The Oxford Handbook of Faust in Music ed. by Lorna Fitzsimmons and Charles McKnight (review)

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For Kafka, listening was an even more internal activity. He imagined sound as constructed liminal space in which one might play, imagine, or face invisible enemies. As an insurance lawyer Kafka visited noisy factories, so he recognized the sonic violence of his time. In his writing he went further and differentiated between internal *Rauschen* and external *Lärm*, both of which could produce mental instability. Ultimately, self-listening for Kafka offered a way to unite inside and outside sounds and perhaps help individuals function in a world that was under constant sonic assault.

Whitney admits that his analytical schema follows a fairly standard scholarly organization of German modernist literature. What is unique, though, is how this analysis uses sound studies to explain changes in literature. Moreover, not only do changes in perceptions of sound trace major shifts in literary works; they also connect those works with broader developments in central European society. Whitney's argument thus details how people experienced sound in this era. The martial, material impact of sound in Liliencron and Altenberg reflected the major sonic changes in rapidly industrializing and militarizing cities from the 1870s through the 1900s. Huelsenbeck's Dadaist cacophony demonstrated the bizarre yet increasingly normal impact of the Great War on how Europeans experienced sound. Musil's three-dimensional idea of sound pointed to new ways of listening after the war that were inspired by rapid sonic technological change. And Kafka's hyper-attention to differences between inner and outer sounds highlighted the increased subjectivity of experience in an era of supposed objectivity.

Whitney closes the book with a chapter on Nazi soundscapes and their echoes after World War II. Third Reich officials often pushed developments discussed in Whitney's book to the extreme. For example, Hitler served as a drummer in some of the same ways that this figure had functioned in modernist literature, namely, by skipping over thought and language and going straight to "acoustic immediacy" (141). German military leaders weaponized sound in ways that turned the eardrum into an actual site of war. This concluding chapter reinforces the social and political implications of sound. While I would have appreciated a clearer connection to the previous analyses of various sonic regimes, Whitney's conclusion emphasizes the book's relevance.

Scholars from many fields and interests will find much to use here. Above all, Whitney makes plain the value of sound studies as a tool to explain developments in literary studies and other disciplines.

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The Oxford Handbook of Faust in Music.
Edited by Lorna Fitzsimmons and Charles McKnight. New York: Oxford University Press, 2019. xxix + 581 pages. $150.00 hardcover or e-book (price varies).

As advertised on the OUP website, the *Oxford Handbook of Faust in Music* "[p]resents an international breadth of topics and expertise," "[o]ffers new analyses of often neglected musical works," and "[e]xpands understanding of musical relationships to a full repertoire of Faust literature, including Christopher Marlowe and Thomas

Mann," "[i]ncludes hundreds of musical examples, tables, and figures to complement the content." When it comes to Faust, any attempt to be comprehensive is a challenge, given the extent to which the Faust theme has haunted the Western mind for the last two to three centuries. But the Oxford volume tries valiantly to do so. It is divided into 25 chapters, each devoted to a work or, in a few cases, a cluster of works. These chapters are in turn grouped into three sections, the first two with ten chapters each and the third with five. Part One, "Symphonic, Choral, Chamber, and Solo Faust Works," is the strongest overall; Part Two, "Faust in Opera" is the weakest; and Part Three, "Faust in Ballet and Musical Theater," is both the most mixed and the most surprising, in a good way. Reading this book from the perspective of German Studies, it is important to note that the chapters are written in the main by and for musicologists and music historians. With a couple of notable exceptions, their knowledge of the German Faust literature is uneven and the contribution to the corpus of scholarship on Faust in literature, even in the best essays, is negligible. Instead, some of the chapters get very technical and require readers who are completely at home not only with musical notation (including more experimental 20th-century sign systems) but with the elements of musical structures. The volume is nevertheless interesting to German Studies, providing numerous and significant examples of the far-reaching impact of Goethe's version in particular, even if composers' attempts at representation in or translation into sound and movement have, in the main, fallen far short of what Goethe articulated in his masterpiece. I will return to this central point, because it is one that the editors and authors uniformly failed to address.

The volume begins with an excellent introduction. The editors clearly know their Faust history and literature, and in many ways set this reader up for disappointment, because almost none of the following chapters delivered at their level of sensitivity to the nuances of the Faust topic. Their essay (or the initial portion of it) is worthwhile reading in an introductory undergraduate course on Faust.

There is one issue with Faust that needs to be established at the outset, and it would have helped enormously had the editors done so. There are, in effect, two Fausts. Not so much the original Chapbook version and its descendants, which all send Faust to hell, and the Goethean version which redeems him. But instead the rather simplistic good-versus-evil-with-a-bit-of-sex version, suitable for puppet plays, popular culture, and other diversions, and the unfathomable, mind-blowing exploration of the human condition epitomized by Goethe and then powerfully echoed in works such as *Moby Dick.* While opera and ballet are fairly good at conveying the former, they seem incapable of achieving the latter. Why, we might ask, did the greatest operatic minds of the 19th and 20th century—Wagner, Verdi, Strauss—avoid the pitfalls of composing a Faust opera when they were able to create such enduring moments of both conceptual and emotional profundity in many other works? And, conversely, if we are honest: why did attempts to approximate Goethe on the operatic stage fail at the task? I wish the editors had had the courage to confront this conundrum, unpopular though it has become to talk about quality.

In many ways, the first chapter, Alberto Rizzuti's "Selected Settings from 'Auerbach's Keller,'" sets the approach for much of the volume. He presents an essentially positivistic catalog of diverse settings of "The Song of the Flea" from Beethoven through Wagner to Mussorgsky, with lesser-known attempts in between.

He provides verbal descriptions of the music as well as some musical analysis amplified with printed music examples, at least one per work. It is a solid effort, but one which takes no risks and provides neither interpretations of the works nor evaluations of their content or success.

The next chapter, Marjorie Hirsch's "Musical Remembering in Schubert's *Faust* settings" is, by contrast, exquisite. It probably helped that she had some of the best material in the volume to work with. It probably also helped that much if not all of the music she was discussing is likely known to the readers, so she could get right down to the very meat of the material. To be sure there is musical analysis as well, but to readers of German Studies, Hirsch displays great sensitivity to the interplay between music and text, to issues of interiority and memory and distance. Her last sentence is worth quoting: "Through his Faust settings, Schubert reveals the Lied's extraordinary capacity for projecting the inner lives of its personae" (60). Indeed.

For my taste, one of the best chapters in the volume is Thomas Grey's "Ideas of Redemption and the Total Artwork in Wagner's Encounters with *Faust.*" Grey's investigation went beyond those Wagnerian works and texts that explicitly have Faust in the title. Instead, he also contemplates the "Faustian" and allusions to *Faust* in Wagner's other works. As it turns out, Wagner is saturated with Faust. It is hardly a surprise, and Grey doesn't have the space to explore fully, but his is perhaps the most significant contribution of the entire volume, one that is unfortunately ignored in the following chapter, Jonathan Kregor's "Liszt's Faust Complexes." If there was a 19th-century composer more obsessed with Faust than Wagner, it was Franz Liszt. And indeed, Kregor leads us through all of Liszt's works openly dedicated to the trope. But he only mentions Liszt's B minor piano sonata in a subclause of the chapter's penultimate sentence. This is heartbreaking, because what Liszt accomplishes only sporadically in works that specifically announce their connection to Faust, he almost miraculously achieves in his epic single-movement sonata in B minor. In that work, he brings the elements of struggle, love, and evil into a dynamic exchange that captures the essence of Goethe. Liszt fulfills the promise E.T.A. Hoffmann presented in his essay on Beethoven: the unique power of music to express that which is denied to verbal language.

Hirsch's and Grey's chapters are not the only highlights, however. James Zychowicz's essay on Mahler's 8th, like Grey's chapter, approaches Mahler within the full richness of the Faust tradition that he was mining. Similarly excellent is Vincent Groud's chapter on Gounod's *Faust* which, because of the work's fame, spared him the necessity of providing a synopsis or a description of the work and allowed him to focus on genesis, performance history, style, and interpretations. Maybe the biggest surprise for me was Raymond Knapp's essay on Faust and the American Musical. A tour de force, it is highly recommended reading.

I have deliberately accentuated the positive and am reluctant to point too harshly at the weaker links in the book, victims in part of the works they consider. There is surely nothing wrong with producing a book which essentially catalogues attempts in various formats—instrumental music, opera, ballet—to set the Faust theme to music. It is sobering that so many of these attempts resulted in second-rate pieces or outright failures. The result is that the vast majority of the chapters must devote most of their space to describing the works and, in the case of the operas, laboriously retelling the story, something we forbid our students from doing, all because the works are un-

known. What is the point, I ask? If a scholar ever needs to refer to one of these works, they will still need to study the source because these chapters will not suffice. None of the chapters convinced me that I had missed a work that needed my attention.

A missed opportunity is that despite the occasional cross-reference by the editors to another chapter in the volume, no conversation emerges that allows for broader observations or conclusions about the ways in which composers have tried to solve the problem of translating elements of the Faust story into sound. For instance, have there been musical gestures or tropes which have become common in depictions of Faust, Gretchen, or Mephisto and, if yes, what are they and what is it about them that is so suggestive of the characters they portray?

Which brings us at last to the crux of the matter. Why did so many attempts to realize Faust in music end in failure, works that have been forgotten, and in some cases never performed? Yet Faust is at the core of some of the greatest musical works ever: Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, Beethoven's "Eroica" symphony, Liszt's B minor Sonata, Wagner's *Ring*: was there ever a more Mephistophelian figure than Alberich, whose evil drive sets the entire mechanism of the *Ring* in motion? It is a great shame that the volume never asks this question.

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Rethinking Black German Studies: Approaches, Interventions and Histories.
Edited by Tiffany N. Florvil and Vanessa D. Plumly, Bern: Peter Lang, 2018.
xi + 328 pages + 9 b/w and color images. €71.30 / $87.10 hardcover or e-book.

"[O]ne of our main goals for this volume was to showcase the insightful scholarship of another generation of scholars who are pushing the fields of Black German and Black Austrian Studies in new directions" (21). The two editors, Tiffany Florvil and Vanessa Plumly, do just that in *Rethinking Black German Studies.* Contributors to the volume explore a wide palette of previously ignored or scantily researched topics in Germanic studies. As the book includes aspects of Black lives in both Germany and Austria and expands the field beyond rethinking it, its title could have easily read *Expanding Black German and Austrian Studies* or *Expanding Black Germanic Studies.*

At the outset, in the introduction, the two editors bemoan the dearth of Black German and Afro-European scholarly voices in their volume and underscore the fact that they are writing from their own cultural perspectives as two non-German scholars, one white and the other Black.

The book is divided into eight chapters organized in three parts: Part I, "German and Austrian Literature and History"; Part II, "Theory and Praxis"; and Part III, "Art and Performance." Part I includes three chapters: "On Representations of Chocolate Consumption as a Colonial Endeavor" by Silke Hackenesch; "Here to Stay: Black Austrian Studies" by Nancy P. Nenno; and "Lucia Engombe's and Stefanie-Lahya Aukongo's Autobiographical Accounts of Solidaritätspolitik and Life in the GDR as Namibian Children" by Meghan O'Dea. Tackling topics ranging from the racialized images of Africans in German colonial cocoa plantations to the othering and racialization of Namibian children in the former German Democratic Republic, these first three chapters highlight the complexities of African Diasporic studies in the Germanic context.