

REVIEWS



BOOKS

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MOZART'S MUSIC OF FRIENDS: SOCIAL INTERPLAY IN THE CHAMBER WORKS

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Imitating the subject of the book at hand, and the broader practice of dialogue in eighteenth-century letters, this review takes the form of an imaginary conversation between a cellist and second violinist who are waiting for the violist and first violinist to join them so they can begin their rehearsal of one of the Mozart 'Haydn' quartets. The text in italics and square brackets describes the changing dynamic between the two fictional protagonists as their conversation progresses.

[Cello opens with a flourish, without disclosing a personal position . . .]

Cello: This book focuses on a repertoire we have considered extensively over the years as performers and academics. We are the book's ideal audience, therefore. How do you find it?

[Violin 2 responds in jovial mood]

Violin 2: I like it! The main text is exceptionally well written. It's a real pleasure to read, whether or not you choose to consult the detailed scholarly footnotes in which much of the specialist methodology and academic context is explained. Well laid out with attractive illustrations, it offers generous music examples, a full reference list and an index at the end. Additionally, it is a book that exists beyond its own pages, owing to the extensive web resources (at www.mozartsmusicoffriends.com) comprising sound recordings (partnering the music examples in the book), further scores, illustrations, web documents and performer biographies, all designed to be 'fun and engaging for Mozart lovers of all stripes', as the author puts it in a video clip on the website home page.

[Cello follows with complementary turn of phrase]

Cello: It is a nice introduction to music theory and analysis for students, referring to a wide range of analytical concepts. That said, the author writes for a 'diverse readership' in addition to students of theory, including historical musicologists, performers and general enthusiasts. I am somewhat beguiled by its easy approachability. Goodness knows, Western art music needs its exponents who can engage the non-expert listener – or even the first-year university music student who isn't yet familiar with this repertoire, owing to the current school music curriculum – without totally dumbing it down, and I think Klorman fulfils that role well. Pragmatically, even though it is not in conventional textbook format, I'd recommend it for undergraduate classroom teaching because of the clarity of the exposition and supporting materials.

[. . . which is then developed further by Violin 2]

Violin 2: The Foreword, by Patrick McCreless, of Yale University, though somewhat like a review before the fact, does a good job of introducing the project to those with little to no exposure to music analysis. So, by the time I started dipping into the book, I already knew that the first three chapters focus on 'historical perspectives', examining the social dimension of chamber music of the period, chamber music as representing the intimacy of (male) conversation, and the 'in-time' qualities which Klorman tells us



characterized informal or semi-formal musical gatherings, where the boundary between composition and extemporization was blurred and indeed constantly challenged by Mozart and other prodigies of the time. Chapters 4 to 7 then draw upon an eclectic range of analytical techniques and approaches, ranging from Schenker through the new *Formenlehre* to recent analytical/critical issues: body and gesture, topic theory and music as play. It then remains for Klorman to underline his key message as his book progresses. His 'central project', as he puts it, is 'to construct a framework for analyzing chamber music as play, expressing in prose the kind of dynamic social intercourse that musicians experience while playing this repertoire' (111). He does this by proposing the idea of multiple agency in performance, claiming that 'the musical fabric is produced through the interaction of all parts within the texture . . . It constitutes a radical focusing of analytical attention on a single level, that of the various fictional personas that (usually) correspond to the individual players' (136). His authority for this approach is that he is a performer – indeed he plays the viola with his own musical friends in the accompanying web materials.

[the mood darkens somewhat . . .]

Cello: All these good things notwithstanding, is his approach as innovative as he seems to feel – don't we already know that instruments in musical textures 'talk to' each other? After all, Edward T. Cone told us back in 1974 in *The Composer's Voice* (Berkeley: University of California Press) that though pieces of music project (and construct) an authorial consciousness – convey a sense of a composer – they are also broken up by other voices, those belonging to the fictional personas of the poetry, the strands of the texture (such as the 'piano accompaniment') or simply the players of the piece. This insight was developed in the new musicology, for example in work by Lawrence Kramer and Carolyn Abbate (albeit usually in relation to a later repertoire than Klorman's). Famously, in *Unsung Voices* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), Abbate invoked Roland Barthes and Mikhail Bakhtin to talk about orchestral textures as annihilating a sense of the composer, and as plunging us into an uncanny world of multiple voices and agents. So the claim to innovation in Klorman's book strikes me as somewhat overstated.

Violin 2: Yes, he is more indebted to the new musicology than he acknowledges, and, seeming to take the title of Cone's book literally, misreads him as emphasizing a single authorial voice. Admittedly, Klorman tries to give an original twist to Cone's idea of personae in speaking of multiple agents and agency, but I would prefer a more nuanced view of agency than he offers. Rebecca Thumpston put it well in an article published after Klorman's book but referring to literature from well before it, in which she discusses 'the fluidity of perceptions of agency' and proposes a new term, 'intra-agency', which 'recognizes the wavering location of agency, existing in a realm between the listener, work, performer, persona and composer' ('The Embodiment of Yearning: Towards a Tripartite Theory of Musical Agency', in *Music, Analysis, Experience*, ed. Costantino Maeder and Mark Reybrouck (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2015), 333). Like Seth Monahan ('Action and Agency Revisited', *Journal of Music Theory* 57/2 (2013), 321–371), who is quoted by our author, Thumpston recognizes what Fred Maus labels the pervasive indeterminacy of agency: 'the claim is not that different listeners may interpret the music differently (though they undoubtedly will), but rather that a single listener's experience will include a play of various schemes of individuation, none of them felt as obligatory' (Maus, 'Music as Drama', *Music Theory Spectrum* 10 (1988), 68).

Cello: Just as his idea of agency is not rich enough for me, so too I have some issue with his views of music in and as performance, since his work comes quite late to the 'performative turn' in musical scholarship and beyond. This shift of attention to music as performance constitutes a new orthodoxy, so much so that its explanatory power has been questioned (for example by Georgina Born in 'For a Relational Musicology: Music and Interdisciplinarity, Beyond the Practice Turn', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 135/2 (2010), 205–243). To be productive, appeals to music as performance, which can possess an almost pious self-evident quality, need to register such critiques, and engage more fully with performance theory, from which they rarely draw. As a result, performance is too often invoked rhetorically, and pre-critically, as a domain in which musicians and audiences are simply 'in the moment', and music is apprehended in a barely mediated manner



as ‘presence’ (these are scare quotes, not actual quotes). While these tropes are part of the discourse of music as performance, they are not facts of performance, and Klorman’s attempt to refresh music analysis might have been elaborated more substantially with reference to, say, Elizabeth Bell’s *Theories of Performance* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publishing, 2008). Performance, performing and performativity have a literature which Klorman fails to access, at least in this work.

[Violin 2 tries to lighten the tone]

Violin 2: I think he would be bored by this stage in our conversation! Isn’t his point much simpler – that the sociality of the later eighteenth century is ‘inside’ the music? Mozart’s chamber music enacts a sort of idealized sociality through how the instruments behave with each other. And in this sense, no special theories are needed as this sociality is just sort of there, waiting to be experienced?

Cello: He does seem to be getting at something like that. And he might have been even more explicit about it, because lurking in his approach is something like McLuhan’s maxim that ‘the medium is the message’ – in this case, music to be played by a group of people in private and semi-public venues is not about what the music ‘represents’ but about its own (if you like) performative materiality.

Violin 2: Yes, though I hoped for more: I was anticipating a new, or at least varied and nuanced, vocabulary to emerge in the book about how instruments behave and relate to each other – a sort of phenomenology of texture. But I didn’t find that. Klorman’s lexicon for his instruments seems quite monochrome in this regard, despite the fact he writes so convincingly as narrator and observer (there is a certain irony here to which I will return). I found some phrases describing the performative collaboration like ‘[the] violin shows off’ (38), ‘[the cello declares] “anything you can do, I can do better!”’ (38), ‘violin II [offers] “approving” commentary’ (43), ‘No!’ (43), ‘a tentative exchange’ (279), but little else. Maybe that’s because, as Klorman emphasizes, he’s not attempting to map conversation onto music, but to place these ideas in the musical domain. In other words, music has its own sociability. None the less, I feel that even a provisional vocabulary has failed to emerge.

[It is now the Cello’s turn to try to recapture the earlier, lighter mood]

Cello: Perhaps it’s not Klorman but his historical sources that lacked vocabulary . . . but then again, if they lacked the words ‘back then’ should we now be putting them in their mouths? . . .

[Violin 2 looks quizzical, even a bit lost . . . and there follows a whirlwind exchange of ideas]

Violin 2: Is Klorman’s vision of the sociability of the late eighteenth-century salon, and of Mozart’s chamber music, a bit too *gemütlich* (pleasant and cheerful); is this a Biedermeier Mozart? That phrase he uses in his title – ‘music of friends’ – is from an essay by Richard Henry Walthew published in his *The Development of Chamber Music* (London: Boosey and Hawkes, 1909, 42) at the zenith of Victorianism and concerned domestic music-making. Several of Klorman’s images, as he acknowledges, are from the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and yet they are used, with only minimal caveats, as windows onto the late eighteenth century. And, thinking about it, his main witnesses to the idealized sociability of chamber music were writing *after* the French Revolution, when all these ‘Enlightened’ ideals of friendly rivalry between equals might have seemed to be slipping into the past.

Cello: You mean chamber music enshrined not just an idealized but a nostalgic vision of sociability? That’s neat! But too neat! You always do this to me!

Violin 2: Anyway, back to the musical point. What kinds of sociability does Klorman discern in Mozart?

Cello: Well, he seems to like the idea of ‘friendly rivalry’, but beyond that, the way Klorman attributes remarks to the instruments (either written into his verbal analysis or set out above the musical score extracts, as a gloss) can seem rather quaint: ‘Tell us a little story about this motive’ (145); ‘lovebirds’ duet’ (162); ‘come on . . . we’re still on the predominant and need to finish the cadence’ (163).



Violin 2: He's entitled to his own way of expressing things! But maybe you're right that the range of social identities and behaviours Klorman admits into chamber music does seem bowdlerized, given the realities of eighteenth-century life, period theories of human selfishness and the contemporary enjoyment of cruel satire. Comedy was a means of lampooning human foibles, and Klorman's references to opera buffa might invite consideration of instrumental 'agents' as in the grip of various manias, fixations and anti-social characteristics.

Cello: That would be quite a different book, and I hope maybe someone some day will write it. But let's think a bit more about why the variety and contradictions of sociability in the late eighteenth century don't feature in the book. I'm wondering now if it's because Klorman's sense of the music is ultimately so compliant with tonal theory, that is, with a mingling of Schenkerian principles involving long-range goals, and the new *Formenlehre* of (particularly) Hepokoski and Darcy? It is written within that tradition, and perhaps one purpose of the McCreless foreword is to affirm that 'belonging', just as Mozart in some biographical interpretations evokes his father's endorsement in the figure of Sarastro. For my taste, Klorman is just a bit too keen to tell me what key the music is in. Consequently, the 'conversation' that he constructs between instruments sometimes seems forced, and in such contrast to his own elegant musical and literary turns. One could almost argue that the instruments hardly ever talk to each other about anything but their next modulation (when and how to undertake it), or about metre and hypermetre (does your two-bar unit conflict with the patterns of weak and strong bars in mine) or about obvious melodic interplay (now you're imitating my music).

Violin 2: So you mean that it's not really about sociability in/as music so much as a supplement to theories of sonata form and metre that highlights how the instruments seem to be going about realizing harmonic schemata or hypermetre and foregrounds melodic features.

Cello: Exactly, you've got it.

[There is a general pause as the two instruments contemplate this thought]

Violin 2: Could it be otherwise, though, if Klorman writes about canonic repertoire within the discipline of music theory?

Cello: Probably not, but a wider cultural-historical account could add something – even a few glimpses of music-making in novels would help to elaborate what kinds of sociality were at stake when people made music together. Consider Goethe's novel of 1809, *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* (Elective Affinities), a novel that exposes a tension between social institutions and human passions, and which complicates the distinction between voluntary and involuntary relationships (or sociability if you like). There's even a music scene, in which Otilie (a young woman and orphan) accompanies the flute playing of the wealthy, married Edward (*Goethes Werke*, ed. Benno von Wiese and Eric Trunz, volume 6 (Hamburg: Wegner, 1960), 297). Their music catalyses the seemingly 'chemical' attraction between them and prophesies their impending intimacy . . .

[The Cello leans in towards Violin 2, but Violin 2 turns adroitly in another direction]

Violin 2: I shall have to believe you, because I haven't read it! But yes, I see where you're coming from. I think there may, nevertheless, be something generalizable to be taken from Klorman's work – if he'd wanted to frame it more systematically. I'm thinking of some research by Daniel Leech-Wilkinson and Helen Prior on the use of metaphor in performance [*Violin 2 rifles in its shoulderbag and gets out an e-book reader*], where they say: 'there may be much to be learned from paying attention to the ways in which performers talk about being musically expressive in sound. Often this bears little relation to musicological discourse: little of the knowledge *about* music taught to performers (its history, theory, sociology, etc.) is actually used during performance (although it may have some bearing on the choices made in preparation). And little of the knowledge of *how to make* music which they use as they perform is written down or available for discussion or even consciously understood' (*Music and Shape*, ed. Leech-Wilkinson and Prior (New York:



Oxford University Press, 2017), 37; original italics). In this context, I'd like to know more about the language, metaphors and concepts that chamber musicians employ – I believe that our US colleagues call them 'studio talk' – and how these convey understanding, and shape performance, outside (or less rigorously inside) Klorman's music-theoretical discourse.

Cello: I agree that performers' language matters, and should be granted epistemological dignity in music scholarship. And, like you, I lament the fact that Klorman doesn't actually tell us what that language is, an omission that tends to maintain the scholarly hierarchy between analyst and performer. Analysts have more things to learn from performers than are dreamt of in this book's philosophy.

Violin 2: The 'performer/theorist' nexus has a long history, of course, though not one Klorman particularly focuses on. Tonal theory in particular – with Schenker as both performer and seer-theorist at the high point of this tradition – has often sought authority in the 'knowledge' represented by expert performance.

Cello: Klorman believes his personal experience as a player can feed into and refresh musical analysis, and even guide the interpretation of the musical past. But he can believe this because he doesn't analyse or historicize his performing. A professional performer today is trained and professionalized in ways remote from the experiences of Mozart's friends, some of whom were amateurs, and who played chamber music for their own enjoyment. I wonder if Klorman has looked at Hans Keller's *Criticism*, referring to the 'phoney profession' of viola player, and of course there was no such thing as a professional viola player in the eighteenth century (Hans Keller, *Criticism* (London: Faber, 1987)).

Violin 2: To be honest, as a keen and reasonably proficient connoisseur performer myself, I found Klorman's self-inscription as performer rather alienating for another reason. The halcyon world which he portrays is one most current readers, of whatever stripes, can only look in on and wonder at. Hardly any classically trained performer today can improvise at the drop of a hat, and classical chamber music is no longer a living repertoire filling everyone's homes. I'm left wondering if this is a work of autobiographical fiction or of music analysis; is it intersubjectively valid or primarily personal? Although Klorman does track changes in the contexts of performance, and notes the rise after 1800 of a performance ideal of 'truth to the work', he doesn't discuss historical performance practice. This omission creates a *tromp l'oeil*, allowing him not only to universalize his experience of playing – to grant it the status of historical evidence and insight into the music itself – but also to identify with chamber musicians of the past and with the composer. These identifications, while they claim to grant access to the past, also erase the difference – and distance – between then and now. Klorman's identification with Mozart the viola player is full of love, but, as psychoanalytic theories of identification predict (as Schenker, in post *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, would surely have known), this love involves a sense of loss and of self-love (see Urie Bronfenbrenner, 'Freudian Theories of Identification and Their Derivatives', *Child Development* 31/1 (1960), 15–40). Klorman admits that 'it might require an entirely different sort of analyst to determine my competency to evaluate my own motivations' (291), but I think his sense that the past is just at our fingertips would be better treated as a trope – something to analyse – rather than a putative new theory.

[after their vigorous interchange of ideas the two instruments seem to be coming to a kind of resolution, their views synthesizing on a topic of mutual concern]

Cello: I agree: he tries to invite us into his charmed country, and probably genuinely feels that this is possible. Klorman wants us not only to experience the world he portrays aurally through being part of the fabric of the music, but also visually, spatially, viscerally. The terminology in his introductory video clip is telling in this respect, where he refers his audience to the website's 'anthology of paintings so you can step into the interiors where this music was performed', and for those who want to dig even deeper 'there is an anthology of historical documents [he] used in preparation of the book, so that the reader can 'read directly what these authors had to say'. He's intent on bringing our experience alive. He puts himself in the position of a 'medium', offering privileged access to a lost domain, but for some of us this will only increase the sense that we are



doomed, because such access is impossible for us all – even (though I would never want him to have to admit it), for himself.

Violin 2: I would so much like my body to sway to his music (*[said wryly]*) as yours will do with mine as we rehearse), but I cannot play that game, much as I might like to. Ultimately, I sense uncertainty – and an attempt to forestall criticism – in our author's numerous caveats on his authority as a professional performer. His admission, adopting the poignant words of L. P. Hartley, that the past is a foreign country (73), does not adequately address how problematic is his promise to grant us access to the music itself in another time and place. His past is not Mozart's present. I think this quotation quite neatly sums it up for me [*Violin 2 moves towards a bookcase and pulls out from it a slim volume of T. S. Eliot's Four Quartets and reads out loud*]:

Words move, music moves
Only in time; but that which is only living
Can only die

[Final triple hammer closure as the door is flung open by the missing instrumentalists, sheet music under their arms, ready to play through Mozart's 'Dissonance' Quartet for the first time together.]

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RALPH P. LOCKE

MUSIC AND THE EXOTIC FROM THE RENAISSANCE TO MOZART

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Music's relationship to the exotic has been a growing area of enquiry in recent decades, yet, as any number of sources reveal – from specialized studies to collections of essays to *Grove Music Online's* 'Exoticism' bibliography (updated in September 2014) – the focus of most scholarship has been on music of the nineteenth century and beyond. To some degree, this is understandable: as European empires expanded to encompass much of the globe and contact with foreign cultures increased, European composers and audiences concomitantly found novelty and entertainment through musical representations, however stereotypical and inaccurate, of these cultures. Thus the sheer number of such representations – which tended, increasingly, to include stylistic markers of difference – grew substantially in the nineteenth century. Ralph P. Locke's own voluminous previous writings have focused virtually exclusively on the period after 1800, from his studies of Saint-Saëns's *Samson et Dalila* and Verdi's *Aida* to his book *Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), which includes only a chapter and a half (out of eleven) on exotic works pre-dating the nineteenth century. *Music and the Exotic from the Renaissance to Mozart* is thus a much-needed addition to the literature. It is the first sustained study of specific works composed during the years 1500–1800, while it also highlights broader trends in composers' approaches to the exotic and audiences' reception of their music. These trends include an increasing preference for exotic settings and characters, often involving quite particular references to a range of foreigners, removed either geographically or chronologically; frequent allegorical treatment of characters and groups in musico-dramatic works, often for the purpose of criticizing aspects of the home culture; and, especially in the eighteenth century, a growing number of stylistic indications of otherness (6–8).