Symphony and Song

Symphony and Song:

The Intersection of Words and Music

Edited by

Victor Kennedy and Michelle Gadpaille

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INTRODUCTION

VICTOR KENNEDY AND MICHELLE GADPAILLE

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid
And on her dulcimer she played,
Singing of Mount Abora.
Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me,
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice! "Kubla Khan" (Coleridge 1798)

When Samuel Taylor Coleridge, a poet with a philosophical bent, wrote these lines, he had been contemplating the nature of the imagination, and he believed that it worked through an association of all the senses. "Kubla Khan" is a poem about the power and the mechanism of the creative imagination, and it uses a variation of the concept of ekphrasis, in which a work in one artistic medium is described and recreated in another.[1]

This book, a sequel to *Words and Music* (Kennedy and Gadpaille 2013), takes its title from Coleridge's poem, and seeks to explore the relation between words and music from a variety of critical and practical perspectives. As Theodor Adorno pointed out, "Music resembles a language… but music is not identical with language" (Adorno 2011, 1). The contributors to this volume explore the relationship between music and language, applying recent theoretical approaches to the analysis of songs, song lyrics,

[1] See "Musical Metaphors in the Poetry of Wallace Stevens" for a discussion of variations of the technique of ekphrasis (Kennedy 2016).

poetry and ekphrastic prose. We are interested in the myriad effects music exerts when combined with words. Each author is convinced that something is added, and this volume thus constitutes an attempt to measure and describe that something from a range of perspectives.

Traditional music critics, such as composer Aaron Copland and pianist and conductor Daniel Barenboim, have described the effects of music subjectively, and with extensive use of metaphor (Barenboim 2001, 2013, Copland 1959, 1988). Researchers in other fields, such as physician Alfred Tomatis (Tomatis 1991), psychologists Frances Rauscher (Rauscher, Shaw, and Ky 1993, 1995) and Daniel Levitin (Levitin 2007), neurologist Oliver Sacks (Sacks 2008) and cognitive scientists such as Mark Johnson and Steve Larson (Johnson and Larson 2003) look at music from different perspectives, examine the mechanisms in the brain devoted to the perception and appreciation of music, and provide new insights into the way we understand and enjoy it. These studies have expanded our knowledge of how music works and have empirically established a connection between the music and speech centres of the brain. Johnson and Larson in particular built upon the work of George Lakoff and his colleagues (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, Lakoff 1987, Lakoff and Turner 1989) to apply the theory of conceptual metaphor, which posits that metaphor is not merely a linguistic device, but an integral part of the way the human brain works, to music, as well as speech. Gerard Genette's work on transtextuality (Genette 1997b, a) is another approach that has proven invaluable in the study of the relation between words and music. A further theoretical tool used by some of the authors in this volume is stylistics, which applies the objective techniques of linguistics to the study of literature (and here, music) (see Leech and Short 1981, Simpson 2004). The authors in this volume apply these interdisciplinary approaches, and more, to an analysis of opera, jazz, pop and rock music.

We begin with Hugo Keiper's "'The Windmills of Your Mind': Notes Towards an Aesthetic of the Pop Song." Keiper's analysis is based on a lifelong attachment to and admiration for a well-known pop song from the 1960s, Noel Harrison's English megahit version of Michel Legrand's original French song "Les moulins de mon

cœur," and its various covers and contexts, intermedial and otherwise. Keiper examines the underlying aesthetic and structural devices of pop and rock songs, such as hook lines, chorus, bridge, verse and their interrelations, and the various rules and precepts of commercial songwriting that are seldom acknowledged in the scholarly analysis of pop song lyrics. Keiper then compares "The Windmills of Your Mind" to Roberta Flack's "Killing Me Softly with His Song" in order to work towards a general aesthetic of pop songs in terms of their "ideal" elements and intended impact on the listener.

Katarina Habe combines the insights of psychologist, musicologist and professional musician in her chapter, "Mozart's Music: A Universal Language for the Human Brain." This chapter provides an overview of recent psychological studies of the effects of music on the brain, with a focus on the controversial topic of the "Mozart Effect," a term coined by French researcher Alfred Tomatis (Tomatis 1991) and tested in a seminal study entitled "Music and Spatial Task Performance" (Rauscher, Shaw, and Ky 1993). Although newspaper stories at the time claimed that the study showed that listening to Mozart's music increased children's IQs, further experiments over the years show that the connection is more complex (Jausovec and Habe 2003, 2004, 2005), while others have failed to replicate the effect at all. Habe and her colleagues claim that listening to music (Mozart's in particular) stimulates diverse regions of the brain and thus "binds" together various aspects of sensory stimuli into a perceived whole. Brain scans show that many areas of the brain "light up" when we listen to music. When we listen to a song, the senses working together could be the reason we feel the experience so deeply.

The next three chapters provide an assortment of perspectives on the traditional genre of opera that, with its music, lyrics, dance, sets and costumes, constitutes the original multimodal experience. In a chapter combining musical and intercultural studies, musicologist Lisa Burnett's "Kim Jong Il's *Gesamtkunstwerk:* Text, Music and Drama in the North Korean Opera *Sea of Blood*" unites socio-political analysis with a close examination of musical motifs and influences in North Korean opera. Although North Korean music is not well known in the West, its endeavours are both unique and

worthy of scholarly attention. Even less widely known than the repertoire itself is that Kim Jong Il is credited as the author of a series of aesthetic treatises, including *On the Art of Music* and *On the Art of Opera,* that prescribe the foundational principles of North Korean music and drama. Kim discusses the relationship between words, gesture, melody and harmony, the proper subject matter of post-revolutionary works of art, and the desired socio-political effects of such art on its audience. Throughout Kim's writings on music, the revolutionary opera *Sea of Blood* (*Pibada*) is held up as a model for North Korean musical works. Paradoxically, Kim advocates not only a smooth and total integration of music, text, and stage action in revolutionary opera, but also a fusion of both traditional Korean and foreign musical and dramatic traditions in order to create a new, avowedly nationalistic form. Burnett's analysis of *Sea of Blood* and Kim Jong Il's writings on music shows that these works represent something revolutionary: a distinctly North Korean vision of *Gesamtkunstwerk.*

The two following chapters examine the more familiar world of nineteenth-century European opera. Tomaž Onič's "'Comprate il mio specifico, per poco ve lo dò': a Stylistic Analysis of Dulcamara's Rhetorical Skills in Italian, English and Slovene," demonstrates the subtle process of characterization in an operatic aria, and goes on to show how the challenges of translating the piece into two different languages are met. Dulcamara is a skilled con man and manipulator; nevertheless, he still is a popular character among the other characters as well as the audience. The reasons for this mostly lie in the use of his powers of persuasion, which depend on his intricate yet subtle use of language, combined with his charismatic and ultimately agreeable personality. Onič describes the rhetorical devices Dulcamara uses and explains how various translators attempted to preserve the structure of these devices while coping with the metrical requirements allowing the lines to be sung to the music.[2] This chapter demonstrates clearly the

[2] See also (Onič 2006, 2014, Zupan 2006).

delicate interdependence of words with melody in the traditional genre of opera.[3]

Jan Kaznowski's "Balzac and Music: Between 'Preserving Idealism' and 'Transcending Sensualism'" explores the French novelist Honoré de Balzac's connection with opera, using the debate between German and Italian composition styles of the early nineteenth century as a background for a discussion about the nature of art. Among the many themes addressed in *La Comédie humaine* is Balzac's interest in music. Balzac considered himself a dilettante, and his main interest was not focused on musical theory. Above all, music for him was an expression of the human heart and mind and an extraordinary psychological problem. Balzac's interest in music was so important (for his writing, he conscientiously consulted specialists on the matter) that Mireille Labouret has suggested that the *La Comédie humaine* can be read as "*quasi una fantasia.*" Two of Balzac's stories, "Gambara" and "Massimilla Doni," were dedicated to the subject of music. Written in the middle of a great quarrel between the Italian musical conception represented by Rossini and the German conception of Meyerbeer that divided critics and music lovers in the 1830s and 40s, they express Balzac's ideas on the debate. Nevertheless, Balzac goes further: he poses more essential questions. What is the process of artistic conception and its development in the mind of the creator? Can composer and performer express in their real lives the emotions they express through their art, and if so, how? Or, on the other hand, is an artist condemned to the "destructive power of thought"? Is it possible to "preserve idealism" while "transcending sensualism"?

Nationalist rivalry is not the sole province of either the nineteenth century, or traditional musical genres. As Kirsten Hempkin demonstrates in her chapter entitled "Beyond 'Flower of Scotland': The Independence Question in Scottish Music," nationalist themes in Scottish songs became unofficial and semi-official national anthems in two referendums on independence. Twice since the 1707 Acts of Union politically united Scotland and

[3] In an earlier essay, Onič provides a similar analysis of another famous aria from *La Traviata* (Onič 2013).

England, Scots have been asked to decide whether they wished to remain part of the United Kingdom. The first referendum was held in 1979, the second in 2014. A great deal changed politically and socially in Scotland during this thirty-five-year period, not least the granting of devolved powers to a Scottish government in 1997 and the establishment of a parliament in Edinburgh. Hempkin offers a comparative analysis of popular pre-referendum songs of the late 1970s and songs of the present day in an attempt to assess the impact of the independence question on the Scottish music scene. She considers the extent to which the independence theme is present in the song lyrics of the two periods in question, differences in the message conveyed by artists on that theme, and the manner in which those messages are expressed. She also draws attention to political parties' use of music in their campaigns to influence the electorate on the independence issue.

A similar discussion of ideology and political themes in songs and song lyrics informs Natalia Kaloh Vid's "A Romantic Singer of the Soviet Union: Individualism and Rebellion in Vladimir Vysotsky's Songs," which provides a peek behind the Iron Curtain with its account of the life and work of a well-known Soviet-era protest singer. Vladimir Vysotsky was an established actor at the Taganka Theatre and in Soviet films and radio broadcasts. His original songs and vocal performances were critical of the regime, but his fame as an actor protected him from prosecution, although his song lyrics were never officially published. His music thrived in the artistic underground, with home recordings passed around hand-to-hand. His lyrics criticised Soviet life and culture, and alluded to the existence of well known but officially non-existent institutions such as the Gulags. Vysotsky was a founder of the style known as *avtorskaia pesnia*, which can be compared to the style of American folk and protest music of artists such as Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger and Joan Baez from the 1930s through the 1960s. Kaloh Vid traces the origins, development, and characteristics of this genre, discussing several examples of Vysotsky's work, before concluding with a statement on the importance of popular music for preserving a spirit of freedom of thought and expression in a totalitarian regime.

We turn next to a different concept of musical translation, that between originals and their "covers." In a chapter providing a close analysis of singing style, Mariusz Gradowski and Monika Konert-Pannek provide an interdisciplinary (musicological and linguistic) comparison of the original version of the song "Love is Blindness" by U2 (*Achtung Baby* 1991) and its jazz cover by Cassandra Wilson ("New Moon Daughter" 1995). Gradowski and Konert-Panek first address the notion of the cover in order to focus on the two versions of the song. The original and the copy, rock and jazz, a man and a woman—different musical and linguistic perspectives are subject to analysis, the common ground being the language. How does Bono interpret the lyrics in comparison with Wilson's interpretation? How is pronunciation related to the manner of their singing and how is it reflected in the overall composition? Gradowski and Konert-Panek first focus on the phonetic, articulatory dimension, in particular on phonostylistic processes, with reference to psycho- and sociolinguistics; subsequently they address the musicological dimension: the interpretation, rhythm, the use of the vocal and its distinct emotional impact in the two versions.

The next section extends the exploration of musical translation by examining the adaptation of a piece of music into fiction, with Carla Fusco's "'Come Rain or Come Shine': Kazuo Ishiguro and Frank Sinatra, Two Crooners in Comparison" and Andrea Stojilkov's "Sting: A Poet Who Sings, A Singer Who Reads," about songs that allude to literary works. These chapters draw on concepts outlined in Stam and Raengo's seminal work on adaptation theory, such as transvocalization, transmodalization, performance and dialogization (Stam and Raengo 2005, 25), each of which exemplifies the phonological relation broached by Fusco and Stojilkov.

While several chapters in this volume consider the effect of literature on songs, Fusco examines whether the influence can go in the other direction. "'Come Rain or Come Shine': Kazuo Ishiguro and Frank Sinatra, Two Crooners in Comparison" bridges the divide between song and story and compares the stylistic interpretations of a song by jazz singer Sinatra and a short story of the same name and subject by writer Kazuo Ishiguro. Fusco considers whether narrative voice in a story can emulate a singer's

style. Sinatra and his contemporaries created a new style in popular singing called "crooning," which was cosier and more confidential than earlier jazz stylings. Subsequently, the content of song lyrics was adapted to this singing style. Songs turned into a sort of intimate declaration of love, with the singer pretending to whisper into a lover's ear and not to a huge audience. "Come Rain or Come Shine," written in 1946 by Harold Arlen with lyrics by Johnny Mercer, was interpreted by many singers, and Frank Sinatra made the song a worldwide hit in the 60s. "Come Rain or Come Shine" is also the title of a short story by Kazuo Ishiguro from his volume *Nocturnes*. Both the song and the short story depict the lover's intention to be together with his partner at all costs in the name of a love that can never end. Through an epistemological analysis of both texts, Fusco argues that Ishiguro's writing style and content can be considered a form of *crooning*.

Moving toward a later era and another genre of popular music, Andrea Stojilkov's "Sting: A Poet Who Sings, A Singer Who Reads" traces the literary influences in Sting's lyrics by examining the boundaries between high and popular culture, and shows how the songwriter alludes to and adapts features of canonical literature in his songs. When compared to "high" art, "popular" art inevitably assumes the undesirable connotation of a product that appeals to consumers for its simplicity and shallowness, and lacks any quality deserving a more profound interpretation; "worthy" is a category reserved for classical music and literary classics, while contemporary novels and popular music are often characterized as disposable consumer goods. Literature has suffered in a society that prizes celebrity and mass consumption. Some artists, however, strive to create popular but high-quality art. Singer-songwriters in all genres of popular music write lyrics that are a hybrid art form in the liminal area between poetry and music. Accompanied by a suitable melody and a carefully chosen and effective arrangement, these lyrics contain many of the elements common to twentieth-century modernist poetic masterpieces. Stojilkov's analysis establishes the potential for intermodal production among contemporary creative artists who resist generic and professional pigeonholing. The corpus for this chapter consists of twenty-five songs from various stages of Sting's career, some created in the 21st

century and credited to him exclusively, others dating back to 1980s England, when he was the front man, bass player and lead vocalist of The Police. Stojilkov shows that, like any other literary discourse, his lyrics can be analyzed on the level of themes, motifs, techniques, dynamics and intertextuality.

Returning to an earlier era of the twentieth century and to "high" culture, Wojciech Klepuszewski's "'Had I a Song': Ivor Gurney's War Poetry" examines the relationship between Gurney's poems and music. Gurney was a composer and poet who was wounded during the Battle of Passchendaele and later confined to a private mental hospital, where he died in 1937. Klepuszewski focuses on the intersection of music and poetry, as expressed in Gurney's poems, within the context of the Great War, and examines Piers Gray's observation that "Gurney is attempting the impossible: to find the words that recreate the experience of noise."

The next chapter discusses the liminal relationship between musical compositions and the verbal texts that contextualize them. Victor Kennedy's "Implied and Unspoken Words in Instrumental Surf Music." This chapter applies Gerard Genette's concept of "transtextuality" to popular music. According to Genette, "transtextuality" is "all that which puts one text in relation, whether manifest or secret, with other texts" (Genette et al. 1997, 1). Genette defines five types of transtextual relationships: Intertextuality (1-2); Paratextuality (3); Metatextuality (4); Architextuality (1) and Hypertextuality (5). Kennedy's analysis of musical metaphors in surf music addresses paratextuality and hypertextuality to discuss a different kind of musical transtextuality, musical metaphors in instrumental surf rock. He shows how music uses tropes similar to the figures of speech in spoken and written language, and in linking words to musical rhythm, sonic equivalents to allusion, pastiche and parody. He argues that instrumental music can use sound effects and sonic tropes to create metaphors for the four pillars of California surf culture: sun, sand, surf and cars. He also shows how surf musicians used intertextuality to allude to and absorb the soundtracks of movie and TV Westerns, and how their creations were subsequently adapted for the soundtracks of spy and space stories. Music is influenced by and influences its paratext, to the point where an art form that is sometimes considered forgotten

has become a major influence not only on American, but also on world culture. In linking words to musical rhythm, Kennedy applies to instrumental music the paradigm of conceptual metaphor developed by George Lakoff and his colleagues, especially Mark Johnson and Steve Larson's idea of metaphors of motion in music. Johnson and Larson make two claims: first, our understanding of musical motion is entirely metaphoric, and second, the key metaphors are grounded in three of our basic bodily experiences of physical motion: pitch "moves"; rhythm "moves"; words "move" us (Johnson and Larson 2003, 63-64). While Johnson and Larson focus on the lyrics to George Harrison's "Something in the Way She Moves," Kennedy argues that the music also "moves" the listener.

Klementina Jurančič Petek's "Correlations in Structural Processing of Music Note and Speech Sound Sequences in Popular Music Writing" applies the tools of linguistic analysis to an exploration of the relationship between musical tones and the sounds of the lyrics in the process of writing popular songs. Comparing song lyrics written in two very different languages, English and Slovene, she demonstrates how the sounds of the language in which they are written affect the melodies, rhythms and accompaniment of the songs.

Like Lisa Burnett's discussion of North Korean opera, Danica Čerče's "Tracing Orality in Contemporary Indigenous Poetry in Australia" examines an art form little known to Western scholars and consumers of popular music. Australian indigenous poets have recently gained increased critical attention in Australia, but within Western critical discourse their work still remains relatively unexplored. Drawing on the work of Stuart Cooke, Čerče argues that this is because literary critics have seldom rigorously engaged with indigenous *oral* poetic tradition in Australia, thereby failing to account for the extensive cultural heritage of contemporary indigenous writing. Consequently, Australian literary studies have ignored the relationship between contemporary indigenous poetry and traditional forms of song lyrics, connected with a larger ignorance of the relationship between the *voice* of the poet and the *written word*. Čerče examines the work of Romaine Moreton as an example of Australian indigenous poetry that questions

contemporary political and social thought, and shows how it functions rhetorically and performatively on its audience. Čerče contends that oral tradition, with its "dimension of performance and a specific attitude to the potency of the spoken word" is not "obsolete," but continues to be an important part of today's Aboriginal poetry. The Aboriginal tradition that underlies Moreton's work thus exists at the boundary where sounds and words overlap, the precise territory that the contributors to this volume have been exploring.

The final chapter, Ester Vidović's "Music and Early Language Development," outlines the practical application of the words/music relation, showing how the musical elements in songs can be used in teaching second language students. Music plays an important role in a child's life, and much recent research indicates that listening to music, combined with creative music pedagogy, can be beneficial for children's intellectual development. Vidović argues that songs are excellent pedagogical tools for language teaching precisely because of their multiple textualities. She explores their importance for the linguistic development of children at an early age. In her view, songs are useful for acquiring new vocabulary primarily through the motivating effect of their rhythm, rhyme and content. Drawing on recent research in the field of multimodal learning, Vidović argues that, combined with movement, rhymes help children develop their language skills through fun and play. Vidović emphasizes the principles of the Total Physical Response Method, one of the principal methods of teaching foreign languages to children.

The fifteen chapters of *Symphony and Song* thus trace a parabola, from the high culture of the nineteenth century, through various popular genres of the 20th and 21st centuries, to the contemporary use of music in preparing future generations for an appreciation of the blended power of language and melody. Each of these writers argues for the inter-disciplinary nature of scholarship (or pedagogy) concerning music and its accompanying words, narratives or paratext. By contesting traditional genre and disciplinary boundaries, such approaches begin the process of restoring and reinvigorating the symphonic aspect of humanities scholarship.

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CHAPTER ONE

"THE WINDMILLS OF YOUR MIND": NOTES TOWARDS AN AESTHETIC OF THE POP SONG

HUGO KEIPER

How do you eat an elephant? At first glance, it might appear that the attempt to set forth an "aesthetic of the pop song" is an overambitious, desperate enterprise, not unlike eating an elephant: a chunk too big to swallow. But just as an elephant can be eaten—bit(e) by bit(e)—I would submit that the basic features and most distinctive constituents of such an aesthetic can indeed be identified. Such a project has been "in the windmills of my mind" for a long time, at least since 2004, when I started doing serious research relating to pop songs and their lyrics, but perhaps even earlier, since the 1980s, when I began using pop songs in my teaching, sometimes devoting special classes to their analysis. About ten years ago the idea began to grow on me, vaguely at first, as a hidden agenda, in various talks and essays, about reading and misreading pop songs such as "All You Need Is Love," for example, and the textual, aesthetic reasons for such acts of (mis-) reading (cf. Keiper 2007 and 2008b); or about Sade's highly idiosyncratic, yet nonetheless quite representative approach to songwriting and her specific intermedial use of lyrics (Keiper 2009); but also about the mechanisms underlying mondegreens, the notorious mishearings of single words or phrases of song lyrics, which have much to do with how pop songs work as intermedial artefacts and are decoded in general ways (Keiper 2008a).

Around that time the project of working out a systematic aesthetic of pop songs first emerged, revolving especially around

the intermedial dimension of such songs, the highly complex and varied interplay of words and music, of lyrics and melody plus arrangement, which captured and held my intense interest. Partly, this sharpened interest had to do with the growing insight and acceptance of literary and cultural critics that pop songs were about to replace, or at least to offer significant competition to "serious," "traditional" poetry, while at the same time their peculiar intermedial nature as songs, with all its implications, made them radically different from written or recited poetry, in terms of their composition, for their listeners and "readers," as well as regarding the implied workings and aesthetic of such songs. Still, while pop songs, or at least some of them, were gradually beginning to be canonized, their specific medial nature and what this meant for their adequate analysis were largely ignored. Indeed, not much research has been conducted in terms of close, comprehensive analysis of such songs, paying sufficient attention to both the lyrics and the musical side, but especially to their unique modes of interplay.[1]

At roughly the same time the question first crossed my mind whether there might be anything like an ideal pop song. I happened to hear "The Windmills of Your Mind" on the radio, a song I had been familiar with for decades, in various covers and contexts, largely superficially, though likely as an earworm on occasion. This time I listened closely and thought, this could be *it*. Or perhaps it was the other way round: hearing the song and ruminating on it, turning it round in my head, as tends to happen with earworms, gave me the idea of looking for the ideal pop song in the first place. Whichever way, I soon convinced myself that I had found it in "The Windmills of Your Mind," and that conviction has grown over the years. Somehow, all these ideas began to appear related, and I can

[1] A recent exception is Victor Kennedy's *Strange Brew* (2013), which offers several useful perspectives and suggestions for approaching the analysis of pop songs. To my mind, and despite enthusiastic praise by some reviewers, Eckstein (2010) is much less useful, because this monograph about "reading song lyrics" attempts to cram every possible consideration and aspect into a few pages, often confusingly, thus force-feeding the reader without really offering useful methodological guidelines or handily practicable avenues.

now offer a few notes towards an aesthetic of the pop song, if not a comprehensive vision and systematic framework for such an aesthetic.

To begin with, two fundamental terminological and notional points should be clarified. First, I use the term pop song as an umbrella term including all sorts of related genres and subgenres, such as rock, hard rock, punk and rap, in accordance with other scholars and handbooks,[2] mainly in order to avoid any discussion about hard-and-fast distinctions between them, which will usually hinge on a range of ideological and/or aesthetic criteria and may be historically variable and contentious, as in the case of rock or punk. In the following, therefore, the term pop song includes several million songs that are obtainable right now, in ever growing numbers, and which loosely belong in the area of popular culture with its many subcultures and trends, even though my main focus will be on commercial songwriting and songs catering for larger audiences and ultimately a mass market.

This takes me to my second qualification. With a minimum of five to six million, or even as many as 37 million pop songs readily available for download on various servers;[3] and with many more that have been released over the last decades on other media, one would be ill-advised to claim that one particular song could be *the one* that ideally represents an underlying aesthetic in total perfection—if there is any such overarching framework in the first place. There must be many others, I am sure, that might serve equally well. Such a proposition, however, has never been my intention, for what I am suggesting is not to spot a single pop song

[2] Cf. e.g. Wicke et al. (2007, s.v. "Popmusik" and "Popular Music"). See further the *All Music Guide: The Definitive Guide to Popular Music* (2001), which is also based on such an open, comprehensive notion of pop(ular) music, including a wide range of styles, genres and directions, from Rock, Folk, Country, or Easy Listening to even Jazz and Avant Garde (see table of contents).

[3] One should not forget about YouTube and the free accessibility of a large number of clips there, which, among many other things, has in a sense revolutionized the teaching of pop songs. At the same time, this example shows that things might change quickly, since recently there has been talk about having to pay for access to YouTube as well.

that is ideal in the Platonic or any other essentialist sense. Rather, what I have in mind is a prototype, along the lines of Eleanor Rosch's prototype theory; that is, a song that comes close to representing, and just possibly epitomising, what to most people is most typical about pop songs, and that comprises and combines such features in particularly effective ways—in other words, in an aesthetically satisfying manner, in terms of both composition and reception. Hence, what I think I have found is a particularly representative specimen of pop song that is sufficiently prototypical to serve as a point of reference for the underlying principal quest and argument.

In this respect, moreover, one must bear in mind one more set of important facts. While it is true that today we have access to a huge, ever growing number of songs, spanning an enormous range and diversity of genres, subgenres and styles, and which it has become even mathematically impossible for any one person to have heard in a lifetime, there is yet the actual practice of songwriting and the concomitant modes of reception, of hearing and reading such songs. That is to say, most of these songs will be composed—and received—within certain traditions and aesthetic conventions and will thus refer to a limited number of prototypical patterns as an underlying foil, using and relating to them in one of two principal ways: as either (1) a model, in largely affirmative, imitative terms, with variations, and with aesthetic developments or progress, but more often than not in epigonous ways; or otherwise (2) utilising or calling attention to such traditions by way of differentiating themselves, of deconstructing such patterns or distancing themselves from them. Either way, and notwithstanding any number of possible in-between positions, most of these songs will in some ways refer to prototypical elements of pop songs, especially in the field of commercial songwriting, and many of the underlying, guiding models will be derived from a comparatively modest, indeed restricted catalogue of canonised songs,[4] as can be found in the various best-of lists such as the "Rolling Stone 500 Greatest Songs of All Time" or other such compilations, or from

[4] Accessed January 16, 2015. http://www.rollingstone.com/music/lists/the-500-greatest-songs-of-all-time-20110407.

what can be heard on the radio, on TV, etc. In the light of such considerations, I would claim and will attempt to show that Michel Legrand's song "The Windmills of Your Mind," with lyrics by Alan and Marilyn Bergman, provides a fitting example, coming close in many ways, and on different levels, to the prototype I would like to advance.

In the following pages I offer basic suggestions relating to a comprehensive aesthetic of pop songs. I will focus mainly on a series of readings of that song which I consider adequate in terms of approaching and highlighting its generic specificity and paradigmatic qualities, while giving a quick rundown of other salient points, briefly also touching on another prototypical song, "Killing Me Softly with His Song," as a second representative example and point of reference. Given these parameters, what I say here is still tentative, incomplete, and—possibly—subject to reconceptualization.

However, before taking a closer look at "The Windmills of Your Mind," let me sketch in some important background about the basic elements and constituent structures of pop songs, and about the terminology used to describe them, which also defines the fundamental categories underlying the composition and conception of such songs.

One aspect in particular is that most of these terms and concepts derive from, and have been systematically established and described in, the context of *commercial songwriting*, an area that has developed into a separate field of applied academic training. In recent years, some of the basic terms such as verse, bridge, and hook have found their way into academic discourse, and even into everyday speech, partly because songwriters and musicians use them in interviews. Moreover, the number of practising songwriters is ever increasing, which helps to spread awareness of the terminology via the media.[5] Yet not much is known about the backgrounds to such notions, especially from the point of view of text production—the verbal dimension, i.e. the *lyrics*, and the

[5] In German-speaking countries in particular, the highly popular format of casting shows has done much to spread basic terminology, such as "Strophe" (the German equivalent for verse) or Chorus / Refrain.

musical side as well as their interplay. Similarly, adequate scholarly analysis of pop songs has made little progress in recent decades, particularly in terms of developing a systematic and comprehensive approach that is practically applicable.

An awareness of such backgrounds, underlying principles and textual strategies is of utmost importance, since most pop songs, generally the products of commercial songwriting, follow a limited set of rules, conventions and underlying patterns that are geared to secure the success of a song as a *commodity* within a strictly circumscribed context of production and reception that is governed by its own laws, but ultimately by the ways such rules are hoped to guarantee success in the market place. Over the years, a set of directives has been developed that is not far removed from the type of comprehensive rhetoric and concomitant set of rules which was derived from, and ultimately governed, the Baroque doctrine of the affections, or *Affektenlehre*, or similar comprehensive systems of composition and their intended effects. The striving of that earlier theory and practice to achieve a unified, focussed effect on the audience by insisting on the observance of specific, clear-cut rules is comparable to the overriding position accorded to the hook line and chorus in contemporary commercial songwriting.

As a consequence, a great and increasing number of textbooks and manuals of professional instruction have come out in recent decades for teaching aspiring songwriters, for example, *The Craft and Business of Song Writing*—a comprehensive and successful textbook by John Braheny, which first appeared in 1997 and has now reached its Third Revised Edition (of 2006). The title, and subtitle, *a practical guide to creating and marketing artistically and commercially successful songs*, are telling, since they emphasise the two most important aspects of the matter. Many more books combining instruction and theory have come out over the years, some focusing on particular aspects of the craft (and business), such as the lyrics, the tunes, even the rhymes. The Berklee College of Music, in particular, has recently specialized in that area and in publishing textbooks on all of these aspects (see References, Pattison and Perricone).

Such precepts are derived from longstanding traditions of composition, especially music-hall and Tin Pan Alley, but also, and

equally importantly, conventions of popular songs, particularly folk songs, ballads, blues and jazz, all of which can be detected behind such rules, not to mention the sophisticated developments of such traditions in pop and rock music since the 1950s and 60s, with ever greater emphasis on marketing and hit potential. Moreover, many of the most creative (earlier) writers of pop songs, such as The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, or Bob Dylan learned their craft by initially covering and adapting or appropriating traditional or pre-existing material covering a broad range of traditions.[6] Gaining experience and developing their own styles in such ways early in their careers made them familiar with the most successful patterns tradition has to offer, usually with a touch of genius added to craft and commerce. The commercially most successful songs of The Beatles, for example, rely on a skilful, original combination of such rules and patterns, whether by intuition or instruction, or both, departing from these patterns in inventive ways (see Ettl 2010). In such songs, it is almost always possible to discern the underlying genres and their characteristic elements and conventions, covering virtually the full range of styles mentioned before. Even in the case of The Beatles, one should not forget that George Martin, the arranger, producer and music manager, was an increasingly important influence on their work, at least on the finished products, thus earning the title of Fifth Beatle. Martin was a classically trained and oriented musician before he took over as producer for The Beatles at EMI/Parlophone, no doubt with high-flying artistic ambitions, but always with an eye on effective marketing strategies for the product.

The present section, then, is not just about fundamental terminology and backgrounds but also highlights core features of a comprehensive aesthetic of pop songs by pinpointing the principal underlying patterns, as well as the decisive shaping forces on the production side, which serve to create a song from its beginnings to the finished product. Today virtually anyone aspiring to be a

[6] The myth that all material in the area of pop and rock is original is easily dismantled by looking at the song credits on records, which clearly, and often surprisingly, show that original compositions are often only a part, sometimes a small part, of the recorded material.

successful songwriter will either seek professional academic training at such institutions as Boston's Berklee College of Music, or Belmont University, Nashville, which offer degree programmes in songwriting; or they will consult the self-training books that are published by such institutions or by teachers or consultants affiliated with them. Besides, many music publishers and studios provide professional advice and help to musicians polishing commercially promising songs for release.

The most important shaping structural elements are *verse*, *chorus* and *bridge*, but above all, the *hook* (or *hook line*). Daniela Ettl, a professional songwriter, wrote a brilliant diploma thesis under my supervision,[7] analysing the twelve commercially most successful Beatles songs against this background. She states: "Apart from these core sections, other building blocks, such as refrain or pre-chorus, can also have a significant impact on the commercial potential of a song, provided that they either show a supportive function towards the hook line or even include characteristics that are similar to the qualities of a hook" (Ettl 2010, 7). Both qualifications apply to "Windmills" in striking ways.[8]

The following definitions of basic terms and concepts might have been taken from any number of sources, but the explanations given by Jai Josefs, in his *Writing Music for Hit Songs*, are most concise and apposite. They demonstrate that not much has changed

[7] I wish to express my gratitude to Daniela for pointing out to me long ago the centrality of such elements in commercial songwriting, as well as the strict rules governing that area of practice.

[8] We are now witnessing radically changing conditions and major shifts in the publishing, marketing, and distribution of pop songs, caused by the disintegration of traditional markets and marketing structures, as well as the massive impact that digital media, especially the internet, have in those areas. This might lead to momentous changes or shifts of emphasis in the aesthetic of pop songs and the structures or elements used, resulting in an even greater importance and enhanced centrality of the hook, as can be seen in recent songs by Katy Perry, Rihanna, and their contemporaries, and even more in wholly commercially oriented songs of the past few years, which are frequently reduced to virtually endless repetitions and loops of hooks or hook-like elements (*oohoohoo*, for example, or similarly indistinct moaning noises).