

Preface

This special issue of Danish Musicology Online constitutes the proceedings of the 3rd biennial conference of the Word and Music Association Forum (WMAF) held on November 13–15 2014 at Aarhus University, Denmark, under the title “Emerging Paradigms: New Methodologies in Word and Music Studies.” WMAF is a network mainly for junior scholars dealing with different kinds of intermedial intersections of words and music. As the title suggests, the goal of the conference was to discuss new, alternative methodological approaches that are currently being shaped in the work of emerging scholars from different disciplines.

Like any inherently interdisciplinary research field, Word and Music Studies is characterized by a methodological multitude, and especially so because of the broad range of possible study objects. The field concerns itself with everything from abstract musico-literary phenomena, such as the way literary works imitate music (or vice versa), to the very concrete ways in which music and lyrics align in vocal works. However, one can certainly point out a few established principles in the research field. Ever since the seminal efforts of Steven Paul Scher to create a typology of word–music relations,¹ a tripartite classification of *music in literature* (e.g. literary text imitating musical structure), *literature in music* (e.g. programme music), and *music and literature* (e.g. song) has been at the core of Word and Music Studies. This has meant that analytical approaches to word–music relations have had a tendency to conform to this classification by focusing on either one of these types.²

While this predominantly structuralist tendency in the field has been, and still is, of great significance, it seems to have fostered certain methodological biases; for instance in favor of an emphasis on a work-oriented approach with the literary text or written score as the object of analysis. Our point of departure for the 3rd WMAF conference was to discuss possible methodological approaches that can potentially ex-

- 1 Steven Paul Scher, “Einleitung: Literatur und Musik: Entwicklung und Stand der Forschung,” in *Ein Handbuch zur Theorie und Praxis eines komparatistischen Grenzgebietes*, ed. Steven Paul Scher (Berlin: Schmidt, 1984).
- 2 This might also show that Word and Music Studies is as prone as any branch of intermedial or interartial scholarship to unconsciously approach the topic with “the paradigmatic assumptions and the methods of their home discipline.” Literary scholars may be more inclined to investigate “music in literature” than objects involving actual music, and so forth. See Claus Clüver, “Intermediality and Interarts Studies,” in *Changing Borders: Contemporary Positions in Intermediality*, ed. Jens Arvidson, Mikael Askander, Jørgen Bruhn, and Heidrun Führer (Lund: Intermedia Studies Press, 2007). Rather than construing it as a tripartite subdivision, one can also see it as a dichotomy of direct and indirect types of (musico-literary) intermediality: on the one hand *music and literature* and on the other *music in literature* or vice versa. Werner Wolf, *The Musicalization of Fiction: A Study in the Theory and History of Intermediality* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999).

pand and supplement established frameworks. In our call for papers, we especially welcomed reflections about the theoretical and methodological implications of studying words and/or music as sounding performance rather than written representation, since the latter approach is likely to limit the empirical scope to canonized/classical “art works.” We figured that the study of performative practices could open up another set of methodological questions concerning the intermedial qualities of words and/or music as ephemeral sound in time. We were curious about the “how to” of interdisciplinary inquiry if the written representation is not the point of departure. However, a number of papers showed that working with works from the classical western canon did not necessarily imply a work-oriented approach. Other papers showed an interest in musical-textual works that blurred the line between word and sound.

The conference entailed an attempt to think about word-and-music-relations in ways that circumvent the typological understanding of musico-literary intermediality. The papers called for attention to intermedial aspects that did not fall neatly into pre-established categories, but, more importantly, they explored alternative methodological paths that might open up new insights in word-and-music relations. The concern was not so much to classify or establish yet another set of typologies of word-and-music relations—that is, a concern with what word-and-music relations *are*—but rather explore what they *do*.³ This was in particular expressed in attempts to deal with embodied and participatory aspects and notions such as experience, spatiality, and performativity, which challenge the traditional dichotomic understanding of score vs. performance, sound vs. writing, or sound vs. sense. The potential of this direction will be clear in the articles which are gathered here, and which are preliminary introduced and discussed in Lawrence Zbikowski’s article immediately following this preface.

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3 As Marie Thompson and Ian Biddle have pointed out, there has been a general shift in musicological research from concerns with “what does music mean” to “what does music do” in relation to the contemporary “affective turn.” As the present volume shows, the move from “meaning” to “doing” also applies to the interdisciplinary field of Word and Music Studies. *Sound, Music, Affect: Theorizing Sonic Experience* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 19.