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William J. Gatens

## JOHN RUSKIN AND MUSIC

THERE IS NO DISPUTING THE FACT THAT JOHN RUSKIN (1819-1900) IS A MAJOR figure in Victorian thought and letters, but to examine his career in relation to music may at first seem somewhat contrived and in need of justification. Some may be surprised to learn that Ruskin devoted serious attention to music in both its practical and philosophical aspects. He even composed several short songs which are extant. While it is undeniable that many other subjects predominate over music in Ruskin's voluminous writings, this should not obscure the importance that the mature Ruskin attached to music in its moral and metaphysical significance and in the crucial place he felt it should occupy in general education.

Ruskin's serious attention to music began rather late in life. His principal writings on the subject date from after 1860, the year of the fifth and final volume of *Modern Painters*, a year justly regarded as marking a turning point in Ruskin's career. The earliest of Ruskin's extant songs date from 1880. The only suggestion of earlier musical composition consists of a group of singing dances that Ruskin devised for the pupils of a rather progressive girls' school at Winnington Hall near Northwich in Cheshire, with which he was informally associated between 1859 and 1868. According to Edward Tyas Cook (1857-1919), a Ruskin biographer and co-editor of his collected works, some of the tunes for these dance songs may have been composed by Ruskin.<sup>1</sup>

In 1894 Augusta Mary Wakefield (1853-1910) published a book entitled *Ruskin on Music*. It is a compilation of passages about music from Ruskin's writings with some explanation and commentary supplied by Wakefield. The compilation, however attractive it may be, is far from exhaustive, and the commentary is not particularly penetrating. The book is so thoroughly suffused with an aura of hero-worship that it impresses the reader as more of a tribute to the still-living Ruskin than as a piece of critical examination. In any event, it can scarcely be regarded as the last word on its subject.

Ruskin's ideas about music could be, to say the least, peculiar. Certainly they were well outside the main stream of musical theory and practice of his own day. Even within the somewhat circumscribed world of Victorian

<sup>1</sup> See the introduction to Volume XXVII of *The Works of John Ruskin*, Library Edition, ed. by E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, 39 vols. (London: George Unwin, 1903-12), lxxiv.

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English music, Ruskin cannot be regarded as a prominent figure. His general hostility towards so many of the prevailing trends in musical practice would have guaranteed as much. Against this, it may be argued that Ruskin is such an important figure in his own right that no significant aspect of his career is without interest.

## I

Towards the end of his life, Ruskin left a candid self-assessment of his musical abilities and propensities. It was intended for Volume II of his unfinished autobiography, *Praeterita* (1886-87), but was deleted from the published version. The passage refers particularly to his childhood and adolescence up to 1841:

I had . . . a sensual faculty of pleasure in sight, as far as I know, unparalleled. . . . I scarcely count my love of music as a separate and additional faculty, because it is merely the same sensitiveness in the ear to sound as in the eye to colour, joined with the architectural love of structure. But this faculty never had the same chance of cultivation as the others, for the simple reason that while I could see good painting or architecture whenever I chose, it was impossible at this period of my chrysalid existence to hear good music anywhere. The modern Italian school was represented by executants of the highest genius, with the result of such popularity throughout France and Italy, that the optional music of cathedral services continually was arranged from opera airs of that school, which also had as much power over my then temperament as Shelley's poetry, — and I never came across any one who could explain a single principle of music to me, nor had any opportunity of hearing music of a pure school in simplicity.

Scientific German music — full of conceit of effort — I rightly abhorred then, as I abhor now; and rightly feeling besides that no energy would be enough to follow up painting and music together, I allowed the latter only such chance thought as I could spare — steadily progressive thought however — until I felt myself justified in speaking of its laws, as I have done lately, in their perceived relations to the laws of other arts.<sup>2</sup>

Clearly Ruskin had no illusions as to the limitations of his technical proficiency in music, but he felt that he could offer some significant philosophical insights. At the same time, some of the observations in this passage need to be taken with a grain of salt in the light of biographical information and opinions expressed in other writings. In particular, Ruskin's childhood seems not to have been quite as devoid of music as the passage might lead us to suspect.

Ruskin's early childhood was almost unbelievably sheltered, and music played no part in the strict scheme of education devised for him by his parents, both of whom came from a serious Scottish evangelical background. His mother was especially pious and never cultivated any musical talent she might have possessed. She had what Ruskin called "the strictest Puritan prejudice against the stage" (XXXV, 176). Ruskin's father seems to have been

<sup>2</sup> Ruskin, *Works*, XXXV, 619. Subsequent references are given by volume and page number.

less severe in this respect, and even Mrs. Ruskin did not object strenuously to her husband taking their son to the theater.

In *Praeterita* we get some glimpses of Ruskin's childhood musical experiences. In 1827, for instance, when he was eight years old, he went with his parents to a grand military dinner at Tunbridge Wells, where he was fascinated by the music of a wind band, though too shy to accept the invitation to try the drum which had captured his special attention. He reflected whimsically, "No one will ever know what I could then have brought out of that drum, or (if my father had perchance taken me to Spain) out of a tambourine" (XXXV, 170).

Sunday afternoons in the family home at Herne Hill were given to reading devotional books. "We none of us cared for singing hymns or psalms as such;" Ruskin reports, "and were too honest to amuse ourselves with them as sacred music, besides that we did not find their music amusing" (XXXV, 73). There was evidently a piano in the house, as Ruskin reports on the playing, which seems not to have been very accomplished, of Mrs. Richard Gray, a neighbor and the wife of one of the elder Ruskin's business associates. He also mentions that his cousin Mary from Perth, who was living with the Ruskins for a time, practiced "scales, and little more" (XXXV, 170).

Domestic music of greater proficiency was also to be heard at Herne Hill, namely the singing of Mr. Ruskin's chief clerk, Henry Watson, and his three sisters. They were frequent guests at the Ruskin home. Their repertory seems to have consisted primarily of German part-songs, which Ruskin found tedious, and Italian songs and arias, which he found pleasant but unworthy of serious attention. He would have preferred "English glees, or Scotch ballads, or British salt-water ones," but in retrospect he noted with appreciation that "from early childhood, I was accustomed to hear a great range of good music completely rightly rendered, without breakings down, missings out, affectations of manner, or vulgar prominence of execution" (XXXV, 174).

In 1835 Ruskin attended the Italian opera in Paris. This was not his first experience of the theater, though by his own admission, he could not remember distinctly his first visit to one. This is strange when one considers the vivid detail with which, in old age, he was able to recall events and places from early childhood. Be that as it may, Paris in 1835 seems the earliest documented instance of his hearing a professional musical performance, apart from the military band at Tunbridge Wells. The opera was *I Puritani*, the last work of the recently deceased Vincenzo Bellini (1801-35). This, the original production of the work, was the rage of Paris. The principal roles had been written for four of the greatest singers of the day: soprano Giulia Grisi (1811-69), basso Luigi Lablache (1794-1858), tenor Giovanni Battista Rubini (1795-1854), and baritone Antonio Tamburini (1800-76). Ruskin's response

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was mixed: “To be taken now at Paris to the feebly dramatic *Puritani* was no great joy to me; but I then heard, and it will always be a rare, and only once or twice in a century possible, thing to hear, four great musicians, all rightly to be called of genius, singing together, with sincere desire to assist each other, not eclipse; and to exhibit, not only their own power of singing, but the beauty of the music they sang” (XXXV, 175). Ruskin may have found the opera dramatically impeachable, but he surely admired Bellini’s gift for lyrical melody, though he ranked it lower than that of Mozart or even Rossini, for whom he elsewhere expressed great admiration. He relished the leisurely performances by the great singers of the 1830s in contrast with the faster tempi that became fashionable later, citing with particular disapproval a performance involving Adelina Patti as Zerlina in the duet “La ci darem” from Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* (XXXV, 176).

In 1837 Ruskin entered Christ Church, Oxford, as an undergraduate. He joined the college’s musical society and had lessons in singing and piano from William Marshall, the cathedral organist. He reports that he learned to sing the Florentine canzonetta “Come mai posso vivere se Rosina non m’ascolta” and to play at least the introduction to the aria “A te o cara” from the aforementioned *Puritani* as well as “what notes I could manage to read of the accompaniments to other songs of similarly tender purport, in which, though never even getting so far as to read with ease, I nevertheless, between my fine rhythmic ear, and true lover’s sentiment, got to understand some principles of musical art” (XXXV, 177).

These pieces of biographical information furnish some background for an event of 1838 that brought forth Ruskin’s first serious writing on music. In that year Charlotte Withers, the daughter of a widowed coal merchant whose wife had been a pious friend and neighbor of Mrs. Ruskin, was a houseguest at Herne Hill. Withers disputed with John Ruskin on the relative merits of music and painting, she favoring the former. Feeling obliged to demolish her arguments, according to what he called “my usual manner of paying court to my mistresses” — one suspects that being a houseguest of the Ruskins could be something of an ordeal — he produced *An Essay on the Relative Dignity of the Studies of Painting and Music and the Advantages to be Derived from Their Pursuit*.<sup>3</sup> Withers was apparently flattered by such attention, and she carried off the essay as something of a prize. It was not published until 1903, though William Gershom Collingwood had given a summary of its arguments in his 1893 Ruskin biography, and A. M. Wakefield had included a few extracts in her book.

<sup>3</sup> *Works*, XXXV, 222. The *Essay*, hereafter to be called *Essay on Painting and Music*, is found in *Works*, I.

In the essay, Ruskin proceeds on the assumption that the appreciation of music does not depend on a cultivated and educated taste, while the appreciation of painting does. He distinguishes two dimensions of human consciousness which may be addressed by art: first, the feelings or “life” with its abode in the heart, and second, thoughts, intellect, or “soul” with its abode in the brain. Music operates only on the first of these, or not even quite that, since music is at best “a mere sensual gratification,” depending on extraneous circumstances to influence the feelings. The most it can do is enhance the reception of other influences which are more sublime and meaningful. Music is not meaningful in itself, but only by association. Painting, on the other hand, operates on both dimensions of consciousness, involving the pleasures of the intellect, which are distinctly higher and greater than those of the feelings. As for the qualifications of a musician, Ruskin’s opinion could hardly be lower:

Let us consider what is necessary to form a musician, and even one who can not only execute, but compose. It requires talent, distinguished talent — but of what description? A musical ear? — that is not intellect; and a something else, we do not know what to call it, which involves neither thought nor feeling, — a sensual power, a corporeal property. A musician may be also a great man, and yet I doubt it: for the habit of sensuality in the ear must gradually embrace and swallow up the other faculties, but on the other hand a musician *may* be what he has been, — a brute in habits, and a bear in manners; an epicure in palate as in ear, a glutton in eating as in hearing; a man of vulgar mind, of mean thought, of debased intellect, — of no principle. All this a man may be, and yet may be a great musician. What splendid talent! what lofty character! In order to add the weight of example to that of argument, compare the character of Handel with that of Raphael.

(I, 279).

Ruskin restricts the sphere of the intellect to those distinct thoughts and images that can be represented by words and pictures, but not well by musical sounds. Since he is unwilling to grant intellectual value to the more abstract expressiveness of musical language and to the operation of musical forms, he concludes that music is a purely sensual experience. It follows, then, that the study and practice of music is intellectually far inferior to the study and practice of drawing and painting.

Without going into greater detail, one may characterize the essay as manifestly an immature and shallow effort. Ruskin’s argumentation is flawed and his evidence weak. Furthermore, one must allow for the fact that the essay was written with a specifically polemical purpose in mind; he was “arguing for victory” rather than for truth.<sup>4</sup> Never in any of his later writings will Ruskin be so harsh in his references to music in general, though he will inveigh harshly against specific composers, styles, and genres. On the contrary, most of his references to music, even in writings dating from before 1860, clearly indicate that he found music at least enjoyable and attractive.

<sup>4</sup> E. T. Cook, *The Life of John Ruskin*, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1911), I, 94.

A case in point occurs in a letter from Rome in December 1841, describing an impressive religious ceremony he had recently witnessed at the Church of *Il Gesù*. Ruskin makes it clear that he was deeply moved by the event, and he gives the music a major share of credit for producing this effect (I, 385). Even so, the music was but one element in a mixture with ritual, architecture, and decoration that provided the associations to help make the music meaningful and deeply moving.

Another noteworthy incident was his meeting on 30 January 1849 with Jenny Lind, at an intimate dinner party given by a family friend. After coffee, the singer went to the piano and sang first some Swedish songs and then Bellini's "Qui la voce." Describing the performance in a letter to his father, Ruskin said that she sang the Bellini aria "very gloriously, prolonging the low notes exactly like soft wind among trees — the higher ones were a little too powerful for the room, but the lowest were heard dying away as if in extreme distance for at least half a minute, and then melted into silence. It was in sound exactly what the last rose of Alpine sunset is in colour" (XXXVI, 92-93).

Ruskin's spontaneous response to music was generally favorable, though he did have his likes and dislikes. Such early instances, however, demonstrate a great difference between this spontaneous response and Ruskin's first attempt to deal with music in a deliberately intellectual or philosophical manner.

## II

W. G. Collingwood wrote that Ruskin, despite his delight in certain kinds of music and his periodic study of singing, piano, and the rudiments of theory, "has no ear for the higher efforts of the art; is not what we call musical."<sup>5</sup> In later life, Ruskin would have been greatly offended at being called unmusical, and he could have discoursed learnedly for hours to refute the allegation. Whatever his conscious attitude might have been at the time of the Charlotte Withers episode, after 1860 his serious regard for music increased immensely. As early as 1867, in his Robert Rede Lecture at Cambridge, he ranked music above painting in the hierarchy of the arts, placing it second only to poetry. But this heightened regard had little or nothing to do with any gain in understanding or appreciation of music as an autonomous art.

A. M. Wakefield claimed that the sentiments expressed in the 1838 *Essay on Painting and Music* are incompatible with Ruskin's later high regard

<sup>5</sup> W. G. Collingwood, *The Life and Work of John Ruskin*, 2 vols. (2d. ed., London: Methuen, 1893), I, 93.

for music, but strange to say, they are quite compatible. Ruskin remained essentially deaf to the vitality of purely musical expression, unwilling to admit any independent significance of musical form, and insistent that there is no intellectual content whatsoever in music apart from its association with a verbal text. Ruskin's opinion of music's value and dignity changed because he came to recognize a powerful relationship between music and words, an insight derived largely from his study of the Greek classics, especially Plato. Nevertheless, the prejudices so openly displayed in the 1838 *Essay* are still discernible in his mature writings on music.

Nowhere is this better illustrated than in an interchange of correspondence given as a lengthy footnote in Ruskin's preface to *Rock Honeycomb* (1877), an edition of psalm paraphrases by Sir Philip Sidney. The unnamed correspondent, whom Ruskin describes as "a man of the highest scientific attainments, and of great general sensitive faculty and intellectual power," challenges Ruskin's contention that in a musical setting the music must be subordinate to the words:

MY DEAR RUSKIN, — "Subordinate" is not the right word, though I think you mean right. "Co-ordinate" would be more correct. Both words and music should express as far as possible the idea intended to be conveyed; but music can convey emotion more powerfully than words, and independently of them. Mozart in his Masses only thought of the words as syllables for hanging notes on, and so wrote music quite profane. Bach, on the contrary, wrote, as it were, on his knees, when he wrote church music. For instance, the "Dona nobis" was set by Mozart to noise and triumph; by J. S. Bach is made a solemn, gentle, and tender prayer, preparing the congregation for the rest of the service. There, no repetition of the words "dona nobis pacem" would give calm to the mind of the listener or reader, but the musical repetition, with variation, extends and enhances the calm both in listener and singer; but it would be quite incorrect to say Bach had "subordinated" the music to the words, for, to a musician, no words could express so much as his music does. Like painting and poetry, music has its own special power, and its own field; it is vague compared with poetry in description, but more exact in expressing feeling.

He goes on to bemoan the misunderstandings attending preparations for the first performance in England of Bach's B Minor Mass, which was given by the London Bach Choir under Otto Goldschmidt on 26 April 1876 at St. James's Hall. Perhaps it was indiscreet of the writer to exalt Bach at the expense of Ruskin's favorite composer, Mozart, especially as Ruskin was known to abhor "scientific German music." The correspondent ends on a note of resignation, that the incomprehension of Bach's greatness "must ever be — during our days, at any rate." Ruskin's reply was merciless, and highly revealing:

I hope better, dear friend; thinking in truth, more highly of music in its true function than you do; but replying to your over-estimate of its independent strength, simply that music gives emotions stronger than words only to persons who do not completely understand words, but do completely enjoy sensations. A great part of the energy of the wars of the world is indeed attributable to the excitement produced by military bands; but a single word will move a good soldier more than an entire day of the most artistic piping

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and drumming. The Dead March in Saul may be more impressive than words, to people who don't know what Death is; but to those who do, no growling in brass can make it gloomier; and Othello's one cry, "O, Desdemona, Desdemona — dead!" will go to their hearts, when a whole cathedral choir, in the richest and most harmonious of whines, would be no more to them than a dog's howling, — not half so much, if the dog loved the dead person. In the instance given by my friend, the music of Bach would assuredly put any disagreeable piece of business out of his head, and prepare him to listen with edification to the sermon, better than the mere *repetition* of the words "dona nobis pacem." [We may take the point without quibbling over liturgical order.] But if he ever had needed peace, and had gone into church really to ask for it, the plain voices of the congregation, uttering the prayer but once, and meaning it, would have been more precious to him than all the quills and trills that ever musician touched or music trembled in.

(XXXI, 111n-112n).

One might never guess that this exchange occurs as a note to an introductory essay in which Ruskin insists that music must be an integral part of general elementary education. Certainly his instincts were not those of a musician. Ruskin's correspondent was asserting a commonplace of musical practice. There is nothing extraordinary in the idea of a composer producing a large-scale setting of a brief text, like Bach's setting of the *Agnus Dei*, deriving the expressive element from the meaning of the text, but expressing it in musical terms, thus producing a piece of purely musical design that stands firmly and makes sense entirely as such. The music is structurally independent of the words, yet intimately related to them. This relationship of words and music, the "co-ordination" of which his correspondent wrote, was a concept that Ruskin never grasped, however undeniable his genius.

While Ruskin found music attractive, he evidently felt an ambivalence towards it, being persuaded that the art was in need of intellectual and moral justification. In this he reflected an attitude that was prominent in English culture during most of the nineteenth century, especially in the first half. Music might be regarded as a pleasant diversion, socially useful as an "accomplishment" (particularly for young ladies), but to take it really seriously showed a distinct misplacement of values if one were a member of respectable society. A number of nineteenth-century writers met this attitude head-on, producing books, tracts, and articles addressing the moral dimension of music and presenting the art as a worthy object of serious cultivation, one capable of conferring valuable intellectual and moral benefits on practitioners and listeners alike, and one that should be an indispensable part of general education. Closely related to such lines of thought were the efforts of other writers to promote and defend the use of music, especially elaborate choral music, in Christian worship.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> See W. J. Gatens, *Victorian Cathedral Music in Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), chaps. 1 and 2, for a more detailed discussion of this subject in both the secular and sacred aspects. Among the nineteenth-century writings that deal with the moral aspect of music are John Hullah, *The Duty and Advantage of Learning to Sing* (London: John W. Parker, 1846);

Ruskin's case presents a fascinating variant in both the secular and sacred categories. While he became a self-proclaimed champion of music and musical education, his ambivalence led him to impose an array of qualifications and restrictions so severe and eccentric as to separate him effectively from the main musical practice of his day. Meanwhile he expressed vehement disapproval of elaborate church music.

One may readily perceive in Ruskin's attitude towards music a manifestation of values instilled as part of his strict evangelical upbringing in a self-consciously upper middle class setting. Indeed, the influence of evangelicalism — the earnestness and high sense of moral duty — has often been credited with contributing greatly to the distinctive cultural flavor of Victorian society at large, of which the aforementioned attitude towards music is a characteristic aspect. In the Ruskin home, as we have seen, amateur music making was welcomed, though certainly not over-indulged. When, however, in 1849 Ruskin wanted to invite Jenny Lind to the family home to see his collection of Turner drawings, his mother reacted in horror, looking upon the great singer "just as on an ordinary actress."<sup>7</sup> Although Ruskin had decisively abandoned the doctrinal tenets of evangelical Christianity by the time he began his mature thinking and writing about music, he seems to have retained much of its temperamental predisposition.

### III

Ruskin's main writings on music date from after 1860. It is worth noting, however, that his earlier books on the visual arts contain numerous musical references. Most often, they are analogies which help to reinforce or clarify a theoretical point on such matters as composition or coloring, but it

Joseph Mainzer, *Music and Education* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1848); Adolf Bernhard Marx, *General Music Instruction* (1839; English trans. London: J. Alfred Novello, 1854); Hugh Reginald Haweis, *Music and Morals* (London: W. H. Allen, 1871); and Edmund Gurney, *The Power of Sound* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1880). Most of these seek to promote music as a vital part of general education, as did Ruskin, and to encourage amateur music making, especially choral singing. Among the writings which specifically defend and encourage elaborate choral music as a part of Christian worship are John Antes Latrobe, *The Music of the Church* (London: R. B. Seely and W. Burnside, 1831); Edward Hodges, *An Apology for Church Music* (London: Rivingtons, 1834); John Jebb, *Three Lectures on the Cathedral Service* (2d. ed., London: F. & J. Rivington, 1845); *Dialogue on the Choral Service* (London: Rivingtons, Burns, Houlston, & Storeman, 1842), and *The Choral Service* (London: John H. Parker, 1843); and Robert Druitt, *A Popular Tract on Church Music* (London: Francis & John Rivington, 1845) and *Conversations on the Choral Service* (London: Thomas Harrison, 1853). To these may be added many nineteenth-century articles, pamphlets, published sermons, and lectures, of which numerous specimens are cited in Gatens's book.

<sup>7</sup> *Works*, XXXVI, 92-93. A. M. Wakefield attributes the incident to "a moment of youthful enthusiasm," though Ruskin was nearly thirty at the time (*Ruskin on Music*, p. 9). E. T. Cook then cites Wakefield's passage in connection with the Charlotte Withers episode, which took place in 1838, nearly eleven years before Ruskin met Jenny Lind (Introduction to *Works*, I, xlvi).

seems significant that Ruskin should deliberately have chosen musical analogies for the purpose. Thus, for example, in *Modern Painters* II (1846), *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849), and *The Elements of Drawing* (1857), he compares visual proportion and composition with melodic contour and balance, maintaining that neither the visual nor the aural varieties are completely reducible to rule (IV, 102, 108; VIII, 163; XV, 162-165). In the second of his *Addresses on Decorative Colour* (25 November 1854), Ruskin makes a series of analogies between drawing and painting on the one hand and music on the other, in an ascending order of elaboration: from drawing in outline, which he likens to clear speaking; then drawing in outline with addition of color, which is like clear articulation in singing; all the way to the complete mastery of light and shade in painting, which is like the skillful management of the full orchestra (XII, 490). In *Modern Painters* IV (1856) and *The Two Paths* (1859) Ruskin likens intensity of color to dynamic levels in music (VI, 327; XVI, 424).

If there was one purely musical element to which Ruskin was sensitive, this was melody, and his references to melody in these pre-1860 works come as near as he ever did to acknowledging an autonomous power of music. In the third volume of *The Stones of Venice* (1852), for instance, he says, "It is at our choice whether we will accompany a poem with Music or not; but if we do the Music *must* be right and neither discordant nor inexpressive. The goodness and sweetness of the poem cannot save it, if the Music be false; but if the Music be right the poem may be insipid and inharmonious and still saved by the notes to which it is wedded" (XI, 218-219). He goes even farther than this in *The Elements of Drawing* (1857), as he follows an analogy between color and melody: "If the colour is wrong, everything is wrong: just as, if you are singing, and sing false notes, it does not matter how true the words are. If you sing at all, you must sing sweetly; and if you colour at all, you must colour rightly. Give up all the form, rather than the slightest part of the colour: just as, if you felt yourself in danger of a false note, you would give up the word, and sing a meaningless sound, if you felt that so you could save the note" (XV, 135). Perhaps such passages as these tell us as much about Ruskin's thoughts on music as does the essay of 1838.

The year 1860 marks a dividing line in Ruskin's life and career. In his writings on art, Ruskin had always been ready to see and proclaim a moral lesson, but his main concern had been for art. After 1860 the horizon of his intellectual activity broadened, and while he continued to write about art, his main concern was for society. Collingwood noted that "since then, art has sometimes been his text, rarely his theme. He has used it as the opportunity, the vehicle, so to say, for teachings of far wider range and deeper import; teachings about life as a whole, conclusions in ethics and economics and reli-

gion, to which he seeks to lead others, as he was led, by the way of art" (Collingwood, *Life*, II, 3).

In the years prior to 1860 there are distinct foreshadowings of Ruskin's change of perspective. Pre-echoes of his social and economic writings appear in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, *The Stones of Venice*, and *The Political Economy of Art* (1857, later renamed *A Joy For Ever*). His evangelical religious beliefs had been eroding since the mid-1840s, and "a morbid sense of the evil of the world, a horror of great darkness" came into decidedly sharper focus at this critical period than heretofore (Collingwood, *Life*, II, 7). He perceived that the institutions of society were producing and perpetuating conditions of misery that he so abhorred. He began to feel that mere philanthropy was futile to correct these conditions, "that no tinkering at social breakages was really worth while; that far more extensive repairs were needed to make the old ship seaworthy" (Collingwood, *Life*, II, 6). Ruskin seemed conscious that the publication in 1867 of the fifth and final volume of *Modern Painters* marked an epoch in his life. He thus accomplished the mission he had set for himself in 1842, and turned to follow a new vocation. Renouncing the old orthodoxies of religion, art, politics, economics, and education, he became a prophet of reproach, hurling verbal thunderbolts against the institutions of society that he regarded as guilty of mortal offense. He also became the self-appointed architect of a new order of social justice and human fulfillment. Music was to be an integral part of that new order.

The most noticeable feature of musical references in the writings after 1860, even in works that are not primarily about music, is the great prominence given to the ethical element. Even when Ruskin's remarks, taken at face value, pertain to the actual practice of music, there is the unmistakable feeling that his intention is far broader in application than to mere technique, as in this passage from *Sesame and Lilies* (1865):

From the beginning, consider your accomplishments as means of assistance to others. . . . In music especially you will soon find what personal benefit there is in being serviceable: it is probable that, however limited your powers, you have voice and ear enough to sustain a note of moderate compass in a concerted piece; — that, then, is the first thing to make sure you can do. Get your voice disciplined and clear, and think only of accuracy; never of effect or expression: if you have any soul worth expressing, it will show itself in your singing; but most likely there are very few feelings in you, at present, needing any particular expression; and the one thing you have to do is to make a clear-voiced little instrument of yourself, which other people can entirely depend upon for the note wanted.

(XVIII, 38-39).

Another tendency in these writings is to go beyond mere analogy and exhortation to recondite etymological and mythological interpretations. Consider, for example, this passage from *Munera Pulveris* (1862-63): "As Charis becomes Charitas on the one side, she becomes — better still — Chara, Joy, on

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the other; or rather this is her very mother's milk and the beauty of her childhood; for God brings no enduring Love nor any other good, out of pain; nor out of contention; but out of joy and harmony. And in this sense, human and divine, music and gladness, and the measures of both, come into her name; and Cher becomes full-vowelled Cheer, and Cheerful; and Chara opens into Choir and Choral" (XVII, 227). After a passage like this, one may need to be reminded that Ruskin intends his thoughts to have a practical application in real choral music, not to be a mere metaphor or ethical symbol.

E. T. Cook has noted that Ruskin, in making such interpretations, tended to rely more on imagination than on scholarship: "In plunging, perhaps with inadequate equipment, into the perilous sea of etymological derivation, it may be that fancy, or *prima facie* impressions, sometimes led him astray." While Ruskin was at this period a keen student of the texts of the Greek and Latin classics, "he troubled himself with little *apparatus classicus*," and hardly ever used scholarly commentaries, but "noted carefully any allusion, suggestion, or usage which fitted in with his own line of thought."<sup>8</sup> One should keep this in mind when pondering the lessons Ruskin purported to extract from mythology or ancient authors.

On 24 May 1867 at the Senate House in Cambridge, Ruskin delivered his Robert Rede Lecture *On the Relation of National Ethics to National Arts*. In it he presented his theories of the relationship of art to morality, inspired primarily by Plato, and devoted considerable attention specifically to music. A portion of this lecture was later elaborated and incorporated into another course of lectures, delivered in part at University College, London, and published under the title *The Queen of the Air: Being a Study of the Greek Myths of Cloud and Storm* (1869). Since his interpretation of the imagery of Greek myth helps to illuminate many of the allusions and principles discussed more abstractly in the Rede Lecture, it will be helpful to consider the slightly later work first.

The lecture which most concerns music is the first of the course, entitled *Athena Chalinitis* (literally "Athena the Restrainer," but subtitled by Ruskin "Athena in the Heavens"), in which the goddess represents the air as a medium for communicating the pulsations of sound. She thus represents the physical dimension of music. Apollo, on the other hand, represents the order and measure of music. His instrument, the lyre, is a device for measurement. The tortoiseshell body of the lyre is the vault of heaven. The sun — Apollo being the sun god — is the master of all time and rhythm. In this intellectual and mathematical side of music, Apollo is aided by the Muses, who are goddesses of instruction. When the balance is proper, Athena's province of the

<sup>8</sup> E. T. Cook, I, 535. See Cook's introduction to *Works*, XIX, lxx-lxx.

physical, impulsive, and passionate complements the measure, order, and design of Apollo and the Muses. When, however, the inspiration is degraded in its passion, the nobility of the Doric flute sinks into the pipe of Pan and the double reed-pipe of Marsyas, the adversary of Apollo, and is then rejected by Athena. In the myth, Athena saw her reflection in the river while she was playing the double pipe, and was so appalled at the distortion it produced in her face that she cast it away, whereupon Marsyas took it up, and it was corrupted.

The distinction is thus between music which is disciplined and ordered, pure in its expression, chastened by its being wedded to the nobility of morally beautiful words, and music which abandons all discipline to the sensual pleasure and promiscuity of empty sounds; between measured, orderly music, "in which the words and thought lead" and "brutal, meaningless 'music' in which the words are lost, and the wind or impulse leads." This distinction was the subject of the musical meditations of the Greek philosophers, for whom "true music is the natural expression of a lofty passion for a right cause" (XIX, 343).

Art must necessarily reflect the ethical state of its creators, and at the same time it tends to communicate and reproduce the ethical condition which gave rise to it. Art is thus a powerful instrument of moral instruction, and no art more so than music, "which of all the arts is most directly ethical in origin, [and] is also the most direct in power of discipline; the first, the simplest, the most effective of all instruments of moral instruction; while in the failure and betrayal of its functions, it becomes the subtlest aid of moral degradation. Music is thus, in her health, the teacher of perfect order, and is the voice of the obedience of angels, and the companion of the course of the spheres of heaven; and in her depravity she is also the teacher of perfect disorder and disobedience, and the *Gloria in Excelsis* becomes the *Marseillaise*" (XIX, 343). The great danger in failing to use music as an agent in the promotion of good is that its great powers can then be appropriated for the promotion of evil, or rather, when music is not inspired by ethical motivation, all that is left is sensuality.

#### IV

In his Rede Lecture, Ruskin discussed the role of art as a reflection of and influence on the national morality. He maintained that the arts spring from the whole of one's humanity, not just from an isolated part of it, and certainly not from the mere mechanical skills involved, important as these might be. All human energies must be healthy for any of them to be healthy,

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for perfect ethical humanity is a harmonious blending and balance of all the virtues without exaggeration. Ruskin describes this as the ideal “Ethos” of man, the acquisition of which is the object of education. The artistic faculty, moreover, is “a visible sign of a national virtue,” the state of the national ethos having a decisive influence on the formation of the individual’s ethos: “All art being the Formative or directing Action of a Spirit, whatever character the spirit itself has must be manifested in the Energy or Deed of it, and makes the deed itself Bad or Good.” Ruskin seems to be saying here that, apart from the question of purely technical competence, only a good person can produce good art. A bad person can produce only bad art, or at most, a mock imitation of good art. A good person cannot produce bad art, “but inasmuch as the being of man is mixed of good and evil inextricably, the art which it produces is inextricably mixed also” (XIX, 164-165). A bad person may, of course, succeed in mastering the mechanics of an art form, and produce works which are technically accomplished, but nonetheless bad as art. Similarly, the lack of attention to technical details can be vicious to the artistic productions of a good person.

In this lecture, Ruskin’s distinctions between morally good and morally bad music run along lines of thought similar to those developed in *The Queen of the Air*: “There is a kind of music which is balanced, reserved, constructive, inventive, complete, pure, and lovely. There is, on the other hand, a kind of music which is unsymmetrical, intemperate, unconstructive, unimaginative, incomplete, sensual, undelightful. Every one of the words by which I express these absolute merits and demerits attaches itself justly also to the quality of soul by which they are produced, and by which they are willingly received. To the order of mind from which they spring they are also acceptable, and the temper by which they have been produced they have also a tendency to reproduce” (XIX, 165). Such principles, especially the capacity for music to reproduce moral atmospheres, occurs in the works of several other Victorian writers, particularly the Reverend Hugh Reginald Haweis.<sup>9</sup> According to such lines of thought, music may have an actively pernicious effect, depending on the moral state of the producer and recipient. The worst corruption possible in music is the degradation of emotional expression, the separation of it from a worthy object:

In good music, the pleasure received by the ear is wholly subordinated to the purpose of expression; . . . but when the emotion is lower, or more common, the bodily sense, though that is always degraded together with it, yet maintains a higher relative position, and the moment this bodily sense of pleasure leads, the music is base and corrupting. . . . The worst corruption of music in modern days is not in, as it might at first be supposed, the exaltation of a dangerous sentiment by faithful sound, as in the hymn of the Marseil-

<sup>9</sup> H. R. Haweis, *Music and Morals*, bk. 1, “Music, Emotion, and Morals.” See also note 6 above.

laisé, but it is the idle and sensual seeking for pleasure in sound only, without any true purpose of sentiment at all, and often without the slightest effort to discern the composer's intention, or understand the relation in a master's work between the syllable and the note.

(XIX, 177-178).

Under such circumstances, the listener wallows in the sensuality of musical emotionalism, being "excited by the Sirens, who are Goddesses of Desire, instead of by the Muses, who are Goddesses of Instruction" (XIX, 178).

This temptation to musical sensuality and all its moral evils is more pernicious in relation to sacred music. Few are the souls who can hear elaborate church music in the proper devotional way,

But between these and the common hunter after pleasure in pathetic sensation, for whom the strain of the cathedral organ is made an interlude to the music of the ballet that he may excite his palled sensation by the alternate taste of sacred and profane, there is an infinite range of gradually lowered faculty and sincerity, receiving in proportion to the abasement of its temper injury from what, to the highest, brings only good. . . . It is not a good thing for a weak and wicked person to be momentarily touched or charmed by sacred art. It is a deadly thing for them to indulge in the habitual enjoyment of it. The *Miserere* of the Sistine sends every one home a degree hardened who did not come there to ask for mercy; and the daily chanted praise of the cathedral choir leaves every one who comes not to adore daily less capable of adoration. And as it is with the religious feelings, so in all others capable of being expressed by sound. If you have them, and desire truly to utter them, music becomes the most perfect utterance, . . . but if we seek only the pleasure of the sense, then the music searches for the dregs of good in our spiritual being, and wrings them forth, and drinks them; and thus the modern opera, with its painted smiles and feverous tears, is only the modulated libation of the last drops of our debased blood into the dust.

(XIX, 179-180).

In connection with this, one may mention some contemptuously sarcastic remarks about Mendelssohn included in a set of notes dating from 1875 for a course of lectures at Oxford on the *Discourses* of Joshua Reynolds. Ruskin depicts Mendelssohn as a shallow trifler, "a man with the heart of a lark" who "sees no more . . . than a migrating butterfly might, understands no more." He singles out the oratorios *St. Paul* and *Elijah* and the anthem "Hear my prayer" (based on Psalm 55) for special vituperation, on the ground that Mendelssohn has trivialized their profound subject matter by clothing it in music of meretricious prettiness: "The Psalms of David talk of matters of life and death. If you don't believe them, or don't want them, let them alone; deny them, defy them, if you will, but don't play with them like piping bullfinches play[ing] with their mistresses' hair" (XXII, 497).

As noted earlier, Ruskin's attitude, especially his attitude towards sacred music, seems to manifest a survival of instincts implanted during his evangelical upbringing, particularly the evangelical uneasiness about the aesthetic element in worship. In *Fors Clavigera* no. 83 (1877), however, he combined this paradoxically with an attack on philistine puritanism, as it was

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popularly conceived, for suppressing morally good music, thus creating a void which has been filled with morally pernicious music. In discussing Scott's *The Heart of Midlothian* (1818), Ruskin condemns the Presbyterian banishment of music and dancing for creating just such a void to be filled with "satyric dance and sirenic song, accomplished, both, with all the finish of science, and used in mimicry of every noble emotion towards God and man, become the uttermost, and worst — because the most traitorous — of blasphemies against the Master who gave motion and voice submissive to other laws than of the elements" (XXIX, 269). This, of course, is not mere literary criticism, but the interpretation of a prophetic parable, intended by Ruskin for his own day, and one that he related to the teachings of Plato:

And this cry of the wild beasts of the islands, or sirenic blasphemy, has in modern days become twofold; consisting first in the mimicry of *devotion* for pleasure, in the oratorio, withering the life of religion into dead bones on the siren-sands; and secondly, the mimicry of *compassion*, for pleasure, in the opera, wasting the pity and love which should overflow in active life, on the ghastliest visions of fictitious grief and horriest decoration of simulated death. But these two blasphemies had become one, in the Greek religious service of Plato's time. "For, indeed, this had come to pass in nearly all our cities, that when any public sacrifice is made to the Gods, not one chorus only, but many choruses, and standing, not reverently far from the altars, but beside them" (yes, in the very cathedrals themselves), "pour forth blasphemies of sacred things" (not mockeries, observe, but songs precisely corresponding to our oratorios — that is to say, turning dramatic prayer into a solemn sensual pleasure), "both with word and rhythm, and the most wailing harmonies, racking the souls of the hearers; and whosoever can make the sacrificing people weep the most, to him is the victory."

(XXIX, 269-270).

In dealing with medieval sources, Ruskin translated essentially the same lessons — the dignified order of carefully defined musical categories, the intimate and necessary relationship of true music to moral rectitude and the spirit of worship — into Christian terms. In *The Pleasures of England* (1884), for example, Ruskin comments on a miniature of St. Cecilia in a late thirteenth-century illuminated antiphonaire from the convent of Beau Pré, which shows the saint seated silently at a banquet, while surrounded by musicians. The miniature is part of the initial to the antiphon:

Cantantibus organis Cecilia virgo in corde suo soli Domino decantabat, dicens, Fiat Domine cor meum et corpus meum immaculatum ut non confundar.

(Whilst the instruments played, Cecilia the Virgin sang in her heart only to the Lord, saying, O Lord, be my heart and body made stainless that I be not confounded.)

(XXXIII, 489).

Of the lesson to be derived, Ruskin is unequivocal: "I need not point out to you how the law, not of sacred Music only so called but of all Music, is determined by this sentence, which means in effect that unless Music exalt and purify it is not under St. Cecilia's ordinance, and is not virtually Music at all"

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(XXXIII, 489-490). In a similar vein, in the second part of *Fiction, Fair and Foul* (1880), Ruskin writes that “the pure chant of the Christian ages . . . is always at heart joyful,” and citing his own *Laws of Fésole* (1877-88), declares that “all great Art is Praise, of which the contrary is also true, all foul or miscreant Art is accusation, . . . ‘She gave me of the tree and I did eat’ being an entirely museless expression on Adam’s part, the briefly essential contrary of Love-song” (XXXIV, 310-311).

All of this was not intended to be mere theory. Like Plato, Ruskin felt that music is an indispensable part of education, as essential to the health of the soul and the development of the intellect and passions as physical exercise to the health of the body. The important thing is participation in music, specifically choral music, the communal act of devotion as opposed to soloistic vanity. As for those persons incapable of singing, who are content to be amused by the performances of professionals, Ruskin likens them to the degraded crowds in the Roman amphitheater being amused by the fighting of gladiators (XXIX, 239). So important is singing that Ruskin says in the preface to *Rock Honeycomb* that “not to be able to sing should be more disgraceful than not being able to read or write,” since it is possible to be virtuous and happy though illiterate (XXXI, 108). According to Ruskin’s Platonic ideal, the separation of music from poetry constitutes a distortion, since “all perfectly rhythmic poetry is meant to be sung to music, and all entirely noble music is the illustration of noble words. The arts of word and note, separate from each other, become degraded; and the museless sayings, or senseless melodies harden the intellect, or demoralize the ear” (XXXI, 107). Although Ruskin does not endorse instrumental music, he regards it as a lesser evil than the abuse of the noble and the holy: “Yet better — and manifoldly better — unvocal word and idle note, than the degradation of the most fateful truths of God to be the subjects of scientific piping for our musical pastime. There is excuse, among our uneducated classes, for the Christmas Pantomime, but none, among our educated classes, for the Easter Oratorio” (XXXI, 107). In his scheme for education, however, Ruskin was intent to describe the ideal. Musical education in his view is synonymous with learning to sing, and like Plato, Ruskin sets out the conditions which govern the music to be sung. He does this in the form of seven “Laws of Song” given in the preface to *Rock Honeycomb*. They may be summarized as follows: First, “none but beautiful and true words are to be set to music at all.” Songs must be noble and temperate, with no excess of grief, pathos, or morbidity. Second, accompaniment is to be subordinate to the voice or choir. Third, the greatest music is vocal. Independent instrumental music is necessarily inferior. Fourth, words must be set without distortion: no prolongation of syllables or roulades, no word repetition or fragmentation of the verse. In other words, the structure of the verse

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must completely determine the structure of the music. Fifth, music should never be used for words other than those for which it was composed, except on authority of the composer. Sixth, music without words is incapable of expressing feelings definitely, as is proved by strophic ballads, in which “the merry and melancholy parts of the story may be with entire propriety and satisfaction sung to precisely the same melody.” Finally, comic songs are subject to the same laws as play and jesting: “No vulgar person can be taught how to play, or to jest, like a gentleman; and, for the most part, comic songs are for the vulgar only. Their higher standard is fixed, in note and word, by Mozart and Rossini; but I cannot at present judge how far even these men may have lowered the true function of the joyful muse” (XXXI, 108-112).

## V

Devising a set of dogmatic regulations is one thing, but Ruskin went further by attempting to put his laws into practice through musical composition. As noted earlier, he had taken music lessons at various times in his life, from his undergraduate days onward. In a letter of 1869 to Charles Eliot Norton he reported, for instance, “I am learning how to play musical scales quite rightly, and have a real Music-master twice a week, and practice always half an hour a day” (XXXVI, 314). Collingwood claims that lessons in singing probably helped his speaking voice, very important to him as a lecturer, as he always had a delicate chest and was subject to periodic spells of a mild consumption.<sup>10</sup> Around 1880, Ruskin engaged the services of George Frederick West as music master for lessons which included the rudiments of musical composition. Ruskin was evidently a difficult student, who wanted to know the reason for every prescription of musical grammar and was unwilling to accept anything on mere authority. In 1880 he began to write songs.

The fact that Ruskin’s primary instincts were not those of a musician helps to explain the difficulty he had in assimilating elements of musical grammar that must have seemed self-evident to a trained musician such as West. There are some crudities of harmony and part-writing in Ruskin’s songs, but it is in the realm of rhythm and meter that the greatest conflicts arise between a natural sense of poetic meter and the subtly different characteristics of musical meter. This is dramatized in a booklet that Ruskin produced in 1880 entitled *Elements of English Prosody*, intended as a companion to *Rock Honeycomb* (see *Works*, XXXI). The booklet is liberally illustrated with musical notation which to the musician is often eccentric to the point of

<sup>10</sup> W. G. Collingwood, *Ruskin Relics* (London: Isbister & Co., 1903), pp. 151ff.

nonsensicality. Ruskin thinks instinctively in terms of poetic feet, but a musical bar does not always behave in quite the same way. The first syllable of a poetic foot is not always the long or accented one. The iamb and the anapest, for example, begin with short or unstressed syllables, unlike the trochee or dactyl in this respect. The first beat of a bar of music, on the other hand, is by definition a downbeat and receives an accent, except in the case of such devices as the hemiola or other syncopations which in any event are exceptional and momentary, depending for their effect on a regular musical meter with accented downbeats to establish the normal context. Thus when Ruskin attempts to illustrate iambic or anapestic meter in musical notation, he puts bar lines between the poetic feet, producing the musical anomaly of a series of unaccented downbeats (see figure 1).

The image shows a musical score for four staves of music. The lyrics are: "Ye mariners of England, Who guard our native seas, Whose flag has braved a thousand years, The battle, — and the breeze." The music is written in a single treble clef. Vertical bar lines are placed between the poetic feet: after "mar-", "ners of", "land,", "guard", "na - tive", "seas,", "flag", "braved", "years,", "bat -", "tle, —", and "breeze." This results in a series of unaccented downbeats at the start of each bar.

(1) One of Ruskin's attempts to render poetic meter in musical notation, from *Elements of English Prosody* (1880).

One of Ruskin's happier attempts to render strict poetic meter musically is his setting of a lyric by Horace, "Faune Nympharum." Some of the turns of melody are unexpected, and perhaps not grateful vocally; Ruskin often seems to lose sight of the exigencies of specific vocal ranges. In this case, the melody spans nearly two octaves. At the same time, there is a certain freshness that results from Ruskin's approach to the meter. Most of the phrases consist of two bars of common time plus one bar of two-four time. Many a trained musician of the period would undoubtedly have prolonged certain of the stressed syllables, perhaps setting some of them to several slurred notes in order to adapt the text to a series of regular four-bar musical

phrases. The end result might be more technically polished and professional, but far less interesting than Ruskin's unorthodox effort.

West assisted Ruskin with his compositional projects. A letter of 1882 suggests, however, that there were sometimes conflicts of opinion arising, no doubt, from the clash of Ruskin's poetic sense with West's musical sense: "Mrs. West sang me my 'Come unto these yellow sands' and 'Old Ægina' — very prettily — but Mr. West's alterations always take out exactly the points I've been driving at, and leave the things just like everything else! But he's so good and eager to help me that he's quite a delight" (XXXVII, 401-402). The two songs mentioned in the letter are among the most problematic from an editorial point of view. Judging from the manuscripts, it appears that Ruskin began by outlining his melodies using solid note-heads, and afterwards went back to work out the exact durations of the notes and their arrangement into bars.<sup>11</sup> Careful examination reveals that certain of the solid note-heads have been modified, some of them very faintly, to form half notes and whole notes. Faint bar lines are inserted at various points, but these by no means guarantee metrical regularity.

"Come unto these yellow sands" is of particular interest, since in part of the preface to *Rock Honeycomb*, Ruskin discusses how this should not be set to music, using letter type graphically to represent a despised roulade (XXXI, 109; see figure 2). It is fortunate that we can know something of how he

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(IV.) All songs are to be sung to their accompaniment, straight forward, as they would be read, or naturally chanted. You must never sing

"Scots whaw-aw<sup>aw</sup> aw<sup>aw</sup> aw-hae wi' Wa-<sup>a-</sup> a-<sup>a-</sup>  
a-<sup>a-</sup> a-a-<sup>a-</sup> a-<sup>a-</sup> al-lace bled,"

nor "Welcome, welcome, welcome to your go — to your go — to your go-oo-ooo-ory bed"; but sing it as you would say it. Neither, even if a song is too short, may you ever extend it by such expedients. You must sing "Come unto these yellow sands" clear through, and be sorry when it is done; but never

"Come unto these ya-<sup>a-</sup> a-<sup>a-</sup> a-<sup>a-</sup> a-<sup>a-</sup> a, etc., low sands."

(2) Ruskin's explanations of how words should not be sung, from the preface to *Rock Honeycomb* (1877).

<sup>11</sup> See the MS facsimiles in the appendix to *Works*, XXXI, 515, 520.

thought this Shakespeare text ought to be set to music, even if the melody, with its many leaps and twists, is one of his oddest creations.

"At Marmion's Grave" (1881), to a text by Walter Scott, was published by W. G. Collingwood in his book *Ruskin Relics* (1903) and reprinted in the appendix to Volume XXXI of the collected *Works*. The unpretentious but elegantly figured piano accompaniment is more polished than those of the other Ruskin songs, and one suspects that West may have had a lot to do with the final version. The song unfolds in short, recitative-like phrases. The simple rhythmic and melodic motif that opens the voice part recurs throughout the song, imparting a feeling of unity in a composition that otherwise does not move in regularly balanced phrases.

Although Ruskin decided in 1842 that he would not become a poet, he did occasionally write verses later in life. Among them are a group of short "Rhymes to Music," one of which, "A Note of Welcome," was composed for his cousin, Mrs. Arthur Severn. Ruskin would often sing it on her arrivals at his home in Brantwood. Another of his later poems is the tender lyric, "Trust thou thy love," which he set to music in 1881. The song consists of four two-bar phrases in common time, each in an identical rhythmic pattern incorporating gently flowing triplets. In contrast with the quirkiness of "Old Ægina" and "Come unto these yellow sands," "Trust thou thy love" has a shapely melody which reaches an understated but touching climax at the beginning of the final phrase.

Ruskin's ideas about music, despite the element of paradox, are largely coherent, though one can find individual instances of direct contradiction. But this is hardly surprising in a man who advocated a radical restructuring of society along lines that sound overtly socialistic, but who was assuredly not an egalitarian, and in the first sentence of *Praeterita* described himself as "a violent Tory of the old school." He was, after all, a man who once said, "I am never satisfied that I have handled a subject properly till I have contradicted myself at least three times" (Cook, I, 1). Certainly his meditations upon the moral, social, religious, and educational aspects of music are of a piece with his utopian vision. Peculiar and eccentric as many of Ruskin's ideas may be, they do represent a highly individual manifestation, perhaps at times an exaggeration, of notions that were more generally current in Victorian England, even if they were not always as passionately held or as elaborately developed as they are in his writings.

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