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Catherine Jones

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Beethoven Hero*

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CATHERINE JONES

The Transatlantic Beethoven Hero

In a journal entry of August 1838 Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote of his experience of the music of Beethoven:

I think myself more a man than some I know inasmuch as I see myself to be open to the enjoyment of talents & deeds of other men as they are not. When a talent comes by, which I cannot appreciate & other men can, I instantly am inferior. With all my ears I cannot detect unity or plan in a strain of Beethoven. Here is a man who draws from it a grand delight. So much is he more a man than I.¹

Emerson would have had the opportunity to hear Beethoven's music in public concerts and private gatherings on his European tour of 1832–33, as well as in the United States. In New England, the Boston Academy of Music, founded in 1833 to further the teaching of sacred and secular music, had begun to champion instrumental music, in particular that of Beethoven, from the mid-1830s, giving its first predominantly orchestral concert on 14 November 1840.² Emerson's journal entry is, in part, a commentary upon the new aesthetic prestige of instrumental music. Liberated from its traditional functions as a servant of visual spectacle or of the written and spoken word, instrumental music could now be seen on both sides of the Atlantic as the maker of its own meaning, a vehicle for ideas, and a potential catalyst of revelation, 'accessible', in Mark Evan Bonds's words, 'to those who actively engaged the work by listening with creative imagination, with *Einbildungskraft*'.³ Emerson, however, by his own admission, is unable to follow the argument of such music and comprehend it as a whole. Yet after reading the 'fine account' of Beethoven in the October 1838 issue of the London periodical, the *Gentleman's Magazine*—a review of Bettina Brentano von Arnim's *Goethes Briefwechsel mit einem Kinde* (*Goethe's Correspondence with a*

Child) (1835)—Emerson would discover in the composer's 'genius' an object of fruitful contemplation.⁴ Inspired by the image of Beethoven presented by von Arnim, who had befriended the composer in Vienna in 1810, Emerson reflects in his journal in November 1838:

in Music, Beethoven, and whosoever like him grandly renounces all forms, societies, & laws as impediments & lives in, on, & for his genius & guiding Idea. How great the influence of such! how it rebukes, how it invites & raises me! My soul answers them saying, 'So it is even as I have heard: — it is no dream; — God is; & there is a heaven for his saints; and that heaven is Obedience to him. I hear ye what ye say great servants of my Lord! I also believe; Lord, help mine unbelief!' (*JMN*, 7: 158)

In this instance, Beethoven speaks directly to Emerson's own sense of vocation. But the composer is also imagined, with von Arnim, as a 'Sponsor' for cultural transformation and renewal in the United States. 'In that old rotten country of Germany', he writes in his journal in May 1839, 'it seems as if spontaneous character,—fresh outbursts of dear nature,—were less rare than in this country, called new & free. We are the most timid crippled old Uncles and Aunts that ever hobbled along the highway without daring to quit the sidewalk. I have no better Sponsors however at this moment in mind than Beethoven & Bettina' (*JMN*, 7: 198).

Emerson's journal entry signals the beginnings of a new spirit of the age in New England. Commenting on the history of Beethoven in Boston in an essay 'Music a Means of Culture', published in the *Atlantic Monthly* in September 1870, John Sullivan Dwight would describe New Englanders of the 1830s as in no sense musical: 'Nothing could be further from the old New England character and "bringing up."⁵ Yet strangely, he observes, the 'first real deep interest' in music awakened in 'this once Puritanical Boston' was an interest in the 'greatest kind' of music: 'Handel, and then more irresistibly Beethoven, were the first to take deep hold on thoughtful, earnest, influential souls' (*MMC*, 322). For Dwight, it is a fact of some significance that the interest felt in Beethoven began at the same moment with the interest in Emerson: 'It was a great extent the young souls drawn to "Transcendentalism" (as it was nicknamed), to escape spiritual starvation, who were most drawn also to the great, deep music which we began to hear at that time' (*MMC*, 322). Amongst this 'set', Dwight recalls, began the practice of writing and lecturing on music and its 'great masters' from a high spiritual point of view (*MMC*, 323). This essay will explore the significance of transatlantic ideas of the hero and the heroic to the Transcendentalists' musical

discourse, focusing on Margaret Fuller's contributions to *The Dial* and *The New-York Tribune*. I shall suggest that Fuller's writing on Beethoven provides insight into the paradox, identified by Charles Capper, in Fuller's life and in the New England Transcendentalist movement, 'the ironic and surprising conversion of a subjectivist, alienated, elitist, and self-consciously "private" faith into an instrument of radically democratic and (for some at least) social change'.⁶

Shortly after her death on 19 July 1850 in the shipwreck of the *Elizabeth* off Fire Island, New York, on her return passage from Europe to the United States, Emerson wrote of Fuller in his journal: 'Her love of art, like that of many, was only a confession of sympathy with the artist in the mute condemnation which his work gave to the deformity of our daily life; her co-perception with him of the eloquence of Form; her aspiration with him to a life altogether beautiful.... There should be a gathering of her friends & some Beethoven should play the dirge' (*JMN*, 11: 257–58). Fuller's letters, in particular her reports on the Academy of Music's performances of Beethoven's symphonies in the Odeon, the remodelled Boston Theatre at Federal Street, appear to support Emerson's judgment.⁷ Fuller experiences Beethoven's music as a form of heavenly compensation in a world deemed unsatisfactory.⁸ Such an attitude towards 'self-culture' suggests the influence of a specific German ideology, as defined by Wolf Lepenies:

Based on cultural aspirations and achievements, the belief that Germany was traveling a special path, a *Sonderweg*, was always a point of pride in the land of poets and thinkers. The inward realm established by German idealism, the classic literature of Weimar, and the Classical and Romantic styles in music preceded the founding of the political nation by more than a hundred years. Henceforth, they gave a special dignity to the withdrawal of the individual from politics into the sphere of culture and private life. Culture was seen as a noble substitute for politics.⁹

Fuller celebrates the 'inner realm' in her letters and journals, combining the philosophical and literary traditions of German-speaking Central Europe with those of New England.¹⁰ She does not, however, see culture as a 'noble substitute' for politics. As translator, critic, editor, journalist and feminist theoretician, as well as founder of the Boston 'Conversations', Fuller uses her knowledge of the arts to participate in the public sphere, 'that unofficial but powerful zone of influence between private discussion and formal governmental debate'.¹¹ In the course of her engagement with New England Transcendentalism and New York literary journalism, she gives particular attention to the social and political

function of the arts, especially the role of music in the shaping of the individual and the collective life.

Fuller first describes her experience of the music of Beethoven in her extant correspondence in a letter to William H. Channing of 5 April 1841. On the previous Saturday evening, she had attended a performance of one of the German composer's symphonies, most likely the Symphony no. 5 in C minor, op. 67, which was presented in Boston for the first time on 27 March of that year by the orchestra of the Academy of Music, playing in the Odeon. 'Oh William', she exclaims,

what majesty what depth, what tearful sweetness of the human heart, what triumphs of the Angel mind! Into his hands [Beethoven] drew all the forces of sound, then poured them forth in tides such as ocean knows not, then the pause which said It is very good and the tender touch which woke again the springs of life. When I read his life I said I will never repine. When I heard this symphony I said I will triumph more and more above the deepenin[g] abysses. The life is large which can receive a Beethoven. I lived that hour. (*L*, 2: 206)

Commenting on this letter, Charles Capper invokes the metaphysics of instrumental music of E.T.A. Hoffmann, whose influential review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony had appeared in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* in 1810. 'Even in the later music criticism of Dwight, who would build a half-century career echoing [Fuller's] religious-aesthetic line', Capper writes, 'one does not find the same Hoffman[n]esque "terror...pain...and endless striving" that Fuller gloried in almost as much as music's "triumphs."¹² In Hoffmann's account, Beethoven's music transcends its physical, acoustic world, transporting the listener to the realm of the mighty and the immeasurable: 'Here shining rays of light shoot through the darkness of night, and we become aware of giant shadows swaying back and forth, moving ever closer around us and destroying within us all being but the pain of infinite yearning, in which every desire, leaping up in sounds of exaltation, sinks back and disappears.' Such yearning, Hoffmann believes, is the 'essence of romanticism'.¹³ Fuller, however, diverges from this analysis of the auditory experience of the symphony to the extent that she interprets the style of Beethoven's music as 'heroic'.

Beethoven used the term 'hero' or 'heroic' in only two of his works: first, in the Piano Sonata in A-flat major, op. 26, of 1801, where the slow movement, in the unusual and dark key of A-flat minor, is a 'Marcia funebre per la morte d'un eroe' ('Funeral March for the death of a hero'); and second, in the Symphony no. 3 in E-flat major, op. 55, which was

finished in 1803 and premiered in 1804. The Third Symphony was inspired by and originally dedicated to Napoleon, then First Consul of France and the heroic embodiment of the anti-monarchist Revolution of 1789. But after the First Consul declared himself Emperor, Beethoven rejected the dedication in a recantation so violent that he actually tore the page, and entitled the work, probably in 1806, as he was getting it ready for its first publication in October of that year, 'Sinfonia Eroica... composta per festeggiare il sovvenire di un grand Uomo' ('Heroic Symphony... composed to celebrate the memory of a great man').¹⁴ Yet the so-called 'heroic style'—the combination of epic scale and dramatic musical process associated particularly with the odd-numbered symphonies from the *Eroica* onwards—would come to define the nature of Beethoven's accomplishment. For over two centuries, in Scott Burnham's words, 'a single style of a single composer has epitomised musical vitality, becoming the paradigm of Western compositional logic and of all the positive virtues that music can embody for humanity'.¹⁵

The term 'heroic' was applied to Beethoven's style from the early nineteenth century. In 1805, for example, the anonymous author of an article for the *Berlinische musikalische Zeitung* claimed that 'in some of the grand symphonies by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven one finds a design and a spirit comparable to the grand plan and character of a heroic poem'.¹⁶ Beethoven's Third Symphony could lay particular claim to such a spirit. Martin Geck and Peter Schleuning suggest that the first reference to a battle as the programmatic basis for the *Eroica* surfaces in the *Haude-Spenersche Zeitung* of Berlin on 4 April 1811 in relation to a first performance in that city; the symphony appears to the anonymous critic 'to represent the painting of a battle'.¹⁷ In 1825, A.B. Marx published unsigned sonnets on the Third, Fifth and Seventh Symphonies in the *Berliner allegemeine musikalische Zeitung*. The sonnet on the Third Symphony has the subtitle 'Ein Heldenleben' ('A Hero's Life') and traces a path from a battle and funeral to celebration and apotheosis. Such a path, Glenn Stanley notes, would become a 'prevailing trope' for the work in mid-nineteenth-century European critical commentary, including influential interpretations by Marx, Hector Berlioz, François-Joseph Fétis, and Richard Wagner.¹⁸ At the same time, according to Burnham, there was a shift of orientation in the reception of Beethoven from a concern with the alleged depiction of the hero (Beethoven's hero) to the composer-as-hero (Beethoven Hero). In Wagner's short story, 'Ein glücklicher Abend' ('A Happy Evening') (1841), for example, one character discourages his friend from hearing the *Eroica* as a musical portrait of Napoleon or of any other specific person, arguing instead that the

symphony is itself an act of heroism, an emulation of Napoleon: '[Beethoven] too, must have felt his powers aroused to an extraordinary pitch, his valiant courage spurred on to a grand and unheard of deed! He was no general—he was a musician; and thus in *his* realm he saw before him the territory within which he could accomplish the same thing that Bonaparte had achieved in the fields of Italy.'¹⁹ Burnham comments:

Beethoven himself is acknowledged as the hero of the *Eroica* Symphony. This pronouncement transforms the symphony from the portrayal of a hero to an act of heroism, and Beethoven from the portrayer of heroes to the hero himself.... With [the *Eroica*], Beethoven is said to liberate music from the stais of eighteenth-century convention, singlehandedly bringing music into a new age by giving it a transcendent voice equal to Western man's most cherished values.... We have moved from Beethoven's hero to Beethoven Hero; the hero with whom we identify becomes subsumed within the figure of a demigod whom we can only serve.²⁰

In her letter to Channing, Fuller, like the character in Wagner's short story, connects the heroic content of Beethoven's work to the composer's life and self-image. The biography to which she refers is most likely Anton Schindler's *Biographie von Ludwig van Beethoven* (1840) (*Biography of Ludwig van Beethoven*), a key source for her article, 'Lives of the Great Composers, Haydn, Mozart, Handel, Bach, Beethoven', first published in the October 1841 issue of *The Dial*. In his biography of Beethoven, Schindler takes up and popularises the idea first proposed in rudimentary form by an anonymous French author in 1818 that Beethoven's music and his career as a composer fall into three periods: early, middle and late.²¹ Schindler also makes known the story of the aborted dedication of the *Eroica* Symphony to Napoleon and of Beethoven's description of the opening of the first movement of the Fifth Symphony as 'Fate knock[ing] at the door'.²² Fuller's interpretation of Beethoven's life and music in *The Dial* and *The New-York Tribune* is shaped by Schindler's biography (amongst others). But she is also concerned with the complex nexus of ideas of 'Beethoven Hero'.

Fuller's 'Lives of the Great Composers' is the longest of eight articles with musical content to appear in *The Dial* in its first form, from 1840 to 1844, when it served, in Orestes A. Brownson's words, as 'the organ of the Transcendentalists, or exquisites of the movement party, radicals indeed of a most ultra stamp, but nevertheless radicals, who would *radicalize* in kid gloves and satin slippers'.²³ The genre of biography had early attracted the interest of the New England Transcendentalists:

Emerson, for example, had contemplated the writing of a ‘modern Plutarch’ while travelling in Europe in the early 1830s, and had partially realised this intention, on his return to New England, in his first organised series of public lectures, that on ‘Biography’, delivered in 1835. Anticipating the concerns of the ‘Biography’ lecture series and the later series on ‘Representative Men’ (first delivered in 1845–46), Emerson wrote in his journal on 12 August 1832: ‘I would draw characters, not write lives. I would evoke the spirit of each, and their relics might rot.... I would walk among the dry bones, and wherever on the face of the earth I found a living man, I would say, here is life, and life is communicable’ (*JMN*, 2: 504). Like Emerson, Fuller is concerned with the life that is ‘communicable’, with the force of personality. But where Emerson seeks in the world of past men ‘the type of a *Man*’ (*JMN*, 2: 505), Fuller’s particular interest in ‘Lives of the Great Composers’ is the ethical value of ‘artist’ biographies.

In her opening remarks, Fuller suggests that from the ‘naive lispings’ of the ‘uncalculating lives’ of artists are heard anew ‘the tones of that mystic song we call Perfectibility, Perfection’.²⁴ The term *perfectibilité* had been made famous by Condorcet in his posthumously published *Esquisse d’un tableau historique des progrès de l’esprit humain* (*Outlines of an Historical View of the Progress of the Human Mind*) (1794), in which he proposed to show ‘from reasoning and from facts, that no bounds have been fixed to the improvement of the human faculties; that the perfectibility of man is absolutely indefinite; that the progress of this perfectibility, henceforth above the control of every power that would impede it, has no other limit than the duration of the globe upon which nature has placed us’.²⁵ According to Frank E. Manuel and Fritzie P. Manuel, the *Esquisse* ‘was the form in which the eighteenth-century idea of progress was generally assimilated by Western thought.... Those who came after [Condorcet] had no choice but to affirm allegiance as did Godwin, Saint-Simon, and Comte, or to proclaim their hostility as Malthus did on the very title page of his pessimist *Essay on Population* [1798]’.²⁶ Affirming partial allegiance to Condorcet, Madame de Staël had emphasised the role of the arts, especially music, in advancing perfectibility.²⁷ Fuller’s ‘perfectibilarian’ speculations in ‘Lives of the Great Composers’ suggest the influence of de Staël. But where de Staël celebrates Italian over German music, Fuller imagines Beethoven towering far above our heads, still with ‘colossal gesture’ pointing above. ‘Music is pausing now’, she writes, ‘to explain, arrange, or explore the treasures so rapidly accumulated; but how great the genius thus employed, how vast the promise for the next revelation’ (*D*, 2: 150).

Fuller's assessment of the biographies she considers is shaped by Thomas Carlyle's self-consciously Romantic pronouncements about history and biography. In an essay on 'Biography', published in *Fraser's Magazine* in 1832, Carlyle complained of the 'ever new disappointment' of the 'earnest Lover of Biography', who encounters 'modern Narrations, of the Philosophical kind where "Philosophy, teaching by Experience," has to sit like owl on housetop, *seeing* nothing, *understanding* nothing, uttering only, with such solemnity, her perpetual more wearisome *boo-boo*'. According to Carlyle, such writing, associated in particular with the Enlightenment in Scotland, fails to fulfil the reader's legitimate desire of gaining some acquaintance with our fellow-creatures, though dead and vanished:

A feast of widest Biographic insight is spread for us; we enter full of hungry anticipations: alas, like so many other feasts, which Life invites us to, a mere Ossian's 'feast of *shells*,'—the food and liquor being all emptied out and clean gone, and only the vacant dishes and deceitful emblems thereof left! Your modern Historical Restaurateurs are indeed little better than high-priests of Famine; that keep choicest china dinner-sets, only no dinner to serve therein. Yet such is our Biographic appetite, we run trying from shop to shop, with ever new hope; and, unless we could eat the wind, with ever new disappointment.²⁸

Frustration with the historiographic method of the Scottish Science of Man and its narrative 'feast of *shells*' also spills into Carlyle's anti-novel *Sartor Resartus* (1833–34), notably in the serio-comic pronouncements of its imaginary German Professor Teufelsdröckh of Weissnichtwo (translated by the English reviewer narrator): 'What are your historical Facts; still more your biographical? Wilt thou know a Man, above all, a Man-kind, by stringing together beadrolls of what thou namest Facts? The Man is the spirit he worked in; not what he did, but what he became. Facts are engraved Hierogams, for which the fewest have the key.'²⁹

Fuller appears to share Carlyle's contempt for 'beadrolls of...Facts'. Contrasting the 'simplicity, fidelity, and strict accuracy' of Schindler's life to the 'more sprightly sketches' of the German composer by Franz Gerhard Wegeler and Ferdinand Ries (*Biographische Notizen über Ludwig van Beethoven* [*Biographical Notes on Ludwig van Beethoven*] [1838]), and by von Arnim (*Goethes Briefwechsel mit Einem Kinde*), Fuller advocates the manifestation of life through life, rather than any attempt at an exact copy: 'Let only the reader read poetically, and Germany *by* Madame de Staël, Wallenstein *by* Schiller, Beethoven *by* Ries, are not the less true for being inaccurate' (*D*, 2: 186). Where Schindler objects to von Arnim's

representation of Beethoven as a *‘Word Hero’*, Fuller argues that we ‘cannot but for a moment share his contempt, as we admire the granite laconism of Beethoven’s real style’, because von Arnim gives us ‘the soul of the matter’: ‘[Bettina’s] description of [Beethoven’s] manner of seizing a melody and then gathering together from every side all that belonged to it, and the saying, “other men are touched by something good. Artists are fiery; they do not weep,” are Beethoven’s whether he really said them or not’ (*D*, 2: 186). Yet Fuller also suggests that there is value in all three approaches: she claims that the impression Schindler gives of Beethoven differs from that given by Ries and von Arnim only in this, ‘that the giant is seen through uncoloured glass; the lineaments are the same in all the three memoirs’ (*D*, 2: 186).

Quoting extensively from Schindler’s biography, Fuller gives particular attention to the ‘second period’ of Beethoven’s life, from 1800 to 1813, sometimes poeticised as the ‘heroic period’. She includes, for example, a complete translation from Schindler of Beethoven’s ‘Heiligenstadt’ Testament of 6 / 10 October 1802—a letter written, but not sent to his brothers, describing his despair about the hearing losses that had begun some three years earlier; he considers and then rejects taking his life. ‘Born with a fiery, lively temperament’, Beethoven writes,

even susceptible to the distractions of society, must I early sever myself, lonely pass my life. If I attempted, in spite of my ill, intercourse with others, O how cruelly was I then repulsed by the doubly gloomy experience of my bad hearing; and yet it was not possible for me to say to men, speak louder, scream, for I am deaf!... *Patience*, it is said, I must now take for my guide. I have so. Constant, I hope, shall my resolution be to endure till the inexorable Fates shall be pleased to break the thread. (*D*, 2: 190–91)

‘Deafness’, suggests Carolyn Abbate, ‘is an unthinkable destiny for any musical individual, and thus Beethoven’s biography has been dominated both openly and secretly by the single fact of his loss of hearing. Beethoven, reified as the human form of genius and indominability, above all serves as a figure of tragedy: the deaf composer.’³⁰ Fuller heroicises this fate, but she also encourages her readers to engage in an act of sympathetic imagination, to place themselves within the life of another: ‘In a world where millions of souls are pining and perishing for want of an inexhaustible fountain of love and grandeur, this soul, which was indeed such an one, could love in vain.... He was left lonely, unsustainable, unsoled, to wrestle with, to conquer his fate’ (*D*, 2: 192). According to Emerson, writing in his journal in January 1835, the month

that saw the beginning of his first series of 'Biography' lectures, the great value of biography consists in the 'perfect sympathy' that exists between like minds: 'Space & time are an absolute nullity to this principle.... Socrates, St Paul, Antoninus, Luther, Milton have lived for us as much as for their contemporaries if by books or by tradition their life & words come to my ear. We recognize with delight a strict likeness between their noblest impulses & our own. We are tried in their trial' (*JMN*, 5: 11–12). Fuller encounters Beethoven's 'life & words' by books and tradition, but she is also 'tried in [his] trial' by listening to his symphonies. From this process Fuller draws a moral. 'Shall lesser beings repine', she asks rhetorically in 'Lives of the Great Composers', 'that they do not receive their dues in this short life with such an example before them, how large the scope of eternal justice must be? Who can repine that thinks of Beethoven?' (*D*, 2: 192).

In a manuscript effusion to Beethoven, written after attending a Saturday evening concert in Boston on 25 November 1843, Fuller projects herself into the composer's heroic story, invoking epic tradition:

Like a humble wife to the sage or poet, it is my triumph that I can understand, can receive thee wholly, like a mistress I arm thee for the fight, like a young daughter I tenderly bind thy wounds....

There is none greater than Shakespeare, for he is a God, but his creations are successive, thy Fiat comprehends them all....

Master!... Tonight I had no wish for thee: it was long since we had met. I did not expect to feel again. I was so very cold; tears had fallen; but they were Hamlet tears of speculation. Thy touch made me again all human. O save and give me to myself and thee.³¹

Published in a censored form in Emerson, Channing and J.F. Clarke's *Memoirs of Margaret Fuller Ossoli* (1852), the effusion describes Fuller's encounter with the musical subjectivity of the 'Master' as a return to life.³² With its almost erotic intensity, the effusion suggests, as Fuller would later put it in an article for the *New-York Daily Tribune*, that 'there is as high a joy in worshipping the hero as in emulating him; his virtue is ours while we know how fervently to love, religiously to prize it'.³³ 'Worship', writes Carlyle in his collection of essays *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (1841), 'is transcendent wonder; wonder for which there is now no limit or measure; that is worship'.³⁴ Fuller explores the aesthetics of wonder in her public musical writing, most notably in her *Tribune* concert reviews, often contrasting her idealised conception of particular works with the (impoverished) reality of the performance. But

Beethoven is not only, for Fuller, a hero or demigod of the past; he is also a harbinger of the future.

In a *Tribune* review of 7 February 1845 of the English language edition of Schindler's life of Beethoven, first published in London in 1841, and edited by Ignace Moscheles, Fuller writes of the reception of Beethoven's music in the United States:

It is observable as an earnest of the great Future which opens for this country, that such a genius [as Beethoven] is so easily and so much appreciated here, by those who have not gone through the steps that prepared the way for him in Europe. He is felt, because he expresses, in full tones, the thoughts that lie at the heart of our own existence, though we have not found means to stammer them as yet. To those who have obtained some clue to all this—and their number is daily on the increase—this biography of Beethoven will be very interesting. They will there find a picture of the great man, as he looked and moved in actual life, though imperfectly painted, as by one who saw the figure from too low a stand-point.³⁵

Fuller suggests that Beethoven's works in performance may help Americans define their collective identity by means of a type of dialogue or interaction between the subjectivity of the listener and the embodied subjectivity of the music. The *Eroica* is a case in point: Fuller interprets the symphony from a New World republican perspective in a *Tribune* review of a New York City performance, emphasising the relation between memory and anticipation in the auditory experience of the work: 'the Funeral March, which forms the second part of this Symphony, while it adequately expresses the greatness of a *genius*, like Napoleon's, must wait for a hero in greatness of *purpose* worthy its majestic sorrow'.³⁶ Fuller recommends Schindler's biography to those who have glimpsed the 'Americanness' of the German composer's works. Noting that the English language edition is 'only a translation' of Schindler, Fuller argues, with reference to the 'outside' title ('Life of Beethoven, by Moscheles'), that 'it seems quite unfair to bring Moscheles so much into the foreground, merely because his name is celebrated in England' (*WNYT*, 71). But she comments favourably on the edition's frontispiece portrait of Beethoven (figure 1, engraved after the painting by Joseph Karl Stieler of 1819–20): 'It bears tokens of the force, the grandeur, the grotesqueness of his genius, and at the same time shows the melancholy that came to him from the great misfortune of his life—his deafness; and the affectionateness of his deep heart' (*WNYT*, 73). Fuller also praises Moscheles's account of his own devotion to 'the Master', given in the

Introduction.

A Bohemian pianist and composer of Jewish descent, Moscheles completed his musical studies under Dionysius Weber, the founder of the Prague Musical Conservatory, before embarking on a career as a freelance musician in Vienna, where he became acquainted with Beethoven. By 1814, when the publisher Artaria commissioned him to prepare a piano reduction of Beethoven's opera *Fidelio* (1805), he had established himself as one of Vienna's most popular pianists, and his career as a virtuoso had begun. Moscheles was first heard in London at a Philharmonic concert on 11 June 1821. Deciding to settle in that city, he taught the piano both privately and at the Royal Academy of Music; he was also a conductor to the Philharmonic Society, and used his influence with the Society to secure financial assistance for Beethoven in 1827. Throughout the 1820s and 30s he gave concert tours in Britain and on the continent, visiting Edinburgh in January 1828. According to his wife Charlotte Embden Moscheles, the success of this winter expedition 'was seriously imperilled by an Italian Opera Company which had forestalled him, and he was obliged to put up with a third-rate orchestra, got together any how from regimented bandmen'. While the concert room on 2 January, the evening of Moscheles's first Edinburgh appearance was only two-thirds full, the virtuoso's performance of his fantasia for piano with orchestral accompaniments, *Anklänge aus Schottland* (*Anticipations of Scotland*) (composed 1826), 'created great enthusiasm; and the newspapers, one and all, condemned the apathy shown by this poor attendance at his concert. This appeal...had its effect, for the next two concerts were filled to overflowing.'³⁷

Like his friend and erstwhile pupil Felix Mendelssohn, Moscheles played an important role in advancing and popularising the *topos* of Scotland in music. Scottish songs appear as themes in *Anklänge aus Schottland* and the later *Fantaisie sur des airs des bardes écossais* (*Fantasy on the Airs of the Scottish Bards*), which Moscheles composed for piano and orchestra in 1828 and dedicated to Walter Scott. Strains of the Scottish bards are also heard in the notes to Moscheles's edition of Schindler's life of Beethoven. Crucially, Moscheles discovers in Burns's song 'Is there for honest Poverty', better known as 'A Man's a Man for a' that', a coincidence not only of sentiment but also of expression with a letter from Beethoven of 1812 to von Arnim and others in which the composer declares: 'Kings and princes can, to be sure, make professors, privy councillors, &c., and confer titles and orders, but they cannot make great men—minds which rise above the common herd—these they must not pretend to make, and therefore must these be held in honour' (*LB*, 1:

133–34). Moscheles cites the following lines from Burns’s song:

‘A prince can make a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, and a’ that,
But an honest man’s aboon his might—’ (*LB*, 1: 134).

For Emerson, such a ‘coincidence’ of sentiment and expression would not only support his theory of parallelism based on sympathy, but also a more general kind of parallelism. ‘I suppose the materials may now exist’, he wrote in his journal on 16 November 1834, ‘for a Portraiture of Man which should be at once history & prophecy. Does it not seem as if a perfect parallelism existed between every great & fully developed man & every other?’ (*JMN*, 4: 336). Although Fuller does not refer specifically to Emerson’s theory of ‘perfect parallelism’, she considers materials for the ‘Portraiture of Man’ as ‘history & prophecy’ as she meditates upon the recent erection of monuments to commemorate the triumphs of genius in Scotland and Germany in her dispatches from Europe for the *Tribune*, specifically dispatch 4, written in Edinburgh on 22 September 1846.

Fuller opens dispatch 4 with a description of the Old Town of Edinburgh from the windows of her hotel on Princess Street in the New Town. Her attention then turns to the open square between the Old Town and the New, which is the proposed terminus of the Railroad. Scott, she notes, ‘could hardly have looked without regret upon an object that marks so distinctly the conquest of the New over the Old, and, appropriately enough, his statue has its back turned that way’.³⁸ Fuller describes the new Scott monument as the fourth such structure to have been erected within two years. ‘Monuments that have risen from the same idea and in such quick succession’, she argues, ‘to Schiller, to Goethe, to Beethoven and to Scott, signalize the character of the new era still more happily than does the Railroad coming up almost to the foot of Edinburgh Castle’ (*DE*, 63). Fuller also invokes Burns in this context, but notes that his statue has been moved from the monument erected in Edinburgh in his honour to one of the city’s public libraries, as being there more accessible to the public.

Carlyle had singled out Burns as an example of ‘The Hero as Man of Letters’ in *On Heroes*. Of Burns’s visit to Edinburgh (‘that notablest phasis of [his] history’), Carlyle comments: ‘Often it seems to me as if [Burns’s] demeanor there were the highest proof he gave of what a fund of worth and genuine manhood was in him.... Perhaps no man one could point out, was ever so sorely tried, and so little forgot himself’ (*H*, 166). Responding to such accounts of the heroic in Burns, Fuller describes the Edinburgh statue of the bard as ‘unworthy of its subject’ because it gives

the idea 'of a smaller and younger person, while we think of Burns as of a man in the prime of manhood, one who not only promised but *was*, and with a sunny glow and breadth of character of which this stone effigy presents no sign' (*DE*, 63). To illustrate this 'breadth of character', Fuller recounts an anecdote told to her by an unnamed Scottish gentleman:

Burns, still only in the dawn of his celebrity, was invited to dine with one of the neighboring so-called gentry.... On arriving, he found his plate set in the servants' room!! After dinner he was invited into a room where guests were assembled, and a chair being placed for him at the lower end of the board, a glass of wine was offered, and he was requested to sing one of his songs for the entertainment of the company. He drank off the wine and thundered forth in reply his grand song, 'For a' that and a' that'.... And, having finished this prophesy and prayer, Nature's nobleman left his churlish entertainers to hide their diminished heads in the home they had disgraced. (*DE*, 63–65)

This story, Fuller suggests, would afford 'the finest subject for a painter capable of representing the glowing eye and natural kingliness of Burns, in contrast to the poor, mean puppets he reproved' (*DE*, 63). It also allows Fuller to 'refresh' her readers' memories with Burns's 'Is there for honest Poverty', which Moscheles had connected to Beethoven's letter to von Arnim and others on kings, princes and great men.

Later in the century, Samuel Smiles would popularise Fuller's Scottish-German canon of great men in his bestselling *Self-Help: With Illustrations of Character, Conduct, and Perseverance* (1859). Smiles had appropriated the term 'self-help' from Emerson's essay 'Man the Reformer', first published in *The Dial* in April 1841 (*D*, 1: 523–38 [533]). According to Smiles, some of the best biographies 'are almost equivalent to gospels—teaching high living, high thinking, and energetic action for their own and the world's good'.³⁹ Burns, Scott and Beethoven are all invoked within this framework (although Burns's 'strain of song' is claimed to be 'higher' than his practice [*S-H*, 247]). Beethoven in particular is imagined as a model of industry and application. Retelling an anecdote of Beethoven and Moscheles found in Schindler's biography, Smiles writes: 'Beethoven's favourite maxim was, "The barriers are not erected which can say to aspiring talents and industry, "Thus far and no further."' When Moscheles submitted his score of "Fidelio" for the pianoforte to Beethoven, the latter found written at the bottom of the last page, "Finis with God's help." Beethoven immediately wrote underneath, "O man! Help thyself!" This was the motto of his artistic life' (*S-H*, 170). Beethoven thus embodies, for Smiles, the spirit of self-help.

Fuller would have shared Smiles's commitment to self-reliant individualism. But her public and private writing from Europe also suggests a renewed interest in the promise of utopian socialism of the kind advocated by the French reformer Charles Fourier. In New England, Fuller had declared her distrust, in a letter to Channing of around 31 October 1840, of 'ambitious plans [associated with Albert Brisbane, an American disciple of Fourier], such as Phalansterian organizations' (*L*, 2: 179). But in dispatch 5, written from Birmingham on 30 September 1846, she comments: 'Can any man who has seen [the poverty of such places as Liverpool, Glasgow and London] dare to blame the Associationists for their attempt to find prevention against such misery and wickedness in our land?' (*DE*, 72). Shortly after arriving in Italy, Fuller would write to Channing on 7 May 1847: 'Art is not important to me now.... I take interest in the state of the people, their manners, the state of the race in them. I see the future dawning; it is in important aspects Fourier's future' (*L*, 4: 271). Yet she would continue to assert the social and political value of music, writing in dispatch 13, from Naples, for example, of her experience in Paris on 29 May 1847 of performances by the Polish composer Chopin on the piano and the Austrian composer Neukomm on the organ: 'One was the minstrel, the other the orator of music: we want them both – the mysterious whispers and the resolute pleadings from the better world which calls us not to slumber here, but press daily onward to claim all our heritage' (*DE*, 126). This is the 'mystic song...Perfectibility' invoked by Fuller in 'Lives of the Great Composers'.

Fuller's later dispatches from continental Europe describe the revolutionary events of 1848–49, in particular the struggle and defeat of the Italian nationalists. Yet she would continue to assert her commitment to a philosophy of progress, insisting, for example, that the fight for democracy had not ended but had just begun. Writing from Florence, on 6 January 1850 (dispatch 37), she concludes her *Tribune* series with the declaration:

Joy to those born this day: In America is open to them the easy chance of a noble, peaceful growth, in Europe of a combat grand in its motives, and in its extent beyond what the world ever before so much as dreamed. Joy to them; and joy to those their heralds, who, if their path was desert, their work unfinished, and their heads in the power of a prostituted civilization, to throw as toys at the feet of flushed, triumphant wickedness, yet holy-hearted in unasking love, great and entire in their devotion, fall or fade, happy in the thought that there come after them greater than themselves, who may at last string the harp of the world to

full concord, in glory to God in the highest, for peace and love from man to man is become the bond of life. (*DE*, 322–23)

In this passage, Fuller summons and renews for a new age the sentiment of Schiller's 'Ode to Joy', described by Dwight as 'a jubilee of all mankind', possessing the 'sublimity of the holiest hymn' (*SMP*, 435):

Joy, thou brightest heaven-lit spark,
 Daughter from the Elysian choir,
 On thy holy ground we walk,
 Reeling with ecstatic fire.
 Thou canst bind in one again
 All that custom tears apart;
 All mankind are brothers, when
 Waves thy soft wing o'er the heart. (*SMP*, 203)

Beethoven had famously used fragments of Schiller's 'Ode' in the choral finale of his Symphony no. 9 in D minor, op. 125. Although the Ninth Symphony would not be performed in the United States until 1846, the work had early entered the New England 'Transcendentalists' musical discourse with Dwight's *Select Minor Poems, Translated from the German of Goethe and Schiller* (1839). Dwight had included in a footnote to his translation of Schiller's 'Ode' a long quotation from an encyclopaedia essay by Marx on Beethoven. 'As in outward life', Marx writes,

[Beethoven's] had been a fruitless longing for the peaceful joys of the family circle, so in his art he returns with all the yearnings of memory and love to men; there grows in him a longing for *human* music, for song, and it leads him to the climax of his creative power. The ninth symphony, with chorus, is written. Here, in the widest reach of his art, he embraces all the results of his life.... Nothing can be more moving, nothing lets us look so deeply into his breast, as when first the Basses, then the singers, join so simply, so like a people's chorus, in the words 'Joy, thou brightest, heaven-lit spark,' and surrender themselves to the soft love and longing, which seeks but *men* only *men!* requires only communion with men, and knows and will know nothing higher. (*SMP*, 437–38)⁴⁰

It is likely that Marx's essay, mediated by Dwight, is behind Fuller's commentary for the *Tribune* on the first American performance of the Ninth Symphony, which took place at a festival concert at Castle Garden, New York City, on 20 May 1846. 'The Ode to Joy', she writes, 'was an entire failure owing to the want of voices fitted to sustain such words

and such music.... It was indeed a pity to hear such a screeching, shrilling, and jarring, when a world-wide gush of soul, equally magnificent in the poet and the musician, demanded the noblest tones, in the most perfect unison of which human nature is capable[;] still we are glad to have heard it, even so.⁴¹ Like Marx, Fuller identifies a common utopianism in Schiller and Beethoven that draws on classical Antiquity as well as Christianity. According to Maynard Solomon, Beethoven's life and art may be envisaged 'as a search for Elysium,...for fraternal and familial harmony, as well as for a just and enlightened social order. With the "Ode to Joy" of the Ninth Symphony, that search found its symbolic fulfilment, though not its conclusion.'⁴² It is therefore appropriate that Schiller's Ode and Beethoven's *Freudenmelodie* should echo in Fuller's final dispatch as she maps the geography of Elysium in the wake of the revolutions of 1848–49. Fuller's 'radicalization' in Europe is an extension of her 'love of art'.

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NOTES

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1. Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. William H. Gilman and others, 16 vols (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1960–82), 7: 50, hereafter cited as *JMN*.
2. Michael Broyles, 'Music of the Highest Class': *Elitism and Populism in Antebellum Boston* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 22; Richard Crawford, *America's Musical Life: A History* (New York: Norton, 2001), 302.
3. Mark Evan Bonds, *Music as Thought: Listening to the Symphony in the Age of Beethoven* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006), 33.
4. Review of Bettina Brentano von Arnim's *Goethe's Correspondence with a Child, Gentleman's Magazine* (October 1838), 393–97.
5. John S. Dwight, 'Music a Means of Culture', *Atlantic Monthly*, 26 (September 1870), 321–31 (321), hereafter *MMC*. The notion that the New England colonies were hostile to all music is a myth. See Barbara Lambert, *Music in Colonial Massachusetts 1630–1820*, 2 vols (Boston: Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1980, 1985). According to Kate Van Winkle Keller, with John Koegel, public furores between local magistrates and overly enthusiastic dancers and musicians in the early days of settlement were the exception rather than the rule: 'The issue was usually inappropriate time and place rather than the activity itself' ('Secular Music to 1800', in *The Cambridge History of American Music* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998], 49–77 [52]).
6. Charles Capper, *Margaret Fuller: An American Romantic Life: Volume I: The Private Years* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), xi.
7. On the transformation of the Boston Federal Street Theatre into the Odeon, see John Sullivan Dwight, 'The History of Music in Boston', in *The Memorial History of Boston*,

- Including Suffolk County, Massachusetts. 1630–1880*, ed. Justin Winsor, 4 vols (Boston, 1883), 4: 415–64 (424).
8. Fuller writes, for example, in a letter to Elizabeth Hoar of [8] March 1842: ‘It seems to me that Heaven, whose course has ever been to “cross-bias me” as Herbert hath it, is no niggard in its compensations.... I have lived a life, if only in the music I have heard and one development seemed to follow another therein as if bound together by destiny, and all things done for me.’ *The Letters of Margaret Fuller*, ed. Robert N. Hudspeth, 6 vols (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1983–94), 3: 47, hereafter *L.* Fuller alludes to George Herbert’s poem ‘The Church’: ‘Thus doth thy power crosse-bias me, not making / Thine own gift good, yet me from my wayes taking’ (*The Works of George Herbert*, ed. F.E. Hutchinson [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1941], 48).
 9. Wolf Lepenies, *The Seduction of Culture in German History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 9. The term ‘self-culture’ has a German provenance. ‘From the poems and the lives of Goethe and Schiller’, Dwight writes, ‘many a young mind has caught the watchword of self-culture; let him speed it onwards’ (Preface, John S. Dwight, *Select Minor Poems, Translated from the German of Goethe and Schiller* [Boston, 1839], xi, hereafter *SMP*).
 10. On the intellectual and cultural links between New England and German-speaking Central Europe: Henry A. Pochmann, *German Culture in America: Philosophical and Literary Influences 1600–1900* (Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1957); René Wellek, *Confrontations: Studies in the Intellectual and Literary Relations between Germany, England, and the United States during the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965); Mark A. Peterson, ‘Theopolis Americana: The City-State of Boston, the Republic of Letters, and the Protestant International, 1689–1739’, in *Soundings in Atlantic History: Latent Structures and Intellectual Currents, 1500–1830*, ed. Bernard Bailyn and Patricia L. Denault (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).
 11. Robert A. Ferguson, *The American Enlightenment, 1750–1820* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 179.
 12. Charles Capper, *Margaret Fuller: An American Romantic Life: The Public Years* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 58.
 13. E.T.A. Hoffmann, unsigned review of Beethoven’s Symphony No. 5 in C minor, *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* (1810), rpt. and trans. in *Music Analysis in the Nineteenth Century: Volume II: Hermeneutic Approaches*, ed. Ian Bent (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 145–60 (146).
 14. Lewis Lockwood, ‘Beethoven, Florestan, and the Varieties of Heroism’, in *Beethoven and His World*, ed. Scott Burnham and Michael P. Steinberg (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000), 27–47 (41).
 15. Scott Burnham, *Beethoven Hero* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), xiii.
 16. [Anon.], ‘Einige Bemerkungen über das Erhabene der Musik’, *Berlinische musikalische Zeitung*, 1 (1805), 180; cited in Martin Geck and Peter Schleuning’s ‘Geschrieben auf Bonaparte.’ *Beethovens ‘Eroica’: Revolution, Reaktion, Rezeption* (Reinbek: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1989), 221.
 17. Unsigned review, *Haude-Spenersche Zeitung* (4 April 1811); cited in Geck and Schleuning, 226.
 18. Glenn Stanley, review of Burnham’s *Beethoven Hero*, *Journal of American Musicology*, 50: 2/3 (Summer–Autumn, 1997), 464–83 (467).
 19. Richard Wagner, *Gesammelte Schriften und Dichtungen* (Leipzig: Fritzsches, 1871–83), 1:

- 182; cited Burnham, xv.
20. Burnham, xv–xvi.
 21. Glenn Stanley, ‘Some Thoughts on Biography and a Chronology of Beethoven’s Life and Music’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Beethoven*, ed. Glenn Stanley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 3–13.
 22. [Anton Schindler], *The Life of Beethoven, Including His Correspondence with His Friends, Numerous Characteristic Traits, and Remarks on His Musical Works*, ed. Ignace Moscheles, 2 vols (London, 1841), 2: 150, hereafter *LB*.
 23. Irving Lowens, ‘Writing about Music in the Periodicals of American Transcendentalism (1835–50)’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 10 (1957), 71–85 (74); [Orestes A. Brownson], review of *The Dial* (1840), *Boston Quarterly Review*, 4 (January 1841), 131–32 (131–32).
 24. Margaret Fuller, ‘Lives of the Great Composers, Haydn, Mozart, Handel, Bach, Beethoven’, *The Dial: A Magazine for Literature, Philosophy, and Religion*, 2 (October 1841), 148–203 (150), hereafter *D*.
 25. Condorcet, *Outlines of an Historical View of the Progress of the Human Mind, translated from the French* (London, 1795), 4.
 26. Frank E. Manuel and Fritzie P. Manuel, *Utopian Thought in the Western World* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1979), 491.
 27. See Catherine Jones, ‘Madame de Staël and Scotland: *Corinne*, Ossian and the Science of Nations’, *Romanticism*, 15:3 (October 2009), 239–53.
 28. Thomas Carlyle, ‘Biography’, in *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, 5 vols (London, 1899), 3: 44–61 (47).
 29. Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, ed. Mark Engel and Rodger L. Tarr (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 150.
 30. Carolyn Abbate, *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 124.
 31. Houghton Library, Harvard University, fms Am 1086, Box A.
 32. See *Memoirs of Margaret Fuller Ossoli*, 3 vols (London, 1852), 1: 310–11.
 33. Margaret Fuller, ‘The Beethoven Monument’, *New-York Daily Tribune*, 3 September 1845, 1.
 34. Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*, ed. Michael K. Goldberg (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 10, hereafter *H*.
 35. Margaret Fuller, review of [Anton Schindler], *Life of Beethoven*, ed. Ignace Moscheles, in *Margaret Fuller, Critic: Writings from the New-York Tribune, 1844–1846*, ed. Judith Mattson Bean and Joel Myerson (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 73, hereafter *WNYT*.
 36. Margaret Fuller, ‘Music in New-York’, *New-York Daily Tribune*, 6 March 1845, 2.
 37. [Charlotte Embden Moscheles], *Life of Moscheles, With Selections from his Diaries and Correspondence, By his Wife. Adapted from the Original German by A.D. Coleridge*, 2 vols (London, 1873), 1: 202.
 38. Margaret Fuller, ‘These Sad But Glorious Days’: *Dispatches from Europe, 1846–1850*, ed. Larry J. Reynolds and Susan Belasco Smith (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991), 63, hereafter *DE*.
 39. Samuel Smiles, *Self-Help*, ed. Peter W. Sinnema (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) 21, hereafter *S-H*.
 40. See ‘ABM’ [Adolf Bernhard Marx], ‘Beethoven, Ludwig von’, *Encyclopädie der gesammten musikalischen Wissenschaften, oder Universal-Lexicon der Tonkunst*, ed. Gustav Schilling (Stuttgart, 1835–38), 1: 513–20.

41. Margaret Fuller, 'The Grand Festival Concert at Castle Garden', *New-York Daily Tribune*, 22 May 1846, 2.
42. Maynard Solomon, 'Beethoven and Schiller', in Maynard Solomon, *Beethoven Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 214–15.

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