

GLSG Newsletter

For the Gay & Lesbian Study Group
of the American Musicological Society
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introduction

Welcome to the spring issue of the Newsletter of the Gay & Lesbian Study Group of the American Musicological Society (AMS). The GLSG is a recognised special interest group of the AMS. A list of GLSG officers and their addresses appears at the end of this issue.

Our objectives include promoting communication among lesbian & gay music scholars, increasing awareness of issues in sexuality and music in the academic community, and establishing a forum for the presentation of lesbian & gay music studies. We also intend to provide an environment in which to examine the process of coming out in academia, and to contribute to a positive political climate for gay & lesbian affirmative action and curricula. We welcome all scholars interested in these topics.

Subscriptions & Contributions: Issues appear twice a year in March and October. We ask (US) \$15 per year for subscribing individuals, \$20 for institutions, and \$10 for the unwaged. Subscribers outside North America should add \$2 to the appropriate category. Subscriptions cover the calendar year. Back issues are available for half the subscription price. Please make cheques out to *GLSG-Judith Peraino* and mail to the address listed at the end of this issue. If you need a receipt (in addition to your canceled cheque) please say so.

The financial burden of producing this Newsletter is not eased by any institution or grant. We welcome contributions in any amount. A Supporting Member subscription is \$25, which goes toward production of the Newsletter.

Mailing List: We encourage you to send names for the mailing list to Judith Peraino at the address listed at the end of this issue. Names and addresses of your colleagues are welcome, as well as addresses of lesbian & gay musical institutions. The GLSG mailing list is not offered to any other organization.

Announcements & Articles should be sent to Stephen McClatchie or Gillian Rodger, co-editors, by 15 February and 15 September of each year. E-mail submissions are

preferred, if possible. We welcome news items, announcements of conferences, concerts, and workshops, special bibliographies, syllabi, suggestions, and letters (even complaints).

Photocopying: Libraries are authorized to photocopy materials in this Newsletter for the purposes of course reserve reading at the rate of one copy for every fifteen students, and may reuse copies for other courses or for the same course offered subsequently.

Gentle Readers: I was both excited and flattered to be asked by the GLSG to consider standing for election as co-editor of the newsletter. I am only sorry that I was not able to attend the AMS meeting in Phoenix and meet you all in person. As an ethnomusicologist by training the task of co-editing a musicology newsletter is a daunting one, but I hope to make a contribution to the newsletter and to live up to the high standards set by previous co-editors.

Thanks go to all of the contributors to this issue, which includes Sue-Ellen Case's speech at the meeting of the GLSG in Phoenix, along with reports from the AMS, SEM and other conferences.

[Gillian Rodger]

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**Society for Ethnomusicology
22-26 October 1997
Pittsburgh**

The Society for Ethnomusicology met jointly with the International Association for the Study of Popular Music at the Sheraton Station Square, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, October 22-26, 1997. Queer Theory was one of the announced conference themes, and for many participants there was a feeling that, finally, our moment had arrived. In open discussion during pre-conference symposium on "Ethnomusicology and the Academy" the need to recognize academic approaches such as queer theory was discussed. There were, however, relatively few papers in the main conference that dealt with the issue of queer theory or connections between sexuality and music.

The highlight of the meeting was, without doubt, the Forum entitled *Queering Ethnomusicology*. This forum had been scheduled to take place in a small conference room and it became necessary to do some last minute juggling to move into a larger room. Even then, the room was full to overflowing. The members of the panel were Philip Brett (University of California Riverside), Jennifer Fraser (Brown University), Gillian Rodger (University of Pittsburgh), Zoe Sherinian (Oberlin) and Billy Vaughn and Matti Bunzl (University of Chicago). The discussant was Carolina Robertson (University of Maryland-College Park). The short papers given by the panelists varied greatly in approach and subject. Philip Brett and Gillian Rodger looked at historical topics. Philip examined the lure of the "exotic" and "Oriental" for homosexual composers of western art music of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century, and the implications inherent in this use of aural markers of cultural "otherness." Gillian introduced an episode from the life of one of the actresses she studies, a same-sex marriage that occurred in 1886, and read contemporary reactions to this event against definitions of class, gender and sexuality of that period to show the necessity of redefining "queer" in different contexts. Jennifer presented the results of her survey of gay and lesbian ethnomusicologists, noting a variety of levels of "outness" both in the academy and in fieldwork that seemed to correlate primarily with age. Zoe examined same-sex cross-caste friendships among Indian girls, using queer theory drawn from anthropology to illuminate an erotic quality to those friendship that has previously been overlooked, or played down by scholars. Matti and Billy brought both a musicological and anthropological perspective to the study of the central role of music in Austria's first ever annual Rainbow Parade. Carolina concluded the session with a response to the

papers given which included a long and timely discussion of personal identity and the various identities academics cultivate, particularly in the field.

Three other papers with gay/lesbian/queer themes also appeared on the program. On a panel that presented the recent work of the Music and Gender Study Group of ICTM Boden Sandstrom (University of Maryland, College Park) presented a short paper entitled "The Michigan Womyn's Festival: A Safe Space for Lesbian Healing and Community." Gillian Rodger showed the relevance of ideas drawn from gay and lesbian studies and queer theory in considering musical performance in past (or foreign) cultures in her paper "He Isn't A Marrying Man: Gender and Sexuality in the Repertoire of Male Impersonators, 1870-1920." And Judith Peraino (Cornell University) showed the resistance to, and in cases the acceptance of, the idea of homosexuality as "ethnicity" in her paper "San Francisco: Resisting a Queer Musical 'Ethnography.'"

The Sexualities and Les/Bi/Gay/Transgendered Concerns Committee of SEM met during the meeting and Ingrid Monson, who had been instrumental in early efforts to organize this committee, stepped down as chair. Gillian Rodger was elected as the new chair. The committee agreed that the name of the committee should not be changed or shortened, because it was important that the committee's role of advocacy and support for L/B/G/T ethnomusicologists within the society be stressed. An informal party sponsored by the committee was held on Saturday night.

[Gillian Rodger]

**American Musicological Society
30 October - 2 November 1997
Phoenix**

Two aspects of the 1997 AMS/SMT meeting in Phoenix struck me as unusual. First, not only is downtown Phoenix wonderfully airy and spacious; the rooms for most of the paper sessions were positively cavernous, making me wonder from time to time where everyone else had gone (does happy hour start earlier there?). It was certainly better than being cramped into small, dank hotel spaces, as we have been in past years. I just hope no one reading a paper was put out by what looked like small crowds. Those of us who were "just listening" this time around were given much food for thought. Second, everyone (or so it seemed) was talking about gender and sexuality, except for Susan McClary, who's now talking about Quietism and Neoplatonism. Go figure—and she had a full house, too, unlike many readers who advertized their talks with more openly provocative abstracts. Perhaps the New Musicology, like Early Music of late, has entered the mainstream, and one can't rely any more on hype to generate an audience. In any case, it's great to

be able to go to an AMS/SMT meeting that features—simultaneously—an Indian pow-wow and a round table on music and religious belief, papers on the castrato as sex-object and Ptolemy's Harmonics, a GLSG program that included a singing vulva (on video; we're not that hip) and a meeting of the Brazilian Music Society. There was, in short, something for everyone. Vive le multiculturalisme!

One of the Thursday afternoon sessions featured papers by John Roberts and Ellen Harris on Handel. Interestingly, each paper tried (inadvertently, I think) to supply what was missing from the other. In discussing Handel's extensive borrowings from Italian composer Francesco Antonio Pistocchi's pastoral opera *Narciso*. John Roberts showed once again his mastery of this kind of detective work, while leaving a number of more speculative questions at bay. Surely I was not the only one in the room to wonder: here's Handel, whose sexual preference has been the subject of much discussion, borrowing left and right from an opera on the Narcissus story by a composer who was also a famous castrato and who sang the title role himself. Was it just Pistocchi's music that struck Handel's fancy, or are these borrowings trying to tell us something deeper about Handel himself? Ellen Harris took up where Roberts left off, exploring the biographical via a Handel cantata text that compares the composer to Orpheus. Her central assertions—that the Orpheus myth condoned, in the early eighteenth century, same-sex love, and that this particular cantata text thus qualifies as sexual allegory—are hard to refute, but the lack of discussion about the composer's musical response to the allegory left this listener wanting more. Harris herself seemed not entirely pleased; she confessed to a good deal of angst over this paper in the weeks leading up to the meeting. Still, this is important work and was well worth the effort. I for one look forward to hearing more from Prof. Harris on this this very interesting topic.

Friday morning brought a paper on "Auden, Britten, and Gay Initiation" by Richard Bozorth, whose affiliation with Texas Christian University (English, not music faculty) is a heartening sign of progress in the Bible Belt. His focus was on the relationship of poetry and music: specifically, on Auden's poetic efforts to bring Britten out of the closet and on the latter's ironic rendering of one particular lyric, "Underneath the abject willow." Bozorth's main point—that Britten absorbed all too well Auden's cynicism about gay life—was well taken, and may well inspire reevaluations of other lyric settings by this now-famously gay composer.

The Friday afternoon session devoted to "Creed, Race, and Gender in the Nineteenth Century" was a fascinating mix of papers on Mendelssohn, Schubert, and female pianists in France. Because our scholarly interests overlap to a certain degree, I was especially interested in

Katharine Ellis's "Women, Pianos, and the Feminization of Baroque Repertories in France, 1850-1900." Drawing on lists of competition pieces for piano classes at the Paris Conservatory and critical writings from the time, Ellis sketched a familiar scenario: how many concert pianists of our time play much Couperin or Rameau? The only Baroque composer we encounter with any regularity on piano recitals these days (nevermind the performer's gender) is J. S. Bach; though interestingly, in late nineteenth-century France, only women were encouraged to play Bach. Male pianists played more standard fare: Chopin, Beethoven, occasionally Schumann or Weber. Ellis further cited a number of critics who patronizingly dismissed harpsichord music as essentially unimportant for the virtuoso. Men, we learned, didn't play this music because it was seen as overly ornamental and lacking in substance. While my own research into Bach playing before 1850 suggests that different attitudes prevailed earlier, it is striking to note how these late nineteenth-century biases are still with us, notwithstanding the occasional oddity of a Glenn Gould or an Andras Schiff.

Finally, Susan McClary's paper on seventeenth-century French harpsichord music. Beginning her talk with a beguiling if oddly anachronistic performance of a d'Anglebert tombeau on an upright piano, Prof. McClary proceeded to suggest how this kind of piece, though strangely uneventful to our modern ears, can be heard (experienced, really, for that was the stated purpose of her live performance) as a reflection of the ideological currents of its time. Particularly compelling for me was the idea that stasis could be, in the context of Baroque music especially, a quality to be valued. One might easily extend her analogy to unmeasured preludes and the subgenre of the *allemande grave*, though McClary was careful to restrict her comments to the piece at hand.

[Matthew Dirst]

GLSG Annual Meeting and Program

31 October 1997

Phoenix

Phoenix crawled with musical scholars as the AMS and SMT met in joint assembly, and around 100 queer and queer-minded constituents of these groups gathered on Friday, October 31 for the meeting of the GLSG.

After the usual round of reports on GLSG finances (they seem to be fine), the newsletter (going strong), and a special report from Ingrid Monson on queer activities in the SEM, new officers were elected; white smoke for Ivan Raykoff and Nadine Hubbs (members at large), Judith Periano (Secretary/Treasurer), female co-editor Gillian Rodger, and male co-chair Chip Whitesell.

Bill Meredith reported on the results of six-months labor

by the selection committee of the Philip Brett Award and announced to general acclamation that the first ever PBA was given to Elizabeth Wood for, among other things, her essay "Decompositions" (forthcoming in *Unnatural Acts*, IUP). Wood was unable to attend the meeting and Suzanne Cusick gamely accepted the award on her part, read a gracious note from the new winner, and urged the assembly to contribute to the growing fund for the award.

Satisfied that the queer business of the group had been settled (or at least accounted for) for another year, the podium was turned over to Sue-Ellen Case. Case's presentation is printed elsewhere in this volume, but the written word cannot capture the visual triumph of Case's video clips featuring dancing genitalia and butch white trash drag shows. A queer afternoon indeed.

[Todd Borgerding]

Society for Music Theory
30 October - 2 November 1997
Phoenix

While I was certainly excited at the prospect of going to Phoenix and once again seeing many of the friends and colleagues I had met at previous conferences, I was disheartened to find that the Annual Meeting of the Society for Music Theory did not feature a single session or panel which explicitly dealt with queer issues. Nevertheless, I was able to attend a number of papers which suggested future avenues of inquiry for our discipline.

In his presentation on Benjamin Britten's opera *Peter Grimes*, Edward D. Latham combined Schenkerian analyses of selected scenes with an adaptation of Stanislavsky's theory of method acting for musical purposes. As a result, Latham was able to provide dramatic explanations for his structural analyses that were quite convincing. He focussed on those scenes in the libretto which involved the character Ellen Orford and the elaboration of the dual focus of her actions: to marry Peter Grimes and to save the boy, John. Latham argued that Ellen's failure to accomplish both goals is reflected in the interrupted forms Britten used to frame her final vocal entrances. Latham also disagreed with the interpretations of Ellen Orford put forward by Philip Brett and Ellen McDonald. According to Latham, Brett sees Britten's anti-heroine as false and manipulative, operating within the work as a willing supporter of the heterosexist society in which the opera is set; McDonald interprets her as the culmination of a long line of oppressive, destructive female characters in opera. Latham, however, reads the character in the context of her personal motivations portrayed entirely within the opera's plot. In her attempts to establish a culturally intelligible unit, Ellen Orford ends up losing both her potential husband and the son who would have completed her family.

Latham's reading thus supports a perhaps unintentional critique of normative heterosexuality on the part of the composer.

Ian Quinn is arguably the leading music theorist today working to introduce fuzzy theory to the musical community. Borrowed from mathematics, fuzzy theory allows the analyst to draw quantitative distinctions between, for example, pitch-class sets and, as Quinn demonstrated in his paper presented in Phoenix, similarity relations, both of which do not necessarily depend on binary paradigms. The potential of Quinn's research for queer theory lies in the solutions it offers to scholars, such as myself, who are uncomfortable with musical analyses which uncritically rely on oppositional models of difference for their theoretical framework. It would certainly be a refreshing change to have an analytical approach developed by music theorists influence other disciplines in the humanities rather than the other way around, as it normally is the case!

In a paper which investigated the intersections between representations of race and musical analysis, Ellie M. Hisama considered two compositions by Ruth Crawford and Tori Amos which present sympathetic portrayals of oriental subjects. She argued that by analyzing works that represent an ethnic Other in a favorable light, students are encouraged to occupy a racially marginalized position, thus experiencing these musical works in a new way, one that emphasizes the often unacknowledged role of subjectivity in analysis. It should be obvious how a similar pedagogical approach could be adapted for the introduction of queer issues into the classroom.

One panel at the annual meeting of SMT deserves honorary mention. During their presentations at a special session entitled "Telling Tales Out of School: Expanding Our Communities of Musical Discourse," Marion A. Guck, Nadine Hubbs, Fred Everett Maus, and Andrew Mead all examined how musical enterprises outside of the academy can contribute to the development of a personal aesthetic which more accurately reflects the analyst's identity as a queer or antihomophobic theorist. Each of the participants demonstrated how subjective interpretations or autobiographical reflections on musical topics can be just as intellectually satisfying as more traditional, "objective" approaches to analysis.

The highlight of the entire conference was the SMT plenary session at which the twentieth anniversary of the society was celebrated. Of special interest to all theorists was the address to the membership by the incoming president, Janet Schmalfeldt. In a move that gave me hope for the future of gay and lesbian research in music theory, Schmalfeldt acknowledged the important contribution made by feminists to the discipline. It appears that we are possibly entering a new, more

queer-friendly era in music theory.

To that end, I have submitted a proposal to the program chair for the 1998 Annual Meeting of the Society for Music Theory in Chapel Hill, North Carolina requesting space on the program for a meeting at which the feasibility of creating a special interest group within the society which would be devoted to the exploration of gay and lesbian issues within the field of music theory. At this meeting, the structure of a gay and lesbian interest group could be formulated and a session proposal for the 1999 Annual Meeting of the Society for Music Theory in Atlanta, Georgia could also be framed. In any case, the proposed meeting in Chapel Hill would give gay and lesbian music theorists a chance to come together and socialize without having to wait for the next joint meeting between the AMS and the SMT in Toronto, Ontario in the year 2000! If you would like to get involved with this project, please feel free to contact me at <Norskybear@aol.com>.

[Lars Rains]

Voices of Opera: Performance, Production, Interpretation

22-23 January, 1998

University of Toronto at Scarborough

A small, yet intrepid crowd of opera enthusiasts braved low temperatures and blizzard conditions to attend the recent symposium *Voices of Opera: Performance, Production, Interpretation* held 22-23 January 1998 at the University of Toronto at Scarborough. The weekend, brilliantly organized by Caryl Clark and Allan Hepburn, consisted of a myriad of informative lectures by noteworthy scholars and exemplary performances by members of Opera Atelier and the Canadian Opera Company.

Some papers dealt with interpretative concerns which shifted from one historical period to another. Issues of authenticity were the focus of a paper by Roger Parker, in which he examined how the information contained in nineteenth-century operatic production books might alter our present views on musically "authentic" performances. Through a postmodern critique of Hans Pfitzner's polemical writings, Stephen McClatchie demonstrated how the use of quotation in his 1917 opera *Palestrina* actually contradicts the composer's conception of a Romantic aesthetic of creativity defined by inspiration. Linda and Micheal Hutcheon analyzed the text and music of Wagner's *Ring Cycle* through the lenses provided by the interdisciplinary field known as "death studies" in order to draw a distinction between the supposed immortality of the gods and the more concrete mortality of the human characters in these operas. Commenting on a recently discovered treatise dating from around 1628,

Anna Migliarisi discussed the formation of the directorial role in early Baroque theater, as well as the didactic suggestions provided by the anonymous author which could be applied to "authentic" staging of operas from this period.

Other presentations offered implicit and explicit queer perspectives on opera performance and reception. Caryl Clark's exposition of the changing voice types and performing traditions for the role of Orpheus in Gluck's eponymous opera illustrated the tensions between the original performances by castrati and modern realizations involving tenors, counter-tenors, and sopranos "en travesti." Another possible interpretation, which was not addressed by Clark in her paper, is that those productions which seek to be "authentic" in terms of vocal range through the use of cross-dressed sopranos ironically contradict Gluck's reformist efforts at a more natural presentation on the basis of gender. An interdisciplinary panel on Wagner's "*Tristan und Isolde*" by Helmut Reichenbacher, Erika Reiman, Jill Scott, and Russell Kilbourn investigated the relation of the libretto to its source texts, the influence of Wagner's literary and cultural context on the libretto and the score, and the composer's position on contemporary philosophical issues. Of particular interest was Erika Reiman's analysis of the shifting function of the "Tristan" chord in terms of death and desire, which she argued is dependant upon the individual perspective of each listener. Her methodological approach seemed to be quite adaptable for both musicologists and music theorists concerned with issues of queer reception.

The highlight of the weekend was undoubtedly the keynote address "A Fan's Apostasy" which was performed with characteristic panache by Wayne Koestenbaum. This well-attended event attracted conference participants and unsuspecting undergraduate students alike. In his autobiographical apologia for opera, Koestenbaum unabashedly acknowledged his own homosexuality in dramatic fashion; at the same time, he recanted his emotional, almost obsessive attachment to opera which he elaborated in his 1993 manifesto, *The Queen's Throat: Opera, Homosexuality, and the Mystery of Desire*. He described how he had since grown to appreciate the music of jazz, with its emphasis on nuance and silence and its demand for active participation on the part of its listeners. Koestenbaum explained how opera requires passivity from its spectators; opera forecloses any masochistic interpretation of subjectivity which could produce ecstatic suspension rather than merely attempt to relate the experience of it. Opera, for Koestenbaum, no longer provided him with the necessary critical distance from which to analyze his own life as a poet and, recently, as a librettist. As he wrestled with personal demons concerning his own mortality, it appeared that Koestenbaum had disavowed his previous commitment to

opera and its representation of ecstasy through death; instead, he seemed to be more interested in the project of living and, in a sense, becoming operatic himself.

His paper also offered several hilarious, yet completely serious suggestions for new productions of opera which cannot be quoted here for fear of them being read out of context. However, it can be reported that Koestenbaum confessed to his large audience that he has a tiny uvula, which became the catchphrase for the remainder of the symposium. A dialogue on the collaborative relationship between composer and librettist by Alexina Louie and Carol Bolt, as well as a retrospective presentation by Susan Benson on her set designs for theater and opera productions, concluded this wonderful weekend of operatic scholarship and performance.

[Lars Rains]

report from the co-chairs

A few words from your humble servants:

Through your generosity, energy, and commitment, the GLSG's presence in the fabric of AMS intellectual life was more noticeable than ever at the 1997 Annual Meeting in Phoenix. Thanks to the personal generosity of the board, we had a fabulous guest speaker at the Friday afternoon study session--self-described "failed music major" (and Professor in the Department of Dramatic Arts and Drama at UC-Davis) Sue-Ellen Case, whose talk "A Butch White Trash Throat" is printed elsewhere in this issue. Elegant, witty, and breathtakingly intelligent in its analysis of class and sexuality in several memorable vocal performances, her presentation was for many of us the intellectual high point of the AMS. And the sight of the "dancing vulva" video clip is one those of us who attended will not soon forget. But surely the emotional and political high point of the AMS this year was the first presentation of the Philip Brett Award. Established a few years ago by the GLSG, funded entirely by personal donations, and henceforth to be given annually, the Brett Award recognizes an outstanding contribution to gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender/transsexual studies in music completed during the previous two academic years. It was scheduled as the last prize to be given at the traditional Saturday evening annual meeting of the society, so that it seemed the prize for which all present held their breath. Preceded by the delicious reading-aloud of the litany "gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender/transsexual" before the entire AMS, the first Philip Brett Award was presented to independent scholar Elizabeth Wood for two contributions--for her essay "Performing Rights: A Sonography of Women's Suffrage" (*MQ* 79/4 [1995], 606-643); and for the talk "Decomposition" that she gave at the most recent Unnatural Acts conference at

UC-Riverside. Unable to receive the award in person, Liz sent a characteristically witty and gracious note of acceptance to be read to the assembled AMS, along with a check re-investing a substantial part of her award in the fund. Her act of generosity combined with the public honoring of Philip's courage and vision to close the Society's annual meeting on an especially moving, vibrant note. It was a moment that surprised many people, gay and straight, with its quietly intense drama.

thanks and welcome

This year some of the most familiar faces of our leadership leave us, having served the maximum allowable terms or having simply decided to move to new challenges. It seems appropriate to mark their departures--and the appearance of important new leaders--with words of thanks and welcome. Thanks, then, to outgoing co-chair Mitchell Morris, for his years of patient, intelligent, gracious, self-aware, and often fabulous leadership. Thanks, as well, to outgoing co-editrix of our newsletter Martha Mockus, who has worked tirelessly and deftly with co-editors Chip Whitesell and Stephen McClatchie to broaden and deepen the intellectual range of the GLSG Newsletter. And thanks to outgoing board members-at-large Richard Agee and Judith Peraino. Richard's organizational skill and attention to detail have been invaluable (especially for the party!) and will be sorely missed. Judith's wise counsel, however, will not be missed as she has valiantly agreed to serve as one of the new officers. Finally, mere thanks are not quite sufficient to acknowledge our collective debt to retiring Subscription Secretary Mario Champagne, who has served a marathon 3 terms in this most labor-intensive of positions. Mario has organized our ever-more complex finances, ensuring a smooth processing at the AMS' national office of donations to the Philip Brett Award, creating a system for the timely collection of GLSG dues, and keeping detailed records. Further, he has handled distribution of the Newsletter, and advised on ways to promote more individual and institutional subscriptions.

We welcome new officers and board members elected at the GLSG's annual meeting in Phoenix (high noon on Halloween). Chip Whitesell succeeds Mitchell as co-chair (working with continuing co-chair Suzanne Cusick); Gillian Rodger succeeds Martha in a 2-year term as co-editrix of the Newsletter (working with continuing co-editor Stephen McClatchie); and the brave Judith Peraino succeeds Mario as Subscription Secretary. Nadine Hubbs and Ivan Raykoff will join continuing board members at large Peter Burkholder and Kelly Harness.

notes on our annual meeting

Breakfast was too early this year for your humble servants, who could find no other time to gather for a board meeting than 7 am in the Terrace Room of the Phoenix Hyatt. Discussion was surprisingly lively,

although co-chair Cusick has had the hardest time remembering what actually happened at the meeting--she seldom remembers anything that happens before 10 am! In fact, it was a meeting full of significant action, to which we draw your attention. dues and subscriptions to rise First, after hearing and studying Mario's financial report, we agreed on the need both to work toward widening the distribution of the GLSG Newsletter and to raise the GLSG dues: beginning this year, individual membership for the fully waged will be \$15; membership will be \$10 for the unwaged. We further voted to eliminate the rate for couples (partly because hardly anyone takes advantage of it), and to leave the institutional subscription rate at \$20. Although these strategies might seem contradictory, they are both prompted by a looming difficulty in covering the Newsletter's printing and distribution costs. We need, especially, to solicit library subscriptions to the Newsletter, and we very strongly urge each of you to persuade your home library (whether it be an academic or a public one) to subscribe. Institutional subscriptions promise not only to solidify our income base, but to legitimize--or further institutionalize, if you will--the kinds of scholarship and thought to which the Newsletter gives voice. In the meantime, we need also to raise our own dues (a decision we made very reluctantly) to ensure the Newsletter's continued existence in the short and middle-term. We urge you to return your dues form as soon as possible, before it slips your mind again. ex-officio board members Second, we agreed that both the GLSG bibliographer and the chair of the Philip Brett Committee ought to be permanent ex-officio members of the board--since we so often seek their wise counsel. At the moment, the actual people whom we have invited to serve with us are Michele Edwards and Lydia Hamessley.

call for nominations!

We invite nominations for the following offices which will come vacant this year: female co-chair (currently Suzanne Cusick); male co-editor (currently Stephen McClatchie) and two members-at-large, one male and one female (the seats of Peter Burkholder and Kelly Harness). Nominations should be sent to Chip Whitesell (as the on-going co-chair) by July 1, 1998, to ensure that the names of nominees can be published in the fall edition of the Newsletter. Feel free to nominate yourself, or to nominate current office-holders for a second term: they can always decline. Chip's address is whitesel@almaak.usc.edu. We especially invite nominations for the 1998 Philip Brett Award. Nominations should include the name of the scholar, a description of the work to be submitted, a statement to the effect that it was completed during the previous 2 years, and, if possible, a curriculum vitae. Please send 5 copies of these materials by July 1 to Lydia Hamessley, c/o Hultberg, 9015 Old Cedar Avenue South, #208, Bloomington MN 55425. Feel free (as above) to nominate

yourself--for an article, a paper, a course syllabus, etc. Next fall! In a shocking display of advance thinking, we have already scheduled the program for our Friday afternoon study session at the 1998 AMS (in Boston): Ellen Harris has agreed to talk with us about her research on Handel and sexuality. Hope y'all can be there! We hope, too, that y'all arrive prepared for the fact that the annual Saturday night cocktail party will be on Halloween.

[Suzanne G. Cusick & Lloyd ("Chip") Whitesell]

feature articles

The following paper formed the program of the Annual Meeting of the GLSG in Phoenix, November 1997. We are grateful to the author for allowing it to appear here.

The Butch White Trash Throat

I am pleased to be invited to speak to this august "body." As you know, my training is in embodied performance, some part of which is called "theater." Beyond this traditional focus on a playwright-driven model, broader pursuits fall into the category of performance studies, while others are covered by the term "performativity." The latter term is a much-debated one and I have entered into the fray in my latest book, *The Domain-Matrix*. However, I understand the debate to be between those trained in the arts and those who are from outside the arts, who misunderstand, or are only slightly aware of the history and theory of performance practices. Here, among others who work in the arts, I think performativity may be a helpful word to extend our sense of embodiment, the fusion of body and sound, step, and gesture out into cultural and social practices that have heretofore been unaware of the spectrum along which such training takes part.

I understand that the field of music studies, like that of performance, has been impacted by ethnographic strategies, poststructuralist theory, and social movements. Certainly, the word "queer," in my title "Queer Performances," only makes discursive sense when uttered at the intersection of those various influences. But particularly in the way that it melds sexual practices and taboos to practices of training the body and, particularly here, the voice. At this point, music, like theater, no longer separates out the various forms of abstract and incarnate practices around it. In fact, it now appears peculiarly "European" in tradition to devise those devisions among the body, the sound, its invention, and its reception. Surely, the consideration of production of the auditory experience can no longer be removed from its fleshly incarnation. If one might wish, when viewing

the traditional overweight tenors and sopranos, that the “too, too solid flesh might melt and resolve itself into a duet,” even that negative wish illustrates how music is lodged in the fleshly significations that produce it. More helpful have been studies such as those by Zoila Mendoza, which historicize the play between a traditional embodiment of music and dance and Peruvian cultural policies that institutionalize it, or Debbie Wong’s notion of revolutionary “noise,” in its broadest sense, as an object of study within ethnomusicology.

In this shared domain of the embodied and its relation to cultural policies, performance studies, or a sense of performativity might inform music, while music studies might inform those of performance. The field of theater-related studies is woefully impoverished in informed considerations of the role the field of sound plays on the cultural stage. We eagerly read the new work in music studies that accounts for the role sound plays in strategies of embodiment. In this work, I am hoping to discover a way to apply some strategies emanating from studies of performance to a consideration of vocal production. I hope to explore a primitive form which might enjoy the new hybridity our two fields are learning to deploy. I hope, in the spirit of invention, you will forgive the very basic understanding of music this work represents.

From this perspective, I want to investigate how gendering processes and sexual taboos around embodiment intertwine with the production practices of vocality. In so doing, I first ask you to indulge me in a personal narrative that is designed to illustrate a direct confrontation between training practices in the social realm and in the institutionalization of music. I want to move from that paradigm into a consideration of a phenomenon of the 1990s, when women “hit” hard rock ‘n’ roll music, playing in grrl bands—particularly in the sound and performance practices of a grunge band. For grunge derives from the tradition of punk and punk aggressively activated the notion that sound *is* its embodiment. In its tradition of music production which emphasized that vocal and instrumental playing was specifically unlearned, punk foregrounded the raw gesture of sound as the register of social attitude. The gesture of making music outside of training, marked by the raw and “ugly” as an aggression against any obedience to traditions of sonority, punk foregrounded this revolt *as* music. Punk’s emphasis on the embodiment of music as music focused on a sexual address in the performance, in which active flirting and direct physical contact with the audience compose what has become known as a music “scene”—a music landscape, a music *mise en scene*, a music scenario. This topographical arena for sound and embodiment performs, as its genre, a ground for the study of the sexual and social resonances of the performance of sound. The “mosh pit,” as it is known, into which performers hurl themselves and their instruments against

the bodies of the listeners, aggressively reconfigures that polite orchestra pit, which relegated musical production to subdued lighting, politely separated from the audience by a small curtain. Punk, then grunge, have made the sexualized embodiment of music their cultural project, offering a unique site of visibility for the study of gender and sexual practice in musical production. Following from these practices, I want to move to a consideration of cross-gender vocality, as exemplified in the practice of lip-synching, to conclude with k.d. lang’s CD entitled *Drag*.

Toward a Butch White Trash Throat

The field of music scholarship already offers a variety of strategies for understanding how “queer studies” might be situated within its parameters. Perhaps the work in this area that is best known outside the study of music (along with *Queering the Pitch*) is Wayne Koestenbaum’s book, *The Queen’s Throat*, about opera queens and their adoration of the singers. This book, in its brilliant and path-breaking formulation of the throat within historical and cultural practices, prompted me to begin to think back to my own development in the tradition of what might be called, in contrast to the queen’s throat, the “butch white trash throat.” Allow me to briefly rehearse these terms. “White trash” is a term which bears both racialized and class markers. It names a difference within whiteness, revealing the precise operations of white supremacy, as it discriminates by erecting a white “other.” (Wray and Newitz, 4) “Butch” refers to a cross-gender performance within the lesbian subculture, which, in combination with “white trash” becomes class-specific. Hence, the hybrid identity of butch and white trash bring an embodied perspective to the training of the throat. Throat, as Koestenbaum uses it, embodies the traditions of producing sound, along with other social technologies, such as medical ones. I want to borrow his sense of throat for this study, but also deploy the term vocality, to likewise suggest vocal production embedded in cultural practices, beyond what is more narrowly understood as “singing.”

At the outset, a comparison of the “butch white trash throat” to the “queen’s throat” reveals the class and gender differences between the two models. Koestenbaum describes the queen’s throat as basically a feudal amour: “the opera queen’s throat is inactive and silent while he listens; the singer’s throat is queen.” In contrast, the “butch” throat is treated here as a cultural producer. The stereotype, and not such a fallacious one, of the “loud dyke,” offensive as she might first appear to the ear, could also be figured as a simple form of liberatory democracy compared to Koestenbaum’s celebration of the feudal relationship between the opera queen and the singer. The “butch white trash throat” is trained by yelling, for example in the bottom of the river

bed during a dirt clod fight: “oops! I didn’t mean to really hurt you”; or at the dinner table: “whoee, now that was hot!”; or in the bars: “Baby, baby my heart beats for you, wa wa wa”; or in bed—well, I leave that example to your imagination. In no way do I mean to contradict Koestenbaum, only to extend the model of study that he invented into a new realm. Aimed at production, I will refer to my own experience, along with a more receptive study of the vocality produced by others.

Now, employing that familiar sprinkling of Lacanian theory over memories lodged in the imaginary, I would like to consider my early years of white trash vocal production as constituting a kind of *jouissance*. If *jouissance* is a form of totally integrated pleasure, then the vocality of white trash culture can be perceived to represent an amalgam of singing and speech, as I have partially demonstrated above, physical strength and the loud voice; in other words, both effort and release in one fell cadenza. As an adult, I have found fragments of this particular integration in more formally defined singing locations: women producing a loud, hands-on-hips singing in Eastern European folk singing, the way gay Nicholas Hytner staged the new version of *Carousel*, in which the factory girls run and yell after work, or play in a rough, physical manner on their day off, then singing “this was a real nice clambake” as a song at the border of that effort/release play. I always heard it in Minnie Pearl’s opening salutation at that other opera, the Grand Old Opry, in “Howdy.” But as a youth, I mostly remember my mother’s bad joke, since my nickname was “suey” calling me in on a summer evening, from where I had been wrestling the boys in the grass, by singing “hog, hog, hog, suey!” And me answering “oh, mama!”

White trash culture sings its language, with glissandos of glee at play. The butch supports that sound with speed, triangulated, strong legs and square shoulders. Unfortunately—at least I was taught to see it that way—jutting your jaw forward to say “oh, yeah” actually closes the throat. Manual labor, with its rural wide distances, or its raucous urban machinery has produced a loud vocality for human interactions as well as a voice that matches the effort in the arm, the back under the weight, or the shoulder to the wheel. As the traditional butch hefted that femme over her shoulder to march proudly out of the bar, she vocalized “Baby, tonight is our night,” as she put her shoulder to the weight.

Meanwhile, back to the old music chorale. Since I want to attend to production as well as reception, I want to refer to my own experiences around vocality, class, gender, and sexuality. If I could imagine my early butch white trash vocality as dwelling in the integrated pleasure of *jouissance*, I can come to understand my entrance into the institutions of the voice as the terror and repression that comes with the primal scene. As some of you know,

my early years in high school and first two college years in a music conservatory were the beginning of my path toward an academic career. From the time I was 14, I thought of music first and everything else second. I was a voice major who had secret desires to compose. In the conservatory, I discovered just how fiercely these two aspirations were gender marked and their borders violently patrolled. I learned that the abstract business of composing was deemed masculine and the embodied performance of singing feminized.

Embodying music was both a delight and a terror, for singing was, like dance, the province of hyper-femininity and good-girl obedience. Koestenbaum, in reviewing voice manuals, documents the close association between training in obedience and morals and voice training. So there I was at my first-year recital, standing in the curve of the grand piano, outfitted in the requisite dress and low heels, with my hands folded in the prescribed manner before me, looking across the room at my cigar-smoking, Italian-baritone voice teacher, who was sitting next to a very femmy and delicate woman with a small dog on her lap. It was like watching the mother and father of voice training prepare to “do it” together through a peculiar kind of triangulation through my vocalizing. Accompanying my extreme anxiety about the quickly approaching B flat, a note assigned to me as they moved my voice up into the mezzo range from my deeply desired contralto yearnings into the Sapphonic deep, was the physicality I had to produce or more precisely reproduce, in my quest for that high note. Lifting my rib cage, while standing with my legs close together, when I so wanted more of the stable, triangulated support my butch self had built, and slightly bending my wrists to undulate the line into the lightly clasped hands, I was embodying a song about the moon being a lover.

My parents had sent me off in the Fall with a saxophone in my hand and a voice they liked to hear sing “Annie Laurie.” By Christmas, when they heard this “catterwallin’,” as they called it, and saw the monstrous version of the saxophone I brought home (a bassoon), they felt the conservatory had ruined my voice and their opportunity to hear “Oh Danny Boy” of a twilight. (As a footnote to that desire, when I studied choral conducting at Berkeley, just prior to the arrival of the illustrious Philip Brett, Professor Lawton deemed the best song for the study of such singing and conducting to be “Drink to Me Only With Thine Eyes”—a song not-to-distantly related to “Annie Laurie.”)

Anyway, during my recital, I did obediently cover my tones, open my throat, and continue to push up toward that B flat. I also successfully demonstrated how to be loud without seeming to be—better known as “projection.” I will forego the Lacanian take on that term to simply note that I “projected” a bourgeois amplification of the

discreet over my loudness. Only later did I realize that perhaps my Italian coach was wisely and sympathetically pushing me into the mezzo range in the hope that my physicality, which would never play the hyper-feminized love interest, might play those boy roles. Perhaps what I perceived as a feminizing drive into the higher notes was actually designed to provide an opportunity to retain my boyish assignment of body weight and gesture in the music profession, but at the time, vocal range had other associations for me. My resistance to the higher range wasn't only because of the sense, as Liz Wood has so elegantly expressed it, of the lower range as the Sapphonic voice, nor from a desire to continue to sing pretty for my relatives back home. From years of singing in choirs and madrigal groups, I also retained a sense of the soprano line as something intellectually less challenging. The alto role seemed more abstract, not simply reproducing the melody line, but requiring a more intellectual, more learned performance of singing. So, since composition, the purely intellectual realm, was denied to me, as a masculine retreat, I felt that the vocal assignment for the lower range at least admitted me into a performance that embodied some conceptual achievement. Thus, my association of the lower voice as masculinized had a double valence: masculine by association with the low range and masculine as the embodiment of the intellectual component in music production.

So as I stood there at my recital, in my dress, climbing toward that B flat, I felt as if I was ascending out of my desired intellectual production into a melodic feminized world where it was entirely possible that the moon might be my only lover. As I watched my coach grow nervous along with me, I sensed, somewhere within my unconscious, that I was about to be caught in the act of watching the primal scene, witnessing the Italian baritone and the French soprano doing "it" through my own voice, and worse, I could not adequately reproduce the required physicality nor adequately suppress the hyper-physicality of the loud butch working class vocality. Somehow the B flat would be naked instead of covered, exposed. I could identify with Schumann as mad, as having to produce his music through A Clara, a woman in the service of embodying it, but I could not make myself sing him. That failure was a gender failure and a vocal failure at once. Moreover, my corporeality, insofar as it enjoyed any seductive success with other women, was "butch." Lily pads, moons, and high notes sounded a distant cry to yelling, as Stanley Kowalski in *Streetcar* had done, STELLA (not star), to the girl who would rush down the steps, across the lawn, and jump on me in that reverse kind of piggy back that melded sexual opportunity to strong shoulder and back.

I was awarded a voice scholarship at the same time that I left the conservatory. The following year, I developed a

stutter and left school entirely, only to finally reenter as a student in the humanities. That stutter effectively bit those open vowels into meaningless aspirations of air that deferred the formation of words. The voice, the breath column, was shattered and forced back behind the teeth. The throat closed up, the tongue rose up behind the teeth and the training was strangled. Later, I found myself irresistibly drawn to the study of the German language, which systematically and rigorously dedicates voice production to the close cacophony of consonants. I even imagined that I had stumbled or stuttered into the place where Schumann's own *angst* had dwelt, between the German language of consonants, a sound topography of modular conceptual masculinity and the open phrases for the feminized throat and mouth—the moooon, after all, in German, is *der Mond*. It seemed, then, that a total eclipse of my embodied performance would be the only way to retain my butch body. My body was reserved for my "personal" life, safely removed from intellectual production. I left off vocalizing to save my body by removing it from the institutional "scene."

Well, I'd love to spend the rest of this time talking about myself, but I now feel compelled to be, well, a little more "alto" about the whole thing and move out into the abstractions that resonate from this narrative. It's difficult to parse all of the elements around class, gender, and sexual practice that are embedded in this personal model, but I think some small clarity might be found in isolating a few principles and examples that work from paradigms Koestenbaum originated and "queer" perspectives on women's music production. Let's return to the site of the throat, since I have left my personal model here. We will eventually understand how this open throat of the academy is belied by a closed-throat production that marks its social condition.

One of Koestenbaum's major critical strategies is to work out the identification gay men have with the throat as a "zone of fellatio" (156). Koestenbaum uses this symbolic site to imply, by metaphoric association, a resonance between the throat and homosexuality itself, noting that homosexuality is not a "fixed location" but "a membrane, like the throat that separates the body's breathing interior from the chaotic external world" (156). While I find useful the metaphor that combines throat with homosexuality, understanding the throat as a pleasure site of fellatio does not seem as inclusive of my pleasures. Happily, however, from the lesbian perspective, Koestenbaum goes on to review representations of the voice box itself which mark it as feminine. He illustrates how photographs of the glottis were received as revealing a "lipped opening" which have associated the voice with the vagina (160). It is precisely this association which seems to inform several contemporary performance strategies by women.

The group *Hole* explicitly takes its name as referring to both the mouth, the vagina, and the gaping hole of a wound. *Hole* is the back-up group for the "Love" that *does* dare to say its name—as "Courtney." Love describes *Hole* on the back of their 1991 single, threateningly entitled "Dicknail," by quoting Proverbs 21:7: "The mouth of a loose woman is a deep pit." They have set out to perform that "loose woman's" pit in their music and their physical embodiment of the sound. Beginning as a female grunge band, *Hole*'s 1991 debut album is pointedly titled *Pretty on the Inside*. Here's how Reynolds and Press describe the album in their book *The Sex Revolts: Gender, Rebellion, and Rock 'n' Roll*:

Love rasps out an unclassifiable alloy of growling defiance and retching disgust, while *Hole*'s tortuous music grinds out her humiliation and hatred with a creakiness that betrays how long this has been lurking at the back of the throat. ... Speculum becomes spectacle, the invisible interior is displayed (261-62).

Love's voice is described as "growling and retching," a voice that had been "lurking at the back of the throat." The clear passage, then, the open throat and sustained sound are made to seem fictions of institutional training, mystifying the sound of the "hole" of woman as it has been socially constructed and received. For *Hole* and Love, the throat/vagina association reveals the passageway from inside to outside which, because it opens to the patriarchal violence of ruin, leaves "pretty on the inside," closed off at the back of the throat, performing its ugly demise from the mouth on out. Love's singing foregrounds the way in which the open throat and covered sound are productions of the institutional remove. When vocality figures its gendered relation to social conditions, the functions of throat find violence affixed to their exercises.

This sound is reproduced by many "grrl" bands, a self-identification formed by removing the single vowel from the word "girl," excerpting that solitary "i" to produce only the closed-throat growl of "grrl" to mark the consonantal divide from the inside to the out. Consonants, which, in my earlier era of repression, had signalled my vocal suicide, are deployed in an aggressive way—as a form of revenge against the prying open of the throat in a danger zone. In order to embody *Hole*'s version of this grrl sound, Love's specific strategy is to take on what she calls the "kinder-whore" look. She dons dirty, ripped, pink dresses, or small velvet ones from the 1960s, with red lipstick and smeared mascara. Doll parts litter the stage. Love performs that oft-quoted line from a play by Cherríe Moraga, whose tough little butch Chicana is interfered with by a school janitor. She says: "he made

me a hole."

Love describes her own sense of the kinder-whore look: "I come across as a fourteen-year-old battered rape victim" (Michel Comte, "Strange Love," *Vanity Fair* [September 1992]: 299). Love sexualizes both the promise and the ruination of the girl child at the same time as she performs her own aggressive version of feminism. Love is the battered, sexually abused child who has become a juvenile delinquent out for revenge. In fact, Love did serve time in a juvenile detention center. She found it useful for her art: "I was very semiotic about my delinquency. I studied it. I learned a lot" (296). The sign of the juvenile delinquent brings the suggestion of the while trash spectacle into play. "Juvey," as we called it, is what happens to the white trash girl when she hits adolescence. Many of my old friends ended up in the Ventura School for Girls, pregnant at fifteen and ready for revenge. Love links the violated hole of that girl-child to the violent aggression of the delinquent. She is the white trash baby doll on a rampage.

Although these signifiers seem to be heterosexual in their address, Love has chosen to perform her sexual availability and femme-top dominance with a grrl band instead of with a band that includes male musicians. In this way, her performance circulates among women on the stage, suggesting a broader performance address than a strictly heterosexual one. Moreover, *Hole*'s drummer, Patty Schemel, is an out lesbian who performs her sexual identity onstage. Her lover works as Love's assistant (that old amanuensis routine), and Patty, Stacey, and Love often live together in the house of Love (Jason Cohen, "Lallapoloza," *Rolling Stone* [24 August 1995]: 49). Making explicit her pansexuality, Love has publicly bragged (to *Out* magazine) that she has slept with "about 15 women" (cited by Jeff Giles, "For Better or Worse," *Newsweek* [11 April 1994]: 73). She appends lesbian sexual experience to her celebrity persona. So when you see and hear *Hole*, there are two different valences the musical performance suggests: on the one hand, it feels as if you are hearing the singing of the *vagina dentata*—Freud's image of that vagina that would devour the penis. After all, the fantasy of a vagina with teeth actually describes a mouth, and *Hole* performs that vocal potential. On the other hand, the all-grrl performance context suggests, beyond a new version of postfeminism, an erotic that is, in the least, queer. As Love struts her femme-top, baby-doll look, she also performs the white trash delinquent who probably enjoyed certain sexual opportunities to be found in "juvey"—the locked-up version of *jouissance*.

Now, if *Hole* performs the vocality and physicality of the abused vagina, Shawna Dempsey and her group "String of Girls" perform the clitoris who vocalizes the vulva. In contrast to the ruined pleasures of the "hole," Dempsey

embodies a happy clitoris who is self-aware of her various needs and pleasures. In her video, *We're Talking Vulva*, it is actually the clitoris who does the talking.

The video opens by acquainting us with the girl band, and here the "i" is retained in the word. The dyky-looking guitarist is shot from along the neck of the electric guitar, lending it a certain phallic *je ne sais quoi*. The "scary" vulva is introduced by this happily singing Canadian dyke in tennies. "We can touch ourselves and make us feel good," she begins. The words "tribadism" and "lesbianism" move across the light rock/rap rhythms to lull us into a liberal reception of this "difference" in sexual orientation. The singing clitoris holds feminist activist signs, inspires happy looking butch construction workers to lick their chops, and entices grocery men to offer up their vegetables. The clitoris, as Dempsey puts it, has only one function: feeling good. Nothing is stuck in the back of her throat and no dissonance is produced by the band. There is an unselfconscious assimilation of the pop rock idiom as well as the MTV format. Dempsey and her group offer a version of what we might perceive as a familiar 1970s tradition of lesbian feminism. The body is literalized and, in a liberal address, there is no questioning of the form itself, as if it could be assimilated to a matter of individual choice. Dempsey literalizes the genitals, conflating sex (as female) with gender in the traditional lesbian feminist configuration.

However, if Dempsey's clitoral identification finds, in its literal embodiment of gender, a source for individual pleasure, those who would embody a cross-gender identification find an interdiction to vocality. One of the most traditional gay and lesbian subcultural forms of musical performance is lip synching. This form accompanies a drag performance. Somehow, wearing the clothes of the other gender, in the context of a gay or lesbian club prescribes a muteness to the performer. The throat is rendered totally unproductive. The vocality of the performer is displaced by the electronic voice of an absent celebrity singer. Only the gestures and the lips perform what is usually a hyper-gendered embodiment of the singer. Generally, there is little attempt to naturalize this displacement of the voice—to convince the audience that the performer is actually singing. It is taken for granted that this is a simulation of the gender show which the celebrity singer represents, be it the tragic failed woman show of Judy Garland, or the relaxed, paternal masculinity show of Perry Como. The sequined dress or the golfer's cardigan sweater, along with the seductive gestures, or the nonchalant display of phallic excess accompany taped singing with full orchestra.

A silent simulation of singing enables the performance of the crossing of gender lines. It's as if the institutions of vocal training have incarcerated the voice. By serving the sentence of silence, the drag mime is allowed the freedom

of cross-dressing and the gestural embodiment of the "other" gender. Yet, by its displacement, it is singing that provides the vehicle for this gender cross. Embodying someone else's singing brings another meaning to the queen's throat. Still in feudal thrall to the singer, the cross-gendered performer is enabled by the silent throat. Vocality is the register of this play of absence/presence, which queers the dominant by stealing its throat.

Lip synching is mostly perceived as bearing a white trash aesthetic. It is often a performance of whiteness—Judy Garland, not Nina Simone, or Perry Como, not Nat King Cole. In the book *Drag: A History of Female Impersonation in the Performing Arts*, RuPaul's photo is the only one in the collection that is non-white—and even he is wearing a blonde wig. He is playing whiteness as an element of drag. Part of the critical status the film *Paris is Burning* achieved was because of the view it finally provided into a queer subculture that was not "white." Perhaps the traditional lip-synching performance is white because a certain "straight" celebrity status is required of the celebrity in order to "queer" the performance. The gender icon must also display success as white and heterosexual in order to secure its dominance. It silences the cross-gender performer in every way. In lip-synching performances, the gowns and suits are often tacky—vintage thrift-store wear. The clubs are modest, to say the least. One of my favourites is a small room in the back of a Chinese restaurant in Seattle, where the lip-synching queens emerge from behind a worn beaded curtain.

The video I want to show is a clip of Peggy Shaw lip synching Perry Como at the WOW Café. This is a cut from the production of *Beauty and the Beast*. You can hear the women in the audience shrieking in the appropriate fan-type way. They idolize Shaw as one would a celebrity, affirming her embodiment of Como's voice. Yet Shaw is also ironizing Como's reaction as phallic excess. In a manner atypical of the traditional lip-synching performance, she comments upon the elements that constitute him as a celebrity. In this way, she offers a more postmodern performance of lip synching that critiques the thrall the singer one performed to the iconic stature of the gender role.

If lip synching provides a cross-gender throat through displacement, k.d. lang produces drag through recycling—a 90s form of lip synching. Unlike those lip-synching artists who are mute, k.d. finds her voice precisely through a vocality that acts like drag. Her most recent CD, entitled *Drag*, best unites the values under scrutiny in this study. The title *Drag* puns on the meaning of drag as cross-gender performance, and "drag" as an inhalation on a cigarette. Each cut on the album is about smoking. Generally, the songs provide an image of dragging on a cigarette, taking in the smoke, as love goes

out the door. Inhalation is a substitute for loss. The opening of the throat is a consequence of the closing of the door.

For k.d., the intake of air into the throat is in sync with the wearing of a suit (on the cover of the CD). She sings the role of the man who experiences these sexual losses and oral gratifications, but sings it in the silkiest of women's voices. Yet the vocal production is, like lip synching, a reproduction. k.d. recycles the music and singing style of earlier celebrities—specifically those who represent white trash song culture, such as Patsy Cline. The songs on *Drag* represent the white trash scenario for smoking and loving: a cheap motel room, a vinyl table, a cup of coffee, and a cigarette, performed in the tradition of the white trash throat to which they belong.

k.d.'s own celebrity status has been important as a representation of a lesbian performer who is out of the closet. She has put drag performance on the cover of *Vanity Fair*. On TV talk shows, she has talked openly about her life as a butch-style lesbian. Her butch throat is opening, if only through its simulation of white-trash vocality. Cross-gender, cross-class drag have proven helpful strategies for opening the butch throat in the dominant culture. For, only as the embodiment is allowed, only as the sexual and gender difference is tolerated, can the throat open. Here's to k.d.—one of those white trash doubled names like BJ, Joe-Bob, or Sue-Ellen—for putting the butch white trash throat on the charts.

[Sue-Ellen Case]

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Figuring out Richter ("the Engima")

Obituaries I find to be one of the most interesting features of the daily newspaper. The motivation is not macabre, but rather detective: how to figure out, from the condensed synopsis of a lifetime, what that life was really like. Who was this person? What accomplishments got them this obituary? And most intriguing of all, were they perhaps gay? It is not the gossip potential that informs the latter query, but an appreciation for the subtle semantics of obituary writing. The issue of sexuality, if and when it's even an issue, provides the best hermeneutical hunting, for there are certain signs and circumlocutions that get used to tell the story without telling too much of the story. (One of the most obvious is the reference to a "companion" instead of a wife or husband; another, sadly, has been the mention of AIDS.)

Pianist Sviatoslav Richter's death in Moscow on 1 August 1997, at the age of 82, was a significant loss to the musical world reported by most major newspapers the next morning. At the time I was subscribed to the *New York Times*, so Anthony Tommasini's write-up was the obituary I pored over. Already by the fifth sentence I learned that Richter had "returned to Moscow about a month ago with his wife, Nina Doloyak [actually, Dorliac]," so my pursuit of another possibly queer soul-mate in the piano world seemed finished with that information. But there were nagging suggestions, the further I read, which complicated the picture, certain essentialist codes that might belie a seemingly conventional heterosexuality. "He was a moody, often brooding man, prone to insecurity ..." "Ill health was given as the reason [for his cancelled tours to the West], but it was rumored that Soviet officials were worried about his emotional stability." Mention was made of "his proclivity for color and sonority," that he was "a collector of art and decorative objects," and friends with Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears.

Other obituaries which I investigated later demonstrated a similar mix of the straight-forward and the suggestive. The *Times* of London called him "an artist of exceptional calibre ... as legendary as the music he performed, thanks to his elusive personality and nervous temperament" — adding that "he was not without a dry, if somewhat sardonic, sense of humour." "The last of the Soviet-era superstars," Claudia Levy wrote in the *Washington Post*, "Mr. Richter was known for his brilliant technique, velvet tone and immense repertoire," but he was also "reclusive, introspective ... moody and temperamental. In public, he cut an aloof figure ... In his later years, his rare performances were increasingly marked by eccentricities." The significance of his marriage seemed to become an issue when certain papers (the *Chicago Tribune*, *Los Angeles Times*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, etc.) made no mention at all of his wife, or when a few eulogies offered alternative descriptions of their relationship (one in the English-language *Moscow News*

poetically called her “his guardian angel”).

My vague yet insistent curiosity about Richter’s personal life was based on pure conjecture until I was directed to the obituary by Alain Lompech in *Le Monde*. Lompech wrote, in the third paragraph of a full-page story, that “Sviatoslav Richter’s personality was all the more complex since he had to live out his homosexuality in a country whose authorities were intolerant. He thus shared his life with Nina Dorliac, a great singer, with whom he was not married, although his official biography mentions a marriage in 1946 ... but whom he loved with a profound affection.” Lompech also quotes Richter’s confidence that “Nous vivre à la colle,” which is unconjugated French for “we live together” or “we’re stuck [glued!] together.”

Lompech’s frank assertions prompted Berlin-based journalist Paul Moor to offer further revelations of his own. Moor wrote on the Internet’s Moderated Classical Music List: “In 1958 Slava had told me that he sometimes went for weeks, even months, without even touching the piano—but only years later did I learn why. The life Soviet law forced him to lead—almost as draconian as in Nazi Germany—resulted in Stygian cyclic depressions that literally crippled him, pushing him perilously close to suicide. The Soviet musical world regarded Slava’s homosexuality as common knowledge, but those laws deprived him, all his life, of real happiness. In Nina he had a totally understanding and accommodating wife, whom he obviously loved very much and depended upon for almost everything (if his watch needed winding, he handed it to Nina), but I always assumed she had acceded to a nominal marriage that primarily served as camouflage.”

Discussing events occurring around the end of the 1950s, Moor also related that Richter was “reluctantly” on the jury of Moscow’s inaugural Tchaikovsky Competition. “Heinrich Neuhaus [Richter’s teacher and mentor] told me that Slava, protesting in his own way against a recently anti-homosexual purge at the Conservatory—the *Tchaikovsky* Conservatory!—had refused to perform in Moscow for a period of time noticeably long enough for the officials to divine his tacit message.” In later weeks, Moor also brought up his reminiscences in two articles on Richter published in *Piano & Keyboard* magazine and the *American Record Guide*. (As he explained to me recently, it was not his intention to “out” Richter in print, but the fact that Lompech had made the first statement about the pianist’s homosexuality seemed to allow him the liberty to express his own views of the situation publicly.)

It is interesting to compare Moor’s take on Richter’s depressions and experiences around the Tchaikovsky competition with other journalists’ interpretation of the same issues. *The Times* asserted, with rather vague logic, that “the disappointing cancellations or ‘illnesses’ were

recognised as an essential aspect of his seriousness about music.” Tommasini placed the situation in a political context: “Mr. Richter’s own relationship with the Soviet leadership was ambiguous. He was no dissident, though in 1960 he performed (on an old upright piano) at the funeral of his friend, the censured author Boris Pasternak, an act that took courage at the time. Afterward several of Mr. Richter’s planned tours to the United States and England were cancelled ... Ill health was given as the reason, but it was rumored that Soviet officials were worried about his emotional stability.” Levy wrote, “The eccentric Mr. Richter, a judge at the 1958 Tchaikovsky competition, had been instructed to grade pianists from 1 to 10. He gave Van Cliburn a 100 and everyone else a zero. He was not asked to judge another competition.”

Richter’s political situation—made problematic, perhaps, by his independent-minded personality or his alleged homosexuality—was an issue most frequently couched in terms of his access to “freedom” in the West. True, Richter was one of the last of the great Soviet musicians the Kremlin permitted through the Cold-War Iron Curtain to concertize in the West; he first played in Finland in 1960, at the age of 45. Were there particular reasons—political, or personal—for holding him back for so long? According to Moor, Khrushchev’s Ministry of Culture exercised a “cruel restraint” on Richter’s freedom to travel, and “one had to wonder why they had such almost panic anxiety over letting him even visit the west.” Alan G. Arthur, in the *Chicago Tribune*, reports that “according to John Culshaw, one of Richter’s Western record producers, the pianist also proved unusually skilled in eluding Soviet agents who traveled with him. Such occurrences in London and Paris apparently led to concern at the ministry that Richter might one day defect, and after 1970 his tours of North America stopped entirely and were severely curtailed elsewhere.”

Other commentators, however, felt that his supposed lack of freedom was a non-issue. The Reuters News Service release mentioned that “although he toured extensively and spent much of his life abroad, Mr. Richter remained loyal to the Soviet Union, unlike some artists such as Mstislav Rostropovich, who left or were expelled. ‘He did what he wanted. He came and went as he pleased,’ said Lilian Hochhauser, Mr. Richter’s longtime agent. ‘It was never an issue for him to defect.’” The pianist’s private life did not seem to be seriously hindered by the system’s disapproval, according to Moor: “When Slava lost his heart to a young Viennese actor, not only did they rendezvous when Slava toured in the west, Slava and Nina actually brought him to Moscow for a visit and got him installed in the National Hotel, then Moscow’s best, which definitely involved some string-pulling.” Bruno Monsaingeon, the film director who spent considerable time with Richter during the pianist’s final years, admitted surprise that “he was never arrested, living the

way he did.”

Monsaingeon’s new documentary on Richter emphasizes the pianist’s aloof indifference to the circumstances of his position: “He was totally free.” As the film’s voice-over intones, “Richter is a world unto himself; closed but radiant, a fish in the great depths, luminous but blind. ... He was indifferent to events, to politics, to praise or material goods. Nothing, neither a political regime, nor generally-accepted musical manners, could bring to an end his wild purity [sa pureté sauvage]. Only the music to which he gave birth [qu’il laisse naître] possesses it. He plays, without deliberate effects, without intentions. He is free.”

Monsaingeon stresses that the French title of his film –“Richter, l’Insoumis” –is not to be translated literally as “the rebel,” but rather as “the engima.” In an interview I did with Monsaingeon soon after the premiere in Paris in February, he explained that Richter “was not a rebel in the sense of active fighting, or an active resistance. ‘L’insoumis’ [also a term used in relation to a conscientious objector to military service] is ‘someone who ignores,’ who is passive—who *can* be passive—but certainly he is not a ‘révolté,’ not at all.” With students he played premieres of works by Stravinsky and Schoenberg at a time when the music of these composers was politically out of favor in the Soviet Union. He was at times prevented from going abroad, Monsaingeon admits, but just as likely, he was not motivated to travel far: “‘They forced me to go to America,’ he said, ‘but I didn’t want to go!’” “The very fact that he didn’t have any ambition—neither in terms of recognition, in terms of money, in terms of goods—made him all the more stronger. This is what I mean by ‘l’insoumis,’” Monsaingeon continued. “And therefore his ‘weight’ was much greater. Whereas all the others were scared—if they utter whatever, you know, it’s going to be the end—he was not scared.” In a sense, Richter’s passivity and indifference may have ultimately served him as a potent shield or a source of power.

In watching Monsaingeon’s film at the premiere, I thought I detected certain subtle hints regarding Richter’s identity and personal life (I admit I was on the look-out for such subtexts, and may have read them in where none were intended). There were intriguing glimpses of Richter prancing around in a toga; various photographs of him as a soulful, attractive young man; flashes of his sly wit (“1953, Stalin, Auf Wiedersehen!”); the quasi-Freudian implications of his complicated relationship with his father, step-father, and mother; the highly evocative Schubert soundtrack (the slow movement of the late Sonata in Bb major) at the beginning and ending of the film, as Richter walks alone through the empty winter cityscape of Moscow (= isolation, loneliness, brooding emotion?). Finally, at the very end of the film, Richter

utters the most enigmatic line of his narration: “I do not love myself.”

For me, it was this paradoxical blend of personal strength and personal defeat that was most potently revealed through the film and the numerous obituaries I had read. But Richter’s personality has not shed its “enigmatic” cloak, despite the revelations and the conjectures of those who knew him, or the assumptions and explanations of those writing about him. His private life remains “tenebrous,” as Moor puts it, and his apparent indifference to the forces surrounding him did not motivate an outwardly responsive spirit—either politically or socially—on his part. Plenty yet remains to be understood about this great artist; at least we can hope to soon reflect on his opinions, wit, and style as presented in the notebooks Richter entrusted to Monsaingeon before his death, which are currently being worked into book form.

[Ivan Raykoff]

“Richter, l’Insoumis” (1997) is a 2-part documentary (155 minutes) which will air on the ARTE channel in Europe September 16 and 23, 1998, and will be available on video through Warner Vision France.

response

Kopelson’s *Beethoven’s Kiss*, and Queer Musicology, Reconsidered

“This book will be of little value to pianists, musicologists, or musicians in general. Not recommended.” – D.L. Patterson, *Choice* (October 1996)

“This book can be recommended to anyone who has picked out a tune at the keyboard and who likes piano music, especially to those who used the piano, in one way or another, as part of their panoply of techniques in dealing with the unexpected problems of a gay childhood. ... Most of all, I wish my colleagues in music would allow themselves to enjoy it, but that may still be too much to hope for.” – Philip Brett, *Lesbian and Gay Studies Newsletter* (Spring 1997)

“With its apparatus of notes and bibliography, the book is underpinned by good traditional scholarship and should become recommended reading for courses on postmodernism and music. It is cleverly written ... and the questions Kopelson asks are worth asking.” – Michael Russ, *Music & Letters* (May 1997)

“The squirm factor is way high, with a continued focus on embarrassing moments in Kopelson’s life, details of his sexual preferences, movie preferences, etc. ... Especially hard to take are some of the Interludes between chapters—biographical vignettes detailing sexual encounters and reflecting on the less noble of the writer’s psychological motivations. There is a danger in this kind of criticism: how can we reveal quirky personal shames and tastes without risking the shameless or tasteless? ... Kopelson blunders on through with little sense of tact.” – Chip Whitesell, *GLSG Newsletter* (March 1997)

When I first read Chip's review of Kevin Kopelson's *Beethoven Kiss: Pianism, Perversion, and the Mastery of Desire* a year ago, three questions came to mind. First: if Kopelson's book is treated this harshly in a queer publication, what ever will happen to it in a straight one (should it ever be reviewed in more conservative environs)? Second, why would such an intelligent gay critic be so "squirmed-out" by Kopelson's approach? Third: what is/will be/is becoming the face of queer musicology?

Given a year, the answer to the first question has worked itself out. Very positive reviews: Claire Detels in *The British Society of Aesthetics Newsletter*, Philip Brett in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Newsletter*; positive, but a tad mixed: Michael Russ in *Music & Letters*, Michael Colby in *Lambda Book Review*; mostly negative: D.L. Patterson in *Choice*, Chip Whitesell in our newsletter. The relative straightness or queerness of the medium seems, thankfully, not to have played a role. (Thanks to Nathan MacBrien, associate editor at Stanford University Press, for supplying all the reviews in the press's possession.)

The second question can only be answered by Chip, but I admit to being taken aback by complaints about having to read about "embarrassing moments in Kopelson's life," about the author's shamelessness and tastelessness, his overkill, those "off-putting" passages. Without more explanation behind his complaints (and the review is rather cursory), all I hear echoing in them is some variety of anxious homophobia. (I remain especially puzzled because the subject of Kevin's book is nothing else than some of the brightest flamers in the pianistic firmament, be they straight or gay; hence, there is a natural conjoining of style and subject. As Jonathan Bellman argues in *The Exotic in Western Music*, "one speaks less convincingly of the strange and shocking, after all, in the language of the everyday.")

But the third question is the most important one for queer musicologists to consider at this early stage in the history of queer musicology. If I understand Chip's review (and I may well not), he wants queer musicology to (1) balance the subjective and objective; (2) distinguish among different uses of autobiography and reject extreme subjectifications as inadequate for [the construction of] theories of reality; and (3) be tactful. In pleading for balance, rejection of extremes, and tactfulness, he seems to be arguing for an aesthetic of classicism and restraint. Demanding these qualities is especially nonsensical, I would proffer, when evaluating either a book like Kopelson's, or Kopelson's subjects, such as Liberace. Neither men will ever be convicted of classical restraint.

This does not mean, going to the other side of the spectrum, that all queer musicology should evince

romanticism rather than classicism, idiosyncrasy rather than universalism, being *outré* instead of tactful. But it does mean that it's perfectly fine for queer musicology (especially queer musicology?) to snuggle into these categories. We don't need to be embarrassed about queer work which is the musicological analogue to the drag queen, the transgressive, the shocking.

Much as I dislike the recent Republican baggage associated with the concept, I'll argue for some sort of queer "big tent": some people need to keep doing what feminist studies calls "compensatory history" (uncovering neglected queer or deviant sexualities as they relate to music making); their work will look rather like "Old Musicology": objective, positivist, supporting its conclusions with an army of data and facts. (I remain deeply impressed, for example, with Kristina Muxfeldt's elegant "Schubert, Platen, and the Myth of Narcissus" that appeared in the Fall 1996 issue of *JAMS*.) Other people, meanwhile, will want to study queer music making and reception (gay choruses, k.d. lang, opera queens, Elton John, homoeroticism and the film score of *Top Gun*). Still others will explore abstract issues of queer theory (can there be such a thing as queer music? what would be its qualities? do queer people listen differently and form their relations to music in a different fashion than straight people? what would a queer-centred musicology look like? what's a queer strategy for interrogating music history?). In this last category would occur work that is so spell bindingly personal, autobiographical, and idiosyncratic that one cannot imagine that it would ever lead queer studies anywhere. Or, in the case of Suzanne Cusick's "On a Lesbian Relationship to Music" (*Queering the Pitch*), one can see exactly where it would, or might, lead us.

Last summer a friend wrote to me that the problem with Kopelson's book is not that it is too personal (thus disagreeing with Chip), but what that personal is all about (agreeing with Chip). I'm still not convinced, even though the book was recently described by one critic as "the worst book on music ever written" on the amslist for the reasons Chip elucidated. Perhaps I'm not convinced because I have been seduced by Philip Brett's musings in "Musicality, Essentialism, and the Closet" (*Queering the Pitch*) about the meanings of music for gay children:

The piano, let us say for example, will thus become an important means for the attempt at expression, disclosure, or communication on the part of those children who have difficulties of various kinds with one or both parents. To gay children, who often experience a shutdown of all feeling as the result of sensing their parents' and society's disapproval of a basic part of their

sentient life, music appears as a veritable lifeline.

In one important sense, Kopelson's book—with its intensely personal musings, its explications of how personally his "being" is inseparably involved in his musical reactions to Gide and Barthes, Chopin and Schumann—is the exact demonstration of these kinds of relationships and meanings which queer people have with music and with its performers, and which we initially form as queer children.

And are the preludes and intermezzos Kopelson playfully intersperses between his major essays so terrible? In them he confesses to the "performativity" of his musical life (and the subsequent inauthenticity of some of it), his postmodern fractured self (imaging as a child that a movie camera was filming his life and the split in consciousness it occasioned), and the unrestrictable ways in which we assemble the meanings of music we love from our musicological studies, our loves (sexual and familial), our histories (see his "Coda" for an excellent example). These little interludes are structurally brilliant soliloquies, pensées that work as welcome contrast.

The six major essays are genuinely thought-provoking and worthy of visiting (and revisiting). "Pianist Envy," for all the sophomoric coyness of its title, is an exploration of desire and performativity by amateurs and professionals, and of Gide's and Barthes' music criticism. I'm especially captivated, as a Beethoven scholar and a gay man interested in queer studies, in Kopelson's sharp-knifed dissection of Allan Keiler's and Alan Walker's (and of Keiler's homophobic reading of Walker's) readings of the famous "Beethoven's kiss" bestowed on the eleven-year-old Liszt.

To conclude, I'm not squirming, I'm entertained and provoked intellectually the right way. I'd rather Kopelson risk than balance, embarrass me than constrain himself, free-associate than be tactful. (I feel similarly about Elizabeth Wood's essay that won the first Philip Brett Award and about Lawrence Kramer's 1997 *After the Lovedeath*.) And I'd argue that queer musicology should be of many types. This works both ways: I know queer scholars who complain that Kristina Muxfeldt was too old-fashioned, too conservative in her *JAMS* article. Let's stop focussing on method and concentrate on content. The last thing a bunch of queer people should be arguing about is style. (At least in this sense....)

I picked up my copy of *Beethoven's Kiss* in A Different Light Bookstore in the Castro on a table with titles pre-signed by their authors. In my copy Kevin signed his name: Kevin Kopels—. No ending to his surname, the K's are exuberant, and the writing slants optimistically to the right. I don't want to read very much into this, but it's

an apt metaphor: the signature is as open-ended as the book. And that's where I think queer musicology needs to be right now.

[William Meredith]

book review

Hajdu, David. *Lush Life: A Biography of Billy Strayhorn*. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1996.

Perhaps part of the value of this book is indicated by the furor it -- indeed, even its publication--created among a number of Duke Ellington fans. My examples come from the Ellington information/discussion group duke-lym@concordia.ca ("lym" from Ellington's signature catch phrase, "We love you madly"). The most rabid were angered that attention had been awarded to anyone but Ellington. Many writers wanted to deny Strayhorn credit for any work that in fact it seems clear he accomplished. One way of doing this was by impugning the author, David Hajdu: in a singularly unprofessional gesture, one member of the list posted a list of "errors" that she had gotten from a second party, not a member of the list, and used this as evidence of Hajdu's supposed incompetence in the archives. Some of these were themselves in error, as Hajdu took pains to point out to the list; others were such lapses, which Hajdu himself of course regretted, as wrong matrix numbers, to be corrected in later printings and editions. They were the sort of mistake one communicates privately to an author, and which most of us find ourselves making far too often in the course of a day.

This led only onward. The Ellington-olators (a neologism I prefer to "fans"; on the list many refer to themselves as "researchers") were even more exercised by the prospect of a movie to be made from Hajdu's book. (It would go without saying that a movie should be made about Ellington first.) One subscriber informed the list that a Los Angeles chapter of GLAAD was to have major input on script, casting, and so on. When called to account for "floating a rumor," its inherent homophobia allowed to speak for itself, she denied that she had done so, saying that instead her posting had been a question to the list in the interests of her research. Hajdu was also castigated for the imagined faults of any movie that will appear, despite the fact that the production is only in its very initial stages and despite Hajdu's obvious response that as (only) the author of a property bought by a studio, he will have very little indeed to do with this still hypothetical film.

But at this point, at least, the issue of Strayhorn's open homosexuality had been addressed, and the homophobic fear of a "gay agenda" put into print. Most of the

postings then were divided between those disgusted by Strayhorn's sexuality, but willing to listen to his music anyway, and those who wrote that only the music matters, that sexuality is immaterial. We know these riffs, and I will return to them again below. I would like first, though, to do what almost no members of the list could bring themselves to do: simply consider Billy Strayhorn and what David Hajdu writes about him.

[Truth-in-packaging here: I was so revolted by the homophobia on the list and by the cheap, insensate attacks on Hajdu that I unsubscribed. Hajdu, in a couple of private communications with me, seemed quite shell-shocked by the whole affair, and unprepared for the rabid onslaught. At one point, he informed the list that he was taking a sabbatical from his day job in New York and so would not be getting messages for a while. He behaved throughout with exemplary professional decorum. I've never met Hajdu, and have had no contact with him beyond our two or three e-mail exchanges; so I hope that this review is in fact a treatment of his book and not a response to his shabby treatment by a new and virulent strain of jazz's moldy figs.]

Lush Life is a chronological narrative of Billy Strayhorn's life (1915-1967), and Hajdu a self-effacing biographer. This is much to my own taste. With such ground-breaking—if sometimes still summary—work as we have here, it is both helpful and engaging that an author organize and tell the story as directly as possible, and allow the readers to have our own reactions and questions without his dictating to us what it all means. Hajdu's research has been extensive, and his story is based on archival evidence (scores and parts from the band's book, newspapers, magazines, recording studio materials, civic archives, and so on) and interviews with hundreds of figures from Strayhorn's life. (The only sources not identified by name are a few gay black musicians who want to maintain their privacy.)

Strayhorn's story seems simple on the surface; perhaps this is another reason why those not directly in the know have assumed that ultimately he was a sideman in the Duke Ellington story rather than an individual who deserved attention as such. Strayhorn was born to a working-class black family and grew up in mixed-race neighborhoods in the Pittsburgh area. His mother, whose favorite child he was, was nurturing, his father more distant, more difficult, and sometimes abusive. Drawn early to music, Strayhorn worked to buy a piano, studied "classical" piano and theory in high school, and at the age of 18 performed the Grieg concerto with the school's Senior Orchestra. He composed, as well: small incidental pieces, and a Concerto for Piano and Percussion. But he was also drawn to popular song and musical theater; his *Fantastic Rhythm*, for which he wrote all the music, lyrics and arrangements, grew from a

20-minute revue to a full-length show and toured locally in the Pittsburgh area for some two years. He continued his study (piano and theory) at the Pittsburgh Musical Institute in 1936-37. And during these years he wrote "Lush Life" and "Something to Live For," two extraordinary songs from anyone so young and not yet a professional.

The famous big break came in late 1938, when Strayhorn was introduced to Duke Ellington. In early 1939 Strayhorn moved to New York (his "Take the 'A' Train" is based on Ellington's directions for taking the subway to find the Ellington apartment in Harlem) and joined the Ellington organization in a capacity apparently well-enough understood by insiders but amorphous to others. Strayhorn worked as needed producing songs, arrangements, and lyrics. He was not paid a salary as such, but Ellington paid his expenses and gave him money as needed—quite generously, to judge from Hajdu's accounts of how freely Strayhorn spent. Except for a period of relative distance in the mid-1950s, this remained the arrangement until Strayhorn's death.

Here controversy and confusion begin. A first problem is provenance: in many cases it is impossible to know who contributed what to the compositions and arrangements performed by the Ellington orchestra and small groups. In some cases we know that Strayhorn's music was performed and published with Ellington's name as co- or even sole composer. This is not news. James Lincoln Collier's *Duke Ellington* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987) raised a firestorm of criticism for contending that much of what we think of as Ellington's music comes instead, uncredited, from his band members. In at least one instance, the alto sax player Johnny Hodges believed that Ellington had co-opted, shall we say, a tune of his. It is also not an uncommon event. As Hajdu points out (p. 120), many of Ellington's own early compositions listed his agent Irving Mills as co-composer or lyricist. In the present instance, Hajdu seems to me to have done an exemplary job of distinguishing, where possible, what came from Ellington and what from Strayhorn.

The question of provenance, however, leads to a deeper problem, that of musical—and especially in the question of the Ellington/Strayhorn relationship, extramusical—identity. This is a famous dilemma in the Ellington/Strayhorn canon, presumably never to be resolved, for by many accounts the two men often communicated about compositions and arrangements non-verbally, even completely silently, just looking at each other. On one level, however, Hajdu has some interesting observations to offer or to report about Ellington and Strayhorn:

Virtually everything about Billy Strayhorn made him a good match with

Duke Ellington. Stately to the verge of ostentation, Ellington used vast resources of ingenuity and will to project an image that promoted pride in and respect for black identity. Yet the priorities of a traveling bandleader—and one who was a tireless composer, arranger, record producer, and entrepreneur as well—prevented Ellington from delving into the high culture he strove to embody. Strayhorn, by contrast, had both the time and the inclination to study the music scores of the masters, to visit museums, and the like. “Duke was a magnificent role model. He was brilliant at it,” said Herb Jeffries [singer with the Ellington band in the early 1940s]. “But some of it was hocus-pocus—grand gestures and particular five-dollar phrases that he’d pronounce with dramatic emphasis. Meanwhile, he never really read anything except the Bible, which is great, mind you, if you’re only going to read one book, and he knew far less about the fine arts, including other composers, than he liked to let on. In Billy, Duke saw that image he considered so important, in flesh and blood” (p. 78).

This seems completely plausible (although it may have struck the Ellington-olators as *lèse-majesté*); but Ellington also saw beyond the personal and contingent to deeper human values embodied by Strayhorn. In his 1965 First Concert of Sacred Music, one of Ellington’s

narrative interludes [includes] a rumination on what Ellington called ‘the four freedoms by which I think Billy Strayhorn lived: freedom from hate, unconditionally; freedom from self-pity; freedom from fear of doing something that would help someone more than it does him; and freedom from the kind of pride that could make a man feel that he was better than his brother’ (p. 246).

High praise indeed. The Ellington/Strayhorn relationship was always one of profound mutual respect and love, despite (and through) the occasional periods of some distance. I am personally glad to be spared here any Freudian (or other psychiatric) interpretation; here again, as throughout the book, Hajdu is to be praised for allowing the participants in this complicated story to speak for themselves, insofar as that is possible, and for

allowing his readers to think for themselves, without positioning himself in between. But this is not to say that the relationship was without its times of coolness, or that Strayhorn himself was no more than a happy, selfless worker for the cause. Duke Ellington’s son Mercer attributed the “beginning of problems with Strayhorn” to the attention Strayhorn received in the late 1940s from Lena Horne and her husband, Lennie Hayton, removing him at least to some degree from the tight musical world of the Ellington orchestra (p. 109). The mid-1950s was a period of more strain, however, and very difficult for participants and observers both. Hajdu recounts a 1957 conversation between Strayhorn and the dancer Honi Coles (whom Strayhorn called Father), when the after-effects of Ellington’s “come-back” at the 1956 Newport Jazz Festival were still evident in articles in such mainstream American periodicals as *Newsweek* and *Look* magazines:

“I read Ellington’s article in *Newsweek*,” said Coles [to Hajdu]. “I asked him if he read it. He said, ‘Yes.’ I said, ‘Why weren’t you mentioned? You wrote every bit as much of that music they’re fussing all over as Ellington, and they didn’t even mention your name. Why do you let them get away with that?’ We stopped eating, I believe, and we just talked. We never finished our meal. All Strayhorn could say to me was, ‘Oh, Father, you know about these things. I don’t care.’ I said to him, ‘I don’t believe you. I think you do care or you wouldn’t be drinking like a fucking fish every fucking time I see you.’ That got him. Billy said, ‘Be careful, Father. Some day, I may get angry with you.’ Then he said, ‘Oh, Father, you know I don’t need all that. I’m better off without all that. Let him have his articles. I’m better off this way.’ I understood what he was saying. Because he wasn’t a celebrity, he didn’t have to answer to anybody about his lifestyle. So I said, ‘I understand. The main thing is that you’re happy.’ And I asked him straight out, ‘Are you?’ And he went into his Father routine—‘Oh, Father . . .’ And he started to cry. I sat there with him, and Billy sat there, and he cried like a baby.” (pp. 171-172)

Lack of recognition, heavy and continual drinking, and uncloseted (if also discreet) homosexuality in an overwhelmingly heterosexual world: we are accustomed to see these (and other “symptoms”) as mutually

reinforcing ingredients in a recipe for psychic hell. Again, Hajdu is careful not to be reductive in his depiction of Strayhorn's mental and emotional life. The book's reader will also remember Strayhorn's distant and difficult father, his nurturing mother (like Ellington's own mother); the tenor of the times, in which heavy drinking and smoking were positively approved as signs of sophistication; the continuing racism which Strayhorn and others in his world faced unceasingly; Strayhorn's apparently life-long mixture of aloofness with warmth; the difficulties of a jazz musician's life, in which one was more often than not separated from one's friends and loved ones (when on the road) or from one's work (when not). One may be struck not by the occurrence of strains in Strayhorn's life and in his relationship with Ellington, but rather with the titanic strength and self-sufficiency on the part of both that prevented any such rifts from becoming truly serious and truly destructive. Again, it is to Hajdu's credit that he does not impose a single reading on the facts and reminiscences that he recounts, but trusts the reader's intelligence, experience and imagination to arrive at a multi-dimensional understanding of his subject.

For this is a biography of Billy Strayhorn, not an exegesis of a Strayhorn/Ellington symbiosis. Hajdu gives us much welcome and insufficiently known information about Strayhorn's early musical work in Pittsburgh, and especially of his work and life outside the Ellington circle in his New York years. From early on, Strayhorn was a regular at cutting contests at Minton's (one of the breeding grounds of bebop) and elsewhere, an active participant in New York's jazz life as well as an informed visitor to its museums and "classical" concerts, and an habitué of intellectual and artistic "salons" beyond any of these. Strayhorn spoke apparently excellent French, and was as at home in Paris as in New York. He frequented tony supper clubs as well as jazz spots, especially Caf Society on the Upper East Side and Caf Society Downtown, on Sheridan Square (both of these resolutely and self-consciously clubs without discriminatory racial policies). Hajdu also focuses on Strayhorn's musical work away from the Ellington compositions and arranging-working with Leonard Feather, making recordings on his own or with Ellington sidemen and others, collaboration with the Artists Theatre, annual shows by the Copasetics, a society of black tap dancers, and other groups in the 1950s, and so on. Perhaps the most moving of these non-Ellington threads in Strayhorn's story is his relationship with Lena Horne.

Strayhorn and Horne met in 1941 and established an immediate rapport of personalities that lasted until Strayhorn's death 26 years later. (As Hajdu points out, the romantic legend that Strayhorn died in her arms is not true; she was performing in Europe at the time.) Strayhorn was at least to some degree responsible for Lena Horne becoming the woman and artist she has been

since the 1950s, after her unhappy experiences in Hollywood. As with Ellington, Horne appeared to be a woman of tremendous sophistication, but by her own admission, she had little education and was indeed quite ignorant of art, books, and many other matters. Strayhorn taught her, but through conversation, example, and joint exploration, not with a syllabus, assignments, and oral exams. This progressed into social issues as well. Again by Horne's own admission, "Billy was the source of my consciousness raising, not about being black but about being me and understanding that I was somebody who both blacks and whites could accept in some ways but could not accept in others, because of who I was. I had to learn to accept myself first, and that's what Billy helped me do" (p. 225). Strayhorn accompanied Horne on a trip south in 1963, and when Medgar Evers asked Horne to sing at an NAACP rally in Jackson, Mississippi, it was Strayhorn to accepted the invitation and made the commitment: "He made me do it, and he taught me how because I didn't know what to sing. I didn't know the songs. Billy had to teach me 'Amazing Grace' and tell me how to do it" (pp. 226-227). Horne sang the hymn a cappella, which must have required extraordinary courage. Five days after the rally, Medgar Evers was shot in the back and killed by a white segregationist; Horne's rage erupted "unbridled" (p. 227) on the *Today* television show, and Hajdu cites Medgar Evers' widow Merlie's belief that "participation by a broadly popular black celebrity like Horne helped expand the movement's reach" (p. 227).

But what moved me most was another sentence in Horne's forthright account of Strayhorn's place in her life: "Since I couldn't have Billy, I let myself fall in love with Lennie [Hayton]" (p. 109). The emotional honesty and entanglements of that sentence are, for me, heart-stopping. Horne then goes on (as I did, after some moments) to say, "I submitted [Hayton] to Billy for his approval, and he gave it to me, or else I wouldn't have married him" (p. 109). It speaks only too well of all three that Hayton was not threatened by Strayhorn, and they became close friends too.

Hajdu thus gives us clear and straightforward reconstructions of Strayhorn's musical life, with and beyond the Ellington organization, and of his social life as well. He is equally forthcoming in his treatment of Strayhorn's homosexuality, and (again, in my eyes) a model of responsibility in treating it as Strayhorn seems himself to have, not as the center or focus of his life, but as a constituent element inextricable from the rest. There are no speculations as to causes. As Strayhorn never shied away from his sexuality, neither does his biographer; neither is tortured by it, nor obsessed by it. Nothing in Strayhorn's life is found to fall back on his sexuality as the single cause (see the passage above, about Honi Coles' taking Strayhorn on about his drinking).

Instead, we follow the “gay” thread, if I can call it that, from Strayhorn’s early years in Pittsburgh, when he seems to have been aware of his sexuality but without acting on it or trying to act against it; through his years in New York, when he did form liaisons but at the same time managed for a whole complex of reasons to become a fully accepted—musically and socially—actor in the Ellington band and the music scene in general; through his three long-term relationships, with Aaron Bridgers, a pianist who moved to Paris in the 1950s, Francis Goldberg, and finally Bill Grove, a white graphic designer. Strayhorn was also apparently out “on the [gay] scene” for a brief time in the mid-1950s, after Bridgers moved to Paris. But according to Hajdu’s source, the gay music critic Roy Hemming, this period was very brief (p. 149). Strayhorn’s three lasting relationships were oriented around their homes -- entertaining together, lavishly and frequently -- and one may believe that this sort of couple-dom was the kind of emotional and sexual relationship that Strayhorn preferred.

As we all know, the roots and ramifications of sexuality are many and various, defying easy analysis. Strayhorn seems not to have worried about any of this, so far as one can tell from Hajdu’s biography or any other source I’m aware of. He had lovers, stable relationships, a circle of friends who were mostly also black and gay, wider circles of friends who were not, deep and important emotional relationships with Lena Horne and other women, and a working milieu that seems amazingly free of homophobia, overt or covert. What we cannot know, of course, is what effect Strayhorn’s sexuality may or did have on his music, for direct evidence is lacking. (I’m fully aware of all the theoretical assumptions I’m making with that statement, given the current discussions in our business. I’d like to take all that as read and cut to the chase, as it were.)

Hajdu does make some tentative connections: “One of Strayhorn’s youthful compositions is so steeped in cynicism about romance that it implies some depth of experience with love, unrequited and perhaps gay” (p. 34). This is the song “Lush Life,” with its opening lines “I used to visit all the very gay places, / Those come what may places”. Hajdu also quotes Strayhorn himself on the song: “It’s a song most persons have to listen to twice before they understand it, and then lots of them don’t know what it’s about.” But having said this much, Hajdu refrains from going any farther in this direction. As he writes, we cannot be sure whether a teenaged and perhaps (probably?) uninitiated youth in Pittsburgh would have made the “gay” = homosexual connection in 1933. I can also easily read these lyrics as the product of a more generic adolescent sensitivity and angst, although the music is far beyond what most beginning songwriters could ever hope to produce.

In other places Hajdu also refers to a sophisticated cynicism or even fatalism about love and romance in Strayhorn’s work—songs like “Something To Live For”—and in his taste in songs by other composers (for example, the Gillespie/Coots standard “You Go To My Head,” in Hajdu’s ears “celebrat[ing] drunken delirium as a metaphor for love,” p. 131). Again, he never makes a specific connection between this cynicism and homosexuality, and it’s more than possible that I am reading here more than he wrote. But my gay antennae did go up reflexively, and my mind’s eye conjures up the stereotypical picture of drunken 1950s gay men weeping, martinis in hand, over Judy Garland LPs. I would much prefer to remember all those songs in the American popular classic canon that embody this sort of fatalism or dark metaphorical rapture about love; for me these are generically human, not specifically gay. (At the same time, and on the other hand, I have to admit that I’d love to see a comparative critical consideration of Strayhorn’s songs and Cole Porter’s.)

One possible way of examining more closely any relationship between Strayhorn’s homosexuality and his music might be a detailed consideration of his work vis--vis Ellington’s. The first obstacle to this is of course the virtually insurmountable one we’ve already seen, the enormous difficulties in trying to separate the two, unless we restrict ourselves to songs whose music and lyrics both we know to have come solely from Strayhorn. But this strikes me as fatal in not considering Strayhorn as the complete musician that he was. It also creates the danger of reducing their musical and personal voices to the realm of sexuality alone, whereas the question is a real nexus of interconnected strands, or a whole nest of chicken/egg problems.

Yet I do wish that Hajdu had addressed himself more to the issue of the two men’s musical differences, even if it proved impossible to reach any substantive conclusion. He adverts to it often in his many discussions of their collaborations, or a reworking by one of work by the other. More than once he reports someone saying to Strayhorn something like, “I’ve heard you play it Ellington’s way—now play it your way.” He writes of “Strayhorn’s individual voice, an emotive one distinct from Ellington’s” (p. 83), but without further explication. As with the cynicism about romance to be found in “Lush Life,” Hajdu notes the “darkness” and “personal anguish” in other Strayhorn tunes (p. 88). Are these general affects we can only point to, without tying them to specific musical elements? This is a question I really don’t know the answer to. More specific comments come from other musicians. Benny Carter said, “Strayhorn’s compositions were so *complete* [emphasis original]. They weren’t just riffs or chord changes like so many others were doing. It made us all think a little differently about what we were doing” (p. 87). Hajdu then quotes Dizzy Gillespie: “All

those sevenths—man, I never heard anything like those things until him. I got ideas from hearing him that I knew I could use forever.” I understand those remarks, or like to think I do. But Hajdu also writes, without being at all specific, “There is more Debussy than Ellington in ‘Chelsea Bridge,’ although Ellington had long experimented with imaginatively colored tone poems” (p. 86).

I also had problems with Hajdu’s early (pp. 35-36) discussion of “Lush Life”. Hajdu is fine on the lyrics and on some details of their musical setting. But he writes of the song as a whole that it is “virtually without repetition” and ignores at least some of its (to me) most striking musical elements. Granted that “Lush Life” is a hard tune, but it is not without a more-than-passing resemblance to standard song form. I want to hear the song as the old verse-plus-chorus, the “verse” the dramatic set-up with an *aabc* phrase structure, the “chorus” (from “Life is lonely again”) the singer’s present emotional situation, *dd’ed*, and a coda, *ff’*, that concludes the story (“Romance is mush”). The song as a whole may be more through-composed than not, in accordance with the story its lyrics tell, but its sections are more discrete and internally repetitive than Hajdu admits. In addition, I would like more attention to its unusual—and unusually difficult—chord structures and progressions than the single phrase “surprising harmonic turns,” and to Strayhorn’s lavish use of parallel ninths, which Hajdu mentions only four pages previously when describing Strayhorn and his young Pittsburgh friends talking about these in the arrangements of the bandleader Joe Haymes.

(I have another minor quibble which probably has nothing to do with Hajdu at all, the cover photo of Strayhorn. He sits slumped over a table or counter top, cigarette in his left hand, looking slantwise at a goldfish in a large vase-shaped bowl. One may be hip to the symbolism of beauty living in a fishbowl, but unfortunately whenever my eyes light on the picture, Strayhorn’s slumped posture and bemused look make me think of a drunk sizing up the martini of his dreams—lush life with a vengeance.)

But: nowhere does Hajdu claim his book to be a biography of the music as well as of the man, and I should not ask for more than he has given us. I also remain at a loss to explain the pot-shots taken at Hajdu on the Ellington list that I described at the beginning of this review. In his treatment of Strayhorn’s contributions to Ellington, Hajdu is much more temperate than other critics and musicians have been, and in reality takes nothing at all away from Ellington. No more does he “flaunt” Strayhorn’s homosexuality, or hold him up as either *gay* victim or *gay* hero; as Strayhorn did himself, Hajdu treats his sexuality as a given and a defining but not (or not necessarily) limiting element of Strayhorn’s

life. *Lush Life* is an exemplary treatment of Billy Strayhorn as a human being and a working musician of some genius. It is full of information, including a bibliography and discography, and of insights about Strayhorn’s various milieux, and could be read for Lena Horne’s contributions alone. Hajdu’s prose is never dry; his final pages, on Strayhorn’s fatal cancer of the esophagus and death, are deeply moving. If you’re interested in American music, read it. And let’s all go see the movie.

[James McCalla]

announcements

The community of graduate students at The Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York is pleased to announce the formation of GSIM, an association devoted to promoting the interests of graduate students specializing in music theory, musicology, ethnomusicology, composition, and performance throughout the City University of New York system of affiliated colleges. The primary function of GSIM will be to encourage the production and presentation of scholarly work among its members. Proposed activities include the establishment of a monthly series of colloquia at which graduate students will be able to present works-in-progress, the formation of study groups geared towards preparing for comprehensive examinations, and the establishment of an annual symposium where graduate students from across North America will be invited to present conference papers on a wide variety of topics in a more relaxed and less intimidating setting.

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5th Annual International Bi Conference, "One World, Many Faces: Unity and Diversity in Bi Communities, Queer Communities and the World," April 3-5, 1998, in Boston. For more information call the conference Info Line at (617) 747-4451, e-mail infor@biconf.org or visit the IBC5 conference website at: <http://www.biconf.org>

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The First Annual GSIM at CUNY Symposium will be held on Saturday, 25 April 1998 at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. The keynote speaker will be Elizabeth Wood of the State University of New York at Stony Brook. Professor Wood is the first recipient of the Philip Brett Award of the American Musicological Society and is a co-editor of the influential text *Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology* (New York: Routledge, 1994). The 1998 GSIM Symposium will feature a variety of papers on feminist and queer topics. For further information, please contact Lars Rains at CUNY Music Department, 33 W. 42nd Street, New York City, New York 10036, (212)

642-2301, Fax: (212) 642-1973, Email:
<Norskybear@aol.com>.

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Interdisciplinary Graduate Student Conference, "How Queer Are We Here?": Interrogating the Efficiency of Queer Theory and Politics, April 24-26, 1998. Sponsored by the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Graduate and Professional Association of the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, the Department of Theater and Dance and the Department of Cultural Studies and Comparative Literature. For more information contact Thomas Haakenson, Department of Cultural Studies & Comparative Literature, 350 Folwell Hall, 9 Pleasant Street Southeast, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, Minneapolis, MN 55455 or e-mail Thoms.O.Haakenson-1@tc.umn.edu or Alan Sikes at Aweslev537@aol.com.

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1st World Conference on Lesbian & Gay Culture, July 20-23, 1998 in Stockholm, Sweden. For more information contact World Conference (Tupilak), Box 23 15, S-103 17, Stockholm, Sweden, phone: 46-8-84-94 19; fax: 46-8-18 22 72

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critical inQueeries Australia's only interdisciplinary journal of queer theory invites submissions for its forthcoming issues for 1998. Areas covered include: queer feminisms; gay/lesbian/bisex/transgender/queer; cultural studies; postcolonialism; poststructuralism; film and television. All manuscripts will be refereed by two or more members of the editorial board or qualified external reviewers. Three copies of the manuscript should be submitted to: *critical inQueeries*, PO Box 4472, The University of Melbourne, Parkville, AUSTRALIA 3052. Further information about the journal can be found at: <http://www.arts.unimelb.edu.au/projects/inQueeries/queeries.htm>

current bibliography

Current Bibliography is a regular list of books, articles, online resources, and other materials relating to lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and queer meanings in music. It focusses on recent publications. We encourage you to send us articles and entries for this list.

Adams, Byron. Review of *Leonard Bernstein* by Humphrey Burton and *Conversations About Bernstein* by William Westbrook Burton. *American Music* 15/3 (Fall 1997): 409-12. [Brings to light the entrenched homophobia within the musical establishment which encouraged Bernstein to take a wife; claims

Burton's biography reflects his own homophobia.]

Als, Hilton. "Laura's Theme." *Out*, no. 49 (November 1997): 110-111. [Reflection on the life and contributions of Laura Nyro, a lesbian singer/songwriter.]

Anderson, R. Reviews of *Schubert: The Music and the Man* by Brian Newbould, and *Franz Schubert: A Biography* by Elizabeth Norman McKay. *Musical Times* 138/1857 (November 1997):30-32.

"Beyond 'Alice'." *Boosey & Hawkes Newsletter* (September 1997): 5. [Discusses David Del Tredici's new orchestral song cycle entitled *Gay Life*.]

Blackburn, Philip, prod. *Harry Partch: Delusion of the Fury*. Enclosure Four. St. Paul, MN: American Composers Forum, 1997. [Video of 1971 version of Partch's major dramatic work, which established his reputation and guru-like status, plus TV program about Partch and performance of his *Daphne of the Dunes* (1968).]

———. *Harry Partch: Enclosure Three*. St. Paul, MN: American Composers Forum, December 1997. [A full-length portrait of an unconventional life told through the composer's own words, photos, scores and correspondence.]

———, prod. "Harry Partch: Enclosure Two." St. Paul, MN: American Composers Forum, 1995. [A four-CD compilation of Partch's works.]

———, prod. *Harry Partch: Four Films From the 1950s*. Enclosure One. St. Paul, MN: American Composers Forum, 1995. [Part of the four-part Enclosure series, see other citations.]

Bream, Jon. "k.d. lang's Refined Interpretation of Emotion Shines at Orpheum." *Star Tribune*, 25 October 1997, p. B4. [Review of Minneapolis performance.]

Brett, Philip. "International Musicological Society: 16th International Congress, London—Royal College of Music, 14th - 20th August, 1997: Round Table VIII—Cultural Politics." *Acta Musicologica*, no. 69 (June 1997): 45-52. [Overview of recent changes in the musicology field, including Philip Brett about the contributions of lesbian and gay studies; other speakers were Susan McClary, Deborah Wong, and Arthur Nestrovski.]

Claussen, Tim. "'Hey Boy!' Offers First-Act Fun, Then Slips." *Star Tribune*, 28 October 1997, p. E2. [Unfavorable review of "Forever Hold Your Piece"; see article by John Habich.]

Cohen, Belissa. "Soft-Serve Sell." *Out*, no. 52 (March 1998): 51. [Interview with Maia Sharp, openly lesbian singer/songwriter.]

Davis, Angela Y. *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism*. New York: Pantheon, 1998. [Includes discussion

- of the contributions of Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith and Billie Holiday to the blues genre and the black feminist movement.]
- Etheridge, Melissa. "An Original Song." *Advocate*, issue 744 (14 October 1997): 83. ["A Truthful Lullaby," her song written to envision the future in 30 years for the GLBT community.]
- Farber, Jim. "Beast Unburdened." *Out*, no. 49 (November 1997): 92-94, 153. [Mick Jagger is on screen advancing sexual freedom in the film version of *Bent*.]
- Frutkin, Alan. "Jazz Master." *Advocate*, issue 753 (17 February 1998): 62. [Interview with pianist Fred Hersch, one of the few openly gay jazz musicians in America.]
- Habich, John. "Illusion Double Bill Offers Gay Themes." *Star Tribune*, 24 October 1997, p. E5. [Review of "Hey Boy!" a revue of songs by gay writers, and "Forever Hold Your Piece," written and performed by Patrick Scully and Djola Branner.]
- Hanson, A. M. Review of *Schubert* by John Reed and *Schubert: The Music and the Man* by Brian Newbould. *Choice* 35/3 (November 1997): 138. [Favorable review of the updated version of John Reed's work (first published ten years ago); book reevaluates the details of Schubert's sexual life in light of new research and controversies surrounding the composer's sexual orientation; also reviews Brian Newbould's recent work on Schubert which deals cautiously with biographical details regarding the composer's sexuality.]
- Hsu, Melinda L. "Celibate Cries: Queer Readings of Morrissey's Sexual Persona." M.A. diss., California State University Fresno, 1996. [Abstract reads, "Morrissey suggests a strategically queer eroticism through his sexually ambiguous lyrics and performance...Discussions of Morrissey's references to the gay closet, coded language and camp, highlight the homoerotic elements central in his work".]
- Hubbs, Nadine. "Music of the 'Fourth Gender': Morrissey and the Sexual Politics of Melodic Contour." In *Genders: Bodies of Writing, Bodies in Performance*, edited by Thomas Foster and Carol Seigel, vol. 23. New York: New York University Press, (1996): 266-96.
- Jamison, Laura. "A Feisty Female Rapper Breaks a Hip-Hop Taboo." *New York Times*, 18 January 1998, sec. 2, p. 34. [Queen Pen is perhaps the first artist to use rap to depict lesbian life, although she is "coy" about her own sexual orientation.]
- Keller, James. "Letter from Lucerne." *Strings* 11/61, issue 6 (March/April 1997): 22, 24-27. [International Festival of Music, Lucerne, began as an alternative to German festivals which excluded Jewish and openly gay musicians.]
- Klam, Julie. "k.d. lang." *Rolling Stone*, no. 773 (13 November 1997): 128-29. [k.d. lang finds it funny that she is labeled "lesbian" and "vegetarian" after trying so hard to avoid such labels.]
- Kramer, Lawrence. "On 'Schubert, Platen, and the Myth of Narcissus' by Kristina Muxfeldt." *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 50/1 (Spring 1997): 225-27. [Ongoing debate about sexuality in Schubert's setting of "Du liebst mich nicht" with a reply by Muxfeldt.]
- Liu, Shirley. "Indigo Girl." *Curve* 7/6 (January 1998): 24-29. [Interview with the Indigo Girls' Amy Ray; first of two-part series.]
- . "Basking in the Indiglow." *Curve* 8/1 (March 1998): 20-21, 31. [Continuation of interview with Amy Ray of the Indigo Girls; she discusses the lesbian community, the Girls' new activism, the Lilith Fair and folks who inspire their music.]
- Maffeo, Lois. "How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Ani DiFranco." *CMJ New Music Monthly*, no. 43 (March 1997): 24-28.
- McFarlane, Rodger. "Singing a New Tune." *Advocate*, issue 745 (28 October 1997): 46-49. [Interview with Tommy Tune concerning his official coming-out.]
- McKee, David. "Bernstein Fascination Continues." *Lavender* 3/69 (16 January 1998): 38. [Review of *The Early Years*, a four-volume CD collection released by RCA of *ad hoc* recording sessions with Bernstein in the late 1940s, and *Bernstein Century* released by Sony Classical; brief history of the life and work of the composer.]
- Meckna, M. Review of *Virgil Thomson: Composer on the Aisle* by Anthony Tommasini. *Choice* 35/3 (November 1997). [Book focuses mainly on the composer's "passionate personal relationships and troubled homosexuality," rather than on musical analysis of his works.]
- Miller, DeAnna. "A Breakthrough for the [Minnesota] Philharmonic." *focusPoint* 5/31, issue 186 (December 24, 1997 - January 6, 1998): 1. [Details encouraging growth of the nation's first gay and lesbian orchestra both musically and as a group.]
- . "Heather Bishop." *focusPoint* 4/22, issue 177 (22-28 October 1997): 9, 15. [Brief history of lesbian singer/songwriter Heather Bishop.]
- Moore, Michael Kiesow. "Ave Maria Callas: The Confessions of a Self-Professed Opera Queen." *Q Monthly [Minneapolis]* 5/2 (February 1998): 14-15. [Investigation of gay and lesbian imagery in opera.]
- [Music Reviews]. *Out*, no. 49 (November 1997): 72, 74. [Including Catie Curtis *Catie Curtis*, RoniSize and Reprazent *New Forms*, and Dawn Upshaw *Claude Debussy: Forgotten Songs*.]

- [Music Reviews]. *Out*, no. 50 (December 1997/January 1998): 74, 76. [Including RuPaul, Salt N Pepa, Ray Charles and X.]
- [Music Reviews]. *Out*, no. 51 (February 1998): 59-60. [Including reviews of *Women Like Us: Lesbian Favorites* and Michael Daugherty's *Jackie O.*]
- [Music Reviews]. *Out*, no. 52 (March 1998): 62. [Including Gary Barlow *Open Road*, Air Moon *Safari*, and Kathleen Battle *Mozart Opera Arias.*]
- Muxfeldt, Kristina. See Lawrence Kramer above.
- [Near, Holly]. See <http://www.hollynear.com>. [Biography, music and books for order, concert appearances and personal essays by lesbian singer/songwriter Holly Near.]
- Norman, Michael. "k.d. lang's Music is Smokin' Again." *Plain Dealer*, 31 October 1997, p. 11. ["k.d. lang says that she has surrendered her position as the unofficial spokeswoman for showbiz lesbianism now that Ellen DeGeneres has come out"; lengthy interview about *Drag.*]
- Otto, Laura. "Bringing Up the Blues." *Fodder: News from the Hungry Mind Bookstore* 9/1 (January - February 1998): 1-2. [Review of *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism* by Angela Davis.]
- "The Out 100." *Out*, no. 50 (December 1997/January 1998): 94-136, 194, 196. [Profiles of 100 of the most interesting and influential gay men and lesbians in America; musicians listed are Andy Bey, Carrie Brownstein and Corin Tucker (of Sleater-Kinney), Ani DiFranco, Lou Harrison, and Elton John.]
- Pantsios, Anastasia. "Queer Spirit." *Cleveland Free Times*, 5 - 11 November 1997, p. 29. [Overview of punk and queercore, plus a review of Pansy Division and their focus of gay attraction.]
- Pepper, Rachel. "Hot Licks from Cool Chicks." *Curve* 7/5 (November 1997): 36. [Including reviews of Sinead O'Connor *Gospel Oak*, Go Sailor *Go Sailor*, Phajja *Seize the Moment*, Melissa Ferrick *Plus One*, and Michelle Malone *Beneath the Devil Moon.*]
- . "Hot Licks from Cool Chicks." *Curve* 7/6 (January 1998): 36. [Including reviews of Sarah McLachlan *Surfacing*, The Lookers *In Clover*, and Linda Tillery and the Cultural Heritage Choir *Front Porch Music.*]
- . "Music Watch." *Curve* 8/1 (March 1998): 36. [Including reviews of Karen Capaldi *Parade*, Loreena McKennitt *The Book of Secrets*, Lisa Ekdahl *When Did You Leave Heaven*, and Marilyn Monroe *The Essential Recordings.*]
- Phoenix, Val C. "The Lesbian Underground." *Curve* 8/1 (March 1998): 24-25. [Interviews with Debbie Smith of the new British indie band Monkey, and Deb Gooze of Snowpony; a look at the queer world of British rock.]
- Reed, John. *Schubert*. New York: Schirmer Books/Prentice Hall International, 1997.
- Renaud, Rudy. "The Best of '97 According to Rudy." *Lavender* 3/67 (19 December 1997): 54. [Including Plain Jane, Happy Apple, Sukpatch, and Passage.]
- . "Rudy's Hit Parade for '98." *Lavender* 3/69 (16 January 1998): 37. [Ideas of which bands are going to be releasing new albums in 1998, and which bands the author would like to see releasing new music.]
- "Review of *Schubert: The Music and the Man* by Brian Newbould". *Virginia Quarterly Review* 73/4 (Fall 1997): 127-28.
- Roeper, Richard. "Girl Groups: This Compilation is for All Music Lovers." *Chicago Sun-Times*, 7 December 1997, sec. Show, p. 2. [Review of *Lesbian Favorites: Women Like Us.*]
- Roem, Ned. "The Sound of Music." *Advocate*, issue 744 (14 October 1997): 105. [Short essay which asks the question, "Is there a gay sensibility?"]
- Schwartz, Harriet. "BeJae Fleming on the Terrors of Writing Music and Her Evolution Into the Blues." *Lavender* 3/71 (13 February 1998): 29. [Openly lesbian acoustic guitarist speaks out about writing and playing the blues.]
- Schwartz, Harriet L. "From Major Labels to Indies, '97 Was a Busy Year for Queer Musicians." *Lavender* 3/67 (19 December 1997): 52.
- Schwarz, K. Robert. "Classic Cover-Up." *Out*, no. 49 (November 1997): 108, 155-56. [As the 200th anniversary of Schubert's birth approaches, the debate about his sexuality continues to rage.]
- Stark, Phyllis. "Gays See Gains in Country Radio." *Billboard* 109/6 (8 February 1998): 68-69.
- Steblin, Rita. Review of *Franz Schubert: A Biography* by Elizabeth Norman McKay. *Music and Letters* 78/3 (August 1997): 434-37. [Finds the author's "role of a fence-sitter" with regard to Schubert's sexuality confusing and unconvincing; Steblin continues to maintain that evidence points strongly to Schubert's heterosexuality.]
- Stolberg, Sheryl Gay. "Writing a Musical, an Offbeat Therapy for H.I.V." *New York Times*, 12 October 1997. [Tells story of Steve Schalchlin, a gay composer and lyricist who wrote a musical while suffering from AIDS, and has now recovered dramatically and can attend its premiere.]
- "Sviatoslav Richter." *Piano & Keyboard*, no. 189 (November 1997): 32-41. [Four separate articles in memory of Richter; especially notable is the article by Paul Moor which discusses Richter's homosexuality.]
- Thomas, Kevin. "Bleak Bent Makes Smooth Move to Screen." *Los Angeles Times*, 26 November 1997, p. F8. [Philip Glass wrote the music for this movie starring Mick Jagger.]

- Turner, Paige. "Cole Porter: Free at Last." *Lavender* 3/65 (21 November 1997): 32. [The copyright on gay composer Cole Porter's music will soon expire.]
- Ullrich, Alan. "Jackie Uh-Oh." *Advocate*, issue 745 (28 October 1997): 57. [Reviews the opera *Jackie O* by Michael Daugherty and Wayne Koestenbaum, a gay writer.]
- . "Leap of Faith." *Advocate*, issue 747 (25 November 1997): 64-65. [Review of *Merce Cunningham: Fifty Years* by David Vaughan.]
- . "Music Master." *Advocate*, issue 749 (23 December 1997): 58. [Review of *Lou Harrison: A Portrait* performed by the California Symphony Orchestra conducted by Barry Jekowsky.]
- . "Ruffling the Met's Feathers." *Advocate*, issue 747 (25 November 1997): 66. [Looking at the "hottest, most outrageous, most subversive, and often the most perceptive publication on the performing arts scene today," *Parterre Box*.]
- Umbauch, Klaus. "Shrill Tones, Nasty Rumors." *Der Spiegel*, 10 November 1997. [Opinionated discussion of the selection of James Levine as a successor to Celibidache as conductor of the Munich Philharmonic Orchestra; hints that Levine's sexuality might be one reason city government now opposes his appointment.]
- Vaughan, David. *Merce Cunningham: Fifty Years*. New York, NY: Aperture, 1997.
- Velez, Andrew. "Shaw Thing." *Out*, no. 52 (March 1998): 51. [England's top jazz singer Ian Shaw is launching a US tour to promote his latest album *Famous Rainy Day*; describes his music as "jazz with soul, or soul with jazz"; partner to Chris Marlowe, a well-known costume designer.]
- Villancourt, Daniel. "Yuletide Harmonies." *Advocate*, issue 748 (9 December 1997): 73-75. [As the holidays approach, gay and lesbian choruses across the country give seasonal tidings and lots of gay cheer.]
- Vroon, Donald K. "Boston Gay Men's Chorus." *American Record Guide* 60/6 (November 1997): 268. [Performance review.]
- Walters, Barry. "Celluloid Sounds." *Advocate*, issue 745 (28 October 1997): 55-56. [Including reviews of newly released gay movie soundtracks, such as *Boogie Nights*, *Pink Flamingos*, *Beautiful Thing* and *Stonewall*.]
- . "The Kid's All Right." *Advocate*, issue 752 (3 February 1998): 57. [Openly gay Kid Congo Powers teams up with singer Sally Norvell on *Abnormals Anonymous*.]
- . "Pink Rhino." *Advocate*, issue 746 (11 November 1997): 71-72. [Pink Rhino is a recording label which supports gay and lesbian music, having released albums with same-sex couples on the covers, and most recently *Women Like Us: Lesbian Favorites*.]
- . "Rock's Queer Evolution." *Advocate*, issue 748 (9 December 1997): 24-31. [Investigating whether there's a double standard for lesbian and gay men in the music industry; interview with Ani DiFranco.]
- . "Rocking the Gay Bandwagon." *Advocate*, issue 747 (25 November 1997): 62-63. [Reviews of Janet Jackson, Green Day, Reel Big Fish, Patti Smith, RuPaul, Martha Wash.]
- . "Sapphic Soul Sister." *Advocate*, issue 749 (23 December 1997): 56-57. [Review of Joi Cardwell, *Joi Cardwell*.]
- . "A Triumph of Love." *Advocate*, issue 750 (20 January 1998): 95-96. [Elton John's tribute to Princess Diana, "Candle in the Wind 1997," has become the best-selling single of all-time (Elton John is openly gay); also review of the "Best of 1997" in music.]
- . "Unsentimental Journey." *Advocate*, issue 752 (3 February 1998): 55-56. ["In a first for the gay press, musician Mark Eitzel speaks openly about his sexuality"; review of his latest album, *Caught in a Trap*.]
- [J. Michele Edwards and Catherine Davies]

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in future issues

We give up trying to predict. It'll be a surprise to all of us. As always, however, we welcome your contributions and suggestions!

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