>114</sup> Compare J[ulian] M[arshall], ‘Handel, George Frederick’, in Grove, Dictionary of Music and Musicians, I, 647-57, at p. 652 and [George] G[rove], ‘Mendelssohn, Jakob Ludwig Felix’, in ibid., II, 253-310, at p. 293 (subsequently reprinted; see n. 107).
- <sup>115</sup> Williams, Handel, pp. 205-8; the original text, written before the English Musical Renaissance had truly blossomed, is longer and more speculative (pp. 233-8).
- <sup>116</sup> Williams, Handel, p. 206
- <sup>117</sup> Williams, Handel, p. 207. In fairness to the biographer, he continued by acknowledging that ‘...there are doubtless many who will say that even if Handel had not appeared, or had remained in Germany, we should have had no great school of English composers during the eighteenth and part of the nineteenth centuries. It is after all doubtful whether the English composers who succeeded Handel... would have been sufficiently in earnest to carry on Purcell’s work.’ Nevertheless, the present point stands.
- <sup>118</sup> Indeed, modern biographical theorists are generally agreed that biography ultimately functions to elucidate the work of the subject through exploration of the life.
- <sup>119</sup> see Breakspeare, Mozart, pp. 211-2
- <sup>120</sup> see Breakspeare, Mozart, pp. 139-41
- <sup>121</sup> see Evans, Tchaikovsky, p. 96
- <sup>122</sup> See Duncan, Schubert, pp. 130-5, on Schubert’s settings of poems by British writers, and on English translations of the texts of his songs originally written in German.
- <sup>123</sup> The scope of this article precludes in-depth discussion of the paradigms that arise from discussions of the music – as distinct from those primarily connected to

composers' lives – in the Master Musicians volumes. However, some preliminary analysis is offered above.

<sup>124</sup> Williams, Handel, p. 190; see ibid., pp. 185-91, on this work.

<sup>125</sup> Stratton, Mendelssohn, pp. 160, 120; on Elijah, see ibid., pp. 157-60. This connection to Birmingham held personal significance for the biographer, who settled in the city just twenty years later.

<sup>126</sup> On Mozart's Requiem, see Breakspeare, Mozart, pp. 144-55.

<sup>127</sup> See, for example, Patterson, Schumann, p. 173; Duncan, Schubert, p. 67.

<sup>128</sup> See Hadden, Haydn, pp. 134-5. Biographical descriptions of this episode are based on early accounts including that of Carpani, who was an eyewitness to the event. See Giuseppe Carpani, Le Haydine, ovvero Lettere su la vita e le opere del celebre maestro Giuseppe Haydn (Milan: Boccinelli, 1812), pp. 242-5, translated (via a French adaptation) by Robert Brewin as 'Letters on the Celebrated Composer Haydn' in The Life of Haydn, in a Series of Letters Written at Vienna. Followed by The Life of Mozart, with Observations on Metastasio, and on the Present State of Music in France and Italy (London: Murray, 1817), pp. 1-332, at pp. 309-11.

<sup>129</sup> see Evans, Tchaikovsky, pp. 122-3

<sup>130</sup> See, for example, Katharine Ellis, Music Criticism in Nineteenth-Century France: La Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris, 1834-1880 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

<sup>131</sup> Linda Colley, Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); David Hempton, Religion and political culture in Britain and Ireland: From the Glorious Revolution to the decline of empire (Cambridge: Cambridge

University Press, 1996).

- <sup>132</sup> Paula R. Backscheider, Reflections on Biography (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 103.
- <sup>133</sup> John Mainwaring, Memoirs of the Life of the Late George Frederic Handel (London: Dodsley, 1760).
- <sup>134</sup> Sir John Hawkins, A General History of the Science and Practice of Music, 5 vols. (London: Payne, 1776); Charles Burney, A General History of Music, from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period, 4 vols. (London: Author, 1776-89).
- <sup>135</sup> See the Preface to [John S. Sainsbury], A Dictionary of Musicians From the Earliest Times, 2 vols. (London: Sainsbury, 1825; reprinted, New York: Da Capo, 1966), I, i-iii. Henry George Farmer has more recently demonstrated this claim to have been unjustified; Farmer, 'British Musicians a Century Ago', Music & Letters, 12/4 (October 1931), 384-92, reprinted with revisions in Sainsbury, A Dictionary of Musicians From the Earliest Times (1966 edition), I, vii-xvi.
- <sup>136</sup> Dictionary of National Biography, edited by Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee, 68 vols. (London: Smith, Elder, 1885-1900); 'English Men of Letters' series, edited by John Morley, 68 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1878-1919).
- <sup>137</sup> In his editorial preface, Grove wrote that '[i]n an English dictionary it has been thought right to treat English music and musicians with special care, and to give their biographies and achievements with some minuteness of detail.' Grove, Preface, in idem, Dictionary of Music and Musicians, I, v-vi, at p. vi.
- <sup>138</sup> Frederick J. Crowest, Phases of Musical England (London: Remington, 1881); idem, A Catechism of Musical History and Biography. With Especial Reference to English



Music and Musicians (London: Reeves, [1883]); idem, The Dictionary of British Musicians: From the Earliest Times to the Present (London: Jarrold, 1895); idem, The Story of British Music (From the Earliest Times to the Tudor Period) (London: Bentley, 1896).

<sup>139</sup> Brown and Stratton, British Musical Biography, Preface, page unnumbered.

<sup>140</sup> Published by Henri Laurens of Paris, the earliest volumes of the ‘Les musiciens célèbres’ series appeared in 1905 under the editorship of Élie Poirée. Over twenty monographs were brought out in the following six years, including the following: P.-L. Hillemacher, Gounod (1905); Arthur Pougin, Hérold (1906); Camile Bellaigue, Mozart (1907); Henri de Curzon, Grétry (1907); Élie Poirée, Chopin (1907); Paul de Stœcklin, Mendelssohn (1907); Lucien Augé de Lassus, Boïeldieu (1908); L.-A. Bourgault-Ducoudray, Schubert (1908); Lionel de la Laurencie, Rameau (1908); Arthur Coquard, Berlioz (1909); René Brancour, Félicien David (1910); Henri Prunières, Lully (1910); Henry Gauthier-Villars, Bizet (1911); Vincent d’Indy, Beethoven (1911); Charles Malherbe, Auber (1911).

<sup>141</sup> See, for example, Adolphe Jullien, ‘Mendelssohn à Paris’, in Airs variés: Histoire, critique, biographie musicales et dramatiques (Paris: Charpentier, 1877), pp. 65-136.

<sup>142</sup> From the point of view of the Master Musicians series, the figure who laid the strongest claim to being an English Great Composer was surely Purcell; on the expansion of the set in the 1930s, a biography by Jack Westrup on this subject was soon included. Another addition was a monograph on Elgar (whose career was very much in its infancy at the time of production of the original series), a decision no doubt influenced by his recent death and the opportunity presented by the availability

of its author, William Reed, a good friend of the composer. J. A. Westrup, Purcell (London: Dent, 1937); W. H. Reed, Elgar (London: Dent, 1939).

<sup>143</sup> See Lidgely, Wagner, pp. 95-143; Patterson, Schumann, pp. 135-48; Stratton, Mendelssohn, pp. 17, 149. For collected editions of the literature referenced above see, respectively, the following: Richard Wagner, Gesammelte Schriften und Dichtungen, 10 vols. (Leipzig: Fritzsche, 1871-83), edited and translated by William Ashton Ellis as Richard Wagner's Prose Works, 8 vols. (see n. 98); Robert Schumann, Gesammelte Schriften über Musik und Musiker, 4 vols. (Leipzig: Wigand, 1854), edited and translated by Fanny Raymond Ritter as Music and Musicians: Essays and Criticism, 2 vols. (London: Reeves, 1877-80); Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, Briefe aus den Jahren 1833 bis 1847, edited by Paul Mendelssohn-Bartholdy and Carl Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (Leipzig: Mendelssohn, 1863), translated by Lady [Grace] Wallace as Letters from 1833 to 1847 (London: Longmans, 1863).

<sup>144</sup> Lidgely's biography contained eight chapters on Wagner's stage works (Lidgely, Wagner, pp. 144-244), as well as two summarising his major literary writings (*ibid.*, pp. 95-143); Breakspeare devoted a substantial portion of his monograph to Mozart's major operas (Breakspeare, Mozart, pp. 155-210); and Evans's volume included sections on Tchaikovsky's operas (Evans, Tchaikovsky, pp. 57-92) and ballets (*ibid.*, pp. 96-103).

<sup>145</sup> I argue this point in my article "'When a Woman Speaks the Truth About Her Body': Ethel Smyth, Virginia Woolf and the Challenges of Lesbian Auto/biography", Music & Letters, 85/2 (forthcoming, May 2004).

<sup>146</sup> See, for example, Jane Spencer, The Rise of the Woman Novelist: From Aphra Behn

to Jane Austen (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986). Biographies of female writers that emerged in nineteenth-century England include Mrs [Elizabeth] Gaskell's canonical The Life of Charlotte Brontë, 2 vols. (London: Smith, Elder, 1857).

<sup>147</sup> While subscribing to the muse paradigm, Patterson explored the compositional activities of Clara Schumann in as much detail as she apparently felt able (see Patterson, Schumann, pp. 31, 102). She did not, however, have the benefit of Berthold Litzmann's extensive biography Clara Schumann: ein Künstlerleben nach Tagebüchern und Briefen, 3 vols. (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1902-8), abridged and translated by Grace E. Hadow as Clara Schumann: An artist's life based on material found in diaries and letters, with a preface by W. H. Hadow, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1913).

<sup>148</sup> Hadden, Chopin, pp. 179, 177. Hadow had written in an essay on Chopin that '[w]e hardly think of him as marking a stage in the general course and progress of artistic History, but, rather, as standing aside from it, unconscious of his relation to the world, preoccupied with the fairyland of his own creations.' W. H. Hadow, 'Frederick Chopin', Studies in Modern Music, 2 vols. (London: Seeley, 1893-5), II, 77-170, at p. 169.

<sup>149</sup> The earliest volumes of the series intertwined the composers at the very heart of music's great classical canons (Beethoven, Wagner, Bach, Mozart) with those possessing significant English connections (Handel, Mendelssohn, Haydn). The biographies of those figures whose position therein was more tenuous (notably Schubert, Brahms, and Tchaikovsky) followed later.