Intertextuality in Popular Music after 1965

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DEDICATION

To Anne

ABSTRACT

Throughout the twentieth century, literary theorists developed a range of new techniques to analyze written works. In addition to studying a work's text, analysts became increasingly interested in studying a work's intertext, that is, its relationships to other texts. Intertextual approaches to music analysis have remained somewhat uncommon, although some commentators, including Christopher Reynolds and Michael Klein, have used intertextual analysis alongside more traditional musical analytical techniques such as Schenkerian analysis or pitch-class set theory. This dissertation applies the notion of intertextuality to the analysis of popular music written after about 1965, focusing in particular on examples that are connected to both classical and popular traditions of Western music. This dissertation explores how the creators of pop and rock music became increasingly interested in incorporating art music traditions into their own works, particularly during the fifty-year period from 1965 to 2015.

Chapter 1 provides a brief historical introduction to musical intertextuality, concentrating broadly on Western art music from the medieval period up to about 1965. Both in Chapter 1 and throughout the dissertation as a whole, a small number of examples illustrate central concepts; the coverage makes no attempt to be comprehensive. Chapter 1 also introduces literary theories surrounding intertextuality that are applied throughout the later chapters.

After the first chapter, Chapters 2 through 4 follow in approximately chronological order and approach the topic of musical intertextuality from three different points of origin: a genre, a source, and a composer.

The genre is progressive rock, the subject of Chapter 2. Progressive rock artists such as Emerson, Lake, and Palmer created new works that were connected by various means to classical precedents. Examples are chosen from about 1965 to about 1980.

The source is Johann Sebastian Bach, whose music is one of the major nexus points for musical intertextuality in many styles. In addition to serving as a source for many progressive rock artists in the 1960s and ’70s (discussed in Chapter 2), Bach’s music has continued to have a generative function for musicians at the turn of the twenty-first century. Chapter 3 examines three contrasting examples: Tenacious D, Stuart Davis, and Chris Thile.

The composer is Rivers Cuomo of Weezer, whose music contains numerous allusions to both popular and classical sources. Drawing on examples from 1994 to 2016, Chapter 4 examines connections between the music of Weezer and that of Johannes Brahms, Aaron Copland, and Giacomo Puccini, among others, arguing that intertextuality is a central characteristic of Weezer’s music.

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CHAPTER 1:
AN INTRODUCTION TO INTERTEXTUALITY IN WESTERN MUSIC

Introduction

The television series *Angel* (1999–2004) is set primarily in Los Angeles around the turn of the twenty-first century. In order to develop the characters in the series, however, the writers occasionally cut to alternative locations or flash back to earlier time periods. This technique is used most frequently with the title character, a vampire born in eighteenth-century Ireland.[1]

In season two of *Angel*, the writers introduce a new character, Lorne, a demon with the ability to read characters' auras and thereby predict their futures. He manages a karaoke bar because his abilities are especially powerful when he reads someone as they are singing. In the premiere episode of season two, "Judgment" (2000), Angel needs Lorne's help and so is forced to sing. He chooses to sing "Mandy," a song written by Scott English and Richard Kerr in 1971 (as "Brandy") and famously recorded by Barry Manilow in 1974. To the other characters in the show, and presumably to audience members as they watch the series, this is a surprising choice. Angel is a fearsome warrior; "Mandy" is easy listening.

But Angel's song choice is part of an intricate network of musical references spread throughout the series. He sings "Mandy" again in season four, during the episode "The Magic Bullet" (2003), when he and many others are enchanted by a mysterious

[1] For musicological studies of *Angel* and other works by Joss Whedon, see Paul Attinello, Janet K. Halfyard, and Vanessa Knights, eds., *Music, Sound, and Silence in "Buffy the Vampire Slayer"* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010); and Kendra Preston Leonard, ed., *"Buffy," Ballads, and Bad Guys Who Sing: Music in the Worlds of Joss Whedon* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, Press, 2011).

character named Jasmine. This time, he sings the tune as a duet with his son Connor, and where the lyrics repeat the line "Oh, Mandy," they sing instead, "Oh, Jasmine." In still another episode, "Hell Bound" (2003) from season five, Spike, another vampire in the series, questions Angel's sense of good taste by mocking his fondness of Manilow. On top of all of these references in the main storyline, Angel's connection to Manilow is also present in a subsidiary storyline told through flashbacks. During a flashback to the 1970s, in the episode "Orpheus" (2003) from season four, Angel plays "Mandy" on the jukebox.

Yet the references reach back even further. In "Judgment," the first episode when Angel sings, a separate scene far from the karaoke bar features Darla, a vampire who shares a long and complicated relationship with Angel, talking about her life with Angel in the nineteenth century. In those days, she and Angel used to enjoy the music of Chopin, particularly his nocturnes and preludes. The show's script never explicitly draws a connection between Angel's predilection for Chopin's music in the nineteenth century and Manilow's in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, but the soundtrack does. While Darla fondly recalls earlier centuries of her life, Chopin's Prelude in C-Minor, Op. 28, No. 20 (1838–9) plays in the background. This excerpt connects Chopin to Manilow because it is the music that Manilow quotes it in the opening of his "Could It Be Magic" (1971).[2]

With references in four episodes spread across four seasons of the series, the shows writers repeatedly remind that audience that Angel likes Barry Manilow. Although

[2] For more on intertextuality in "Could It Be Magic," see Jon Finson, "Two Versions of Manilow's 'Could It Be Magic,'" *Musical Quarterly* 65, no. 2 (April 1979): 265–80.

his affection for Chopin is stressed less frequently, it nevertheless serves the same purpose. Angel may be a fearsome warrior, but his musical preferences show that he also has a sensitive, even feminine side. This can be seen through Angel's fondness for Manilow in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries as well as through his fondness for Chopin a century earlier, and the use of Chopin's Prelude in C-Minor, Op. 28, No. 20 implicitly connects both musicians.

*

The central thread that ties this project together is musical intertextuality, that is, the relationships between various works of music. The nature of these relationships varies from one work to the next and includes such divergent possibilities as homage, parody, or improvement.[3] These connections are in no way unusual, and in some contexts, they can even be the norm. In the *L'homme armé* Mass tradition, for example, forty odd compositions are related by virtue of sharing the same cantus firmus.[4] As Peter Burkholder has pointed out, "many musical compositions incorporate material from one or more earlier works,"[5] like the way Manilow borrows from Chopin in "Could It Be Magic," or the way many composers use the *L'homme armé* tune in their *L'homme armé*

[3] Harold Bloom theorized six categories of intertextuality in literature and provided the following Greek terms to distinguish one category from the next: clinamen, tessera, kenosis, daemonization, askesis, and apophrades. See Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).

[4] For more on the *L'homme armé* tradition, see, for example, Lewis Lockwood, "Aspects of the 'L'homme armé' Tradition," *Proceedings of the Royal Music Association* 100 (1973–1974): 97–122.

[5] J. Peter Burkholder, "Borrowing," *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.

Masses. The three chapters that follow this introduction approach musical intertextuality from three different points of origin: a genre, a source, and a composer.

The genre is progressive rock, the subject of Chapter 2. Progressive rock artists such as Emerson, Lake, and Palmer created new works that were connected by various means to classical precedents. Examples are chosen from about 1965 to about 1980.

The source is Johann Sebastian Bach, whose music is one of the major nexus points for musical intertextuality in many styles. In addition to serving as a source for many progressive rock artists in the 1960s and ’70s (discussed in Chapter 2), Bach’s music has continued to have a generative function for musicians at the turn of the twenty-first century. Chapter 3 examines three contrasting examples: Tenacious D, Stuart Davis, and Chris Thile.

The composer is Rivers Cuomo of Weezer, whose music contains numerous allusions to both popular and classical sources. Drawing on examples from 1994 to 2016, Chapter 4 examines connections between the music of Weezer and that of Johannes Brahms, Aaron Copland, and Giacomo Puccini, among others, arguing that intertextuality is a central characteristic of Weezer’s music

Although I concentrate on American popular music from 1965 to 2015, the history of musical intertextuality is, of course, much richer and longer than these few decades. In this introduction, then, I offer a brief sketch of musical intertextuality in Western musical traditions up to about 1965 as a means of setting the stage for the chapters that follow. Musical intertextuality has been so widespread for so long that both in this introduction and in this dissertation as a whole, I concentrate on a small number of

illustrative examples rather than attempting anything close to comprehensive coverage. After considering a series of important developments in the history of musical intertextuality, I provide a short overview of some of the most important theoretical tenets, particularly from the field of literary criticism, that inform my analyses throughout.

Historical Background

In its most general sense, musical intertextuality refers to any relationship between musical works. Musical intertextuality is neither new nor especially rare. In the section above, this chapter has already mentioned Barry Manilow's "Could It Be Magic" and the *L'homme armé* tradition of the Renaissance, two examples that differ widely in time, place, and musical style. The present section considers additional, representative examples of musical intertextuality in Western musical traditions from the medieval period up to about 1965.[6]

As a whole, this dissertation centers around musical intertextuality; in this historical introduction to the topic, however, I often favor the narrower term *musical*

[6] The history that unfolds over the next several paragraphs largely follows the framework Peter Burkholder lays out in his detailed and valuable article on musical borrowing in *Grove Music Online*, which is the most comprehensive source on the subject available today. Some of the specific examples are my own while others are taken from Burkholder and still others come from the many sources listed in the bibliography at the end of this dissertation. See Burkholder, "Borrowing." For sources on musical borrowing within individual time periods, see also Honey Meconi, ed., *Early Musical Borrowing* (New York: Routledge, 2004); Christopher Reynolds, *Motives for Allusion: Context and Content in Nineteenth-Century Music* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003); and David Metzer, *Quotation and Cultural Meaning in Twentieth-Century Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

borrowing. Intertextuality refers to any relationship between works whereas musical borrowing refers more specifically to a musical composition that incorporates material from an earlier source. In other words, musical borrowing describes compositions that are intertextually related in one, specific way. Examples of musical intertextuality in later chapters include both musical borrowing as well as several different types of relationships.

The earliest extant examples of musical borrowing, as Burkholder argues, depend upon the existence of evidence that can show a relationship between one work and another. In other words,

> The concept of borrowing elements from one piece to use in another depends on the idea of the piece itself. Accordingly, the traceable history of musical borrowing begins in the medieval repertories of liturgical chant for the Byzantine, Roman, and Ambrosian rites, the first surviving large bodies of music in which individual pieces were fixed in notation.[7]

The musical relationships between these works might include melodic contour, the use of melodic formulas, or the quasi-improvisatory practice of combining a series of pre-existing musical units (this last practice is called centonization). The musical similarities between large numbers of examples indicate that, in the Gregorian repertory, the "re-use of melodic material is the standard procedure for creating new works."[8]

From the ninth through the thirteenth centuries, composers embellished pre-existing medieval chant with new music, new text, or both in a practice known as troping. New words could elaborate on the liturgical themes in the text, while new music or poetry could add artistic or expressive value. Since tropes rely so strongly on pre-existing

[7] Burkholder, "Borrowing, §2: Medieval Monophony."
[8] Ibid.

models, it may make more sense to think of these early examples as evidence of performance practice rather than as distinct musical compositions. By analogy, we might think of a monk elaborating on a given musical structure in the same way that we think of an opera singer embellishing an aria in the eighteenth century, or in the same way that we think of a jazz player riffing on a tune in the twentieth century. Nevertheless, because some tropes are fixed in musical notation, scholars can study the relationships that exist between one historical artifact and another.

These early, monophonic examples show that musical intertextuality has existed for at least as long as Western musical notation, and presumably dates back even further to oral traditions and to musical practices outside the West.

Intertextuality in general and musical borrowing in particular were common in polyphonic music of the medieval period as well. To quote Burkholder's history again, "The major forms of polyphony to 1300—organum, discant, and motet—were all based on existing melodies, usually chant. Thus the early history of polyphony is largely a history of musical borrowing."[9] Like troping, some practices surrounding early polyphony may be better thought of as acts of performance rather than as acts of composition. For example, adding a drone or a parallel melody to an existing chant changes the essential nature of the composition so little that it sounds more like a new way to present a work, rather than being a new work altogether. This process is characteristic of the examples in *Musica enchiriadis* (ca. 850–900). Later sources of polyphonic music such as the Winchester Troper (first half of eleventh century) or *Ad*

[9] Ibid., §3: Polyphony to 1300.

organum faciendum (ca. 1100) illustrate something closer to our modern notion of musical composition. Although the examples in these later sources are based on pre-existing musical material, the new melodic additions could be parallel, oblique, or contrary to their source, and cadences could appear with relatively more or less frequency, demonstrating that the new materials involve some degree of intention and control by individual composers, rather than being the result of an intuitive, predictable process.

In the twelfth century, both within the tradition of Aquitanian polyphony and within the tradition of Notre Dame polyphony, composers continued to use pre-existing musical materials in developing new repertoires. In both traditions, the borrowed material appears in the lowest voice while a second voice of newly added material appears above it. This new voice is typically more salient than the borrowed voice because it is higher in pitch and because it moves in shorter rhythmic values. As a result, the new musical material carries more sonic interest than the lower and slower moving source material. At Notre Dame, this process did not always stop at the second voice but was sometimes repeated for a third or even a fourth voice, as in Pérotin's *Viderunt omnes*.

The same process of using one or more pre-existing voices as the basis for a new composition continued in the thirteenth century. Motets, for example, were sometimes virtually indistinguishable from earlier polyphony, save for the newly added text. *Ex semine rosa/Ex semine Habrahe/EX SEMINE* (early to mid-thirteenth century) is one such example. The three texts of *Ex semine* are all in Latin and relate to the Virgin Mary, but the same compositional techniques were used in secular music of the thirteenth

century as well. The texts in the triplum voice and motetus voice of *L'autre jour/Au tens pascour/IN SECULUM*, for example, relay a love story in French, while the tenor voice has a very short text in Latin: "In seculum" (forever).

In the fourteenth century, motets continued to serve as fertile ground for musical borrowing. In the Ars Nova style, procedures of musical borrowing grew to include not only melodic material from individual voices but also structural elements from entire compositions. Burkholder points to Guillaume de Machaut's four-voice motet *Aucune gent/Qui plus aimme/Fiat voluntas tua* as an example that "borrows the talea, color, and structural elements" of Philippe de Vitry's *Douce playsence/Garison/Neuma*.[10]

In the sense that the Ars Nova style involves many composers borrowing not only melodic material but also structural elements, it is similar to the way that some progressive rock artists approach their craft half a millennium later. More on the borrowing practices of progressive rock artists may be found in Chapter 2.[11]

Returning to the fourteenth century, instrumentals works, such as keyboard intabulations of polyphonic vocal works, also contain musical borrowing in a sense, although as with some examples mentioned above, these may be better thought of as transcriptions or arrangements rather than as new compositions.

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[10] Ibid., §4: 14th Century.

[11] Other studies of musical borrowing that take an entire style as their point of origin include, for example, Robert Walser, "Eruptions: Heavy Metal Appropriations of Classical Virtuosity," *Popular Music* 11 (1992): 263–308; Joseph Strauss, *Remaking the Past: Musical Modernism and the Influence of the Tonal Tradition* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990); Ingrid Monson, *Saying Something: Jazz Improvisation and Interaction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Tricia Rose, *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1994); and many others.

During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, musical borrowing reached new heights as composers began to expand the scale of their works. In musical settings of the Mass Ordinary text, for example, composers such as John Dunstaple, Guillaume Du Fay, Johannes Ockeghem, and many others began to conceive of their Masses as musically unified entities. (Earlier settings of the Mass Ordinary text, such as Machaut's *Messe de Nostre Dame*, had sometimes been unified to some extent—featuring, for example, a fixed number of voices and a consistent musical texture—but their musical cohesion did not reach the same degree as examples of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.) One example of this practice has already been mentioned above, that of the *L'homme armé* Mass tradition. The *Caput* Mass tradition is similar both in terms of its history and in terms of compositional technique.[12] In both the *L'homme armé* tradition and the *Caput* tradition, composers use a pre-existing melody as a starting point—either the *L'homme armé* melody or the *Caput* melody, respectively—and then use that melody as a way to unify all the movements in their Mass settings. In some cases, composers go beyond the use of melody and also borrow multiple parts of the polyphonic texture or borrow structural elements that organize the work. The *Missa Caput* by Jacob Obrecht, for example, seems to be modeled after two earlier *Caput* Masses, one by Ockeghem and one by Du Fay.[13] Paraphrase Masses and imitation Masses differ in the exact manner of how they use pre-existing sources, but they are similar to cantus firmus Masses in that they are musically unified and based on pre-existing musical material. In all these traditions, there

[12] For more on the *Caput* Mass tradition, see Anne Walters Robertson, "The Savior, the Woman, and the Head of the Dragon in the *Caput* Masses and Motet, *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 59, no. 3 (Fall 2006): 537–630.

[13] Burkholder, "Borrowing, §5: Renaissance Mass Cycles."

is a sense of competition between various composers: if they all use the same melody as a starting point, for example, then the interest lies not in the melody itself but in how it is handled, and in who handles it best.

Beginning in the early sixteenth century, following the Reformation, Protestant music too developed in close relation to earlier precedents. Lutheran chorales, for example, were sometimes modeled after Gregorian chants, and Latin hymns could form the basis for German chorales, as *Veni Redemptor gentium* was the model for Martin Luther's setting of *Nun komm der Heiden Heiland*.[14]

In secular music of the Renaissance, one area where borrowing was pervasive was in the quodlibet, a genre comprising works based on musical quotations. Quodlibet was especially popular in Germany, although similar practices existed in Spain (*ensalada*), France (*fricassée*), and other places.[15] These works were often written with the intent to be humorous, an effect that relied upon listeners' ability to recognize the quoted material. Therefore, borrowing was an essential element of quodlibet not only for composers but also for their audiences.

In instrumental music of the Renaissance, a new genre emerged that, like quodlibet, placed borrowing at the forefront of its process: variations. In a general sense, many earlier genres had already relied upon the notion of variation—take, for example, the way that the *Caput* melody must be altered in small ways to accommodate the various texts in each movement of the Mass Ordinary. But, in a more specific sense, the genre of variations represents a new category of musical borrowing. The very concept of a

[14] Ibid., §6: Other Renaissance Sacred Music.
[15] Ibid., §7: Renaissance Secular Music.

variation assumes there must be some given material, and the work exists to spin out variations on that material, as many composers did.

Variation form can refer either to a changing pattern above a repeated bass line, such as a passacaglia, or to a theme followed by a set of variations on that theme. A theme could be newly composed (then, in a sense, borrowed for each subsequent variation), but it was also quite common to begin with a pre-existing theme (meaning that the theme itself is borrowed and each subsequent variation borrows the borrowed theme). In cases like these, the network of musical relationships exists not only from one variation to the next but also from entire sets of variations to their source (and, where two sets of variations are based upon the same theme, from entire sets to other entire sets). As with cantus firmus Masses based on a single, shared tune, variations sets that are based on a single, shared theme derive their sense of musical interest not from the theme itself—the theme is the same in all of them—but rather from the manipulations and changes to the repeating pattern.

Long after the Renaissance, variations remained a testing ground for composers to demonstrate their ability to develop musical material. Well-known examples include J.S. Bach's set of thirty *Goldberg Variations*, BWV 998 (published 1741), Beethoven's set of thirty-three *Diabelli Variations* (Op. 120, 1819–23), and W.A. Mozart's set of twelve variations on the French tune "Ah vous dirai-je, maman" (K. 265/300e, 1781–2). (More on this last example appears below.) Johannes Brahms wrote variations on themes attributed to Robert Schumann (Op. 9, 1854), Handel (Op. 24, 1861), and Haydn (Op. 56, 1873), among others. Similarly, Sergei Rachmaninoff used themes by composers such as

Chopin (Op. 22, 1902–3), Corelli (Op. 42, 1931), and Paganini (Op. 43, 1934) as the basis for some of his compositions. A single source, such as a popular operatic aria, could become the basis for multiple sets of variations from different composers. For example, Beethoven, Chopin, Berlioz, and others each wrote a set of variations on the theme "Là ci darem la mano," from the first act of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* (1787).[16] This list could go on indefinitely because this sort of musical borrowing was a common practice for centuries. As Burkholder points out, "Writing variations on a borrowed theme remains one of the most prominent uses of musical borrowing down to the present day; indeed, it is so common that it is seldom thought of as a kind of borrowing."[17] Yet, of course, it is. Just as "Là ci darem la mano" is not an original composition by Berlioz, neither did Bach compose the thirtieth *Goldberg Variation* free of influence from the twenty-ninth.

In the seventeenth century, practices of musical borrowing continued, not only in variations form but also in music of standardized patterns (for example, a lament over a descending tetrachord), genres in which borrowing was the norm (such as quodlibet or chorale preludes), and reworkings of existing music for new purposes.[18] By the nineteenth century, this last category was viewed unfavorably, but in the seventeenth and even eighteenth centuries, reworkings were common. To suggest the extent of reworkings as practiced for more than a century all across Europe, Burkholder provides examples by the following composers: Monteverdi, Lully, Purcell, Vivaldi, Rameau, and J.S. Bach. One of the best-known pieces of classical music of all time also includes one of the

[16] The works are Beethoven, WoO 28, ?1795; Chopin, B. 225, Op. 2, 1827; Berlioz, H. 30, 1828 or earlier.

[17] Burkholder, "Borrowing, §7: Renaissance Secular Music."

[18] Ibid.

highest-profile examples of a reworking. To create one of the choruses of *Messiah* (HWV 56, 1742), "For unto Us a Child Is Born," Handel reworked a duet about a mistrustful lover, "No, di voi non vo' fidarmi" (HWV 189, 1741).

Only a few generations after Handel, a critical view of reworkings emerged. As Burkholder explains,

> 19th-century notions of originality regarded reworking one's own music as unoriginal and taking another's work without due credit as plagiarism. These ideas began to emerge during the 18th century, and their gradual acceptance led to a fundamental change in attitudes towards and practices of borrowing.[19]

In a separate passage, Burkholder continues,

> Romanticism has no more profound source than this change in emphasis from the continuity and collectivity of a tradition sustained through imitation of exemplary models to the individualism of an artistic culture that prized genius, inspiration, and innovation.[20]

In the late eighteenth century, musical borrowing continued as a way for inexperienced composers to imitate mature ones—in arrangements of pre-existing tunes and in variation sets—but otherwise began to become less salient. One celebrated exception occurs in Act II of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, when the characters are having supper and an instrumental ensemble is providing background music for the meal. The band plays selections by Martín y Soler, Giuseppe Sarti, and by Mozart himself ("Non più andrai," from *Le nozze di Figaro*, 1786). Mozart uses these quotations to support the narrative of the opera, to make it seem as though the characters are having a typical dinner with music in the late eighteenth century.

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[19] Burkholder, "Borrowing, §9: Reworkings and Issues of Originality."
[20] Ibid.

Although the nineteenth century prized originality more than any previous era had, nineteenth-century composers nevertheless continued to borrow under specific conditions. As noted above, variations sets are one context where borrowing is inevitable. In addition to the examples by Beethoven, Brahms, Rachmaninoff, and others noted above, the nineteenth century also saw much freer approaches to variation. An interesting example is Franz Liszt's *Réminiscences de Don Juan* (1841) for piano.[21] Liszt uses themes from throughout Mozart's *Don Giovanni* in the work, but rather than offering a straightforward set of variations, or an arrangement of the opera for keyboard, Liszt re-orders and re-combines Mozart's music to suggest themes that are not present in the opera itself. For instance, as Klára Móricz and David Schneider explain, "The two grimmest, most 'diabolical' scenes in the opera are conflated in Liszt's first section."[22] And, later in the work, when Liszt combines the theme of Don Giovanni asking for Zerlina's hand ("Vieni, vieni") with the theme where the statue asks for Don't hand ("Tu m'invitasti a cena"), "Liszt creates an interpretive link between love and death, between the erotic and the demonic, suggesting that the same force that drives his insatiable sexual desire also manufactures the Don's downfall."[23]

In addition to variations, two further places where nineteenth-century composers borrowed are in pieces that use folk or exoticized sources. Haydn and Beethoven, for example, each arranged a large number of British and Irish folk songs, while Liszt drew

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[21] Liszt also treated themes from *Don Giovanni* in Fantasia über Motive aus *Figaro* und *Don Juan* (1842) and *Réminiscences de Don Juan* for two pianos (1876–7).

[22] Klára Móricz and David Schneider, eds., *Oxford Anthology of Western Music*, Volume 2: The Mid-Eighteenth Century to the Late Nineteenth Century (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 389.

[23] Ibid.

from a series of folk idioms, including Hungarian, Czech, Polish, Russian, and others.[24] In the United States as well, composers such as Edward MacDowell and Louis Gottschalk used various sources as a way to add an exotic aura to some of their works (see, for example, MacDowell's "Indian" Suite, 1891–5, and Gottschalk's *Souvenir de Puerto Rico*, Op. 31, 1857–8).

Due to an increasing interest in music of the past, historical sources also proved to be rich with potential for nineteenth-century composers. One example is the revival of Bach's style in such nineteenth-century works as Felix Mendelssohn's Six Sonatas for organ (Op. 65, 1844–5), Brahms's chorale preludes (1896), and Reger's chorale fantasias (1898–1900).[25] The motive B–A–C–H (B♭, A, C, B♮) was also used with some frequency. Bach's hold on many composers' imaginations was not confined to the nineteenth century, however, as the examples from the turn of the twenty-first century in Chapter 3 of this dissertation demonstrate.

In the nineteenth century, the only borrowed source that could rival Bach in terms of popularity and historical value was the opening of the "Dies irae," beginning with Berlioz's memorable use of the chant in the fifth movement of his *Symphonie fantastique* (1830).

Around the turn of the twentieth century, Gustav Mahler borrowed from various pre-existing musical sources in especially notable ways. Both his vocal and symphonic works borrow from sources by other composers as well as from his own works. Burkholder describes an example from Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* (Songs

[24] Burkholder, "Borrowing, §11: 19th Century."
[25] Ibid.

of a Wayfarer, 1883–5, rev. ?1891–6), a four-movement song cycle in which, during the final movement, the protagonist reflects on his own death. Burkholder writes,

> Mahler's lengthy reference in the last of the *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* . . . to a scene from Donizetti's opera *Don Sebastian* [1843], in which a man witnesses his own funeral, conveys the feelings of Mahler's protagonist with stunning clarity for those who recognize the allusion.[26]

Musical material from *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* appears again in Mahler's Symphony No. 1 in D Major (?1884–8, rev. 1893–6, second rev. ca. 1906), providing an opportunity for further layers of meaning—between Mahler's symphony, Mahler's song cycle, Donizetti's opera, or some combination of the three. Other examples by Mahler include, again, his Symphony No. 1, whose third movement borrows its theme from the children's song "Frère Jacques" (the German title is "Bruder Jacob," the English "Brother John"), as well as his Ninth Symphony (1908–9), which makes reference to both his *Kindertotenlieder* (Songs on the Death of Children, 1901–4, song no. 4) and his *Das Lied von der Erde* (Song of the Earth, 1908–9, first movement).

From a time period barely later than Mahler's, and working in the United States rather than primarily in Europe, Charles Ives also used borrowing as a central compositional device. To cite just one example, Ives's *Central Park in the Dark* (ca. 1909, rev. ca. 1936) combines new material with a series of quotations from both well-known and obscure sources, including "Ben Bolt," the ragtime song "Hello! Ma Baby"

[26] Ibid.

(1899), "The Worms Crawl In," "The Campbells Are Coming," Sousa's *Washington Post March* (1889), and presumably other yet-to-be-identified sources as well.[27]

As others have taken single composers such as Mahler or Ives as the focal point for studies of musical borrowing,[28] I have organized Chapter 4 of the present dissertation around the borrowing practice of one performer and composer: Rivers Cuomo (b. 1970).

During the twentieth century, the compositional techniques of collage, quotation, and pastiche grew to unprecedented lengths. In otherwise original musical compositions, composers freely borrowed from a wide variety of sources. Pastiche is the least specific of these terms, referring to the borrowing of an entire style rather than any one particular piece. One example of pastiche is Prokofiev's "Classical Symphony" (1916–17), which imitates the style of Haydn.

Quotation is the most straightforward borrowing technique because it involves material that is taken directly from one work and used in another, often in a clearly audible way. George Rochberg's *Ricordanza* (1972) is an example both of pastiche (because it is written in the style of Beethoven) and of quotation (because it borrows one of its themes from Beethoven's Cello Sonata, Op. 102, No. 1, 1815). Similarly, Arvo

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[27] For a fuller account of Ives's practice of musical borrowing, see J. Peter Burkholder, *All Made of Tunes: Charles Ives and the Uses of Musical Borrowing* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995). Burkholder's description of *Central Park in the Dark* is 344–5.

[28] See, for example, Burkholder, *All Made of Tunes*; Kramer Ulrich, "Quotation and Self-Borrowing in the Music of Alban Berg," *Journal of Musicological Research* 12 (1992): 53–82; Steven M. Bruns, "'In stilo Mahleriano': Quotation and Allusion in the Music of George Crumb," *American Music Research Center Journal* 3 (1993): 9–39; Cheryl Tongier, "Pre-Existent Music in the Works of Peter Maxwell Davies" (PhD diss., University of Kansas, 1983); Christopher Smith, "'Broadway the Hard Way': Techniques of Allusion in Music by Frank Zappa," *College Music Symposium* 35 (1995): 35–60; and many others.

Pärt's *Credo* (1968) quotes a chord progression of Bach's (*The Well-Tempered Clavier*, Book I, Prelude No. 1 in C Major, 1722) and George Crumb uses quotations from Bach, Schubert, and others in his *Makrokosmos* (1972, 1973). As with Ives, one can hardly imagine a piece by Alfred Schnittke that does not use quotation.

Finally, composers such as Luciano Berio in his *Sinfonia* (1968–9) used the technique of collage to form new compositions out of pieces of old ones. This technique was especially popular for electronic or tape compositions since recordings could readily be spliced together. John Cage's *Imaginary Landscape No. 5* (1952), Karlheinz Stockhausen's *Gesang der Jünglinge* (1955–6), and James Tenney's *Viet Flakes* (1966) each use collage techniques to form musical works quite different from their sources.

Like its classical counterpart, rock music has a rich history of musical intertextuality as well. In addition to the various types of musical borrowing described above, the prevalence of recordings in popular music creates an opportunity for a new type of relationship between works. In earlier eras, musical borrowing took place between two works—say, for example, the way that Rochberg's *Ricordanza* borrows one of its themes from Beethoven's Cello Sonata, Op. 102, No. 1. But in the rock era—an era filled or even dominated by recordings—musical borrowing could occur not just work-to-work but also recording-to-recording. In Tenney's *Viet Flakes*, for example, the composer borrows not just the song "We Can Work It Out" but the Beatles' recording of the song (1965). To cite another example that use live performance rather than recordings to suggest a specific performance, when David Allan Coe alludes to Charley Pride in the song "You Never Even Called Me by My Name," by Steve Goodman and John Prine

(1975), he does so not by borrowing a melody by Pride but instead by imitating Pride's voice. (Doug Supernaw recorded the song in 1994, and his version features guest vocals by the real Charley Pride, along with several others.)

Recognizing the importance not only of works but of particular performances of works, therefore, some of the examples in later chapters treat various performances of the same work as intertextually related. The strongly differentiated versions of "All along the Watchtower" by Bob Dylan (1967) and Jimi Hendrix (1968) serve as a good example.[29]

Additional examples of intertextuality in twentieth-century popular music include so-called answer songs. For example, in her recording of Lieber and Stoller's "Hound Dog" (recorded 1952), Big Mama Thorton sings, "You ain't nothin' but a hound dog." Using identical music but newly composed lyrics, Rufus Thomas sings in response (1953), "You ain't nothin' but a bear cat." When Elvis Presley recorded "Hound Dog" years later (1956), his version can be heard as intertextually related to both Big Mama Thorton's and Rufus Thomas's.

Since the birth of hip hop in the 1970s, a major component of that style has been sampling. As with other trends, a comprehensive list of hip-hop samples would be impossible to produce; instead, I offer a few examples to hint at the variety and ubiquity of sampling in hip hop. Public Enemy's *Fear of a Black Planet* (1990), a commercially successful and highly influential album that the Library of Congress added to the

[29] See Albin Zak, "Bob Dylan and Jimi Hendrix: Juxtaposition and Transformation 'All along the Watchtower,'" *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 57, no. 3 (Fall 2004): 599–644.

National Recording Registry in 2004, contains numerous samples, perhaps hundreds.[30] The Run-D.M.C. song "Walk This Way," released in 1986, uses music from the 1975 Aerosmith song of the same title; since Aerosmith recorded and performed this song with Run-D.M.C., it is not a sample, but it is pre-existing music that serves as the backing track for rapped vocals in the same way many hip hop samples do. Aerosmith remained a viable source of musical material one and a half decades later, when Eminem borrowed from the band's 1973 song "Dream On" in his "Sing for the Moment" (2002). The introduction is a sample from Aerosmith's song, then Eminem raps the verses, and Aerosmith's Steven Tyler sings the chorus, as in this excerpt from the end of the first verse through the first chorus:

> *Eminem*: His thoughts are whacked. He's mad so he's talkin' back,
> talkin' black, brainwashed from rock and rap.
> He sags his pants, do-rags and a stocking cap.
> His stepfather hit him, so he socked him back
> and broke his nose. This house is a broken home.
> There's no control. He just lets his emotions go.
>
> *Steven Tyler*: Sing with me, sing for the years,
> sing for the laughter, sing for the tears,
> sing with me, just for today.
> Maybe tomorrow the good Lord will take you away.

The way the tracks are mixed together, it sounds as though Steven Tyler and Eminem are performing a duet, when in fact their parts were recorded thirty years apart. Aerosmith's Joe Perry plays an extended guitar solo at the end of Eminem's track.

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[30] Kevin Nottingham estimates that the album contains ninety-five samples. See "*Fear of a Black Planet*: Original Samples," *The Underground Hip Hop Authority*, http://www.kevinnottingham.com/2008/09/24/fear-of-a-black-planet-original-samples/.

See also Robert Walser, "Rhythm, Rhyme, and Rhetoric in the Music of Public Enemy," *Ethnomusicology* 39, no. 2 (Spring–Summer 1995): 193–217.

A significant intersection between popular and classical traditions began around 1965, when progressive rock artists started writing longer and more formally and harmonically complex music; their albums contained allusions and quotations, a marked contrast from the short, typically unrelated songs that filled rock albums of the 1950s and early 1960s. Chapter 2 begins with the story of progressive rock.

The examples above have concentrated on musical material—pitch, rhythm, and the like. However, musical intertextuality can also be found within the texts of musical works. In virtually every time period, there has been a tradition of setting new texts to old music. Two examples have already been noted: "Ah vous dirai-je, maman" and cantus firmus masses (whose texts, whether from *L'homme armé*, *Caput*, or another source, were changed to fit the Roman Rite). In a more recent example, the mid-twentieth-century hit song "What a Wonderful World" (1967)[31] might seem like a new composition, but in fact it borrows much of its musical material from earlier works; only the text is really new. Beginning at very young ages, many children learn the songs "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" and the "Alphabet Song." But these two songs are actually one song, "Ah vous dirai-je, maman," the French tune that Mozart had used two centuries earlier as the basis for a variations set. The same melody forms the basis of the children's song "Baa, Baa, Black Sheep" and, allowing for some rhythmic flexibility, also provides the musical underpinning for "What a Wonderful World," although the latter is slowed down and reharmonized, giving it a nostalgic and even world-weary

[31] "What a Wonderful World" was written by Bob Thiele (under the pseudonym George Douglas) and George David Weiss. It has been recorded several times, perhaps most famously by Louis Armstrong.

quality. Upon first hearing, the different texts of these five examples could create the impression that they are five different works, even though the musical material is nearly identical. Because of their shared musical material, these works are clearly connected, or, to put it another way, they form an intertextual network of relationships based on their shared musical material.

Methods from Literary Criticism

In order to make sense of this widespread practice of borrowing, I turn to the literary theorists who first developed the concept of intertextuality—the relationship between texts—although the term is now widely used in disciplines outside of literature as well. The work of Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin (1895–1975) was central to the concept of intertextuality, although he never used that term. Instead, he coined the term *dialogism* to refer to works that continually carried on dialogs with other works and authors. Dialogic works, in his formulation, were in contrast to monologic works, which emphasized a single, authorial voice. Strictly speaking, Bakhtin did not believe monologic works existed at all; he thought every work was dialogic. In general, however, he identified two literary genres—the epic and the novel—which he regarded as more monologic and more dialogic, respectively.

In "Epic and Novel," Bakhtin argued that the novel was an essentially new genre, different from any that had come before it. Older forms of literature, such as histories and epics, developed long ago—so long ago, he claims, that they were actually oral traditions that writers only happened to commit to paper much later. The novel, in contrast, is a

much newer, younger genre, and, significantly, it developed as a *written* art form, not an oral one. Because the novel is a written art form, Bakhtin argues, it plays with conventions of writing in ways that older, oral genres do not. (For example, a novel might present events out of chronological order, or from the perspective of a biased character, or switching back and forth between general and specific scenarios, and so on. These devices would only serve to confuse the presentation of an epic.) For Bakhtin, the novel presented a new medium that was capable of changing its structure as it developed because new novels continuous revised and expanded the genre. He drew most of his examples from Russian authors (and Dostoyevsky first among them), but he might just as easily have written about other innovative novelists like James Joyce or John Steinbeck.

Bakhtin wrote prolifically in the 1920s and '30s, but his writings were not well known until the '60s (and some are still not well known). Some of his works were lost, and others were accepted for publication but faced lengthy delays. Pam Morris describes an extreme example in her commentary in *The Bakhtin Reader*: Bakhtin submitted his thesis in 1940; war delayed its defense until 1947; although he passed his defense, conservative committee members delayed the conference of his degree until 1951; the work was finally published in 1965.[32] Published in Russian, that is. Not all of his works faced a twenty-five year delay in publication like this one, but even works that came out relatively quickly faced considerable language and cultural barriers to reach Western readers during the Cold War.

[32] Pam Morris, ed., *The Bakhtin Reader: Selected Writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev and Voloshinov* (London: Arnold, 1994), 194.

One of the scholars who began drawing attention to Bakhtin's work was Julia Kristeva (b. 1941), who coined the term *intertextuality* (from *intertextualité*). Echoing and expanding on Bakhtin's notion that novels develop in relation to one another, Kristeva writes, "Any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another."[33] For Kristeva, intertextuality is a way of talking about the mediation that happens between text and reader. The connection is not direct but instead relies on codes, including codes from other texts. She expanded Bakhtin's work on the novel to all written genres. Some scholars (notably Roland Barthes) have continued to use the term *intertextualité* as Kristeva first intended it, but others have applied various meanings, which can sometimes differ greatly from Kristeva's original usage. In general, intertextuality can now refer to any connection between two works, including works in different media, such as a painting and an overture.

From its origins in Russian and French sources, intertextuality has made its way into English sources as well, notably in the work of Harold Bloom (b. 1930). In his book *The Anxiety of Influence*, Bloom writes,

> Poetic history, in this book's argument, is held to be indistinguishable from poetic influence, since strong poets make that history by misreading one another, so as to clear imaginative space for themselves.[34]

In other words, all new poems are related to older poems that have come before. Bloom's six "revisionary ratios" describe how authors "misread" their predecessors. For example,

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[33] Ibid., 37.

[34] Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 5.

a poet might present a more concise version of a model, showing that the model was excessive. Or a poet might begin a poem following the opening of a model, but then suddenly swerve away, showing the direction the model should have taken. All of his ratios represent ways that strong poets misread their predecessors. Indeed, because poets are unconscious of the Freudian defense mechanisms involved, they are incapable of reading their predecessors with accuracy. While Bloom's work is provocative, and many fruitful projects have developed from it, I apply it in a limited way. He only accounts for influence that arises out of fear, and he does not allow for influence to rise out of humility, gratitude, or excitement. (In addition, Bloom continuously describes the anxiety of influence as a conflict between sons and fathers, never daughters and mothers.)

The idea of poems being interconnected with one another is so central to Bloom's thinking that he advises, "Let us give up the failed enterprise of seeking to 'understand' any single poem as an entity in itself." He encourages his readers to instead pursue "the quest of learning to read any poem as its poet's deliberate misinterpretation, *as a poet*, of a precursor poem or of poetry in general."[35] As with Bakhtin and Kristeva, the dialog or intertext between works is key.

Intertextuality in Music

Kristeva and Bloom were focused on literary texts, and several subsequent scholars have applied their notions to music. One of the scholars associated with musical intertextuality is Robert Hatten, currently on faculty at the University of Texas. In his

[35] Ibid., 43. Italics original.

article "The Place of Intertextuality in Music Studies," Hatten notes that the concept of intertextuality can be applied to an author (as in, what were the author's model(s), what piece(s) was she or he responding to, and so on) or to an audience (as in, what were the model(s) they could have heard, melodies that might have sounded similar to them, and so on).[36] These two distinct processes are called *poietic* and *esthesic*, respectively. In his book *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*, Hatten addresses both processes, but he places an important limitation on them: he focuses only on intertextualities that existed in Beethoven's lifetime.[37] This is not a necessary limitation—after all, one can listen to a Beethoven symphony today and be reminded of Brahms, Schoenberg, or John Oswald—but it helps Hatten to contain his project and to focus on a specific time and place. If intertextuality involves the study of multiple works, it is tempting to ask, "why stop at two or three?" Could we not study the intertextual connections between an infinite number of works? Well, yes, but such an endeavor would hardly prove interesting. The study of any particular work would predictably conclude that it is related to every other work. By localizing his inquiry, Hatten avoids this particular rabbit hole.

Another important constraint Hatten uses is to distinguish between style and strategy. There are certain stylistic elements that remain consistent across a large body of works (for example, beginning a concerto with a fast movement). Hatten takes these stylistic connections for granted and directs his attention instead on the strategies that composers use to play with (or against) those stylistic expectations.

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[36] Robert Hatten, "The Place of Intertextuality in Music Studies," *American Journal of Semiotics* 3, no. 4 (1985): 69–82.

[37] Robert Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994).

In *Intertextuality in Western Art Music*, published in a book series for which Hatten served as general editor, Michael Klein uses a similar methodology, applied mostly to nineteenth-century piano pieces but including a few pieces from the twentieth century or other performance mediums as well.[38] The main difference in Klein's work is that he is willing to applying intertextual relationships anachronistically. For example, both Hatten and Klein might discuss an intertextuality between a work by Chopin and one by Lutosławski to inform our interpretation of the later work. But only Klein would use it to inform the earlier work as well. (In that particular example, Klein reinterprets the troublesome phrasing in Chopin by means of the relatively clearer phrasing in Lutosławski.) In one of his examples, Klein discusses how some analysts read "Hey Jude" historically, comparing it to other songs by the Beatles or their precursors while other analysts read it transhistorically, comparing it to works by Orlando di Lasso or Radiohead. Lasso's music is so far removed from the Beatles, both chronologically and stylistically, that the bulk of the Beatles' audience probably will not register any connection, and Radiohead came after the Beatles, making it impossible for the Beatles to intend any sort of connection. Yet both connections remain.

Christopher Reynolds provided one of the most readable and easily applicable texts on musical intertextuality in his book *Motives for Allusion*.[39] Reynolds creates a new taxonomy, one that is much more straightforward than Bloom's and at the same time more diverse. Reynolds presents many examples from the nineteenth century (and a few

[38] Michael Klein, *Intertextuality in Western Art Music* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005).

[39] Christopher Alan Reynolds, *Motives for Allusion: Context and Content in Nineteenth-Century Music* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).

from slightly earlier) that have some connection of themes (either musical, poetic, or both). Reynolds shows how allusions can be assimilative (when the new work carries with it the meaning of its precursor's context) or contrastive (when the new work rejects the meaning of its precursor's context). He also addresses the practices of texting (applying a text to an instrumental theme) and naming (B-A-C-H, e.g.). Reynolds offers the following conclusive statement, which is itself an allusion to Karol Berger's *A Theory of Art*: "If in interpreting this world [that a piece of art creates] we do not notice, or disregard, the quotation or allusion, we miss a feature of the world we interpret, not something external to it."[40] Again, the relationships between works are central.

One important aspect of Reynolds's thinking is that allusions do not necessarily need to sound alike. And, further, all things that sound alike are not allusions.[41] As with Hatten, Reynolds is interested in the audience (the esthesic). Who were these allusions written for, and who heard them? He proposes three types of motivations targeted to three types of listeners: (1) Amateurs. In order to project an aura of originality, composers would hide allusions or clearly manipulate the obvious allusions (such as Berlioz's use of the "Dies irae" in his *Symphonie fantastique*). (2) Connoisseurs. In order to demonstrate familiarity and mastery of a received tradition, composers would leave enough traces of the original source for reminiscence hunters to find, especially showing how they masterfully handled their sources. (3) Exclusive company. This would be the composer

[40] Karol Berger, quoted in Reynolds, *Motives for Allusion*, 181.
[41] Reynolds, *Motives for Allusion*, 2.

and perhaps a few close confidants who would share in the knowledge or real sources and methods through letters, conversations, and so forth.[42]

Richard Taruskin (b. 1945) has also done some work on musical borrowing (exploring, for example, Stravinsky's use of folk sources in his *Rite of Spring*), including an insightful review of Kevin Korsyn's and Joseph Straus's scholarship on intertextuality.[43] Taruskin, like Reynolds, notes that there are many ways to create good works, directly contrasting Bloom's notion of fighting for creative territory as the only way to become "strong." Taruskin notes that sometimes influence is an act of voluntary surrender, rather than of pugilism.[44] Taruskin's main criticism of both Korsyn and Straus is that they use Bloom's "revisionary ratios," but they don't actually revise at all. Instead, they conclude Brahms and Schoenberg (among others) are the strong poets that most musicologists already thought they were. Taruskin further reminds us that the Bloomian mold entails "wrestling with threatening fathers, not with benign great-grandfathers."[45] So for composers of Schoenberg's generation, "Wagner was everybody's appalling father, [and] Bach was everyone's handpicked *vecchoi genitor*."[46] The debts that composers reveal are the easy ones; those they conceal, the hardest.

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[42] Ibid., 142.

[43] Richard Taruskin, "Revising Revision," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 46, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 114–38; reprinted in *The Danger of Music and Other Anti-Utopian Essays* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009): 354–81.

[44] Taruskin, "Revising Revision," 356.

[45] Ibid., 374.

[46] Ibid., 375.

Conclusion

Composers of art music and popular music both borrowed from one another, with each tradition serving as both an environment and a source for borrowing. Intertextual analysis can inform our understanding of works from any time period or style, and it is especially relevant to music of the twentieth century, when collage, quotation, pastiche, sampling, and other compositional techniques all became increasingly common. While intertextual analysis draws the listener's attention from a single text to one or more external works, the connections are not in themselves external. If we fail to notice an instance of intertextuality or if we ignore one, we are not omitting a feature that is external to the work, but rather one that is central to it.

CHAPTER 2:
STYLES COLLIDE: THE POPULAR-CLASSICAL FUSION OF PROGRESSIVE ROCK

Introduction

The title of this chapter refers to popular music and classical music, as if those two traditions were easily defined and perfectly distinct. Neither is the case. What I mean by *popular* has nothing to do with popularity, and what I mean by *classical* is not related to the Classical era—neither the one beginning in antiquity nor the one beginning in the eighteenth century. Instead, I use *popular* as an umbrella term for Western music with a prominent beat and a characteristic instrumentation of vocals, drums, bass, and guitar or keyboard, focusing in particular on works written after about 1965. *Classical*, by contrast, is meant to denote Western art music of any time period or style, often including wind, brass, or orchestral stringed instruments. Although these terms must remain somewhat flexible, and therefore imprecise, I use them because, despite their limitations, the binary division between popular and classical styles has founds its way into both common and academic usage and, therefore, is an integral part of the existing conversation about musical style.[1]

[1] To mention only a few examples, John Covach and Walter Everett use similar terms in their preface to "American Rock and the Classical Music Tradition," special issue, *Contemporary Music Review* 18, no. 4 (September 1999): 1. They do not offer definitions for these terms, however. Substituting *rock* for *popular*, Janell Duxbury also uses similar terms with more explicit definitions in *Rockin' the Classics and Classicizin' the Rock: A Selectively Annotated Discography* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985), ix. Bernard Gendron uses *popular music* for the title of his book, and *rock* in the text, further illustrating the imprecision of terms. Bernard Gendron, *Between Montmartre and the Mudd Club: Popular Music and the Avant-Garde* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002). See especially note 1 on p. 341.

Like most binary divisions, this one is overly simplistic, but it is also practical. In general, music stores, whether physical or virtual, display recordings of popular music in one section of the store and recordings of classical music in a different section. Newspapers often employ separate critics to write about one style or the other, and magazines often specialize in one type of music and do not cover the other at all. Similarly, live performances of these types of music generally attract different audiences with different expectations. Does the audience sit, stand, or move around? Do the performers speak to the audience, or perform the music only? What is the typical style of dress for the performers and for the audience? When should the audience chat, clap, or remain silent? At the conclusion of a given concert, one might even be able to make a reasonable guess as to the style of music that was played based solely on what type of alcohol was sold.[2]

With all of these practical dissimilarities, then, the traditions of popular and classical music might seem to be entirely distinct and unconnected. But they are not. There is a long tradition of classical composers coopting popular styles. The music of Baroque instrumental suites, for example, has its origins in social dance music, and

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[2] Both popular and classical music venues make alcohol available to their customers, but the characteristic types of alcohol can differ. For instance, when the Chicago Symphony Orchestra performs at Orchestra Hall in Chicago, the venue advertises "Italian-inspired cuisine and global wines." By contrast, when Kid Rock performs at the Joe Louis Arena in Detroit, the venue promotes Kid Rock's personal brand of low-cost beer, Badass American Lager.

In a blog post, Molly Breckling points out some of the conflicts that can occur—on issues from dancing to parenting—during live performances of "cross-generic" music, that is, music that has some aspects of both popular and classical traditions. Molly M. Breckling, "Cross-Generic Music and the Politics of Public Listening," *Appreciate the Music*, 21 July 2015, http://www.appreciatethemusic.com/appreciate-the-music/cross-generic-music-and-the-politics-of-public-listening.

pieces like Maurice Ravel's Violin Sonata No. 2 (1923–7), whose second movement bears the heading "Blues," provide clear examples of popular styles influencing art music traditions. Even the polka, that somewhat raucous couple-dance so popular in the nineteenth century, found its way into works by Bedřich Smetana, the Strauss family, and Igor Stravinsky, among others.[3]

The examples above are all cases in which popular styles serve as models for classical pieces. However, as many scholars have shown, and as I explore in the remainder of this chapter, classical sources can likewise serve as the generative material for popular works. The clearest and most sustained example of this stylistic cross-pollination is progressive rock, a style that began in the United Kingdom in the late 1960s, peaked in the '70s, and has yet to completely dissolve.

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In a passage from the introductory materials of his landmark book on progressive rock, Edward Macan begins by noting the importance of classical music to the development of progressive rock; he continues by providing several general examples and by addressing some cultural implications of this stylistic crossover; finally, he concludes by pointing to a central reason for progressive rock's ultimate decline. Macan writes,

> The defining features of progressive rock, those elements that serve to separate it from other contemporary styles of popular music, are all drawn from the European classical tradition. These hallmarks include . . . the employment of

[3] Specific examples include *The Bartered Bride* (1870), *Champagner-Polka*, Op. 211 (1858), and *Circus Polka* (1942), respectively, and there are many others. The works list of Johann Strauss II in *Grove Music Online* contains approximately one hundred polkas.

> lengthy sectional forms such as the song cycle or the multimovement suite, and the preoccupation with dazzling metrical and instrumental virtuosity. . . . [Progressive rock musicians] attempt to forge a dialectical relationship between the high culture of their parents and the popular culture that they grew up in. . . . [T]he constant appeal made in progressive rock to the music of high culture is one of the major reasons that many rock critics, professed "populists," disliked the idiom so intensely.[4]

Macan's description of "the constant appeal" to high art might seem like an exaggeration, and Eric Hung has criticized Macan's view for being too narrow,[5] but examples really are abundant: Including the first edition, first supplement, and second supplement of her annotated discography, Janell Duxbury has documented 942 pages worth of examples of music that crosses the imagined boundary between popular and classical styles, and these examples are drawn mostly from progressive rock.[6]

As Macan points out, both critical commentators and fans of progressive rock struggled to reconcile two styles of music that were so historically, sonically, and culturally different from one another. Some argued, "music should contain hidden layers of meaning," such as allusions to classical sources, while critics attacked any relationship

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[4] Edward Macan, *Rocking the Classics: English Progressive Rock and the Counterculture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 12–13. In a separate passage, Macan writes, "[Progressive rock is remembered] above all for its attempts to combine classical music's sense of space and monumental scope with rock's raw power and energy." Macan, *Rocking the Classics*, 3.

[5] Eric Hung, "Hearing Emerson, Lake, and Palmer Anew: Progressive Rock as 'Music of Attraction,'" *Current Musicology* 79 (2005): 245–59. See especially 245–7 and 255.

[6] Janell R. Duxbury, *Rockin' the Classics and Classicizin' the Rock: A Selectively Annotated Discography* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985); Duxbury, *Rockin' the Classics and Classicizin' the Rock: A Selectively Annotated Discography: First Supplement* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1991); and Duxbury, *Rockin' the Classics and Classicizin' the Rock: A Selectively Annotated Discography: Second Supplement* (Philadelphia: Xlibris, 2000). Duxbury also maintains the website *Rock-Classical Connection Webpage*, http://www.rockclassical.com/.

to classical styles as "elitist, a betrayal of rock's populist origins."[7] In a review of Deep Purple's *Machine Head* (1972), for example, the rock critic Lester Bangs calls progressive rock "pompous," "pretentious," "an atrocity," and "mush" within the space of only two paragraphs.[8] Regardless of whether listeners heard progressive rock favorably or critically, it nevertheless continued to combine popular and classical idioms, and its composers routinely borrowed from pre-existing, classical sources, which was a sharp departure from other contemporaneous styles of Western popular music.

A perhaps surprising twist is that, for a time, progressive rock artists, who had supposedly committed "a betrayal of rock's populist origins," found major commercial success among mass audiences. Macan writes,

> By the mid-1970s, the most commercially successful progressive rock bands—ELP, Yes, Pink Floyd, and Jethro Tull—easily sold out large stadiums and arenas on their American tours; between 1971 and 1976 these four bands had sixteen top ten and four number one albums in the United States between them, arguably making progressive rock the most commercially lucrative style of this period.[9]

Under the banner of progressive rock, the same classical composers, pieces, and forms that seem perennially to struggle to hold on to an ever-shrinking, ever-aging audience served as the models for a new kind of music that "easily sold out large stadiums."

My purpose in devoting this chapter to progressive rock is not to break new intellectual ground; other studies on progressive rock provide more depth and greater length than the brief examination I provide here. Rather, my purpose is to provide

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[7] Macan uses these quotations to characterize psychedelic thinking and populist thinking, respectively, in Macan, *Rocking the Classics*, 124 and 3.

[8] Lester Bangs, "Machine Head," *Rolling Stone*, 25 May 1972, http://www.rollingstone.com/music/albumreviews/machine-head-19720525.

[9] Macan, *Rocking the Classics*, 28.

historical and musical context in order to frame later developments. Progressive rock is the earliest music that combines a fully formed rock idiom with historical classical materials into a new, complex, and commercially viable style.[10] In the remainder of this chapter, then, I analyze specific, representative examples of progressive rock to illustrate some of the several different compositional techniques that progressive rock artists used in the 1960s and '70s to connect their works to classical predecessors. In subsequent chapters, some of these same techniques will reappear in other, less frequently examined styles of the 1990s, 2000s, and beyond.

Popular Music Featuring Classical Instrumentation

Popular music's long history includes a variety of instruments. In the nineteenth century, piano and voice were the most typical combination of instruments for music of popular consumption, including the German lied, French mélodie, and English and American parlor song. In the United States in the early twentieth century, the popular music of the Great American Songbook—which developed out of the traditions of the American musical, Tin Pan Alley, and early jazz—often featured several wind or brass instruments in combination with a rhythm section. This style can be heard on the recordings of Frank Sinatra, among many other examples. Wind and brass instruments

[10] In his article on progressive rock for *The Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Allan Moore sets the beginning of progressive rock at 1967, specifically with the Beatles' "Strawberry Fields Forever" (single released 13 February 1967) and Procol Harum's "A Whiter Shade of Pale" (single released 12 May 1967). The present chapter includes a few earlier examples because they are relevant to the discussion, even if they are not, strictly speaking, progressive rock. Allan F. Moore, "Progressive Rock," *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.

were also prominent in popular music of the 1930s and '40s, the height of the swing era. The saxophone in particular continued to be an important instrument in the history of early rock 'n' roll, often serving as the featured instrument during instrumental solos in such songs as "Rocket 88" (1951), "Rock around the Clock" (1954), and "Slippin' and Slidin'" (1956). The trend of using a variety of instruments continued in pop music with songs like the Shirelles' "Will You Love Me Tomorrow" (1960), which includes a string section, and the Drifters' "On Broadway" (1963), which includes strings, brass, and percussion.[11]

By the mid-1960s, however, the landscape of popular music had shifted somewhat as rock began to emerge as a subgenre distinct from pop. Relative to pop, rock was seen as more serious, its creator and fans more committed, and as a result, rock artists were more likely to write their own material and play all their own instrumental parts. Critical commentaries from this period bear out these assertions, as in, for instance, Lester Bangs's review of *Machine Head* cited above, where he writes, "no self-respecting late-Sixties rock band wants to put out an album with nothing but covers on it."[12] Whereas pop recordings made in the 1950s and '60 commonly used session musicians,

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[11] "Rocket 88" was credited to Jackie Brenston and his Delta Cats, performers better known as Ike Turner and the Kings of Rhythm. "Rock around the Clock" was written by Max C. Freedman and James E. Myers, and the best known recording is by Bill Haley and his Comets. "Slippin' and Slidin'" is by Little Richard, Edwin Bocage, Al Collins, and James Smith. Little Richard's recording features drummer Earl Palmer, playing what some consider to be the first recorded rock 'n' roll beat. These songs are some of the earliest examples of rock 'n' roll.

"Will You Love Me Tomorrow" was written by Gerry Goffin and Carole King. "On Broadway" was written by Barry Mann, Cynthia Weil, Jerry Leiber, and Mike Stoller. I am grateful to Peter Mercer-Taylor for suggesting several of the specific examples in this paragraph.

[12] Lester Bangs, "Machine Head."

such as the Funk Brothers in Detroit and the Wrecking Crew in Los Angeles, by the late 1960s, there was a growing expectation for rock bands to play their own instruments, both on stage and in the recording studio.[13]

The electric guitar also took on greater prominence within rock groups, all but supplanting the saxophone as the featured solo instrument. Thus, a performer such as Jimi Hendrix could be expected to perform with only a guitar, bass, and drums. With some room for variations, exceptions, and doubling, that grouping of instruments has remained fairly stable for rock music and its many subgenres over subsequent decades. Guitar, bass, and drums have continued to form the core of many rock bands all the way into the present, with such bands as the Ramones, Metallica, the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Green Day, and the Strokes serving as a few representative examples of varying styles and time periods. In a review in *Rolling Stone* from 1968, Jim Miller calls this combination of instruments "the basic . . . rock instrumentation," although he notes that the Moody Blues were in the process of changing that notion.[14]

In sum, wind, brass, or orchestral string instruments are not unusual in themselves. They are regular contributors to classical music, jazz, and pop music, among many other styles. In fully mature rock music, whose listeners would typically expect to

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[13] For more on the Funk Brothers, see George Nelson, "Standing in the Shadows of Motown: The Unsung Session Men of Hitsville's Golden Era," in *Buppies, B-Boys, Baps, and Bohos: Notes on Post-Soul Black Culture* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992), 165–75. For more on the Wrecking Crew, see Kent Hartman, *The Wrecking Crew: The Inside Story of Rock and Roll's Best-Kept Secret—The Unknown Studio Musicians Who Recorded the Soundtrack of a Generation* (New York: Thomas Dunne, 2012).

[14] Jim Miller, "The Moody Blues: *Days of Future Passed*," *Rolling Stone*, 7 December 1968, http://www.rollingstone.com/artists/themoodyblues/albums/album/89937/review/6067584/days_of_future_passed.

hear guitar, bass, and drums, however, wind, brass, or orchestral string instruments become unusual because of their context. For rock bands in the mid-1960s, then, perhaps the most straightforward way to generate a link to classical music was by deploying stereotypically classical instruments in their works.

There are many examples of progressive rock artists who perform with orchestral instruments, and I will briefly consider a handful, but this sort of timbral experimentation both preceded progressive rock's ascent and continued after the style's decline. I shall begin, then, not at the height of progressive rock from the early- to mid-1970s but instead with precursors from the mid-1960s.

By the mid-1960s, the Beatles were experimenting with their sound by imitating various musical styles. Walter Everett points to "What Goes On" (*Rubber Soul*, 1965) as an imitation of country and western style; "Drive My Car" (*Rubber Soul*) as rhythm and blues; "I've Just Seen a Face" (*Help!* 1965) as folk; and "Yesterday" (*Help!*) and "In My Life" (*Rubber Soul*) as classical.[15] "Yesterday" features a string quartet mixed to the left, Paul McCartney's acoustic guitar on the right, and his voice in the center.[16] The other three members of the Beatles do not play or sing on the track. "In My Life" prominently features vocal harmonies, but it is the instrumental solo that suggests music of the Baroque. George Martin said he composed the solo himself, and he recorded it in an unusual way: he played a Steinway piano at half speed, down an octave, and then sped up the recording to achieve the desired tempo and pitch. As a consequence of speeding up

[15] Walter Everett, *The Beatles As Musicians: The Quarry Men through "Rubber Soul"* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 337.

[16] Ibid., 301.

the recording, the piano has a shorter decay than expected and sounds more like a harpsichord than a piano.[17] According to Everett, "The Beatles' arrangement [of "Yesterday"] is probably responsible for the late-1960s explosion of interest in classical instrumentation in pop music."[18]

One of the groups caught up in the musical explosion was the American band the Left Banke, which in July 1966 released its first single, "Walk Away Renée" (1966). In some ways, the song is typical of pop music of the mid-1960s: It is in 4/4 time with a moderate tempo; it is in a major key (A major); the form is simple, repetitive, and even predictable (intro-verse-chorus-verse-chorus-solo-chorus-verse-chorus); the chorus features three-part vocal harmony; it lasts about two and a half minutes; and the lyrics deal with unrequited love. But the instrumentation is distinctive. There is a prominent harpsichord part throughout the recording, a string quartet (more on this below), and the instrumental solo features a flute rather than, say, a saxophone, guitar, or keyboard. All of these features led commentators to classify the Left Banke's recording as Baroque pop, or some similar hybrid.

To further illustrate that the song itself is not especially peculiar, but its instrumentation is, compare Left Banke's recording of "Walk Away Renée" to the cover version by the Four Tops, released a year later (*Reach Out*, 1967). Many of the musical elements remained the same. The meter, tempo, key, form, length, and lyrics are all unchanged. The Four Tops utilize more vocal harmony in their version, with back-up singing not only on the choruses but also in the second and third verses, which is a typical

[17] Ibid., 320.
[18] Ibid., 302.

characteristic of that Detroit quartet's style. But the instrumentation has been wholly transformed. Where there was once harpsichord and string quartet, there is now electric guitar and electric bass. Both versions feature percussion, but the percussion part is more prominent in the Four Tops' version because of a constant tambourine figure and a brief timpani segment in the first few seconds of the introduction. The solo instrument has changed from flute to muted brass. In the Four Tops' studio recording, there is still a string part, and the solo section even includes several strums of a harp, although these instruments were not part of the Four Tops' live show. The cover by the Four Tops shows that "Walk Away Renée" is a fairly typical pop song of the mid-1960s, but the instrumentation in the original version by the Left Banke is unusual.

Only one month after the Left Banke released "Walk Away Renée," back across the Atlantic the Beatles continued to experiment with classical instrumentation in their song "Eleanor Rigby" (*Revolver*, 1966), which features a double string quartet. In "Eleanor Rigby," the varying contrapuntal textures of the string parts add to the classical effect that the string instrumentation creates. As McCartney sings during the first two verses,[19] the strings play block chords staccato. When he breathes at the ends of phrases, the cellos fill in the open space with more melodic material. In the third verse, the contrapuntal texture changes with a new countermelody in the upper strings. The choruses mix staccato and legato accompanying string lines. The refrains include vocal harmony parts, sung by John Lennon and George Harrison, while the strings once again

[19] Details about the voicings come from Walter Everett, *The Beatles As Musicians: "Revolver" through the "Anthology"* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 51–3.

fill in the space at the ends of phrases, allowing time for the singers to breathe. The final section of the song is a combination of the chorus and refrain: As McCartney sings, "All the lonely people . . .," Lennon responds, "Ah, look at all the lonely people." As the examples above show, the string instrumentation of "Eleanor Rigby" is not in and of itself unusual, but within the context of mid-1960s rock it is striking. Even more striking than the instruments we hear, however, are the instruments that are missing: the song includes neither guitar, bass, nor drums. In other words, "Eleanor Rigby" features the Beatles' voices, but none of the four plays any of the instruments on the recording.

The Beatles also experiment with classical instrumentation throughout their album *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967). Like "Eleanor Rigby," the song "She's Leaving Home" includes a number of instruments but none played by the four members of the Beatles. The accompanying instruments include harp and a small string ensemble but no rock instruments. In the last track of the album, "A Day in the Life," the "forty-odd piece orchestra drawn from the London Philharmonic Orchestra"[20] plays orchestral glissandos between several distinct sections of the song (the first approximately 1:45–2:15, the second 2:50–3:20, and the last 3:50–4:20), stopping abruptly before the song's final harmony, a sustained E major chord on the piano.[21] Following the conclusion of "A Day in the Life," there are no more tracks listed on *Sgt. Pepper*, but there is one more sound. The ending of the album is most unusual. It features

[20] Duxbury, *Rockin' the Classics*, 100.

[21] More specifically, the E major chord was played simultaneously on three pianos with dampers depressed, and on harmonium. See Walter Everett, *The Beatles As Musicians: "Revolver" through the "Anthology"* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 121.

a tape loop—whose contents Everett describes as "vocal gibberish"[22]—reminiscent of the electronic works of the German composer Karlheinz Stockhausen (1928–2007), who is pictured on the famous, star-studded album cover.

In the same year that the Beatles released *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, the Moody Blues recorded *Days of Future Passed* (1967) with the London Festival Orchestra under the baton of Peter Knight. Reviewing the album for *Rolling Stone*, Miller describes the Moody Blues as "a fine, tight English rock group." He offers measured praise to the band for writing "solid rock tracks," and for recording "with little reliance on studio musicians." But he is highly critical of their use of orchestral instruments. He criticizes their attempt to fuse rock and classical music as "pure nonsense." He refers to the use of orchestral instruments as "movie soundtrack slush" and calls the concept "disastrous." In the final sentence of his review, he hopes their next album will be "a straight-ahead, no bullshit album of rock."[23]

Instead of falling into disuse, however, the trend of using orchestral instruments in a rock context grew stronger. Macan argues that the Moody Blues' *Days of Future Passed*, the very album Miller so strongly condemned, "almost singlehandedly established the concept of 'symphonic rock.'"[24] Following the precedent it established, many bands that played music in an ostensibly rock idiom worked with classical

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[22] "Tomorrow Never Knows" (*Revolver*, 1966) contains tape loops as well. See Walter Everett, *The Beatles As Musicians: "Revolver" through the "Anthology"* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 36–7 and 122.

[23] Jim Miller, "The Moody Blues: *Days of Future Passed*," *Rolling Stone*, 7 December 1968, http://www.rollingstone.com/artists/themoodyblues/albums/album/89937/review/6067584/days_of_future_passed.

[24] Macan, *Rocking the Classics*, 21.

ensembles, either in a recording studio, in live performances, or both. See Table 2.1 for a highly selective list of examples.[25] The table includes a few early examples followed by several of the most prominent artists in progressive rock, but it is offered here as only a brief sample. A comprehensive table would include hundreds of entries, leading all the way up to the present.

Table 2.1: Selected examples of collaborations between rock artists and classical ensembles.

Artist or Group	*Classical Ensemble*	*Recording or Performance*	*Year*
The Beatles	London Philharmonic Orchestra (selected)	*Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*	1967
Moody Blues	London Festival Orchestra	*Days of Future Passed*	1967
Deep Purple	Royal Philharmonic Orchestra	*Concerto for Group and Orchestra*	1970
The Nice	Sinfonia of London	*Five Bridges*	1970
Pink Floyd	John Aldis Choir (and instrumental ensemble)	*Atom Heart Mother*	1970
Yes	(Unspecified musicians associated with the Royal College of Music)	*Time and a Word*	1970
Procol Harum	Edmonton Symphony Orchestra and the Da Camera Singers	*Procol Harum Live in Concert with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra*	1972
The Who	London Symphony Orchestra and Chamber Choir	*Tommy* (orchestral version)	1972
Rick Wakeman	London Symphony Orchestra and English Chamber Choir	*Journey to the Centre of the Earth*	1974
Renaissance	London Symphony Orchestra (selected)	*Scheherazade*	1975
ELP	London Philharmonic Orchestra	*Works, Volumes 1 and 2*	1977

[25] Many, many more examples can be found in Duxbury, *Rockin' the Classics*; Duxbury, *Rockin' the Classics: First Supplement*; and Duxbury, *Rockin' the Classics: Second Supplement*.

Performing with a large ensemble was not without its challenges. In 1977, Emerson, Lake, and Palmer (ELP) attempted to tour with a fifty-six piece orchestra and small chamber chorus, but after only fifteen concerts, "the cost became prohibitive and the orchestra was dropped from the rest of the tour."[26]

For bands interested in evoking a classical-style sound without taking a full orchestra on tour, a small number of instruments played in a classical style could serve as a practical substitute. The Rolling Stones used a string quartet in "As Tears Go By" (*December's Children*, 1965); harpsichord and dulcimer in "Lady Jane" (*Aftermath*, 1966); and recorder, cello, and piano in "Ruby Tuesday" (*Between the Buttons*, 1967).[27] In the Kinks' song "Village Green" (*Village Green Preservation Society*, 1968), this goal was achieved with harpsichord and oboe. The Beatles' song "Penny Lane" (*Magical Mystery Tour*, 1967) features several wind, brass, and percussion instruments, but the section that points directly to high art is the Baroque-style piccolo trumpet solo (from approximately 1:10 to 1:30, after the third verse and before the second chorus), played by David Mason. A year after "Penny Lane," the Beatles released yet another song with classical instrumentation: "Piggies" (*The Beatles* [*The White Album*], 1968) features harpsichord and double string quartet. In addition to its instrumentation, the song evokes a Baroque style through the use of arpeggiated melodies, predictable melodic sequences, and bass movement by fifths. The song's lyrics and use of sound effects indicate that it is

[26] The tour yielded a recording: *In Concert* (1979), with chorus conducted by Godfrey Salmon. Duxbury summarizes the history of the tour and recording in Duxbury, *Rockin' the Classics*, 102.

[27] These and other examples may be found in Duxbury, *Rockin' the Classics*, 128.

satirical; last line has the little piggies sitting down "to eat their bacon," followed by the sound of a pig's squeal.

In addition to collaborating with symphony orchestras or featuring orchestral instruments in their arrangements, some bands reached back even further into the history of Western art music and featured older historical instruments, including krummhorn, recorder, and regal. (The harpsichord also continued to be used.) Macan singles out Steeleye Span and Gryphon as representative examples. For instance, Gryphon's second album, *Midnight Mushrumps* (1974), includes five types of recorder and four types of krummhorn. As Macan points out,

> The influence of medieval and renaissance music is evident not only in the use of archaic instruments, but also in the madrigal-like a capella vocal passages to which these groups sometimes resorted (i.e., the vocal arrangements of Jethro Tull's "Songs from the Woods," Gentle Giant's "On Reflection," and Steeleye Span's "Gaudete").[28]

As the preceding examples have shown, progressive rock artists often evoked the style of classical music through the use of orchestral or archaic instruments, and also with outmoded vocal counterpoint. In the sections that follow, we will see that they could also evoke classical style by using materials from classical compositions.

Popular Pieces That Borrow from or Allude to Classical Pieces

In some instances, progressive rock bands performed more or less faithful arrangements of classical pieces. The group most associated with this practice is Emerson, Lake, and Palmer (ELP). ELP recorded Bach's Two-Part Invention in D Minor

[28] Macan, *Rocking the Classics*, 135.

(BWV 775, ca. 1720, revised 1723, on *Works, Volume 1*, 1977). They also recorded their own renditions of music by Bartók ("The Barbarian," *Emerson, Lake, and Palmer*, 1970, after *Allegro barbaro*, 1911) and Janáček ("Knife-Edge," *Emerson, Lake, and Palmer*, 1970, after the first movement of Sinfonietta, 1926), among other composers.

Still another example of an arrangement is ELP's recording of "Maple Leaf Rag" (*Works, volume 2*, 1977), by Scott Joplin (1899). A ragtime piano piece might not seem like an example of high art, but by the time of ELP's recording, ragtime was no longer a current style; Joplin himself had been dead for sixty years. Renewed interest in Joplin's music was brought on by Joshua Rifkin's recording *Scott Joplin: Piano Rags* (1970), which reintroduced listeners to ragtime music (or introduced them for the first time). Along with the recording, Rifkin wrote extensive, well-researched liner notes, and in a lengthy piece for *The New York Times*, music critic Harold Schonberg discussed Joplin's opera *Treemonisha* and called for more research on Joplin, writing, "Scholars are going to have to get busy on Joplin."[29] In a remarkable issue of *Billboard*, from 28 September 1974, Rifkin's recording label, Nonesuch, advertised Joplin's music alongside that of Bach, Hindemith, Ives, Mahler, and so on. When it came to sales, the top five best-selling classical LPs were all dedicated to the music of Joplin.[30]

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[29] Harold C. Schonberg, "Scholars, Get Busy on Scott Joplin!" *The New York Times*, 24 January 1971, 15.

[30] In all, Joplin could be found on 9 of the top 40 best-selling classical LPs that week. Rifkin's first volume of Joplin's rags held the number 5 spot, while his second volume was at number 4, and a combination of both volumes appeared at number 3. At number 1 was a recording by the Southland Stingers, at number 2 a recording by the New England Conservatory Ragtime Ensemble, who also had the number 7 spot. Still further recordings of Joplin's music appeared at number 16, 26, and 31. *Billboard*, 28 September 1974, 50 and 61.

ELP also sometimes used classical pieces as jumping off points for improvisatory or original material, as they did with their recording of "Fanfare for the Common Man" (*Works, Volume 1*, 1977), by Aaron Copland (1942). The first and last few minutes of the track directly quote Copland's well-known fanfare. The long middle section, however, bears little resemblance to its source. Where Copland is all brass and earnestness, ELP is bluesy and driving. A typical performance of Copland's fanfare might last three minutes, whereas ELP's version is more than nine and a half minutes long.

Another interesting example that combines a fairly straightforward arrangement with original composition is ELP's eleven-movement version of Modest Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* (original 1874, ELP's recording 1971). As Eric Hung has shown, some sections of the piece, such as "Promenade" and "The Gnome," feature altered orchestration and tempo but most everything else is retained from Mussorgsky. In other sections, ELP composes wholly new material, sometimes including the addition of lyrics. Examples include "The Sage," "Blues Variation," and other movements. A reproduction of Hung's form chart appears in Table 2.2 below.[31] Since Mussorgsky scored *Pictures at an Exhibition* for piano, there is a sense in which ELP followed in the footsteps of Ravel, who also altered Mussorgsky's instrumentation for his own orchestral arrangement of *Pictures at an Exhibition*, on a commission from Serge Koussevitzky in

[31] Eric Hung, "Hearing Emerson, Lake, and Palmer Anew: Progressive Rock as 'Music of Attraction,'" *Current Musicology* 79 (2005): 250.

1922.[32] But ELP's version is a much freer interpretation than Ravel's, including both large sections of improvisation and entire movements of original material.

Table 2.2: Eric Hung's formal outline of ELP's *Pictures at an Exhibition*.

Movement	*Title*	*Type of Transcription*
1	Promenade	Strict transcription
2	The Gnome	Semi-strict and free transcription
3	Promenade	Strict transcription, lyrics added
4	The Sage	Original ELP material
5	The Old Castle	Original ELP material
6	Blues Variations	Variations of Mussorgsky and Bill Evans
7	Promenade	Strict transcription
8	The Hut of Baba Yaga	Semi-strict transcription
9	The Curse of Baba Yaga	Variations on Mussorgsky
10	The Hut of Baba Yaga	Semi-strict transcription
11	The Great Gates of Kiev	Semi-strict transcription, lyrics added

While ELP is especially well known for borrowing or alluding to classical works, they were not the first progressive rock group to do so. One of the earliest examples is Procol Harum's "A Whiter Shade of Pale" (single released 12 May 1967), one of two tracks Moore credits for starting progressive rock.[33] The organ figure that opens "A Whiter Shade of Pale" (and reappears between its verses), played by Matthew Fisher, is strongly reminiscent of a theme by J.S. Bach.[34] Although the song features the archaic

[32] Although Ravel's orchestration is certainly the best known, *Pictures* has also been orchestrated by a number of other composers, including Henry Wood, Leo Funtek, and Lucien Cailliet.

[33] The other is the Beatles' "Strawberry Fields Forever" (single released 13 February 1967). Allan F. Moore, "Progressive Rock," *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.

[34] Although the band claims that the theme is original, it is similar to several themes in Bach's works: the first movement from the cantata "Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme" (Wake Up, the Voice Is Calling Us), BWV 140 (first performance 1731); Sinfonia, BWV 156 (1729); the Largo from BWV 1056 (1729); and Suite in D Major, BWV 1068, "Air for the G string" (ca. 1731). See Duxbury, *Rockin' the Classics*, 50–51.

style of the German Baroque—played on an organ, no less—it became one of the best-selling singles of all time. According to a study compiled by the BBC of recordings played in public places, "A Whiter Shade of Pale" was "the most played song" in the United Kingdom in the twentieth century.[35]

Just as many popular artists followed the precedent of using an orchestra, established by the Moody Blues on *Days of Future Passed*, so too did "A Whiter Shade of Pale" seem to lead many popular artists to use classical sources. See Table 2.3 for a highly selective list of examples.[36]

Before Keith Emerson was a member of ELP, he had been the keyboardist of the Nice, which borrowed from classical precedents such as Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 3, BWV 1048 (1721), in their "Symphony for Group and Orchestra" (*Ars longa vita brevis*, 1968).[37] In the Nice's repertoire were also materials borrowed from Jean Sibelius, Leonard Bernstein, Leoš Janáček, Antonín Dvořák, Pyotr Tchaikovsky, and others.

There are an infinite number of points along the spectrum between performance and composition. In straightforward transcriptions of classical works, progressive rock

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Macan simply says the organ riff is "based on a theme by J.S. Bach." See Macan, *Rocking the Classics*, 33.

[35] The BBC measured only publicly played recordings for the seventy-five-year period ending in 2009. "Whiter Shade 'Most Played' Song," http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/7996979.stm.

[36] Many, many more examples can be found in Duxbury, *Rockin' the Classics*; Duxbury, *Rockin' the Classics: First Supplement*; and Duxbury, *Rockin' the Classics: Second Supplement*.

[37] The titles here are somewhat confusing. The album title is *Ars longa vita brevis*. The sixth track, the B side of the LP, is sometimes called "Ars longa vita brevis" and sometimes called "Symphony for Group and Orchestra." It is sometimes treated as one track, over nineteen minutes long and consisting of several sections, and other times treated as five separate tracks.

Table 2.3: Selected examples of popular songs that borrow from or allude to classical sources.

Artist or Group	*Popular Song*	*Classical Source*	*Album (Year)*
The Byrds	"She Don't Care about Time"	Bach, "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring"	Single (1965)
The Beatles	"All You Need Is Love"	Bach, Two-Part Invention No. 8 in F Major	*Magical Mystery Tour* (1967)
Procol Harum	"A Whiter Shade of Pale"	Bach (similar to multiple pieces)	*Procol Harum* (1967)
Deep Purple	"River Deep, Mountain High"	R. Strauss, *Also sprach Zarathustra*	*The Book of Taliesyn* (1968)
The Nice	"America"	Bernstein, *West Side Story*: "America"	Single (1968)
The Nice	"Intermezzo from the *Karelia Suite*"	Sibelius, *Karelia Suite*	*Ars longa vita brevis* (1968)
The Nice	"Symphony for Group and Orchestra"	Bach, Brandenburg Concerto No. 3	*Ars longa vita brevis* (1968)
The Nice	"Pathetique"	Tchaikovsky, Symphony No. 6: III.	*Five Bridges* (1970)
ELP	"The Barbarian"	Bartók, *Allegro barbaro*	*Emerson, Lake, and Palmer* (1971)
ELP	"The Only Way"	Bach, Toccata in F; Bach, *Well-Tempered Clavier*, Book 1, Prelude No. 6	*Tarkus* (1971)
ELP	"Abaddon's Bolero"	Ravel, *Bolero*	*Trilogy* (1972)
ELP	"Nutrocker"	Tchaikovsky, Nutcracker Suite: March of the Wooden Soldiers	*Pictures at an Exhibition* (1972)

bands are dependent upon their classical sources for musical material. While many progressive rock bands perform these works with thrilling virtuosity and to great acclaim, there is evidence that some progressive rock artists had mixed feelings about achieving professional success by performing the works of others. According to interviews cited by Hung, ELP "felt that *Pictures* was 'not primarily ELP's own work.'"[38] To allay this

[38] Hung, "Hearing Emerson, Lake, and Palmer Anew," 248.

concern, progressive rock artists could incorporate a large degree of improvisation or a freer approach toward transcription, and as a result, some musical materials would come from classical sources while other materials would be original compositions. Pieces of this type form a hybrid of both performance and composition, or performance as a means of composition. In the next section of this chapter, I examine the other end of the spectrum, where progressive rock composers create wholly original compositions, devoid of references to individual classical works.

Popular Pieces That Borrow Classical Forms

As noted above, the song "Walk Away Renée" features harpsichord, string quartet, and flute. In addition to its instrumentation, the song also evokes a sense of the Baroque through its chromatically descending string parts. The combination of string timbre and descending chromatic motion is characteristic of Baroque counterpoint. The basso continuo parts of the final duet of Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* (1642–3) and Dido's Lament from Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* (1689) are two well-known examples. Unlike examples in the previous section, then, there is no one particular tune that Left Banke are borrowing here. Instead, they are drawing on a compositional device used to organize many pieces of music of different styles, and the use of string quartet links the practice to classical music specifically. The organ in Procol Harum's "A Whiter Shade of Pale" (1967) plays a similar descending line in the bass, although it is within the key of C major rather than being chromatic. The organ part in "A Whiter Shade of Pale" sounds so similar to several passages by J.S. Bach that Macan says it is "based on a

theme by J.S. Bach," but the band claims that the material is original.[39] Nors Josephson points to similar descending bass patterns in many songs as evidence of Baroque style in popular music, as in, for example, the Beatles' "I Am the Walrus" (*Magical Mystery Tour*, 1967) and Klaatu's "Around the Universe in 80 Days" (*Hope*, 1977).[40]

In addition to using the technique of descending bass patterns, many rock artists of the late 1960s and early '70s turned to classical music for models of multi-movement forms. Take, for instance, the first track of ELP's album *Works, volume 1* (1977), Piano Concerto No. 1 by Keith Emerson. The work has three movements, just like many classical piano concertos, and Emerson performs on piano (not synthesizer), supported by the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

Duxbury has described the Nice's "Symphony for Group and Orchestra" as a six-movement instrumental suite.[41] A short snippet of Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 3, BWV 1048 (1721), does appear in the third movement, entitled "Brandenburger," although the treatment is so free that the movement must be regarded as an original composition by the Nice; the other five movements in the work have no apparent relationship to Bach's music. Macan calls the work a suite as well, placing Pink Floyd's *A Saucerful of Secrets* (1968) in the same category, along with several other examples following just a few years behind Pink Floyd: Yes's *The Yes Album* (1971), *Fragile*

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[39] See note 34 above.

[40] Nors S. Josephson, "Bach Meets Liszt: Traditional Formal Structures and Performance Practices in Progressive Rock," *Musical Quarterly* 76, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 68–9.

[41] Duxbury, *Rockin' the Classics*, 132.

(1971), and *Close to the Edge* (1972); and Genesis's *Trespass* (1970), *Nursery Cryme* (1971), and *Foxtrot* (1972).[42]

Just as Duxbury and Macan use the term *suite* to describe works that are primarily for instruments alone, they also borrow descriptive terms from classical music to describe large-scale vocal genres as well. Macan has described the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967) as a song cycle. He writes, "One also sees a new concern for large-scale structure. The different songs of *Sergeant Pepper* are part of an overall song cycle unified by the recurrence of the opening song in varied form near the end of the album."[43]

Returning to models for instrumental music, sonata form has been a useful if imperfect archetype for progressive rock artists. For instance, Macan compares the form in Yes's *Close to the Edge* (1972) to sonata form.[44] Macan writes,

> The four-movement construction of *Close to the Edge* offers a number of clear parallels with sonata form. The first movement can be viewed as the "exposition"; the second, as a varied repetition of the "exposition"; the third, as the "development section"; and the final movement as the "recapitulation." There is also a lengthy introduction that falls into two distinct sections, and a brief coda that refers back to the opening of the piece.[45]

At the conclusion of his analysis, Macan also explains, however, why some aspects of *Close to the Edge* are not parallel with sonata form:

> If *Close to the Edge* is about a spiritual quest, about an attempt to reach a higher level of consciousness and spirituality, returning to the tonic would make little symbolic sense. . . . Thus, while sonata form's potential for depicting conflict and

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[42] Macan, *Rocking the Classics*, 21–22, 24.
[43] Ibid., 20.
[44] Ibid., 85.
[45] Ibid., 100.

> resolution is ideally suited to convey the conceptual substance of *Close to the Edge*, its tonal scheme is not.[46]

After an introduction in E minor, the first section begins in A Dorian; the third section begins in E major; and the last section ends in F major. These sections would be analogous to the exposition, development, and recapitulation of sonata form, except that in the end, the harmony does not return to tonic.[47]

Similarly, Josephson provides several examples of progressive rock songs that follow something like sonata form (Negasphere, "Beyond Love"; Negasphere, "Another Dawn Is Breaking"; Kenso, "Sora ni hikaru" [Light in the Sky]), although he does not always clearly articulate how the forms are analogous to sonata form.[48] In his most persuasive example, Josephson argues that Genesis's "Supper's Ready" (*Foxtrot*, 1972) has a symphonic structure, complete with gendered first and second themes for the sonata form–like first movement, a slow second movement, a scherzo and trio, and a recapitulation as the final movement. A partial summary of Josephson's form diagram appears in Table 2.4 below.[49]

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[46] Ibid., 103.

[47] In addition to Macan, see also John Covach, "Progressive Rock, 'Close to the Edge,' and the Boundaries of Style," in *Understanding Rock: Essays in Musical Analysis*, ed. John Covach and Graeme M. Boone (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 3–31, especially Figure 1.1 on p. 12.

[48] Josephson, "Bach Meets Liszt," 80–81.

[49] Ibid., 85, Table 6.

Table 2.4: A partial summary of Nors Josephson's formal outline of Genesis's "Supper's Ready."

Sections	*Symphonic analogies*
1	Double exposition (contrasting themes reflect male-female dialog in lyrics)
2	Folkish bridge leading up to fanfare-like apotheosis of feminine theme from section 1
3	Thematic reminiscence of part 1 that culminates in toccata-style battle scene
4	Static slow movement
5	Scherzo with trio (and repeated scherzo)
6	Folkish bridge leading up to toccata-like climax and emphatic recall of feminine theme from section 1
7	Recapitulation of 2's apotheosis and 1's harmonies (such as sixth chords with upper F-sharp)

Conclusion

To an observer in the 1950s, it probably seemed as if popular and classical musical traditions were far apart from one another and would continue to diverge in the coming decades. By the late 1960s, however, as Bernard Gendron writes,

> it seemed as if the whole cultural world was being turned on its head. To many, such transgressions across the barriers of high and low culture—evoked so powerfully by rock music but spreading to the other media—constituted a historically unprecedented set of events transformative enough to usher in a new cultural age. The opposition between art and entertainment, between elite and mass culture, which hitherto, it was thought, had been rigorously enforced and institutionalized, no longer seemed viable. The barriers between these two domains appeared to be on the verge of complete collapse.[50]

The barriers between high and low culture have yet to reach the collapse Gendron describes, but they did change dramatically for rock music after the mid-1960s. Instead of arriving, flourishing, and disappearing, like so many other popular fads, rock music matured from the music of youthful rebellion to a more serious and complex form. Historical interest in popular music developed, both in terms of critical commentary and

[50] Gendron, *Between Montmartre and the Mudd Club*, 1–2.

in terms of commercial potential, so that today one can find any number of retrospective think pieces on disco, and any major radio market is sure to have a so-called oldies station. Popular music even entered the academy, the ancient stronghold of high culture.

Classical and popular traditions have had a centuries-long history of cross-pollination. The most focused and sustained example during the rock era is the fusion between popular and classical idioms that occurred during the height of progressive rock. This drawing together of ideas from two traditions—in terms of instrumentation, musical themes, and formal structures—had a lasting impact, as the music from later decades in Chapters 3 and 4 demonstrates.

CHAPTER 3
EXTRA-GENERIC BORROWING: BACH AS POPULAR MUSIC[*]

Introduction

In front of some 500,000 people, on 19 September 1981 in New York's Central Park, the American folk rock duo Simon and Garfunkel performed the song "American Tune." It was anything but.

Paul Simon (b. 1941) wrote the lyrics to "American Tune," but the tune came from Germany, not America.[1] Hans Leo Hassler (1564–1612) wrote it, and J.S. Bach adapted it, indirectly, for use in his *St. Matthew Passion*, BWV 244 (first known performance, 1727).[2] Listeners who connect "American Tune" to Bach's chorale might interpret the song by way of assimilative allusion.[3] That is, the meaning from the earlier piece might affect how they hear the later one. The earlier piece in this case, known in the

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[*] This chapter began as an essay for professor Leslie Sprout's Spring 2007 seminar in musicology at the University of Iowa. It was then revised for the 2013 conference of the International Association of Popular Music (U.S. chapter). The present version has been revised and expanded.

[1] Simon recorded the song twice, once on his second solo album (*There Goes Rhymin' Simon*, 1973), and once with Garfunkel (*The Concert in Central Park*, 1982).

[2] The complete history of how Hassler's music found its way into Bach's Passion has been told by other authors, and I do not repeat it here. I am grateful to Peter Mercer-Taylor for directing me to several important mile markers along the way, including, most notably, Johann Crüger's hymnal, *Praxis Pietatis Melica* (6th ed., 1656), which was the earliest source to match Hassler's music with Paul Gerhardt's "O Haupt voll Blut" text. See Kerala J. Snyder, "Text and Tone in Hassler's German Songs and Their Sacred Parodies," in *Musical Humanism and Its Legacy: Essays in Honor of Claude V. Palisca*, ed. Nancy Kovaleff Baker and Barbara Russano Hanning (Pendragon Press, 1992), 253–78.

The date of composition for *St. Matthew Passion* has been the subject of considerable debate. I use the earliest date of performance given in *Grove Music Online*. See Christoph Wolff et al., "Bach, §III: (7) Johann Sebastian Bach," *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.

[3] See Christopher Reynolds, *Motives for Allusion: Context and Content in Nineteenth-Century Music* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 44–67.

German chorale repertoire as "O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden" and also well known by its English title, "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded," is still used in Protestant worship contexts today. (See Appendix 3A for Simon's complete lyrics to "American Tune"; see Appendix 3B for the German text of "O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden," along with an English translation, "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded.") The chorale's text describes Jesus's suffering and death. Therefore, some listeners might recall the Christological context of Bach's chorale and apply it to Simon's song because of the shared musical material between the two pieces. Additional elements of the lyrics in "American Tune" support this interpretation: Simon sings about mistakes, confusion, weariness, and shattered dreams. In spite of these struggles, however, each verse reminds listeners that everything is "all right." The lyrics never explicitly explain how or why the protagonist overcomes these difficult circumstances, but through association with "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded," one could justifiably interpret a subtext of Christian redemption: everything is "all right" because Jesus died for humanity's sins.

On the other hand, the same association could yield an entirely different interpretation. Listeners who recognize Bach's music will know that Simon's "American Tune," is a German tune, not an American one. What other lies might be hiding in the lyrics? When Simon sings that everything is "all right," is he being truthful, or as misleading as his title? Since the lyrics mention the Statue of Liberty and the *Mayflower*, listeners might reasonably interpret the lyrics as a commentary on the United States. This reading leads to a critical perspective. Based on the behavior of the United States, Simon wonders, "what went wrong?" He foresees the end of the United States in a dream when

he sings, "My eyes could clearly see / the Statue of Liberty / sailing away to sea." And he wearily accepts the country's defeat when he sings, "You can't be forever blessed." The association with "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded" in this alternate interpretation does not provide a message of Christian redemption but rather to a brutal fall from power, and the hymn's text about grief, shame, scorn, anguish, abuse, suffering, and pain refer to the imminent, depressing collapse of a political dynasty. This was 1973, after all. Public opinion had long since turned against the Vietnam War, and the Watergate scandal was in full swing.

Simon's lyrics are ambiguous enough that either of these interpretations is plausible, depending on an individual listener's political persuasion or religiosity. Bach's music, then, becomes a decisive factor. Its appearance is either a symbol of religious devotion, or a clue that this "American Tune" is playing on borrowed time.

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In Chapter 2, I discussed how popular artists used classical music as models for their work, focusing in particular on progressive rock from the mid-1960s through the '70s.[4] In this chapter, I leave the realm of progressive rock to show that classical music has influenced other popular styles as well, and that its influence has continued in the last quarter century. To support my argument, I draw on examples from a variety of musical styles. They relate to one another because they all borrow from the same source: Johann

[4] As Robert Walser has shown, heavy metal artists of the 1970s and '80s also borrowed classical materials extensively. See especially Robert Walser, "Eruptions: Heavy Metal Appropriations of Classical Virtuosity," in *Running with the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music* (Middleton, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1993), 57–107.

Sebastian Bach (1685–1750). Since at least 1829, when Felix Mendelssohn led a revival performance of the *St. Matthew Passion*,[5] Bach's music has proven to be an especially abundant source of raw musical materials for composers. As Duxbury has pointed out, "In assessing the frequency of particular classical themes in popular music, J.S. Bach appears to be the all-time favorite composer."[6]

This chapter examines three popular songs, recorded 2001–2006 in styles ranging from mocking to reverent, that all quote Bach's music as an exemplar of musical sophistication: Tenacious D's "Rock Your Socks" (*Tenacious D*, 2001), Stuart Davis's "Inventions" (*The Late Stuart Davis*, 2002), and Nickel Creek's live recording of "The Fox" (*Reasons Why: The Very Best*, 2006). All three songs borrow from, while simultaneously commenting on, the music of Bach. In the lyrics of the first two songs, Bach's music represents the pinnacle of musical achievement, a style so elite that it requires careful study and specialized training. However, the music contradicts the lyrics of these songs by presenting Bach's style for a mass audience, not an elite one. The third song does not refer to Bach in its lyrics; instead, through formal design, it places Bach's music alongside Bob Dylan's, Bill Monroe's, and a traditional folk song, as if to mine them all equally as so much musical ore, regardless of their historical contexts.

In an essay on historically informed performance practice entitled "Bach Defended Against His Devotees," the German critical theorist Theodor Adorno

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[5] For more on the Bach revival, ignited when Mendelssohn conducted the first performance of the *St. Matthew Passion* in a century, see R. Larry Todd, *Mendelssohn: A Life in Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 122–4 and 193–8.

[6] Janell R. Duxbury, *Rockin' the Classics and Classicizin' the Rock: A Selectively Annotated Discography* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985), xvi.

condemns the frequent (mis)use of Bach's music. Adorno posits the reason artists are motivated to exploit Bach in particular: "This conception of Bach draws all those who . . . go in search of authority, obsessed by the notion of how nice it would be to be secure."[7] All three of the songs in this chapter remove Bach from his historical context, which is the precise quality that bothers Adorno about the historical performance movement. In a characteristic passage, Adorno argues that by taking Bach's music out of its context, "Bach is impoverished, reduced and stripped of the specific musical content which was the basis of his prestige."[8]

Yet, in another sense, my examples are also quite different from the targets of Adorno's criticism. Adorno argues, "Bach is degraded by impotent nostalgia" and later suggests that, for example, a performance of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* with the number of performers Bach used at his church in Leipzig "sounds pale and indecisive to the present-day ear."[9] But the examples in this chapter refuse to leave Bach's music alone. Rather than recalling it nostalgically or abandoning expressivity in the name of historical accuracy, the examples in this chapter reorient Bach's music to a modern context. In the conclusion of his essay, Adorno argues, "[Bach's] heritage has passed [from performance] on to composition, which is loyal to him in being disloyal; it calls his music by name in producing it anew."[10] The songs in this chapter produce Bach's music anew by making fun of it, growing out of it, or changing it entirely.

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[7] Theodor W. Adorno, "Bach Defended Against his Devotees," in *Prisms* (London: Garden City Press, 1967), 135.

[8] Ibid., 136.

[9] Ibid., 135 and 144.

[10] Ibid., 146.

Tenacious D Rocks Bach

In a frequently cited 1988 article, Susan McClary and Robert Walser open with a Bloom County comic strip in which the characters read a review about their band. The characters are befuddled by the obfuscating and aimless review, and one ultimately asks, "but do we kick butt?" Throughout the rest of the article, McClary and Walser argue,

> that the inability or unwillingness to address this component of music—the bottom-line component, as it were, for most musicians and fans—is the greatest single failure of musicology. [11]

However, the comedic hard rock duo Tenacious D is guilty of no such failure. They directly and repeatedly use their lyrics to claim that the band does indeed "kick butt." I begin with these mock rockers because their parody exaggerates a characteristic that exists in all of the examples in this chapter. Although Tenacious D is a satirical group known mostly for its shocking vulgarity, even a band so crass draws on the same, shared cultural codes that my later examples employ more subtly and in greater earnest: They all use Bach's music to represent musical sophistication and mastery.[12]

In their songs and in the many interviews they have given, Tenacious D have freely mixed thoughtful responses with jokes, thereby complicating efforts to accurately describe their history. The claim is made in the special features on *Tenacious D in the Pick of Destiny*, for example, that Meat Loaf and Ronnie James Dio are two major influences, and that seems true. But on the band's official website, they state that the goal

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[11] Susan McClary and Robert Walser, "Start Making Sense! Musicology Wrestles with Rock," in *On Record: Rock, Pop, and the Written Word*, ed. Simon Frith and Andrew Goodwin (New York: Routledge, 1990), 277 (comic strip) and 286 (quotation).

[12] The comedic film *This Is Spinal Tap* (1984), a satire of documentary films about rock musicians, includes a brief scene where one of the characters identifies Bach as a major influence. He claims to combine Bach and Mozart in a style he calls "Mach."

of their music is "to change the way we might eat a delicious meal,"[13] which seems like a comedic non sequitur. All information about Tenacious D, therefore, should be read with a healthy skepticism, although a few basic things can be said with confidence.

The two core members of Tenacious D are Jack Black (b. 1969) and Kyle Gass (b. 1960). Black is the lead vocalist, and Gass the lead guitarist, although both sing and play. They met as cast members of an acting troupe in Los Angeles in the late 1980s and started performing together in comedy clubs in 1994. The premise of their act revolves around two musicians who desperately want to become rock icons, but they are dimwitted, overweight, and lazy. A representative line from their song "Rock Your Socks" illustrates the concept: Black speak-yells, "are you willing to make the commitment to waking up at the crack of noon for deep-knee rock squats? Seven or eight at a time? In a row?" This premise has endured through a television series, a feature-length film, a world tour, and three studio albums to date.

Tenacious D uses many forms of media to tell its audience the farcical myth that Tenacious D is the greatest band of all time. The band was the subject of the HBO series *Tenacious D: The Greatest Band on Earth* (episodes aired in 1997, 1999, and 2000), which was later released on DVD under the title *The Complete Master Works* (2003); they released a second DVD, *The Complete Master Works 2* (2008), a few years later; they have recorded three albums together, *Tenacious D* (2001), *The Pick of Destiny* (2006), and *Rize of the Fenix* (2012), that all address the band's greatness in detail; and

[13] On their official website, Tenacious D states the goal of the band's music: "Jack Black and Kyle Gass have arrived to change the way we listen to sound to change the way we thought. Think? To change the way we might eat a delicious meal." www.tenaciousd.com.

they have starred in one feature-length motion picture, *Tenacious D in the Pick of Destiny* (2006), whose promotional posters, playing on the band's well-established myth of greatness, advertise it as "the greatest motion picture of all time."[14]

The song "Tribute" (*Tenacious D*, 2001) specifically recalls the time that the band played "the greatest and best song in the world," according to Black's spoken introduction. The story arc in the lyrics has strong similarities to the Charlie Daniels Band's "The Devil Went Down to Georgia" (*Million Mile Reflections*, 1979). In "The Devil Went Down to Georgia," the protagonist, Johnny, enters a fiddle contest against the devil and wins, thereby earning a golden fiddle and saving his soul. The narrative shares some similarities with the *Faust* archetype, wherein a character makes a pact with the devil, but it has distinguishing aspects as well. Johnny does not enter into a trade with the devil, as in Faust's exchange of knowledge for soul, but instead must earn his prize by defeating the devil in a competition. The same is true of the characters in "Tribute." Tenacious D save their two members' souls when, according to the first sung section of lyrics, they "played the first thing that came to [their] heads / just so happened to be / the best song in the world." In other words, the plot of "Tribute" does not have its characters freely taking a bet with the devil the way that Johnny does. Instead, they come upon the devil by chance and confront him out of necessity.

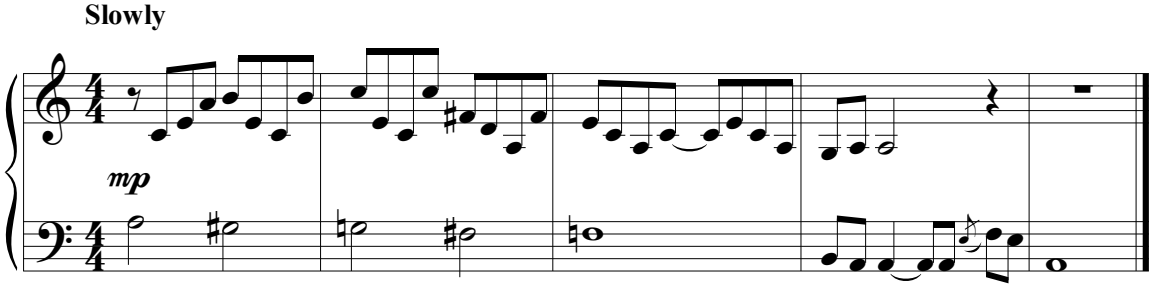
Just as "Tribute" borrows its plot type from "The Devil Went Down to Georgia," the Tenacious D song also borrows some of its musical material, this time from Led Zeppelin's "Stairway to Heaven" (*Led Zeppelin IV*, 1971). Tenacious D's live

[14] See the entry for *Tenacious D in the Pick of Destiny* in the Internet Movie Database, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0365830/.

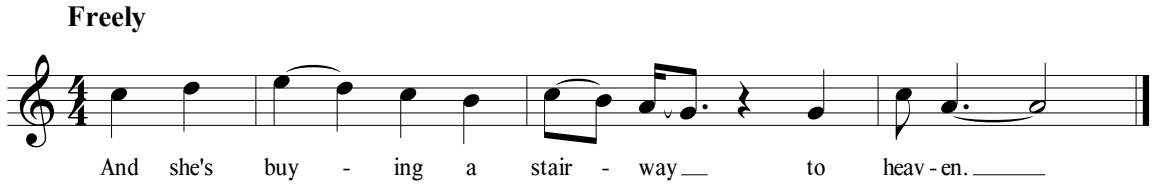
performances of "Tribute" make the source overt, whereas the studio recording conceals it somewhat. Both songs are in the key of A minor, they use similar chord progressions, and in some live performances, excerpts of the guitar and vocal parts of the two songs are identical. For example, in a clip from the HBO series available on *The Complete Masterworks*, Gass begins "Tribute" by playing the famous opening guitar solo of "Stairway to Heaven" verbatim, and in a separate performance, from a live show recorded for *The Complete Masterworks 2*, the final vocal duet that Black and Gass sing at the end of "Tribute" borrows its melody from the conclusion of "Stairway to Heaven." Sumanth Gopinath has suggested that the theatrical pauses at the end of their duet exaggerate the recitative-like seriousness of the ending of "Stairway to Heaven," and that the repetition of the descending parallel thirds makes "Tribute" excessive, as if milking the most moving and powerful material from the source song in a satirical way. See Example 3.1 and Example 3.2. Since the subject of the lyrics is "the greatest and best song in the world" and the music is reminiscent of "Stairway to Heaven," the implication, of course, is that "Stairway to Heaven" is the greatest song in the world. The lyrics deny this conclusion, however, because as Black and Gass point out in the latter half of the song, they could not remember the music for the greatest song, but it sounded nothing like "Tribute." That is, the greatest song in the world sounds nothing like "Stairway to Heaven." Consequently, "Tribute" remains a jape rather than a heart-felt homage.

Tenacious D assumes a similar stance of mock-sincerity in its allusions to classical sources. On the band's eponymous debut album, released in 2001, a section of the song "Rock Your Socks" borrows its music from the Bourrée of J.S. Bach's Suite in

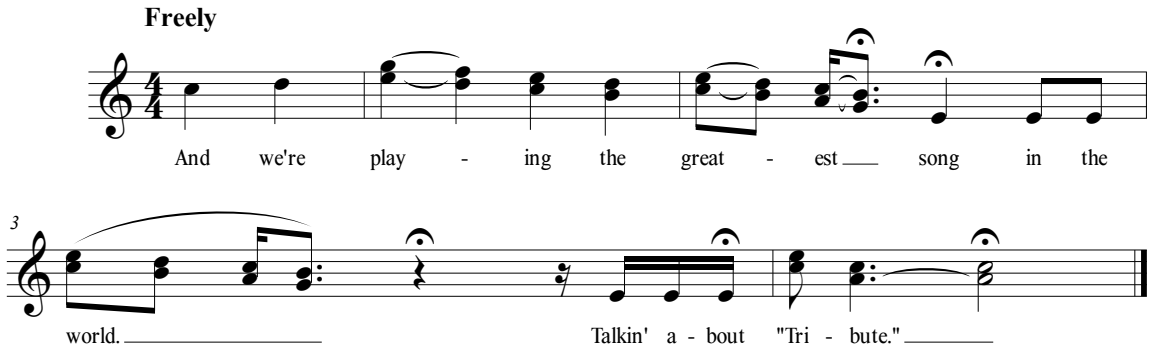
Example 3.1: Tenacious D, “Tribute,” *The Complete Master Works* (2003): intro. Guitar solo taken from Led Zeppelin, “Stairway to Heaven,” *Led Zeppelin IV* (1971): intro.



Example 3.2a: Led Zeppelin, “Stairway to Heaven,” *Led Zeppelin IV* (1971): outro.



Example 3.2b: Tenacious D, “Tribute,” *The Complete Master Works 2* (2008): outro.



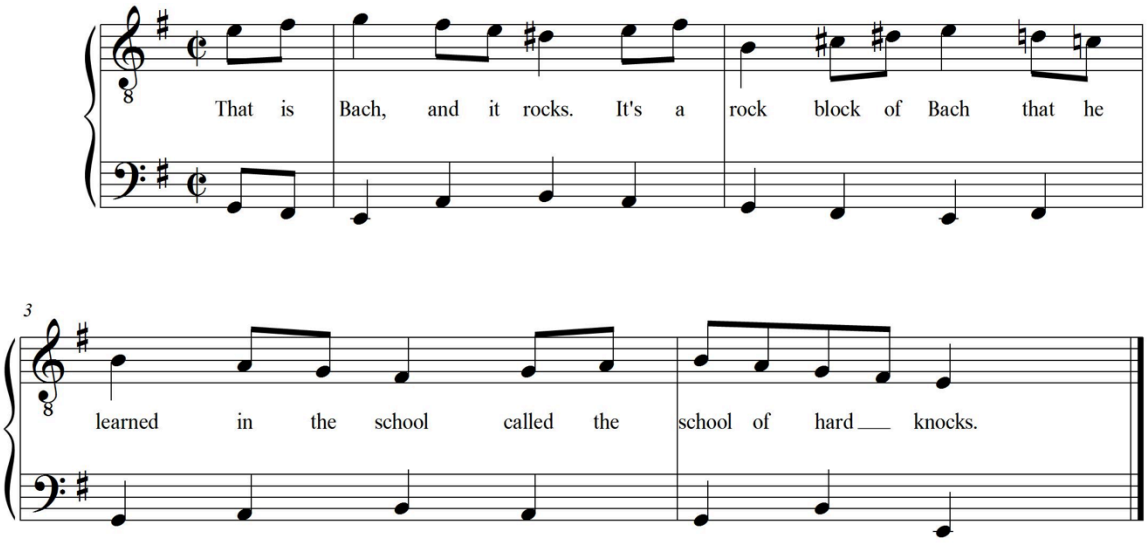
E Minor, BWV 996 (? after 1712). Because this music had already been borrowed by other popular groups, including Jethro Tull (*Stand Up*, 1969) and Led Zeppelin (*BBC*

Sessions, 1997),[15] Tenacious D may be poking fun at the general practice of quoting Bach in a popular music context, or they may be sending up Jethro Tull or Led Zeppelin specifically. The lyrics of "Rock Your Socks" point out that good music can come from a multitude of styles. In fact, style does not matter; according to the lyrics of the first verse, "it only matters if it rocks." (Here, Tenacious D seem to agree with McClary and Walser.) As the verse continues, however, it immediately contradicts itself and elevates classical music above other styles. Referring to his partner Kyle Gass as "K.G.," Black sing-shouts, "Rock 'n' roll is bogus, right K.G.? (Right!) / Only thing that really matters is the classical sauce. / And that's why me and K.G. are classically trained." Then the lyrics offer a reason for why they chose to quote Bach's music in particular. As Gass plays Bach's music, on classical guitar no less, Black sings the lyrics shown in Example 3.3. Even if the audience hears the music as a reference to Jethro Tull, Led Zeppelin, or another popular act, Tenacious D make clear that the audience is supposed to recognize

[15] Jethro Tull's performance of Bach's Bourrée is the earliest and probably the best-known rendering of the piece in a popular music context. However, it is far from the only instance. Duxbury has identified the following examples: Jethro Tull, "Bourrée (*Stand Up*, 1969); Enoch Light, "Petite Paulette" (*Spaced Out/The Music of Bach, Bacharach, and the Beatles*, 1969); Sindelfingen, "Mark's Bach" (*Odgipig*, 1973); Ekseption, "Bourrée" (*Mindmirror*, 1975); Ozzy Osbourne, "Dee" (*Blizzard of Ozz*, 1981); Alcatrazz, "Coming Bach" (*Live Sentence*, 1984); Tamás Szekeres, "Prelude and Presto BWV 996" (*Guitarmania*, 1989); European Electronic Orchestra, Bourée BWV 996 (*Sampled on Bach*, 1991); Steve Hackett, Bourée BWV 996 (*Momentum*, 1994); and the guitar solo of Led Zeppelin, "Heartbreaker" (*BBC Session*, 1997). See Janell R. Duxbury, *Rockin' the Classics and Classicizin' the Rock: A Selectively Annotated Discography* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985); Duxbury, *Rockin' the Classics and Classicizin' the Rock: A Selectively Annotated Discography: First Supplement* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1991); and Duxbury, *Rockin' the Classics and Classicizin' the Rock: A Selectively Annotated Discography: Second Supplement* (Philadelphia: Xlibris, 2000). Duxbury also maintains the website *Rock-Classical Connection Webpage*, http://www.rockclassical.com/.

the musical connection to Bach. As the lyrics explain, Bach is the original source of this musical material. Furthermore, Bach's music represents excellence ("it rocks"), and it is something learned ("he learned in the school / called the school of hard knocks").

Example 3.3: Tenacious D, "Rock Your Socks," *Tenacious D* (2001): interlude. Music taken from J.S. Bach, Suite in E Minor, BWV 996 (? after 1712): 5. Bourrée, mm. 1–4.[16]



Half a decade later, the band uses the same melody for the same purpose in the song "Classico" (*The Pick of Destiny*, 2006), and in this later song, two additional melodies serve as evidence that the band rocks: Beethoven's *Für Elise* (Bagatelle in A Minor, WoO 59, 1808) and Mozart's *Eine kleine Nachtmusik* (Serenade in G Major, K. 525, 1787). When "Classico" appears in the film *Tenacious D in the Pick of Destiny*, the two main characters have just met. Black is impressed with Gass's guitar skills, and,

[16] Bach uses bass clef for the lower staff and treble clef for the upper staff. I have set the upper staff in a sub octave treble clef in order to allow enough space between the staves to accommodate Tenacious D's added lyrics.

using the same music from Bach's Suite in E Minor that the band had used earlier in "Rock Your Socks," this time Black sings:

> Can't you see he's the man?
> Let me hear you applaud.
> He is more than a man;
> He's a shiny golden god.

In terms of narrative function within the film, this song is meant to serve as evidence of the high level of skill that Gass and Black possess on guitar and vocals, respectively; this much is obvious from the scenario. But as director Liam Lynch points out in the director's commentary, it is also something more than a plot device. The medley of Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart really is complex music, and Black and Gass really do execute it at a high musical level. In other words, "Classico" demonstrates the musical skills not just of the characters within the film but also of the actors portraying those characters.

In at least two other instances, Tenacious D tries to make the argument—to some extent, always in jest—that training and practice are necessary components in the development of musical skill. In the film *School of Rock* (2003), Black develops a curriculum in music history and theory so that his elementary students can form an excellent rock band. (The film does not credit Tenacious D, but Black plays the lead character and Gass is cast in a bit role.) While *School of Rock* emphasizes popular music, the song "Classical Teacher" (*Rize of the Fenix*, 2012) approaches classical sources with the same rigor. Although "Classical Teacher" is a skit rather than a song, it is yet another trope on the theme that classical music is the key to excellent musicianship. In "Classical Teacher," Black urges Gass to take lessons from a London Philharmonic teacher because

only a classical teacher will help Tenacious D become the best band in the world. (Shortly thereafter, the skit descends into adolescent vulgarity.)

Tenacious D satirically promotes itself as the greatest band in the world. In "Rock Your Socks," the band supports this claim with the evidence that Black and Gass have studied Bach. In "Classico," Tenacious D adds Beethoven and Mozart to a medley that begins with Bach's Suite in E Minor to further bolster its credentials. In both the film *School House Rock* and the skit "Classical Teacher," the band presses its claim further still by emphasizing the importance of study to achieve musical mastery. If songs such as "Rock Your Socks" place classical music, and Bach in particular, on a pedestal of excellence in music, then by playing classical music, the band farcically places itself on that same pedestal. When they want to prove that they "kick butt," to recall McClary and Walser's phrase, Black and Gass play Bach.

Stuart Davis on Bach the Inventor

Independent singer-songwriter Stuart Davis (b. 1971) was born in Des Moines, Iowa, grew up in Lakeville, Minnesota, and currently resides in Boulder, Colorado. Like the songs by Tenacious D discussed above, Davis's song "Invention" (*The Late Stuart Davis*, 2002) lionizes Bach, but this time the reference is sincere, rather than satirical. Davis is a surprising candidate to borrow pre-existing musical materials because his other endeavors demonstrate a strong commitment to originality. He invented a language, "Is," and trained his daughter to be the first native speaker. He has developed a system of

philosophy and written about it extensively.[17] Yet Davis, like Tenacious D, borrows from both popular and classical sources in his music.

Many popular artists perform cover versions of other artists' songs, but Davis takes the concept of covers to the extreme on *Davis Does Elvis*, a 2004 album comprised entirely of covers of songs by Elvis Costello. Davis occasionally incorporates borrowed popular music, including covers, into his live performances; this practice, however, often denigrates the source material. During one performance, for example, he performs his version of the Divinyls' "I Touch Myself" (*Divinyls*, 1990), and suggestively invites members of the audience to act out the lyrics.[18] In "Medley," the eighth track from his live album *16 Nudes* (1998), Davis quotes several songs by Lynyrd Skynyrd with slight but significant alterations to the lyrics. For example, when Davis begins to perform his rendition of Lynyrd Skynyrd's "Free Bird" (*Pronounced 'Lĕh-'nérd 'Skin-'nérd*, 1973), he sings, "If I leave here tomorrow, / would you still *dis*member me?" instead of "*re*member me." The same track quotes Orleans's "Dance with Me" (*Orleans II*, 1974), sung with faux enthusiasm, and Rick Springfield's "Jessie's Girl" (*Working Class Dog*, 1981).

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[17] Davis frequently writes about Is on his blog, http://www.stuartdavis.com/blog. I have been unable to locate the original source for the claim that his daughter is the first native speaker, although it is widely reported on various websites, including http://www.experiencefestival.com/a/Stuart_Davis_musician_-_Miscellaneous/id/2094121. For information about his philosophy, see his contributions to the Integral Institute, https://integrallife.com/, and Stuart Davis, *Love Has No Opposite*, 2 vols. (2006), audiobook.

[18] A home recording was made of a performance in Iowa City, Iowa. See it here: Stuart Davis, "Stuart Davis Cover of 'I touch myself,'" YouTube video, 3:04, from a performance 1 September 2006, posted by "fomjob," 2 September 2006, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Jky-lw9vy0.

Davis alters the lyrics of "Jessie's Girl" in a way that provides a none-too-subtle reference to the stand-out mega-hit that has largely defined Springfield's career:[19]

Springfield's Version:	Davis's Version:
Jessie is a friend.	Jessie's been a friend.
Yeah I know,	Well I know,
he's been a good friend of mine.	he's been a good friend of mine.
But lately somethin's changed;	Lately somethin's changed;
it ain't hard to define:	it ain't hard to define:
Jessie's got himself a girl,	Jessie got himself a hit,
and I wanna make her mine.	and we never heard from him again.

In the performance captured on *16 Nudes*, the audience claps and laughs at the punch line, seeming to accept it as good-natured teasing rather than as a mean-spirited insult. While Davis offers an unfavorable summation of Springfield's career in "Medley," he uses a completely different tone when he sings about Bach.

There is a marked contrast between the way Davis covers songs by other popular artists, such as "Jessie's Girl," and the way he approaches Bach's music. As the previous examples have shown, the former usually includes alternate, ribbing lyrics. In contrast, Davis's approach to Bach's music borders on reverence. Davis studied composition and classical guitar performance in college,[20] which informed his appreciation of classical

[19] While "Jessie's Girl" has been Springfield's only number one single, he has had four additional top-ten singles, and four of his albums have been certified platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America. See http://www.billboard.com/artist/365034/rick-springfield/chart and http://www.riaa.com/goldandplatinumdata.php?content_selector=gold-platinum-searchable-database.

[20] In a blog entry dated 8 March 2005, Davis writes, "Back in college I was a music composition major with a classical guitar performance double [major] . . . I spent four years literally practicing five to six hours a day." But in a blog entry one month later, dated April 5, 2005, Davis writes, "I dropped out of college after two and a half years, . . .

music in general and Bach in particular. On practicing classical guitar, Davis writes on his blog, "it helps my guitar skills over all, nothing improves your over all musicianship like working on classical. Nothing. It's the olympics of musicianship."[21] And Davis considers Bach to be an exemplary Olympian. In a July 2004 blog entry, for example, Davis writes that Bach, "essentially made music everything it's been since he died."[22] One month later, when considering what kind of music will still be viable 8,000 years in the future, Davis writes the following in his blog:

> 8,000 years from now? who knows. but the odds are very, very high people will still be interested in Bach. let's face it, Bach pretty much invented the WHEEL when it comes to music. we were all simple, ambulatory beasts till he came along, waved his wand- and POOF! there were wheels, vehicles of all sorts, and people have been transporting themselves ever since. doesn't matter who you listen to, Metallica, Yanni, Brittany Spears- they inherited everything from Bach.[23]

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and it's been 13 years since I had a job or wrote a paper for a class." http://www.stuartdavis.com/blog.

[21] Stuart Davis, "The Olympics of Musicianship," *Stuart's Blog*, entry dated 8 March 2005, http://www.stuartdavis.com/blog.

[22] Stuart Davis, "the ecstasy of XTC," *Stuart's Blog*, entry dated 15 July 2004, http://www.stuartdavis.com/blog.

[23] Stuart Davis, "feeling better, thanks. . .," *Stuart's Blog*, entry dated 8 August 2004, http://www.stuartdavis.com/blog. Davis also speaks highly of the Beatles. For example, in "the ecstasy of XTC," Davis writes, "then there was the Beatles (who invented pop music, and wrote pretty much every song we've ever heard. we've all been re-writing Beatles songs since i wanna hold your hand or whatever came first."

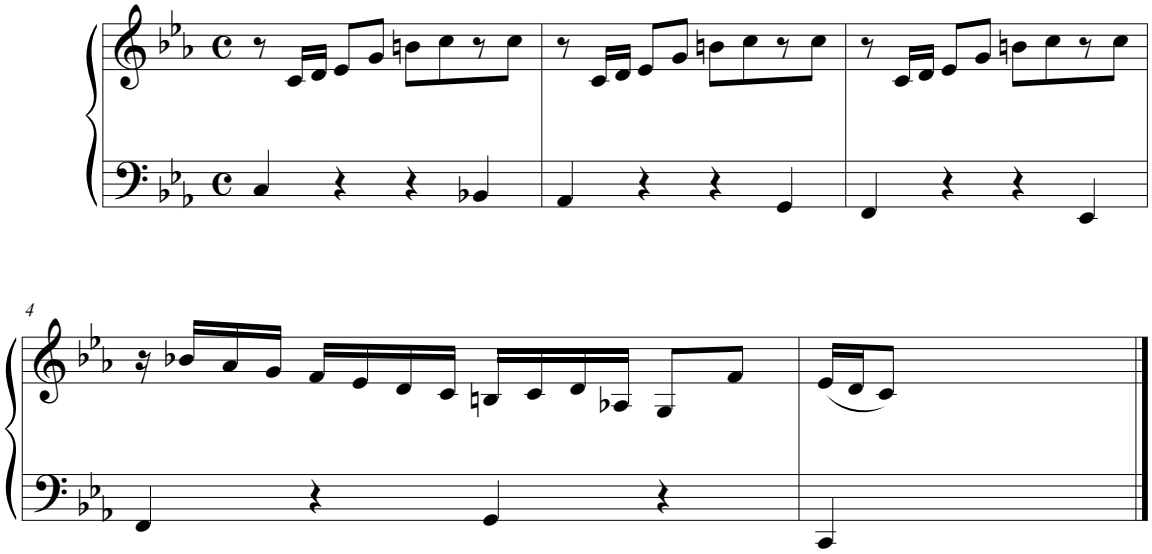
Davis links Bach with the Beatles again in later blog entries. In one, he writes, "in true innovation, you have a few very rare events like Bach, which would be like the formation of the fucking Planet- Bach basically invented everything, and what he didn't invent he perfected, then you have smaller events like the Beatles, which is like Pangea busting apart and making continents. Bach invented the Beatles, and the Beatles invented pop music." Stuart Davis, "Why Is Six Feet Under Authentic Innovation, and Sex in the City Is a Pure Shit Sandwich?" *Stuart's Blog*, entry dated 17 January 2005, http://www.stuartdavis.com/blog.

My point is not that Davis is correct—his characterization of music before Bach is woefully inaccurate. But we see here the high level of veneration that Davis maintains for Bach, even at the expense of accuracy.

In a tribute to this maker of musical wheels, Davis opens his 2002 song "Inventions" with a direct quotation from the Prelude of Bach's Partita in C Minor, BWV 997 (ca. 1740; see Example 3.4). Other than the key and some fragmentary melodic material, the rest of the song bears little resemblance to Bach's Prelude; it is only a jumping off point. In his introductory remarks to "Inventions," recorded during a live performance for *The Late Stuart Davis* (2002), Davis points out that he "co-wrote this song with Johann Sebastian Bach." With this comment, Davis not only reveals the source of his musical borrowing but he also gives the audience an important window through which to interpret the lyrics. The lyrics of "Inventions" are not as straightforward as those in Tenacious D's "Rock Your Socks" or "Classico," and without the mention of Bach, it would be difficult to construct a coherent meaning from the ambiguous text. See Appendix 3C for Davis's complete lyrics. It seems to be a song about the act of creation—both as an artistic pursuit and as an existential question—but at one point, he directs a question to a cat ("Do they, kittie?"). The message of the song does not seem to be humorous, however. Davis's performance is serious and sometimes angry; when he sing-shouts, "Shut up!" no one in the audience laughs. In the most revealing passage of the text, which reappears throughout the song at the closing of the chorus, Davis sings,

> I'm inventing what will be
> the thing that tells me
> what invented me.

Example 3.4: Stuart Davis, "Inventions," *The Late Stuart Davis* (2002): intro. Music taken from J.S. Bach, Partita in C Minor, BWV 997 (ca. 1740): 1. Prelude, mm. 1–5.



The protagonist in the song wishes to reveal his maker. The lyrics never specify what ingenious invention he will use to accomplish this goal, but Davis uses his verbal introduction to the song to point the audience toward Bach. So oriented, listeners might recall Bach's fifteen inventions (BWV 772–86),[24] which Davis presumably alludes to with the title of his song, or Bach's Partita in C Minor, which provides the opening material of Davis's song. If Bach delivers the opening musical material, and the rest of the song follows from that, then Bach becomes god-like, the source of musical creation. Clearly this interpretation places Bach in a position of tremendous power and echoes the message Davis advances in his blog ("Bach pretty much invented the WHEEL when it comes to music," "Bach basically invented everything"). By using Bach's music and by

[24] Bach also composed fifteen sinfonias, sometimes called three-part inventions (BWV 787–801).

telling the audience he co-wrote the song with Bach, Davis directs his audience to a specific interpretation of an ambiguous text: Bach is the inventor, the rest of us tinkerers.

The lyrics of "Inventions" are ambiguous, but following any reasonable interpretation, they certainly elevate Bach to a much higher level than his other borrowings of the Divinyls, Lynyrd Skynyrd, or Rick Springfield. With the allusion to the genre of inventions in the song's title, the quoted musical material from Bach's Partita in C Minor, the level of importance that the lyrics impart to Bach, and the opinion of Bach that Davis published in his blog, it is clear that Davis holds a high opinion of Bach's music. Unlike his other borrowings, then, there is strong evidence to believe Davis's deeply held sincerity when he quotes Bach's music in "Inventions." Although Davis's remarks are earnest and Tenacious D's are tongue-in-cheek, they both answer McClary and Walser's comic-strip challenge in the same way: Bach "kicks butt."

Chris Thile's Bach: From Nickel Creek to *Sonatas and Partitas*

Just as Tenacious D extols Bach in comedic songs, and just as Stuart Davis reveres him through independent music, so too does Chris Thile (b. 1981) lionize Bach, this time in the style of bluegrass. Thile is an American multi-instrumentalist, specializing in the mandolin, and a 2012 MacArthur Fellow. As a solo artist, as a member of Nickel Creek (1989–2007, 2014–present), and as a member of the Punch Brothers (2006–present), he has promoted Bach in interviews, performances, and compositions. This section gives some attention to several stages of Thile's career, but its subject is both more general and more specific than Thile's work alone. On the one hand, I map Thile's

position within a larger system of progressive bluegrass, showing a wide spread of classical influences across several generations. And on the other, I provide a detailed analysis of how Thile incorporates Bach's music into Nickel Creek's live recording of "The Fox" (*Reasons Why: The Very Best*, 2006).

Before Thile was born, bluegrass had already been a remarkably eclectic style of music. There were traditionalists, such as Ralph Stanley (1927–2016) and Bill Monroe (1911–96), the so-called "father of bluegrass." But there were also experimentalists, even among the founders of the style. Earl Scruggs (1924–2012) was a member of Monroe's Bluegrass Boys and of the Foggy Mountain Boys, two of the most important groups in the history of bluegrass, and he popularized the three-finger style of banjo playing (also called "Scruggs style"), one of the most distinctive sonic qualities of bluegrass. But Scruggs was also someone who pushed the boundaries of his style. For example, he performed songs by Bob Dylan (b. 1941), Simon and Garfunkel, and the Beatles, and he collaborated with the saxophonist King Curtis (1934–71). After he left the Foggy Mountain Boys, Scruggs formed the Earl Scruggs Revue to further expand the limits of his three-finger banjo style.

In later generations, many other artists followed in Scruggs's footsteps toward innovation in bluegrass. David Grisman (b. 1945), Sam Bush (b. 1952), and Béla Fleck (b. 1958) are a few of the most notable examples. Grisman (also known as "Dawg") had a long and productive relationship with Jerry Garcia (1942–95) of the Grateful Dead, and his personal brand of jazz- and jam-band-influenced "dawg music" has been captured on numerous recordings, including those by the David Grisman Quintet and the David

Grisman Bluegrass Experience. He has been an influence for Thile both as a musician and more specifically as a mandolin player. Bush, a mandolin player and fiddle player, has played with New Grass Revival (1971–89) and many other groups, and he has continued to lead the Sam Bush Band. In addition to bluegrass, rock and jazz can readily be heard as two of many influences in Bush's playing. Finally, although he is a banjo player rather than a mandolin player, Fleck has extended the boundaries of bluegrass throughout his career. He played in New Grass Revival, alongside Bush, and later formed Béla Fleck and the Flecktones (1988–2012, 2016). Even with a banjo player as their leader, the Flecktones sound more like a jazz combo than a bluegrass band, in part, due to the instrumentation of the rest of the band. They have prominently featured Jeff Coffin on saxophone and Future Man (born Roy Wooten) on percussion. Another reason they sound more like jazz and less like bluegrass is their approach toward improvisation. Improvisation is an important element of both styles, but in comparison to a typical bluegrass framework, the Flecktones take a freer approach toward improvisation, using extended harmonies and unpredictable formal patterns. They have also collaborated with musicians from around the world, such as Sandip Burman (tabla player) and Kongar-ol Ondar (Tuvan throat singer). Fleck has performed with the Nashville Symphony Orchestra, with Chick Corea, and with numerous other collaborators. In any given performance, Fleck is just as likely to produce bluegrass, jazz, world music, classical, funk, or electronic music, making him an important precursor for Nickel Creek's eclectic style of bluegrass. This list could go on, but these few examples at least give a hint of the

way that a cohort of adventurous musicians has been expanding the traditional definition of bluegrass for several decades.

For the purposes of the present chapter, Fleck's work offers an especially relevant connection between bluegrass and classical music. Fleck attributes his bluegrass-classical fusions to bassist, composer, and 2002 MacArthur Fellow Edgar Meyer (b. 1960). In the liner notes of *Perpetual Motion* (2001), the album on which the performers play canonical works of Western classical music arranged for bluegrass instruments, Fleck writes,

> [Meyer] has often pushed me to get involved with classical music, whether it was writing a piece together for banjo and string quartet in 1983, recording *Uncommon Ritual* with J.S. Bach and William Byrd pieces, or looking for interesting Bach duets to perform together.[25]

The same album features Thile on mandolin.

Over the past thirty years, Fleck and Meyer have been a part of several efforts to fuse American string music with other musical styles. In addition to Fleck, Meyer, and Thile, *Perpetual Motion* also features the violinist Joshua Bell (b. 1967), one of classical music's most popular virtuosos, and the classical guitarist John Williams (b. 1941). Meyer, a contemporary bass virtuoso in both classical and popular traditions, has worked with Thile on a number of projects since this recording, and he is also a composer of contemporary art music. Meyer has participated in several genre-crossing collaborations, such as the albums *Appalachia Waltz* (1996) and *Appalachian Journey* (2000), both of which feature the cellist Yo-Yo Ma (b. 1955) and a number of other contributors. A new

[25] Béla Fleck, *Perpetual Motion*, with Joshua Bell, Gary Hoffman, Evelyn Glennie, Edgar Meyer, Chris Thile, James Bryan Sutton, and John Williams, Sony Classical SK 8610, 2001, liner notes.

venture, Goat Rodeo, features the quartet of Ma, Meyer, Thile, and the fiddle player Stuart Duncan (b. 1964). Upon its release, their 2011 debut album, *The Goat Rodeo Sessions*, reportedly became the first record to top *Billboard* magazine's bluegrass and classical charts at the same time.[26] In other words, Thile, alongside Meyer, Fleck, and a handful of others, are part of a network of musicians who mix bluegrass and classical styles together. Figure 3.1 provides a visual representation of this network.[27]

Thile's professional musical career began with Nickel Creek, a bluegrass quartet featuring Thile, the siblings Sara Watkins (b. 1981) and Sean Watkins (b. 1977), and various bass players.[28] They started playing together in an informal setting in southern California in 1986, when Thile and Sara were about five years old and Sean was about nine, and made their official debut at the Lake Henshaw Bluegrass Festival three years later.[29] During their teenage years, they released two albums of bluegrass standards,[30] and have gone on to release four studio albums and a compilation album. Their music has

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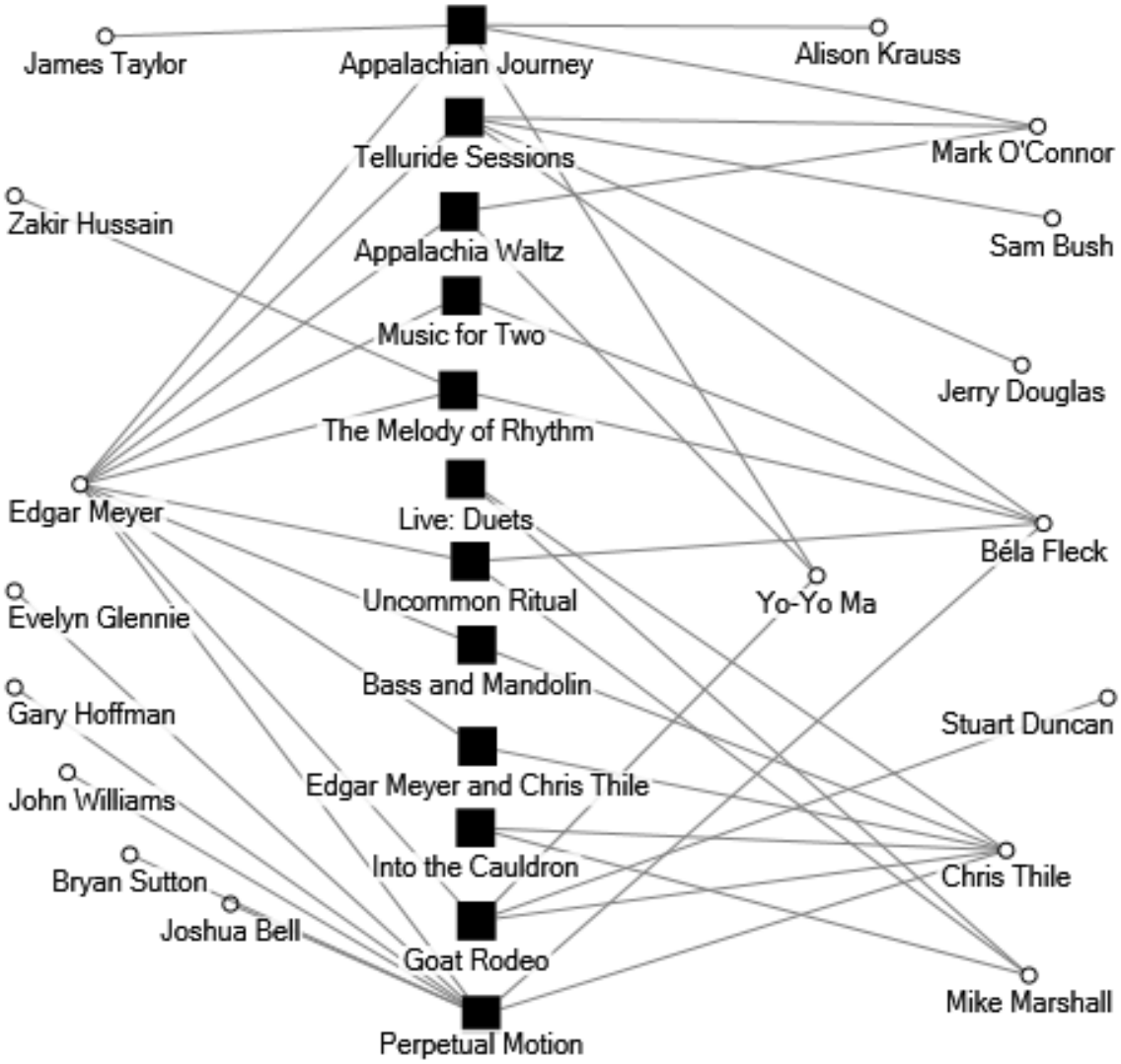
[26] George Varga, "Stuart Duncan Riding High with Goat Rodeo," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, 31 January 2012, http://www.utsandiego.com/news/2012/jan/31/stuart-duncan-riding-high-goat-rodeo/.

[27] I am grateful to Anne Shelley for her assistance in creating this data visualization.

[28] Nickel Creek bills themselves as a trio, but they are actually a quartet. The first bass player was Scott Thile, Chris's father. In subsequent recordings and performances, the band has used several bass players, including Byron House, Mark Schatz, and Edgar Meyer.

[29] Since this paper discusses both Sean and Sara Watkins, I refer to them by first name. The history of the band that unfolds over the next several paragraph draws from many sources listed in the bibliography. For their early history, see for example a retrospective piece by Pam Kragen, "Guitarist Revisits Roots at Carlsbad Pizzeria," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, 5 May 2016, http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/2016/may/05/sean-watkins-revisits-carlsbad-pizzeria/.

Figure 3.1: People and albums that combine bluegrass and classical styles.



earned numerous awards, including a total of seven Grammy Award nominations (winning Best Contemporary Folk Album in 2003), BBC Folk Musician of the Year (Thile, 2007), and a MacArthur Fellowship (Thile, 2012).

[30] Although they are of little interest to the present study, Nickel Creek's two early albums are *Little Cowpoke* (1993) and *Here to There* (1997).

Each of the band members has received formal musical training, including private lessons. Sean started his formal music education by taking piano lessons, then added mandolin, and ultimately landed on guitar. Although his study of piano did not reach a professional level, he made an important connection through these lessons: His piano teacher's son, John Moore, gave him lessons on bluegrass instruments. Sean's family, including his younger sister Sara, began to frequent That Pizza Place, a restaurant in Carlsbad, California, so that they could hear Sean's teacher play in Bluegrass Etc. Sean and Sara's mother wanted her to study flute, but Sara preferred the violin. She began studying violin with the Suzuki method at age six, and then she took lessons from Dennis Caplinger, the fiddle player of Bluegrass Etc. Moore had another talented bluegrass student, Chris Thile, and the three young musicians started playing together informally there in That Pizza Place. In addition to mandolin, Thile also studied guitar, and on various recordings he has played a host of instruments, including banjo, piano, drums, violin, viola, cello, bass, and bouzouki.

In their formative years, Thile won the national Walnut Valley Mandolin Championship (1993); Sean reached the finals at the National Flatpicking Guitar Championship on both mandolin and guitar (1993; since then he has been a featured performer and has not been allowed to compete); Sara won the Arizona State Fiddle Championship (1996); and as a unit, Nickel Creek won the Four Corner States Bluegrass Festival Championships in the family band division (1991) and the Southwest regional division of the Pizza Hut International Bluegrass Showdown (1994). They also won the

International Bluegrass Music Association awards Emerging Artist of the Year (2000) and Instrumental Group of the Year (2001).

After performing at numerous festivals and recording two albums of bluegrass covers, Nickel Creek achieved breakout success on its eponymous 2000 album. This was due, in part, to fiddler, singer, and forty-two-time Grammy Award nominee Alison Krauss (b. 1971). Krauss coached the young trio, particularly on their singing;[31] she produced *Nickel Creek* (2000) and *This Side* (2002), albums whose commercial success made the band's career economically feasible.[32] More than this, Krauss's own recordings are often credited for bringing bluegrass to a wider audience.[33] Without her, Nickel Creek might have had a successful career playing bluegrass festivals, but they would not have had an audience sufficiently large to support gold- or platinum-level album sales.

Thile is firmly rooted in traditional bluegrass, not because he grew up in the south in a rural environment—he grew up in a California suburb—but because he has participated in this style of music for his entire life. He has also reached the highest pinnacles of bluegrass, having won such awards as the Grammy Award for Best

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[31] Craig Havighurst, "Newgrass Wunderkinder," *Acoustic Guitar* 11, no. 2 (August 2000): 16–17.

[32] Krauss also co-produced Nickel Creek's compilation album, *Reasons Why: The Very Best* (2006).

[33] Krauss is a major commercial force in bluegrass and country music; according to some sources, she is the best-selling bluegrass artist of all time. She had major success with "When You Say Nothing At All" (*Keith Whitley: A Tribute Album*, 1994), a cover of a song by Paul Overstreet and Don Schlitz that had been a hit for Keith Whitley in the late 1980s. She is also featured on the soundtrack to *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* (2000), an album that had sold over 8 million copies as of 10 October 2007, making it peerless among bluegrass recordings. See http://www.riaa.com/ and http://www.billboard.com/articles/columns/chart-beat/6457905/luke-bryan-sam-hunt-country-charts.

Bluegrass Album (*True Life Blues: The Songs of Bill Monroe*, released 1996, Grammy Award 1997) and International Bluegrass Music Association's Mandolinist of the Year award (2001). Yet his influences and interests are wide ranging. In his lyrics, he makes references to both James Joyce and J.R.R. Tolkein.[34] He found the name for his second band, the Punch Brothers, in a short story by Mark Twain. Over the course of his decades-long career, he has named numerous musical influences, including not only bluegrass artists like Bill Monroe and Ricky Skaggs and progressive bluegrass artists like David Grisman and Sam Bush but also Bill Evans, Radiohead, Sufjan Stevens, Kendrick Lamar, Igor Stravinsky, Jean Sibelius, and the list goes on. Thile has described the musical aspiration of wanting to sound like a string quartet and also to recreate *Kind of Blue*.[35] One interviewer heard in Nickel Creek's music the combination of French wines and cheeses plus hot dogs.[36] Thile has defended Nickel Creek from those who think the band mixed styles only for the sake of mixing styles. He wrote:

> We're not genre-hoppers. We take no pride in just haphazardly throwing together genres that haven't met before. "Let's play bluegrass and reggae! Both have a lot of backbeat!" We don't want to do that. If we're going to blend genres, we'd like it to be genre soup, where you can't see what's in it—as opposed to genre stew, where everything is very defined.[37]

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[34] Nickel Creek's songs "Eveline" and "In the House of Tom Bombadil" refer to Joyce's and to Tolkein's works, respectively. Thile also quoted Tolkein in the title of his 2001 solo album, *Not All Who Wander Are Lost*.

[35] See Terry Teachout, "Bluegrass That Can Twang and Be Cool, Too," *New York Times*, 27 May 2001, http://www.nytimes.com/2001/05/27/arts/music-bluegrass-that-can-twang-and-be-cool-too.html; and Dennis Cook, "Chris Thile: Bringing in Some New Blood," *JamBase* (2005), http://www.jambase.com/Articles/7300/CHRIS-THILE-BRINGING-IN-SOME-NEW-BLOOD/0.

[36] Jason Killingsworth, "A Mandolin with No Country," *Paste Magazine* 17 (2005): 2. http://www.pastemagazine.com/articles/2005/08/nickel-creek.html.

[37] Thile on www.nickelcreek.com.

He expressed a similar sentiment more succinctly when he told an interviewer, "We [in Nickel Creek] play boundaryless music."[38]

According to Sara, Celtic music, classical, and bluegrass filled the house where she and Sean grew up.[39] The juxtaposition of widely varying styles, therefore, does not seem unusual to Sara, Sean, or Thile, but it has given critics much difficulty in categorizing Nickel Creek's music. The startling array of labels that have been applied to the group—"newgrass," "youthgrass," "bluegrass with an edge," "accelerated bluegrass," "progressive bluegrass," "postmodern bluegrass," "roots," "old-time," "traditional," "vernacular," "folk," "acoustic," "postmodern," "Celtic," and "polystylistic"—strongly suggests they may have succeeded in blending genres in the way that defies easy categorization. To cite only one example, the musician and author Jeffrey Pepper Rodgers has praised the band for "brilliantly [connecting] Celtic melodies, stark mountain ballads, and even chamber music."[40] Nickel Creek understand their combination of styles to be very natural. As Sara has explained,

> We want to take the different elements of bluegrass, pop, jazz, classical, and Celtic music that we listen to and mold them into a consistent Nickel Creek format. . . . We want to have great technical ability, but not lose anybody by being too technical . . . We want people to hear it and just accept it for what it is, but at the same time have musicians be able to appreciate some of the different colors and technical things we are doing, in addition to it being great music.[41]

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[38] Thile quoted in Teachout, "Bluegrass That Can Twang," 20.

[39] Candace Horgan, "Nickel Creek's Sara Watkins," *Fiddler Magazine* 8/2 (Summer 2001): 15.

[40] Jeffrey Pepper Rodgers, "Up on Nickel Creek: How Three Bluegrass Prodigies Became One of the Freshest Successes in Pop Music," *Acoustic Guitar* 13 (December 2002): 57.

[41] Sara quoted in Horgan, "Nickel Creek's Sara Watkins," 18.

Sean has expressed a similar sentiment in an interview, saying,

> When we are writing songs we try to blend these influences in such a way that it doesn't come out sounding like two separate things that have come together. We try to make it its own separate entity and we try to bring it together in a way that people can relate to it.[42]

And in his characteristic wide-eyed style, Thile has said nearly the same thing. In his words,

> Our roots are in assimilation. Having grown up in California, that's a patchwork quilt society. A melting pot among melting pots. It's like Cal-Asian food. If you eat it and separate everything out and think, "Well, that tastes good, and so does this," you lose the overall flavor of it all coming together. You should just think, "I don't know what the hell this food is, but it tastes really great." We'd like to be that, music-wise.[43]

Their music, in short, combines various sources, as each member of the band has articulated.

Thile would have his audience hear the band's music as a mysterious, eclectic whole. Contrary to his advice, however, I would like to make it less mysterious, to disentangle the myriad sounds in Nickel Creek's music by separating out one influence in particular, the influence of classical music.

Sean, Sara, and Thile all have a specific relationship with classical music. In addition to developing her skills in bluegrass, Sara attended music camps where she received classical training,[44] Sean has taken composition lessons and written a string

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[42] Sean quoted in Dan Miller, "Sean Watkins," *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine* 5 (July–August 2001): 7.

[43] Thile quoted in Silas House, "It's About the Music (Interview with Nickel Creek)," *No Depression* 59 (September–October 2005): 107.

[44] See Jeffrey Pepper Rodgers, "Up on Nickel Creek: How Three Bluegrass Prodigies Became One of the Freshest Successes in Pop Music," *Acoustic Guitar* 13 (December 2002): 59.

quartet,[45] and Thile studied music at the undergraduate level. Regarding his university training, Thile said,

> I went to Murray State University for about a year and a half and studied composition and theory—as much as I could soak in during that time before Nickel Creek became too overwhelming to do both. I thoroughly enjoyed it and learned so much, and I'm trying to keep going. It's all in the interest of being a well-rounded musician. I especially admire the composers—they have so much control over their ideas and how to reproduce them with an orchestra, string quartet, solo piano, or whatever.[46]

In other words, classical music was a formative style for Thile and his bandmates.

In Nickel Creek's live shows, the band has performed classical works, in whole or in part, alongside their own songs and covers of popular hits, creating unusual juxtapositions. In a single performance, for example, the audience might hear several bluegrass standards, all four movements of Bach's Sonata in A Minor, BWV 1003 (1720), and a cover of Brittany Spears's "Toxic" (*In the Zone*, 2003). In another, the band might channel the electronic sound of Radiohead's "Morning Bell," released in 2000, and juxtapose it against Bob Dylan's protest song "Masters of War," from 1963.[47] Comparing live performances of Nickel Creek's cover of "Toxic" against Stuart Davis's cover of "Free Bird" or "Jessie's Girl" shows that the audience reads them in the same way. That is, the audience laughs because Nickel Creek and Davis seem to mock these particular

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[45] See Michael Routh, "Sean Watkins of Nickel Creek: Emerging from the Waters of Nickel Creek," *iBluegrass Magazine*, 8 April 2001, http://www.ibluegrass.com/bg_posting3.cfm?p__i=1045&p__r=B000059T1L&p__#.V4gHCJMrKHo.

[46] Chris Thile quoted in Rodgers, "Up on Nickel Creek," 59.

[47] "Morning Bell" is from *Kid A* (2000), and "Masters of War" is from *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan* (1963). It would probably be impossible to create a complete list of Nickel Creek's performance repertory, since it would have to begin when the players were only five years old, but the few examples mentioned in this chapter suggest the breadth such a list would have.

musical sources. When Nickel Creek have played "Toxic" in live performances, it has not been Sara, Nickel Creek's only female member, who has sung Spears's vocal part. Instead, the role of the seductive leading lady has been given to Thile. Nickel Creek play the song in the same key as Spears's recording, which means that Thile reaches high into his falsetto to sing the chorus. He also performs a dance routine, including styling his hair and swinging his hips suggestively. Although Thile seems sincere in his appreciation of "Toxic," by flipping the gender of the singer, by taking the singer far outside of his normal singing range, and by adding physical comedy, Nickel Creek turns Spears's seductive song into a silly amusement.[48]

In contrast, just as we saw with Stuart Davis, Nickel Creek approaches Bach's music with utter sincerity. When asked about Bach in an interview, Thile replied,

> I can't even talk about it because I'll just cry. I put it on and will sit reverently in front of it for however long I can before the world drags me back. I'll play it, and I'll even naïvely attempt to imitate him compositionally or at least try to pick up some of the intent. He was such an intent-ful composer. A greater artist cannot be found in the history of the world.[49]

This is virtually the same position that Davis expressed about Bach, when he called him the inventor of the musical wheel and predicted that his music would still be important 8,000 years in the future. And although Thile and Davis are sincere rather than comedic, their positions are also essentially similar to Tenacious D's lyric "That is Bach, / and it rocks."

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[48] Thile makes some presumably sincere comments about "Toxic" at the end of the video below. An example of his dancing begins about one minute into the video and recurs throughout. See Nickel Creek, "09 Nickel Creek 2014-08-02 Toxic," YouTube video, 4:09, from a performance 2 August 2014, posted by "Mark's Memories," 16 October 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A9gRnwmUl9A.

[49] Thile quoted in Cook, "Chris Thile."

As a solo artist, with Nickel Creek, and with the Punch Brothers, Thile regularly incorporates Bach's music into his live performances. In one especially intricate example, Thile quotes the Prelude of Bach's Partita in E Major, BWV 1006 (ca. 1736–7) in Nickel Creek's live version of "The Fox" (*Reasons Why: The Very Best*, 2006), an American folk song. Sara tells the story of how they came to know "The Fox":

> "The Fox" is a song that Chris's mom used to sing to him when he was little. When we were in Japan a few years ago, we were playing a junior high school, and they wanted us to do an American folk song. And we were debating things like "Puff the Magic Dragon," trying to think of an American folk tune, and Chris mentioned "The Fox." This was about fifteen minutes before showtime, and he started doing this rhythm on the mandolin, and on the chorus I just jumped in. From that beginning, it went almost straight to the CD without being changed.[50]

The band made a studio recording of "The Fox" in 2000 (*Nickel Creek*), and it became a staple of their live shows. A music critic for the *New York Times* singled out the song in a positive review of Nickel Creek's New York debut, in 2001, writing,

> The high point of the evening was a free-form jam on "The Fox," a traditional folk ballad into which they stirred such unlikely ingredients as a hip-hop version of Bob Dylan's "Subterranean Homesick Blues" [*Bringing It All Back Home*, 1965] and a greased-lightning rendering of the first movement of Bach's E Major Violin Partita, played on the mandolin by Mr. Thile.[51]

This description accurately describes the rendition that the band recorded for their 2006 compilation album (*Reasons Why: The Very Best*), except they go even further. They comfortably quote Dylan next to Bach in the context of a traditional folk song, and this time they add Bill Monroe's "Jerusalem Ridge" to the mix. While Tenacious D and Stuart Davis overtly point out their references to Bach's music through their lyrics or

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[50] Sara quoted in Horgan, "Nickel Creek's Sara Watkins," 17.
[51] Teachout, "Bluegrass That Can Twang," 20.

verbal introductions, Nickel Creek do not; instead, Thile quotes Bach's music in a long solo passage, trusting audience members to recognize musical virtuosity, whether or not they can identify all its sources.

Both in his performances with Nickel Creek and in separate projects, Thile has borrowed not only classical melodies but also classical compositional techniques. On his 2001 solo album, *Not All Who Wander Are Lost*, for example, Thile composed "Sinai to Canaan," an eleven-minute piece in two movements. Premiering 17 March 2007 at Carnegie Hall and released the following year with the Punch Brothers, Thile's most ambitious work yet is his four-movement suite, *The Blind Leaving the Blind*, which is more than forty minutes long. He has released two albums of bluegrass-classical fusion tunes co-written with Edgar Meyer (*Edgar Meyer and Chris Thile*, 2008 and *Bass and Mandolin*, 2014), the latter of which won the Grammy Award for Best Contemporary Instrumental Album. For several years, Thile repeatedly expressed a desire to record an album comprised entirely of Bach's music, a plan that came to fruition in 2013 with his album *Bach: Sonatas and Partitas*, volume 1. By giving it the title "volume 1," the suggestion, of course, is that later volumes will follow, but Thile has made no formal announcement along these lines.

Conclusion

The subject of this dissertation is musical borrowing, focusing in particular on the elements that commercially successful artists have borrowed from classical models. In Chapter 2, I discuss how progressive rock artists used classical music as models for their

work, focusing in particular on the mid-1960s through the '70s. In this chapter, I show that the practice of musical borrowing continued into the 2000s and spread into a wide variety of popular musical styles. J.S. Bach was an especially important figure, and he is the model for examples throughout this chapter. Although the core examples in this chapter originated in the first decade of the twenty-first century, Bach's influence on popular music has a much longer history than that narrow time period, as some of the music in Chapter 2 has shown. Therefore, as a coda to this chapter, I return briefly to Paul Simon's "American Tune," from 1973.

As I pointed out in the introduction, the music of Simon's song comes from Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, but the trail does not end there. Bach too borrowed it, and his source was "Mein Gmüth ist mir verwirret" ("My Mind Is a Muddle," 1601), a secular song by Hans Leo Hassler.[52] Although the pool of listeners who are familiar with Hassler's work must surely be a shallow one, this twist nevertheless opens a broad new range of possible interpretations. The text of Hassler's piece, unattributed but possibly by Hassler himself, is about an unattainable infatuation. Now the brutal text from Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* is interwoven with a love story, perhaps relatable to the love between Jesus and his Christian followers. And Simon's cryptic text about the United States is tangled not only with a story of Christological redemption but also with one of unrequited love. Since at least the nineteenth century, Bach has proven to be a fruitful source of

[52] I am grateful to Anne Shelley for directing me to several additional parodies of Hassler's music, including settings by Kaspar Hassler (1562–1618), Johann Schein (1586–1630), Samuel Scheidt (1587–1654), and Dietrich Buxtehude (ca. 1637–1707). See also David Hill, "The Time of the Sign: 'O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden' in Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*," *Journal of Musicology* 14, no. 4 (1996): 514–43.

inspiration for generations of composers, but in his lifetime, he not only provided models but also followed them.

Just as Tenacious D, Stuart Davis, and Chris Thile borrowed from Bach, the nexus of "American Tune," "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded," and "Mein Gmüth ist mir verwirret" demonstrates that Bach likewise borrowed from his predecessors. My final quote comes from Chris Thile, but it might as well be from Tenacious D, Stuart Davis, Paul Simon, or, indeed, from Bach himself. Thile said, "Obviously you have to be mining the past for influence and inspiration."[53] During his lifetime, Bach was as active a miner as any of his contemporaries, and today, he has become the ore.

This chapter analyses three popular songs, recorded 2001–2006 in styles ranging from mocking to reverent, that all quote Bach's music. While the lyrics and musical settings frame Bach as an exemplar of musical sophistication—perhaps as a symbol of elitism—the music simultaneously presents Bach's style for a mass audience, not an elite one.

Half a century ago, Adorno called for a halt to treating Bach as frozen nostalgia, and instead prodded composers to produce Bach's music anew. The artists in this chapter have answered Adorno's call. They refuse to leave Bach's music alone and instead they make fun of it, grow out of it, or change it entirely.

[53] Thile quoted in House, "It's About the Music," 105.

CHAPTER 4
WEEZER'S LYRICAL AND MUSICAL ALLUSIONS*

Introduction

In the final movement of Hector Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* (1830), bassoons and tubas intone a melody that Berlioz's Parisian audience would have recognized immediately: it is the opening of "Dies irae," a monophonic chant that has been used in Catholic funeral services since at least the fourteenth century. To drive the point home, the title of the chant appears in the score and in the program notes, and accompanying the melody, the orchestral bells play long, sustained pitches, creating an effect similar to the tolling of church bells. But what is it doing here, in a symphony?

"Dies irae" would fit perfectly well in the context of a Catholic funeral—indeed, its entrance is meant to suggest the protagonist's imagined funeral in the tragic program that goes along with Berlioz's work. But despite its programmatic justification, a piece of medieval liturgical music is a rare bird to find lurking in the final movement of a symphony of 1830. Its usage stands out, both in the nineteenth century and to later audiences, because it somehow seems to be in the wrong place. More than one hundred measures into the fifth and final movement of this program symphony, listeners might reasonably expect to recognize the movement's principal theme, or to hear the *ideé fixe*, the melodic idea that appears in all five movements of the now-famous work; instead, they recognize centuries-old funeral music. The melody stands out from its context.

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* This chapter began as an essay for Professor Peter Mercer-Taylor's Fall 2009 seminar in musicology at the University of Minnesota. It was then revised for the spring 2012 conference of the Midwest Chapter of the American Musicological Society. The present version has been revised and expanded.

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Like Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*, the music of the American alternative rock band Weezer is cluttered with cultural objects and practices that resist their context. Quotations and allusions draw Weezer's music away from its environment of alternative rock, and as a result, their music can sometimes sound displaced, as if it belongs to some other time period or style. But, of course, it belongs to the time period in which it was written, and, therefore, making sense of Weezer's many references leads to a richer understanding not only of Weezer's music but also to alternative rock as a whole.

Nearly twenty-five years after he co-founded Weezer, Rivers Cuomo, the band's principal songwriter, told a reporter from the *Los Angeles Times*, "I'm trying to create something that I don't entirely understand. I have an instinct to create these complicated things: a song, a recording, a persona, whatever."[1] To unpack the many references in Weezer's "complicated things," it is often helpful to consider them in light of the notion of ungrammaticality, a term I will turn to at several points in the pages that follow.

In his 1978 book *Semiotics of Poetry*, literary theorist Michael Riffaterre coins the term *ungrammaticality* to describe strange moments in French poetry that are analogous to the strange moment in *Symphonie fantastique* described above.[2] Riffaterre's system includes many carefully bounded categories and subcategories of ungrammaticality, but in its broad, general sense—the sense that I will employ throughout this chapter—

[1] Mikael Wood, "Weezer's Rivers Cuomo Is Getting 'Comeback' Fatigue," *Los Angeles Times*, 25 March 2016, http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/la-ca-ms-rivers-cuomo-20160327-story.html.

[2] Michael Riffaterre, *Semiotics of Poetry* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1978).

ungrammaticality is a fairly straightforward concept. It refers to any deviant grammar.[3] Riffaterre rightly argues that grammar depends on context. Just as the rules of French grammar differ from those of German grammar, so too do rules of grammar vary from one creative work to another. Therefore, in a particular poem or symphony, for instance, something is ungrammatical not because it is strange in and of itself but because it breaks the rules established by its context. The context of Weezer's music is alternative rock from the 1990s to the present, a context from which they often depart.

One of the ways that ungrammaticalities most frequently reveal themselves is through allusion or quotation. Audiences might recognize that an ungrammaticality does not belonging to its context precisely because they recognize that there is some other context to which it does belong. In the Berlioz example, when the "Dies irae" chant first enters the final movement of *Symphonie fantastique* (m. 127), it is not that the music itself is especially strange. The melody is slow and low, the mood somber, and the texture sparse, but these qualities pale in comparison to some of the much stranger effects that appear later in the movement, particularly the indication at m. 444, where Berlioz directs the violins and violas to play *col legno*, that is, with the wood of their bows rather than with the hair. So, "Dies irae" is not an especially strange tune in itself. Instead, what makes it stand out is the fact that it belongs someplace else; it belongs in a Catholic funeral service. Weezer use the same technique. The boastful lyrics of "The Greatest Man That Ever Lived (Variations on a Shaker Hymn)" (*Weezer [The Red Album]*, 2008), for example, are interrupted mid-song when Cuomo delivers the line, "all the world's a stage,

[3] Ibid., 2.

and each of us is a player." This line is peculiar within the context of the song precisely because it first belonged to another context, William Shakespeare's play *As You Like It* (circa 1600).[4] By alluding to Shakespeare's play, which comes from a distant time and place, Cuomo causes a disruption in the narrative flow of the song.

Symphonie fantastique and "The Greatest Man That Ever Lived (Variations on a Shaker Hymn)" show that in order to understand allusions, the analyst must look, or listen, for contexts outside of a given work, rather than looking only within it. As Michael Klein explains in *Intertextuality in Western Art Music*, "Ungrammaticalities are hermeneutic windows that signal the reader to look to another text for meaning."[5] Similarly, arguing for the importance of studying the connections between works, Lawrence Kramer has used the term *other-voicedness* to describe the strangeness that results when one work collides with another. In consideration of two other-voiced texts, Kramer echoes Riffaterre's notion of ungrammaticality: "Both texts pivot on an act of narration that intrudes where it somehow does not belong."[6]

One of the challenges of seeking meaning outside the work at hand is that it might go on forever, leaving the interpretive act forever unfinished and the interpretation

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[4] Cuomo is clearly alluding to Shakespeare, although his quotation is not precise. Shakespeare wrote, "All the world's a stage / And all the men and women merely players." Elvis Presley alluded to the line in his song "Are You Lonesome Tonight," when he said, "You know someone said that the world's a stage / And each must play a part." Cuomo's gloss is "Somebody said all the world's a stage, and each of us is a player."

[5] Michael Klein, *Intertextuality in Western Art Music* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005), 97. For more on hermeneutic windows, see Lawrence Kramer, *Music as Cultural Practice, 1800–1900* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990), especially Chapter 1, "Tropes and Windows: An Outline of Musical Hermeneutics," 2–22.

[6] Lawrence Kramer, *Music as Cultural Practice*, 183.

always unstable. Klein argues that ungrammaticality can provide some level of stability, writing "While it has become a commonplace in literary criticism to claim that the intertextual nature of writing threatens stable interpretation, Riffaterre's theory marks intertextuality as the enabler of meaning in regard to strangeness."[7] In the case of "Dies irae," why stop at the medieval sequence and *Symphonie fantastique*? Why not also consider Mozart's setting in his Requiem (1791), or Benjamin Britten's in his *War Requiem* (1962)? The answer is that all interpretations are inherently incomplete. As new works, new audiences, and new theories emerge, the meaning of a given work will always be in a fluid state of becoming, never in a stable state of being. So the critics are right: The search for all the external connections of a given work could go on forever. But so too could the explication of only its internal properties. Far from being a reason to shy away from intertextual interpretation, this quality distinguishes art from more finite subjects, and it is why creative works reward continual, repeated investigations.

For the remainder of this chapter, I apply such concepts as intertextuality, ungrammaticality, and other-voicedness as tools to analyze the works of the alternative rock band Weezer, arguing that deviant grammar is a fundamental concept for interpreting the band's work.

Weezer are four Los Angeles–based musicians whose music is filled with quotations, allusions, and references to other works. In this chapter, I discuss how they deploy these compositional techniques in examples both lyrical and musical, both esoteric and conspicuous. I first offer a brief history of the band, focusing in particular on

[7] Michael Klein, *Intertextuality in Western Art Music* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005), 97.

principal songwriter Rivers Cuomo's musical training in order to establish a framework for the sources of his many allusions. Then I analyze a sample of some of the many references in Weezer's lyrics, showing how they pack their texts with a host of cultural codes. Next, I borrow theories created to analyze intertextuality, ungrammaticality, and allusion in literature, and apply them to Weezer's music. In close readings of several songs, I show how allusions create rich and varied layers of meaning. In one case, a musical quotation serves to reinforce the surface-level meaning in a song, while in another, a moment of ungrammaticality contradicts a song's apparent meaning. In their songs, Weezer regularly defy the conventions associated with alternative rock music and sing, instead, "as though with another voice." By drawing attention to these anomalies, my goal is to work toward a more complete understanding of this band's music and, more generally, toward a better understanding of allusion as a compositional technique in post-1965 rock music.

Rivers Cuomo's Education and Training

Throughout Weezer's history, Rivers Cuomo has served as the band's principal songwriter, lead singer, and one of two guitarists. Because he is the primary composer of the group, he receives the most detailed treatment in this chapter; for the others who have played alongside him in Weezer, I offer only brief sketches. The section on Cuomo's musical education and training contains a certain level of detail—such as the name of a specific class that he completed at a specific university—because this information helps

explain the many sources of allusions in Weezer's music. A brief description of Weezer's output will contextualize the examples that appear throughout this chapter.

Rivers Cuomo (b. 1970) was born in New York City, but he grew up in much more isolated environments: at a Buddhist center in upstate New York, in an ashram in Yogaville, Connecticut, and in Storrs, Connecticut, a small town that is home to the University of Connecticut.[8] His biological father, Frank Cuomo, played drums semi-professionally, but the elder Cuomo left the family when his son was only five years old, so the role he played in his son's early musical training was limited. The younger Cuomo reportedly participated in music programs at Mansfield Middle School, and after he completed the eighth grade, in 1984, he received his first guitar. One of his first recordings dates from this period.[9]

From at least his teenage years, Cuomo took his musical education and training seriously. From 1984 to 1988, he actively participated in music throughout his time at E.O. Smith High School (E.O. Smith later became the name of Cuomo's music publishing company).[10] He sang in the chorus for all four years of high school, was

[8] The biographical information in this section comes from many interviews, a selection of which appears in the bibliography. Two sources are of special note: John D. Luerssen, *Rivers' Edge: The Weezer Story* (Toronto: ECW Press, 2004), although biased and somewhat dated, remains the only book-length study of Weezer. The crowd-sourced site http://www.weezerpedia.com/, although frequently needing clearer documentation, has been an invaluable reference as well.

[9] The recording captures a portion of Cuomo's band in rehearsal, although it can only loosely be described as musical. There are a few guitar sounds, but it mostly consists of a few teenagers talking about their musical aspirations. See "I Wish You Had an Axe Guitar," in Rivers Cuomo, *Alone: The Home Recordings of Rivers Cuomo* (Geffen Records B0010417-02, 2007).

[10] In high school, Cuomo went by the name Peter Kitts, using his stepfather's surname. See Cuomo's / Kitts's unofficial high school transcript here:

accepted into All State his senior year, and was also involved in musical theater, playing the role of Johnny Casino in his high school's production of *Grease!* in the spring of his junior year.[11]

In the years surrounding his graduation from high school, in 1988, Cuomo began to seek musical training that was more specialized than what was available as part of a typical public school education. For instance, he attended a five-week summer music program at Berklee School of Music in Boston in 1987;[12] he took a music theory course during his junior year in high school; and during his senior year, he also completed several music courses at the University of Connecticut.[13] After high school graduation, Cuomo moved to Los Angeles in 1989 to pursue a career as a professional musician. He enrolled in the Guitar Institute of Technology, although he apparently attended classes there infrequently.[14] Shortly thereafter, he enrolled at Los Angeles City College and, beginning in the fall of 1991, at Santa Monica College, where he took music appreciation, among other classes.[15] After Weezer signed a recording contract and

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http://web.archive.org/web/20050923193411/http://www.weezed.com/rc/old/artifacts/1988-EO_Smith-pg1.jpg.

[11] See April and May of 1987 here: http://weezerpedia.com/catalogofriffs.html.

[12] See July and August of 1987 here: http://weezerpedia.com/catalogofriffs.html.

[13] Cuomo's unofficial high school transcript, cited above, includes four university music courses: MUS 145, MUS 146, MUS 251, and MUSIC 2.

[14] See a letter explaining why Cuomo would not receive a certificate of completion from the Guitar Institute of Technology here: http://web.archive.org/web/20040324132858/http://www.weezed.com/rc/old/letters/1990-04-26-MI.jpg.

[15] Luersson, *Rivers' Edge*, 45, 56, 61.

Cuomo's transcript from Los Angeles City College—a semester in which he earned a 4.0 GPA—may be seen here: http://web.archive.org/web/20050924184323/http://www.weezed.com/rc/old/artifacts/1991-04-LACC_Grade_Report.jpg.

released its first album, he continued to study music at Harvard University, attending intermittently from 1995 until 2006, when he graduated with a degree in English. With the exception of his years at Harvard, Los Angeles has remained his primary home since 1989.

In interviews and liner notes, Cuomo has discussed his musical influences, both popular and classical. Brian Wilson of the Beach Boys has long been a hero to Cuomo, and Kiss was an early and lasting influence, especially their 1976 album *Rock and Roll Over*.[16] Cuomo has described the Kiss guitarist Ace Frehley as "just God, because all of his solos were so memorable and singable. They had form to them; they'd start out low and go up high. . . . They were just great, compact little emotional things."[17] Even though he is talking about a band perhaps best known for their stage makeup and pyrotechnics, Cuomo describes their songs in terms of musical form and melodic contour. He takes them seriously as well-crafted musical objects.

In his formative years, Cuomo was a devoted fan of heavy metal. He has pointed to many heavy metal guitarists as early influences, specifically mentioning Scorpions, Judas Priest, Yngwie Malmsteen, Quiet Riot, and Iron Maiden, and, somewhat later,

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A letter of recommendation from his music appreciation professor at Santa Monica College may be seen here: http://web.archive.org/web/20050923200040/http://www.weezed.com/rc/old/artifacts/1991-12-16-SMC_recommend.jpg.

[16] Luersson, *Rivers' Edge*, 7.

[17] Cuomo, quoted in Luersson, *Rivers' Edge*, 12.

Metallica, Slayer, Megadeth, and Anthrax.[18] But, as he has pointed out, he maintained interests in other musical styles as well. As he has said,

> Spiritually I was a metalhead in my teens, which is really sad to say, but musically, I've always listened to everything. I've always listened to classical music. All through high school, I was in lots of classical performing groups. So while I was really rallying behind the headbangers' cause, I always had an open mind to everything else that I was exposed to.[19]

Within the realm of classical music, Cuomo has specifically singled out opera as a favorite genre, saying, "I'm basically an opera fanatic, and especially a fan of Puccini."[20] He evidently once skipped an interview so that he could attend an opera.[21]

After he moved to Los Angeles, Cuomo was exposed to many more styles of popular music, in part through his day job at Tower Records. The Pixies, Nirvana, Jane's Addiction, the Velvet Underground, the Beatles, and Sonic Youth became new influences in the crucial years leading up to Weezer's formation.[22] Around 1991, Cuomo went through a rap phase; Public Enemy, NWA, and Ice Cube filled his ears.[23] Although any musical influence from rap is difficult to hear in Weezer's music, Cuomo does imitate hip-hop-style lyrics in a few songs. One early example is the opening line of "Buddy Holly" (*Weezer [The Blue Album]*, 1994), wherein Cuomo sings, "What's with these homies dissin' my girl? / Why do they gotta front?" Other examples from much later include "The Greatest Man That Ever Lived (Variations on a Shaker Hymn)" (*Weezer*

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[18] The song "Prom Night" mentions the Scorpions. For the other examples, see Luersson, *Rivers' Edge*, 14–15, 17.

[19] Cuomo, quoted in Luersson, *Rivers' Edge*, 21.

[20] Cuomo, quoted in Luersson, *Rivers' Edge*, 211.

[21] Luersson, *Rivers' Edge*, 141.

[22] Ibid., 46.

[23] Ibid., 111.

[The Red Album], 2008) and "Can't Stop Partying" (*Raditude*, 2009), the latter of which is a collaboration with the rapper Lil Wayne. On a recording he made in 1992 and released fifteen years later on *Alone: The Home Recordings of Rivers Cuomo* (2007), Cuomo even recorded a cover of "The Bomb" by Ice Cube.

After he released his first album with Weezer, he added to his music studies by enrolling in music courses at Harvard, one of the most prestigious universities in the country and a place with a first-rate music program.

Cuomo's musical training—first as a dedicated music student in high school, then as a music student at five post-secondary institutions, and finally as an employee at Tower Records—led him to develop a deep knowledge of musical style in a variety of traditions. His musical tastes changed over time and included such varied sources as heavy metal, classical, and hip hop. In later sections of this chapter, I show how his lyrical and musical allusions make use of the knowledge he gained through his musical education.

In addition to his education, Cuomo gained practical experience by playing in several bands from the mid-1980s to the early '90s, at which point he co-founded Weezer. Fury (founded 1984) was a short-lived project involving Justin Fisher (bass), Eric Robertson (drums), and Cuomo's younger brother, Leaves (b. 1971, guitar). Fury had at least one public performance and made some amateur recordings; their repertoire was mostly covers of songs by Kiss. After Fury disbanded, Cuomo's next group, Avant Garde (1985–90), was a more serious and longer-lasting project. In addition to Cuomo and Fisher, Avant Garde's lineup included Kevin Ridel (b. 1969, vocals), Bryn Mutch

(drums), and Michael Stanton (guitar), whom Cuomo had met at the Berklee music camp. They played a number of shows in Connecticut, recorded three demo cassettes, and then relocated from Connecticut to Los Angeles to make it big.[24] After struggling to gain traction, the band was rebranded as Zoom and recorded a fourth demo, which did not yield the record deal that its members so badly wanted. Their efforts stymied, the band broke up. Fisher went on to become the bass player for Nerf Herder, and Ridel moved on to play in other bands, including Ridel High and AM Radio.

While the move to Los Angeles ultimately proved unsuccessful for Avant Garde / Zoom, Cuomo remained in the city, continued to connect with other musicians, and began to shift his attention to writing.[25] Cuomo was nominally a member of two groups—Fuzz and Sixty Wrong Sausages (both founded 1991)—and even played a few shows with them, but these were writing projects more than they were full-fledged bands. A further venture specifically dedicated to writing was the so-called Fifty Song Project, in which Cuomo and his fellow bandmate Patrick Wilson attempted to compose fifty new songs between them.[26] The Fifty Song Project yielded important results: three of its

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[24] A $288.37 bill for six hours of studio time may be found here: http://web.archive.org/web/20050923192517/http://www.weezed.com/rc/old/artifacts/1987-12-12-studio_bill.jpg.

A playlist from WHUS radio, showing Avant Garde's demo to be slightly more popular than albums by Jane's Addition, Dio, Guns n' Roses, and others may be found here: http://web.archive.org/web/20050923192534/http://www.weezed.com/rc/old/artifacts/1988-01-WHUS_playlist.jpg.

[25] For a list of Cuomo's compositions, and many other activities, 1984–2002, see http://weezerpedia.com/catalogofriffs.html.

[26] In addition to Fury, Avant Garde / Zoom, Fuzz, Sixty Wrong Sausages, and the Fifty Song Project, Cuomo has also played with Homie (1997–8) and with Scott & Rivers (2009–14), which features songs sung in Japanese. Weezer have also occasionally used

songs, "Undone—The Sweater Song," "My Name Is Jonas," and "The World Has Turned and Left Me Here,"[27] would later appear on Weezer's first album. But perhaps even more important than these musical compositions were the personal and musical relationships Cuomo formed in the years following his move to Los Angeles.

The network of musicians that Cuomo built during his first three years in Los Angeles would prove decisive. The band that took Cuomo from Connecticut to Los Angeles fizzled away, as did his next three bands. But Cuomo began playing with Patrick Wilson in Fuzz, and Sixty Wrong Sausages included both Wilson and Jason Cropper. Cuomo, Wilson, and Cropper all transitioned from Sixty Wrong Sausages into the Fifty Song Project, where they were joined by Matt Sharp. All the pieces were in place for the project that would define Cuomo's career: This quartet—Cuomo, Wilson, Cropper, and Sharp—would become Weezer.

A Brief History of Weezer

Weezer had their first rehearsal February 14, 1992, in Los Angeles. The founding lineup consisted of Rivers Cuomo (b. 1970; vocals and guitar), Jason Cropper (b. 1971; guitar), Matt Sharp (b. 1969; bass), and Patrick Wilson (b. 1969; drums).[28] They played

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the pseudonym Goat Punishment, typically for trying out new material or for playing in small venues, since 1998.

[27] See 1991 in http://weezerpedia.com/catalogofriffs.html.

[28] Patrick Wilson has been Weezer's only fulltime drummer, and he is the only founding member, apart from Cuomo, who remains in the band. In addition to playing drums, Wilson has written or co-written a handful of Weezer's songs, played guitar, and added backup vocals with Weezer. Wilson also leads the Special Goodness (founded 1996).

local clubs in Los Angeles and recorded multiple demos, eventually catching the attention of Todd Sullivan, a representative of Geffen Records, who signed them to a recording contract in 1993.

Their debut record, *Weezer [The Blue Album]* (DGC, 1994), combines the distorted guitar solos of alternative rock with the singable melodies of power pop. (Technically, the album is self-titled, but everyone calls it *The Blue Album* on account of the fact that Weezer have released four self-titled albums to date, and this one has a blue background on the cover.) Produced by Ric Ocasek of the Cars and supported by two Spike Jonze music videos, *The Blue Album* has sold more than three million copies in the United States alone and remains their best-selling record. It includes the breakout hits "Undone—The Sweater Song," "Buddy Holly," and "Say It Ain't So." Critical reception for the album was initially favorable, and has only grown more so since the album's release. Among its many accolades, in 2003 *Rolling Stone* ranked it as the 297th greatest

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In addition to the four current and three former members of Weezer, the band also has one unofficial member, and that is Karl Koch (b. 1969). Koch has contributed to a few of Weezer's recordings—for example, he plays the kick drum in "Butterfly" (*Pinkerton*) and he created the spoken dialog sections of "Undone—The Sweater Song" (*The Blue Album*)—but his primary involvement with the band is non-musical. Koch's many duties have included working as a driver and roadie, managing the Weezer fan club, designing and maintaining the website, shooting still photos and videos of live performances, and fulfilling many other functions. He maintains an archive of unreleased material related to Weezer, and he is a valuable resource for Weezer researchers, including myself. As if struggling to sum up the many responsibilities he has taken on, the liner notes of *Pinkerton* credit him simply for his role as "Karl Koch."

album of all time.[29] In 1993, while Weezer were in the process of recording *The Blue Album*, founding guitarist Jason Cropper was replaced by Brian Bell (b. 1968).[30]

For their second release, Cuomo planned something more experimental and ambitious: a rock opera set in space. Using the title *Songs from the Black Hole*, Cuomo made at least two drafts of the libretto and wrote at least seventeen musical numbers for inclusion in the opera.[31] A page from Cuomo's manuscript (see Figure 4.1) shows a projected sequence of songs, alongside an incomplete tonal plan, demonstrating that he conceived of the project as one large-scale, harmonically cohesive work and that it reached an advanced stage of development.[32] In the first half of 1996, Cuomo abandoned *Songs from the Black Hole*, and in its place pursued *Pinkerton*, the project that became

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[29] The initial list was released in 2003. A revised list, from 2012, re-ranked *The Blue Album* at number 299. See http://www.rollingstone.com/music/lists/500-greatest-albums-of-all-time-20120531.

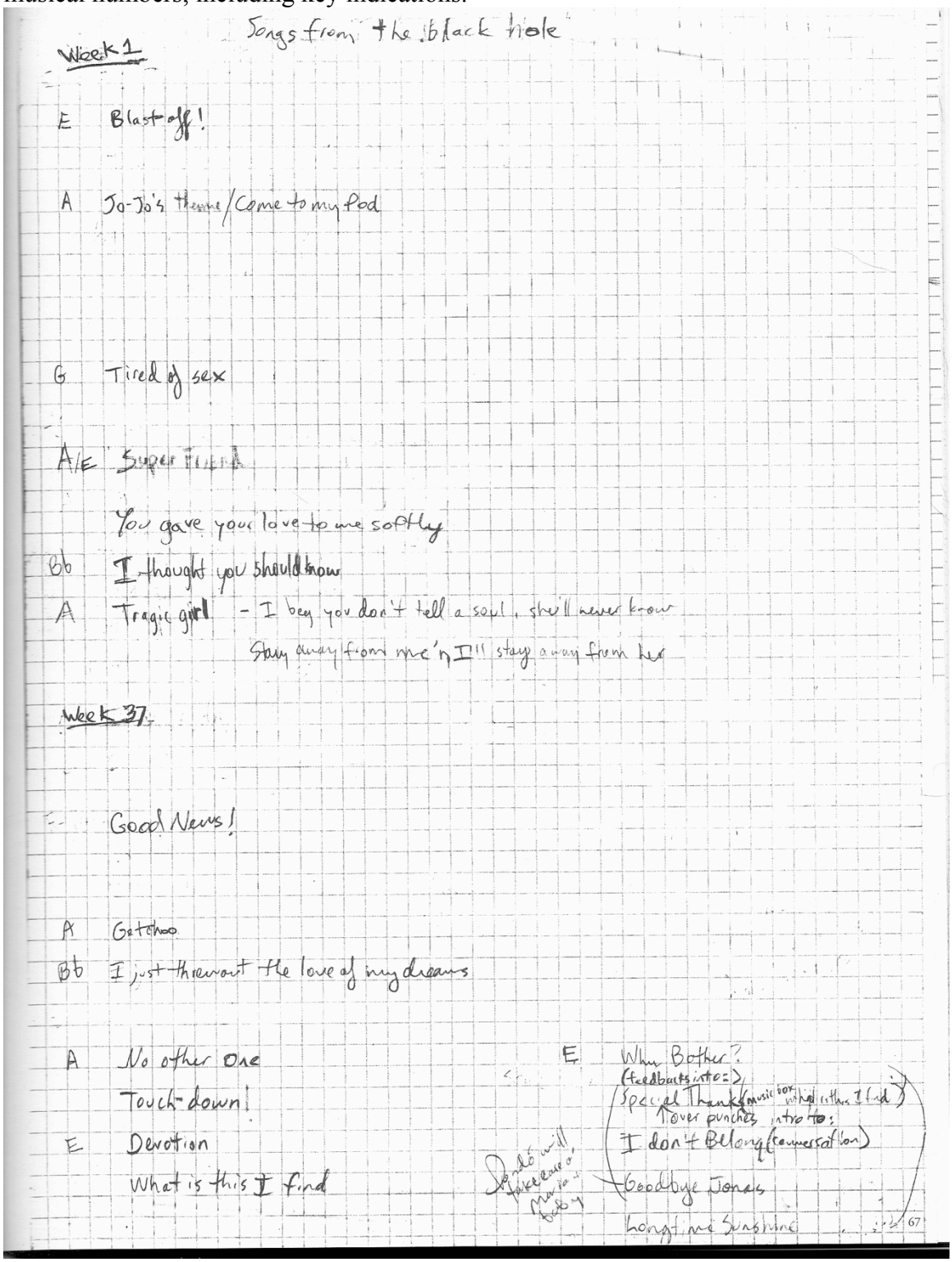
[30] The circumstances of Cropper's departure are disputed and seem to be protected under a legal non-disclosure agreement. Cropper is credited as a songwriter on "My Name Is Jonas," the first track of *The Blue Album*, and can be heard on some of the band's earliest demo recordings, but he is not listed as a performer on any of the band's studio albums. Based on an interview with producer Ric Ocasek, Luerssen argues that Cuomo—not Cropper nor his replacement, Brian Bell—recorded all of the guitar parts on *The Blue Album*. This version of events was later confirmed by Karl Koch, Weezer's unofficial historian. See Luerssen, *Rivers' Edge*, 85–103 and Karl Koch, "The Story of Making *The Blue Album*," *Weezerpedia*, http://www.weezerpedia.com/wiki/index.php?title=The_Story_of_Making_the_Blue_Album.

In addition to guitar, Bell also plays such auxiliary instruments as keyboards and harmonica, and contributes harmony vocals (especially after 2000) to Weezer. He has also played with Carnival Art (1989–1993), the Space Twins (founded 1993), and the Relationship (founded 2006).

[31] See the first draft of the libretto in Rivers Cuomo, *The Pinkerton Diaries* (Hong Kong: privately printed, 2011), 28–40. See the second draft of the libretto ibid., 72–9. An incomplete synopsis and list of pieces can be seen ibid., 66–7.

[32] Rivers Cuomo, *The Pinkerton Diaries* (Hong Kong: privately printed, 2011), 67.

Figure 4.1: Rivers Cuomo, *Songs from the Black Hole* (1995): projected sequence of musical numbers, including key indications.



Weezer's second album. Four songs that he shaped for the opera—"Tired of Sex," "Getchoo," "No Other One," and "Why Bother?"—were repurposed as the first four tracks of *Pinkerton*.[33]

Compared to *The Blue Album*, released two years earlier, *Pinkerton* (DGC, 1996) features heavier distortion, more feedback, and more strain in the vocal delivery, as well as darker, more personal lyrical themes. The album also contains a series of references to Giacomo Puccini's opera *Madama Butterfly* (1904): (1) the title of the album, *Pinkerton*, is a reference to B.F. Pinkerton, the lead tenor in the opera; (2) the title of the album's closing song, "Butterfly," refers to the title character of the opera; (3) in the packaging for the compact disc, the allegorical map hidden underneath the disc tray shows a fictional ship, the *U.S.S. Pinkerton*, sailing to the island of the butterfly; (4) on the disc itself is a quotation Act I of the opera's libretto: "Dovunque al mondo lo Yankee vagabondo / si gode e traffica / sprezzando rischi. / Affonda l'áncora alla ventura" (The whole world over, / on business and pleasure, / the Yankee travels all danger scorning. / His anchor boldly he casts at random)[34]; and (5) the lyrics in several of the album's songs make allusions to the plot of the opera, such as the opening line of "El Scorcho," "Goddamn you half Japanese girls." The cover art, a print by Utagawa Hiroshige called

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[33] Without naming specific examples, Cuomo states in a 2007 interview that one or more of these songs existed in some form before he conceived of *Songs from the Black Hole*. He further explains that he revised them for the (unfinished) opera, and then revised them again for the (finished) album. See Steven Robertshaw, "Web Exclusive: A Conversation with Rivers Cuomo," *Alternative Press*, 30 October 2007, https://web.archive.org/web/20090228184011/http://altpress.com/features/111.htm.

[34] The libretto is by Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa, adapted from the book by John L. Long and the drama by David Belasco. This translation by R.H. Elkin is taken from a 1906 edition of the score. *OperaGlass*, last modified 29 March 2009, http://opera.stanford.edu/Puccini/Butterfly/libretto_a.html.

Kambara yoru no yuki (Night snow at Kambara), also alludes to Japanese culture more generally. The band produced the album themselves, and they resisted using quirky music videos like those from *The Blue Album*.[35] Three singles were released—"El Scorcho," "The Good Life," and "Pink Triangle"—but none fared particularly well. Initial album sales failed to meet expectations, and the critical response was pitiless. To cite the most notorious example, an infamous critics poll in *Rolling Stone* ranked *Pinkerton* as the second worst album of 1996.[36] In subsequent years, however, the album gradually developed a devoted cult following, and both its sales and reviews improved. In 2002, only six years after the album was initially panned, a readers' poll in *Rolling Stone* ranked *Pinkerton* as the best album from 1996 (not the second worst) and the sixteenth greatest album of all time,[37] a remarkable turnaround. In 2010, *Pinkerton* was reissued in a Deluxe Edition, and from 2010 to 2014 Weezer performed all the songs from the record in order as part of their Memories Tour. In September of 2016, twenty years after its release, *Pinkerton* was finally certified platinum.

In the months following the release of *Pinkerton*, however, disappointment surrounding the album raised serious questions about Weezer's future. Cuomo was enrolled at Harvard, and the other band members pursued their side projects. In 1998,

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[35] Luersson, *Rivers' Edge*, 202.

[36] See a retrospective in *Rolling Stone* of the magazine's initial coverage here: Andy Green, "Flashback: Weezer Preview *Pinkerton* at 1996," *Rolling Stone*, 22 December 2015, http://www.rollingstone.com/music/videos/flashback-weezer-preview-pinkerton-at-1996-show-20151222.

[37] "*Rolling Stone* Readers Top 100 Albums," *Rolling Stone*, 17 October 2002, http://www.rocklistmusic.co.uk/rstone.html#Readers%20100.

founding member Matt Sharp left the band.[38] He was the bassist from 1992 to 1998, crucial early years during which Weezer developed their sound, signed a recording contract, and recorded *The Blue Album* and *Pinkerton*. In addition to his bass parts, Sharp frequently contributed harmony vocals in his signature falsetto. Because *The Blue Album* remains the band's best-selling record, because *Pinkerton* boasts a devoted cult following, and because Sharp's falsetto vocals survive as one of the most distinctive characteristics of Weezer's sound, some fans consider the roster with Sharp to be the quintessential Weezer lineup. Suggestions of this nature can be found on virtually every Weezer discussion forum, leading the definitive fan site *Weezerpedia* to call Sharp "a highly polarizing and controversial figure within the Weezer canon."[39] He filed a lawsuit against his former band members in 2002. The suit sought restitution for, among other things, royalties from the band's first two albums. The parties reached a settlement out of court.

Weezer were on hiatus at the time of Sharp's departure, and as a result, he was not immediately replaced. When they regrouped, in 2000, Mikey Welsh (1971–2011)[40] was hired as the new bassist for Weezer's third studio album, *Weezer [The Green Album]* (Geffen, 2001). In many ways, *The Green Album* represents a return to the formulas that

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[38] Sharp has been involved with several music projects outside Weezer, most notably the Rentals (founded 1995), which he leads.

[39] See http://www.weezerpedia.com/wiki/index.php?title=Matt_Sharp.

[40] Welsh was found dead in his Chicago hotel room on October 8, 2011. Authorities suspected a drug overdose as the cause of death, although that suspicion was never publicly confirmed. During his short life, he had brief stints with several bands and a professional career as a visual artist. See his obituary in the *Chicago Tribune*: Peter Nickeas, "Drug Overdose Suspected in Death of Former Weezer Bass Player," *Chicago Tribune*, 9 October 2011, http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/breaking/chi-weezer-bass-player-dies-in-chicago-20111009-story.html.

had proven to be successful on *The Blue Album*. Like *The Blue Album*, *The Green Album* features Ric Ocasek as producer, its cover shows the band members standing against a solid background color, and it is self-titled (which is why the two albums are distinguished by color rather than by title). They further signal their intention of returning to the past with a quotation by the Italian opera composer Giuseppe Verdi printed across the album art: "Torniamo all'antico e sarà un progresso" (Let us turn to the past: that will be progress).[41] In terms of musical style as well, they returned to the power pop style of their debut, with tighter forms and all songs falling within the timespan of 2:08 to 3:50; the entire album is only 28 minutes and 20 seconds long. The personal, emotional lyrics of *Pinkerton* were nowhere to be found, and the style of production returned to a much cleaner sound as well. Three singles—"Hash Pipe," "Island in the Sun," and "Photograph"—gained traction on the U.S. Alternative chart, leading to strong album sales; the album was certified platinum within four months of its release.[42] Critical reception as well showed improvement over *Pinkerton*. Rob Sheffield's review in *Rolling Stone* was typical, describing the album as "ten excellent tunes . . . with zero filler."[43] Not all was well, however. After only a year playing with Weezer, new bassist Mikey Welsh left, in 2001, as the result of a nervous breakdown.[44]

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[41] Giuseppe Verdi in a letter to Francesco Florimo dated 5 January 1871. See the original in Francesco Florimo, *Riccardo Wagner ed i wagneristi* (Ancona: A. Gustavo Morelli, 1883), 108. See an English translation in Charles Osborne, trans. and ed., *Letters of Giuseppe Verdi* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1971), 169.

[42] See http://www.riaa.com/.

[43] Rob Sheffield, "Weezer: *Weezer*," *Rolling Stone*, 14 May 2001, http://www.rollingstone.com/music/albumreviews/weezer-2001-20010514.

[44] Although Shriner joined the band eight years after Bell and nine years after Cuomo and Wilson, and although he does not sing harmony parts with the signature

After Welsh's departure, Scott Shriner (b. 1965) joined the band as Weezer's third bassist. He began touring with Weezer right away and soon thereafter entered the studio with them to record their fourth album, *Maladroit* (Geffen, 2002). This album is a bit heavier than its predecessors, perhaps due to Shriner's presence. He plays bass with a pick, rather than with his fingers, and his backing vocals are less whimsical than Sharp's. Like *The Green Album*, the song construction on *Maladroit* is tight and focused, with song lengths ranging from 1:53 to 3:09. The band returned to self-producing for the album, and they involved fans in the process of its creation. For example, both the title of the album and its cover art came from fans. In addition, Weezer released demo versions of their songs before they had been completed, and fans offered constructive feedback about which songs to continue developing and how best to develop them. *Maladroit* produced two singles: "Dope Nose" and "Keep Fishin'," the latter of which features a shuffle beat and doo-wop vocal harmonies in an alternative rock context. These singles saw some success on the U.S. Alternative chart but were not major hits. The album achieved gold status within a month of its release, but then sales stagnated.[45] Critical reception of the album was mixed.

Since *Maladroit*, Weezer have had no changes in personnel, which has meant a more consistent stream of new releases and a more stable sound, with some notable

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falsetto of founding bassist Matt Sharp, Shriner has nevertheless been a major contributor to Weezer's output, serving as the bassist on seven of its ten studio albums to date. He has also contributed auxiliary instrumental parts, sung harmony parts, and even sung lead vocals on a limited number of Weezer's recordings, such as "Cold Dark World" and "King" (*Weezer [The Red Album]*, deluxe edition, 2008). Shriner played in several bands before joining Weezer, including Vanilla Ice's backup band.

[45] See http://www.riaa.com/.

exceptions. Their next album was *Make Believe* (Geffen, 2005), produced by Rick Rubin. It yielded the band's biggest hit to date, "Beverly Hills," which reached number one on the U.S. Alternative chart, number ten on the *Billboard* Hot 100, and earned a Grammy Award nomination in the category of Best Rock Song, Weezer's first Grammy nomination. Owing to strong sales in its first year, *Make Believe* became Weezer's third platinum album.

For their sixth release, Weezer put out yet another self-titled album, *Weezer [The Red Album]* (DGC, 2008). Although the title and cover art recall Weezer's two earlier eponymous albums, the musical style of *The Red Album* is much more varied. Production duties were split between Rick Rubin, Jacknife Lee, and the band members themselves. Cuomo also shared writing credits, with each other member of the band receiving one writing or co-writing credit apiece. Perhaps most surprisingly, each member of the band takes a turn as lead vocalist, which had not happened on any of Weezer's previous five albums. The band experimented with musical form on a few songs on *The Red Album*, most notably on "Dreamin'" and "The Greatest Man That Ever Lived (Variations on a Shaker Hymn)," and three songs from *The Red Album* are each more than five minutes long, making them Weezer's longest songs since their debut album fourteen years earlier. Four singles were released, but album sales remained modest; it was Weezer's first album that failed to achieve gold status.

Weezer continued to experiment and to collaborate for their seventh studio release, *Raditude* (DGC, 2009), which credits nine composers and six producers. "Can't Stop Partying" features the rapper Lil Wayne, and during a section of "Love Is the

Answer," the vocalist Amrita Sen sings in Hindi. The lead single, "(If You're Wondering If I Want You To) I Want You To," rose to number two on the U.S. Alternative chart, and Marc Webb created a memorable and entertaining video for it. But a wide range of sonic experiments in less than thirty-five minutes resulted in an inconsistent sound, which some critics panned. To cite an extreme example, Huw Jones calls it an "unpardonable decline," "woefully written," "thematically vacant and sonically uninspired," and "an abhorrent cocktail of deluded lyricism and indolent musicianship."[46] By this point, Weezer had been with the same record company for sixteen years and seven albums, but after sales for both *The Red Album* and *Raditude* proved disappointing, they parted ways with Geffen Records.

Weezer then moved to the independent label Epitaph for their eighth album, *Hurley* (Epitaph, 2010). This album had only two producers, Rivers Cuomo and Shawn Everett, but like *Raditude*, the writing credits were numerous, including contributions from nine people outside of Weezer. The album contains several adventurous explorations of timbre—"Hang On" includes hurdy gurdy and mandolin, for example—but in terms of musical form, it is fairly conservative. As with *The Green Album* and *The Red Album*, there seems to be an effort on *Hurley* to recall earlier parts of the band's history. For example, the opening track, which was also the album's lead single, includes the lyrics, "All the memories make me want to go back there." Indeed, around this time, the band began their nostalgic Memories Tour. On one night, they would play *The Blue Album* start to finish; on the next night, they would do the same with *Pinkerton*.

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[46] Huw Jones, "Weezer: *Raditude*," *Slant Magazine*, 28 October 2009, http://www.slantmagazine.com/music/review/weezer-raditude.

When they returned to the studio, their next project was *Everything Will Be Alright in the End* (Republic, 2014). It, too, hearkened back to the band's earlier days. Ric Ocasek was hired as producer for the third time. The lyrics of the lead single, "Back to the Shack," refer to various pieces of band nostalgia: "the shack" where they used to record together; "the strat with the lightning strap," that is, the Fender Stratocaster guitar suspended by a black strap with a white lightning bolt (following Ace Frehley of Kiss) that Cuomo played in the band's early years; a reference to 1994, the year of their debut album; and the line "maybe I should play the lead guitar and Pat should play the drums" as a call to return to their traditional roles in the band.[47] One new quality of *Everything Will Be Alright in the End* is the use of skyscraping vocal lines in the style of Queen or Judas Priest, particularly on "I've Had It up to Here." Another is "Go Away," the only true duet on any of Weezer's albums, which features Cuomo and Bethany Cosentino. Finally, the last three tracks of the album form an interdependent, mostly instrumental, three-movement suite, *The Futurescope Trilogy*. The album's lyrics are both personal and specific. Alongside stories of girl trouble and his absent father, Cuomo makes reference to Shakespeare, Leonardo da Vinci, Steven Hawking, King George III, Paul Revere, and Henry Longfellow, among others. Although sales were modest, critical reception for *Everything Will Be Alright in the End* was much more favorable than it had been for

[47] From 2009 to 2012, Josh Freese (b. 1972) played drums with Weezer on a part-time basis. Freese recorded a few drum tracks on Weezer's *Raditude* (2009) and toured with the band irregularly. When Freese played drums, Wilson switched from drums to guitar, and Cuomo focused exclusively on singing, rather than on both singing and playing guitar. This arrangement, however, proved temporary. After a few years, Freese returned to his other musical ventures, and Wilson retained his place as Weezer's only fulltime drummer.

Weezer's previous several albums. For example, on National Public Radio's All Songs Considered blog, Robin Hilton writes,

> It's a breathtaking work of art, brilliantly produced. . . . I've heard plenty of albums over the years that left me in awe. But I can't think of any in recent memory that have been so much fun to listen to, and so affecting. *Everything Will Be Alright in the End* is the record of the year [for 2014].[48]

Most recently, Weezer have released yet another self-titled album, *Weezer [The White Album]* (Crush, 2016). It is Weezer's most relaxed album to date. The lyrics suggest that this is music for the beach, and the cover art shows the band in a beach scene. Production duties were handled by Jake Sinclair of Crush Music, and writing credits are shared between Cuomo and twelve co-writers. As with earlier works, *The White Album* contains a host of references, in this case to Charles Darwin, the scientist Gregor Mendel, Sisyphus, Burt Bacharach, Mother Theresa, Radiohead, Lewis Carroll, and Dante.

To date, Weezer have released ten studio albums. Eight of these have climbed to one of the top ten positions on the *Billboard* 200 album chart, including six that have reached the top five. Their best-selling record is *The Blue Album*, and their highest-charting single is "Beverly Hills" (*Make Believe*, 2005). Since 2005, album sales have fallen off from their peak, but the band has continued to tour successfully, including headlining two Caribbean "Weezer Cruises," in 2012 and 2014. From the perspective of both fans and critics, their first two or three records were their most successful, and their subsequent work has been measured against these early achievements.

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[48] Robin Hilton, "Robin Hilton's Top 10 Albums of 2014," *NPR.org*, 11 December 2014, http://www.npr.org/sections/allsongs/2014/12/11/369596740/robin-hiltons-top-10-albums-of-2014.

Allusions in Weezer's Lyrics

Weezer's lyrics, almost all of which were penned by Rivers Cuomo, contain numerous allusions and references that stand out against the context of alternative rock music. At times, it is the ungrammaticality itself that strikes the listener. But even where it does not, Cuomo's lyrics reach out to such a range of sources, and for a range of purposes, that fabrics of allusion must be considered in order to make sense of the lyrics. Even though Riffaterre developed his concept with French poetry in mind, it nevertheless works well for analyzing Weezer's music because, like Riffaterre's French poetry, Weezer's lyrics deviate from their normative grammar.

The song "Buddy Holly" is a case in point since its lyrics contain a strange combination of references. The chorus mentions Buddy Holly (1936–59) and Mary Tyler Moore (b. 1936),[49] suggesting that the song is a throwback to the late 1950s, when Holly was at the height of his career, or early '60, when Moore landed her first television role. The song's doo-wop-style lyrics (woo-hoo, woo-ee-oo, oh-oh) also contribute to a retro sensibility. This effect is made even stronger by the music video, directed by Spike Jonze, which shows the band performing in an episode of *Happy Days*, the popular television show that aired in the 1970s and '80s but was set even earlier, in the 1950s and '60s. But neither Buddy Holly, nor Mary Tyler Moore, nor any character from *Happy Days* would ever sing, "What's with these homies dissin' my girl? / Why do they gotta

[49] Even though Moore is mentioned in the chorus and Holly appears in both the chorus and the title, these references were relatively late additions to the song. In an early draft, the chorus ran, "ooo-we-oo you look just like Ginger Rogers. / Oh-oh I move just like Fred Astaire." Early versions of the song were also much slower than the studio version. See Rivers Cuomo, *Alone: The Home Recordings of Rivers Cuomo* (Geffen Records B0010417-02, 2007): liner notes [4].

front?" Against the retro backdrop of the rest of the lyrics, and of the video, the 1990s hip-hop-style slang in these opening lines is ungrammatical. The music, too, resists the retro lyrics with its heavily distorted guitars and synth riffs.

References to specific cultural objects, both real and fictional, lurk within the lyrics of many of Cuomo's songs, as they do in "Buddy Holly." The same album, for example, makes mention of Superman ("Undone—The Sweater Song"); and a Dungeon Master's guide, a twelve-sided die, Kitty Pride, and Night Crawler ("In the Garage"). More than a decade later, on *The Red Album*, Cuomo sings about the hair loss prevention product Rogaine, the sunglasses' manufacturer Oakley, and the music producer Timbaland ("Pork and Beans"); and in "Heart Songs," he mentions seventeen artists by name: Gordon Lightfoot, Cat Stevens, Joan Baez, Eddy Rabbit, Abba, Devo, Pat Benatar, John Lennon, Bruce Springsteen, Grover Washington, Quiet Riot, Iron Maiden, Judas Priest, Slayer, Debby Gibson, Michael Jackson, and Will Smith (as the Fresh Prince).

Often, these are passing references with little consequence, but sometimes they foreshadow later events in a song, or clarify some aspect of a song, or help uncover something that might otherwise remain hidden. In the band's lead single from their 2009 album *Raditude*, "(If You're Wondering If I Want You To) I Want You To," for example, the lyrics mention by name the popular U.S. film *Titanic* (1997), starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet as Jack and Rose. At the beginning of the second verse, Cuomo sings, "The rest of the summer was the best we ever had. / We watched *Titanic*, and it didn't make us sad." Throughout the song, the protagonist grows closer to his beloved, just as Jack and Rose's relationship advances in the film. Both stories hinge

on a piece of jewelry. In the film, the necklace sets off a series of crucial plot developments. In the song, the ring that appears at the end of the second chorus implies that the couple is getting engaged.

The enthusiasm of "(If You're Working If I Want You To) I Want You To" is enhanced by Marc Webb's treatment of the song for a music video.[50] In the video, optimism ascends to levels of humorous absurdity. In the process of pining for the same woman, Weezer's bassist is shot through the heart with an arrow; the guitarist loses his arm while performing a chainsaw trick; and the drummer is hit by a truck, which is driven by the singer. Yet all four still cheerfully join in to sing the chorus.

The music of the song is so syrupy-sweet as to give the impression of unremitting bliss, but the music is misleading. The reference to the film in the lyrics foreshadows how the song will end. Rather than ending with the two characters living happily ever after, as the music would suggest, the song ends tragically, just like the film. The first time through the chorus, the protagonist sings, "I want you to" to encourage his beloved to make the first move in the relationship. When the chorus returns, he uses the same words to urge her to propose marriage. But by the time the chorus makes its final return, the relationship has soured and he calls for her to end it, singing, once again, "I want you to." The musical style remains hyper-optimistic through the end of the song (with its major key, up tempo, finger snaps, vocal harmonies), but the reference to *Titanic* foreshadows the eventual breakup in the lyrics.

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[50] Weezer, "(If You're Wondering If I Want You To) I Want You To," directed by Marc Webb, YouTube video, 3:31, posted by "WeezerVEVO," November 24, 2009, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cDIzMGh94vo.

Another song cluttered with cultural objects is "El Scorcho" (*Pinkerton*), a song in which a boy struggles to confess his feelings to a girl whom he admires. In the second verse, he sings,

> I asked you to go to the Green Day concert
> You said you never heard of them
> -How cool is that?-
> So I went to your room and read your diary:
> "*watching Grunge leg-drop New Jack through a press table . . .*"
> and then my heart stopped:
> "*listening to Cio-Cio San fall in love all over again*."

In printed form, published in *The Pinkerton Diaries* and available on *Weezerpedia*,[51] Cuomo's punctuation helps give some meaningful shape to the lyrics. The dashes surrounding "How cool is that?" indicate that this phrase is an aside the protagonist asks himself. The quotation marks and change of font style indicate material that he found in the girl's diary, such as "*listening to Cio-Cio San fall in love all over again*." But in recordings or live performances, these punctuation marks cannot be heard, and as a result, the lyrics are more difficult to understand. The last two lines are particularly tricky because Cuomo runs them together with no breath in between. The way he sings the two lines, they sound connected: "and then my heart stopped listening to Cio-Cio San . . ."

With the aid of repeated listening, transcription, or consultation of Cuomo's manuscript, the structure of the text becomes clearer. The next step toward understanding the lyrics is to decode the references. In the second verse, we learn that Cuomo's beloved listens to *Madama Butterfly* (also known as Cio-Cio-San), does not listen to Green Day

[51] The punctuation follows Cuomo's manuscript of the lyrics. In this example, I have rendered his change to cursive by using italics. See his manuscript in Rivers Cuomo, *The Pinkerton Diaries* (Hong Kong: privately printed, 2011), 115 or at http://www.weezerpedia.com/wiki/index.php?title=Image:El-Scorcho-lyrics.jpg.

(one of Weezer's principal rivals), and reads *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*, but not for the articles. *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* is where she saw a specific photo of one wrestler, Johnny Grunge, performing a leg drop maneuver on another wrestler, New Jack, causing both to fall through a table. The specific and obscure references make the text almost incomprehensible, but once unpacked, this stanza casts her as an individual, not as a generic, stock character. She is both cool and geeky in all the right ways. In the boy's idealized conception of her, she is so perfect for him that they both enjoy the same operas as well as the same pro-wrestling publications.

A similar case of mysterious lyrical references appears later on the same album. The final song on the album, "Butterfly," tells the story of an inexperienced young man who captures a pet butterfly but, not knowing how to care for her, unintentionally causes her death. With a voice full of regret, Cuomo sings in verse three,

> I told you I would return
> When the robin makes his nest
> but I ain't never comin' back
> I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

These are the last lines of the last song of the album, but they make for a strange ending because the singer refers to something not from earlier in the song, or earlier on the album, but from Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*. Neither in the preceding verses nor in the chorus of "Butterfly"; nor in any of the other songs on *Pinkerton*; nor even in any of the other songs on Weezer's only earlier album does the singer ever mention anything about robins or nesting. The title of the song, "Butterfly," and of the album, *Pinkerton*, point to the latch that will open this particular "hermeneutic window." In *Madama Butterfly*, near the beginning of Act II, shortly before the iconic soprano aria "Un bel di vedremo," the

character Cio-Cio-San (Madama Butterfly) recalls that Pinkerton told her he would return to her with the nesting of the robin (*la nidiata il pettirosso*). The libretto reads,

> Quell'ultima mattina:
> tornerete signor? gli domandai.
> Egli, col cuore grosso,
> per celarmi la pena
> sorridendo rispose:
> "O Butterfly piccina mogliettina,
> tornerò colle rose
> alla stagion serena
> quando fa la nidiata il pettirosso."
>
> [Why, just before he went,
> I asked him, You'll come back again to me?
> And with his heart so heavy,
> To conceal his trouble,
> With a smile he made answer:
> "O Butterfly, my tiny little child-wife,
> I'll return with the roses,
> The warm and sunny season
> When the red-breasted robins are nesting."][52]

As in Puccini's opera, completed more than ninety years earlier, Weezer's Pinkerton returns too late, causing Butterfly's destruction. But here Cuomo swerves away from Puccini's story. This time, in Rivers Cuomo's voice, Pinkerton finally says something he never said in the opera: "I'm sorry."

"Butterfly" is a particularly rich example; it concludes an allegory that spins across the entire album. Earlier on the same album is another example of text that, as Kramer would say, "intrudes where it does not belong." The lyrics of Weezer's "Across

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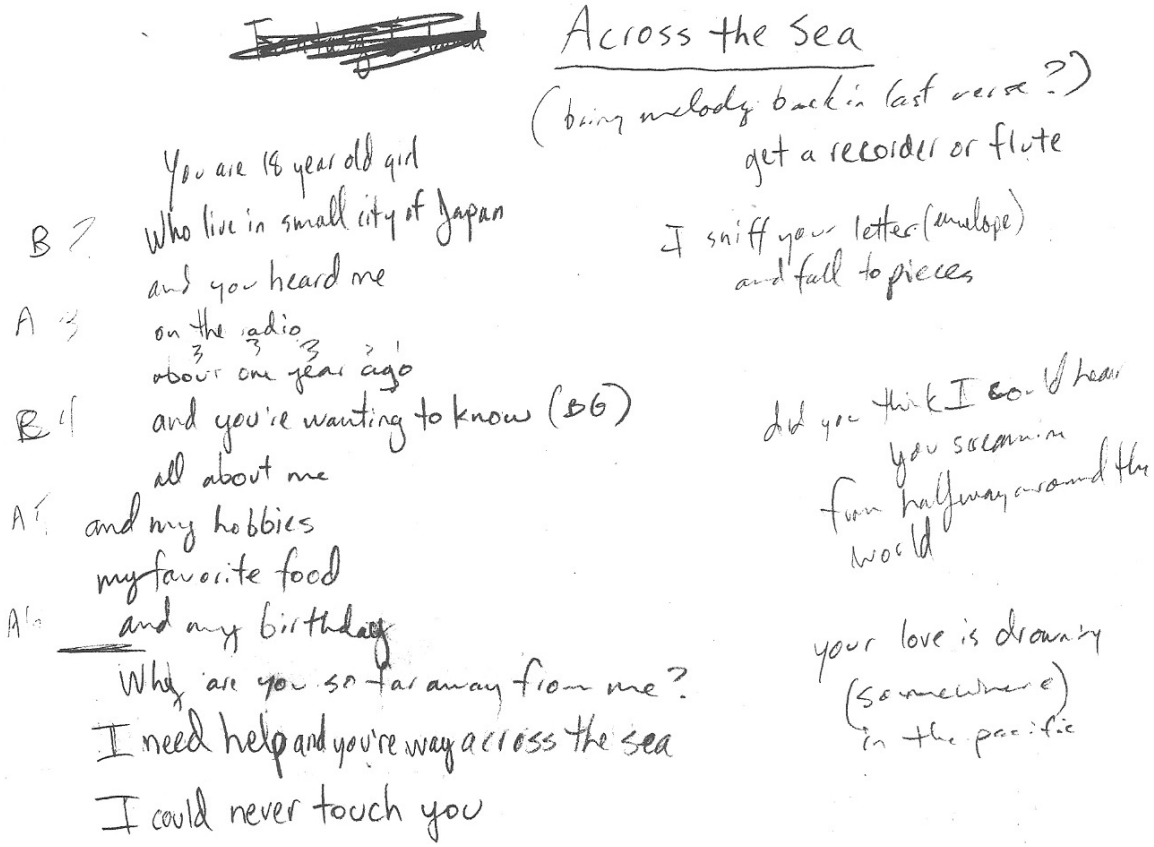
[52] The libretto is by Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa, adapted from the short story by John Luther Long and the drama by David Belasco. This translation by R.H. Elkin is taken from a 1906 edition of the score. *OperaGlass*, last modified 29 March 2009, accessed 8 December 2009, http://opera.stanford.edu/Puccini/Butterfly/libretto_a.html.

the Sea" tell the story of a man in the United States and a young woman in Japan. Each character fixates on the other, even to the point of fetishizing, but they remain disconnected by the vast distance that separates them, both geographically and culturally. The lyrics of the first verse demonstrate the same kind of other-voicedness Kramer describes. For several lines, Cuomo speaks not as himself but as a young Japanese woman who struggles with English grammar. This improper use of language is ungrammaticality in its most basic sense; the lyrics include a reference to a woman "who live in small city of Japan."[53] A reproduction of Cuomo's manuscript, shown in Figure 4.2, illustrates that this ungrammaticality was already present in an early draft of the lyrics.[54] The studio recording of the song is an intimate portrait, although it leaves out the most uncomfortable fetishism Cuomo considered for the lyrics.

[53] Cuomo has claimed that he took these opening lyrics directly from a letter from a Japanese fan, which would explain the improper grammar. He said, "She basically wrote the lyrics to the first verse and part of the chorus, too." However, this anecdote might not be strictly accurate. As the manuscript reproduction in Figure 4.2 shows, Cuomo drafted and revised the lyrics throughout his compositional process. See Luersson, *Rivers' Edge*, 194.

[54] Rivers Cuomo, *The Pinkerton Diaries* (Hong Kong: privately printed, 2011), 139.

Figure 4.2: Weezer, "Across the Sea," *Pinkerton* (1996): draft of lyrics.



Allusions in Weezer's Music

Just as Weezer's lyrics simmer with allusions, such as those in "El Scorcho," "Butterfly," and "Across the Sea," so too does their music. The musical grammar that predominates across most of their music is that of alternative rock from the 1990s or later. They use distorted electric guitars, electric bass, and drum set; most songs use verse-chorus forms and feature a strong vocal melody with some vocal harmonies; the words are easy to understand (even if their meaning is not); the lyrical themes in the songs, as well as the visual aesthetic of the group, position them outside the mainstream of rock music. But they deviate from this musical grammar in numerous ways, some of

which I have already made reference to. For example, Weezer experiment with unusual instrumentations in such songs as "Hang On" (*Hurley*), which includes mandolin and hurdy gurdy, or the inside-the-piano solo that concludes "Undone—The Sweater Song" (*The Blue Album*). They sometimes allude to other musical styles, as in "Can't Stop Partying" (*Raditude*), which features the rapper Lil Wayne, or "Love Is the Answer" (*Raditude*), which includes extended passages of vocalist Amrita Sen singing in Hindi. *The Futurescope Trilogy*, which concludes the album *Everything Will Be Alright in the End*, is similar to an instrumental suite, although the second movement does contain some vocals. As mentioned above, Cuomo worked on an even more ambitious plan in the mid-1990s, a rock opera entitled *Songs from the Black Hole*, although that plan was abandoned and left unfinished. In the song "Falling for You" (*Pinkerton*), they seem to hint at some of the ways their music spills out from the confines of alternative rock to include numerous extra-generic musical points of reference. The protagonist in the song ironically refers to himself as "little ol' three-chord me," but the song actually contains ten times that number of chords.

I have already mentioned how the intentional mistakes of English grammar in the lyrics of "Across the Sea" suggest the voice of a Japanese character. Let us turn now to that song's music. In the opening seconds of the recording, I contend that Weezer create two distinct sonic voices—one to represent Japan, and one the United States—before the lyrics even begin. The track opens with a short introductory duet between piano and

recorder.[55] The use of wind instrument playing a pentatonic melody suggests an exoticized culture, especially in comparison to what comes next. After the duet ends, the introduction continues with the entrance of a heavily distorted electric guitar on a G6add2 chord, and then continues on to the verse in G major.[56] The change in melodic language from pentatonic to diatonic, in instrumentation from acoustic wind instrument to distorted electric guitar, and in harmonic language from triads to extended tertian chords all suggest a change in place from Japan to the United States. These changes are further supported by the recording mix. Whereas the opening is mixed in balanced stereo, at the entrance of the guitar, the mix turns strongly right, further distinguishing the two halves of the introduction from one another. In this case, the first voice to enter is the exoticized other, while the second voice is Weezer's. With respect to the entire album, Cuomo has written, "This is really the clash of East vs. West. My hindu, zen, kyokushin, self-denial, self-abnegation, no-emotion, cool-faced side versus my Italian-American heavy metal side."[57] After the brief opening gesture of East vs. West, followed by the ungrammatical lyrics of the beloved, the remainder of the track demonstrates a more typical grammar for Weezer's music—distorted electric guitars, electric bass, drums, and singing in proper English—which make the opening stand out even more in retrospect.

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[55] The manuscript calls for flute or recorder to play the melody. The published transcription indicates flute. To my ear, the studio recording sounds like a recorder. In live performances, it is guitar or synthesizer.

[56] Like many of Weezer's recordings, "Across the Sea" was recorded with the guitars tuned one semitone below standard tuning. As a result, the sounding pitch is one half step below the written (and played) pitch. Throughout this chapter, I designate pitches by their written (and played) pitch names.

[57] Cuomo, *The Pinkerton Diaries*, 158.

Weezer's lyrical allusions often coincide with their musical ones, generating rich, layered musical objects. Besides "Across the Sea," another example occurs in their 1994 song "Holiday" (*The Blue Album*). In the bridge, in three-part harmony, the members of Weezer sing,

> [lower parts, repeated three times]
> We will write a postcard
> To our friends and family
> In free verse
>
> [upper part, sung by Cuomo]
> On the road with Kerouac,
> Sheltered in his Bivouac,
> On this road we'll never die . . .

As the protagonist muses about a spontaneous vacation, with the only plan being to follow the wind, he sings, "On the road with Kerouac," mentioning both the author Jack Kerouac and his best-known work in a single line.[58] The musical consequences of this lyrical reference are notable. Immediately before Kerouac's name is invoked, the electric guitars drop out completely and the drum part is greatly reduced. Behind what has essentially become a bass solo, band members begin to snap their fingers, creating the stereotypical ensemble that beat writers such as Kerouac might have used to accompany their poetry. After this new Kerouac-ian musical texture has been established, Cuomo sings the author's name. In the transition from the bridge to the next chorus, the "beat section" ends, and Weezer's more typical sound reemerges as the electric guitars reenter and the drums regain the higher level of activity that they formerly possessed.

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[58] This song seems to be about a fantasy vacation, but in his diary, Cuomo wrote about a real trip to Guatemala, where he hoped to "experience a Kerouac-ian adventure." Rivers Cuomo, *Alone II: The Home Recordings of Rivers Cuomo* (DGC / Interscope Records B0012341-02, 2008): liner notes [3].

Similarly, the lyrics of "Heart Songs" (*The Red Album*) have musical consequences. Much of the text simply lists a series of artists who have influenced Cuomo over the years.[59] But in the bridge, the lyrics do not mention any artists or songs by name, instead evoking the band Nirvana through a reference to the cover art of their iconic 1991 album *Nevermind*. At the start of the bridge, Cuomo mentions the year 1991, and later in the section, refers directly to the album's cover art: "had a baby on it / he was naked on it." He designates Nirvana as the band "that broke the chains" he was wearing, so it makes sense that Nirvana's moment in the song would require a more emphatic musical treatment. When the memory of *Nevermind* is invoked, the song's sonic palette darkens considerably from acoustic ballad to distorted grunge tune, making it sound more like a Nirvana song. There is a slow build both in the dynamics and in the chord progression. Halfway through the bridge, the drums expand from just kick drum to include snare and cymbals as well. The addition of high strings does not sound like Nirvana, or Weezer, but like the changes in the drum and bass parts, the addition of high strings serve to increase the tension that builds throughout the bridge. Then the music finally bursts forth in the outro: the vocal melody jumps up an octave—a technique Kurt Cobain used in a number of Nirvana songs—supported by harmony and echoing vocals,

[59] The artists named in the lyrics are Gordon Lightfoot, Cat Stevens, Joan Baez, Eddy Rabbit, Abba, Devo, Pat Benatar, John Lennon, Bruce Springsteen, Grover Washington, Quiet Riot, Iron Maiden, Judas Priest, Slayer, Debby Gibson, Michael Jackson, and Will Smith (as the Fresh Prince). The inclusion of Debby Gibson is actually a mistake; her name is mentioned next to lyrics from "I Think We're Alone Now," which is actually by Tiffany (*Tiffany*, 1987). Cuomo also mentions by song title (rather than by artist) "Never Gonna Give You Up" by Rick Astley (*Whenever You Need Somebody*, 1987) and "It Takes Two" by Rob Base and DJ E-Z Rock (*It Takes Two*, 1988). He also refers to jazz and hippie songs more generally.

and the song's first guitar solo enters, more than three and a half minutes into a four-minute song.

"Heart Songs" is a tour de force of references to popular music, and in other songs, Cuomo refers to classical music as well. The notion of overt ungrammaticality comes closer to the fore, in two respects, in "In the Garage" (*The Blue Album*). For much of Weezer's output, including the other nine tracks on *The Blue Album* and a large majority of the tracks on Weezer's nine subsequent albums, Weezer often utilize the design of soft-verse/loud-chorus. David Temperley has pointed to the contrasting verse/chorus structure as one of the trademark features of rock music, and he argues that there is an expressive purpose to this different treatment, namely

> a contrast between unity and individual freedom. . . . [when all the parts come together in the chorus,] this signifies coordination, unity of purpose . . . The unified spirit of the chorus is also indicated, in many cases, by the addition of other vocals to the melody, either singing in unison or in harmony.[60]

Furthermore, Cuomo himself has written that he considers the soft-verse/loud-chorus structure to be an essential element of a great song. He has written that around the time he composed "In the Garage," he patterned his compositions after other songs that used a soft-verse/loud-chorus structure, such as the Pixies' "Gigantic" (*Surfer Rosa*, 1988) and Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit" (*Nevermind*, 1991).[61] "In the Garage" is an exception to this rule. The chorus remains subdued: the backing vocals drop out, and the

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[60] Temperley uses the terms loose-verse/tight-chorus rather than soft-verse/loud-chorus, although in Temperley's contrasting sections, the chorus is often louder than the verse. See David Temperley, "The Melodic-Harmonic 'Divorce' in Rock," *Popular Music* 26, no. 2 (2007): 323–42. The quotation is 336–7.

[61] Although Cuomo does not mention it as an example, the Pixies' "Gouge Away" (*Doolittle*, 1989) uses the same formula. See Rivers Cuomo, *Alone II*: liner notes [2].

lead vocals feature a narrow range in a low tessitura (a major sixth, concert G♭–E♭), which makes the chorus stylistically ungrammatical.

One explanation for why the chorus remains subdued is found in the song's lyrics. "In the Garage" is about a profoundly lonely character. Journalist Jakob Dorof refers to this song as "Weezer's manifesto: [a] secret [anthem] for the lonely ones."[62] The other band members fail to sing along on the chorus because in the song world, the protagonist has no one who is willing to join him in song. The verses articulate, in painful detail, the various ways the speaker spends his time alone. He has all the necessary equipment to play the role-playing game Dungeons and Dragons, though he never actually plays it. He likes the band Kiss, though he never describes listening to their music or seeing them in concert. His closest friends are, apparently, action figures from X-Men comics and cartoons—and not even the popular ones. If, as Christopher Reynolds argues in *Motives for Allusion*,[63] allusions generate meaning based on shared cultural codes, then the shared cultural codes of "In the Garage"—which are Dungeons and Dragons, the X-Men, and Kiss, fifteen years after that band's peak of popularity—all point to a character who is an outcast, perhaps a geek.

The references in the lyrics offer a partially satisfying explanation for the song's unusual chorus, but there is an important musical reference as well: the chorus's melody is remarkably similar to the opening of Johannes Brahms's "Waldesnacht," op. 62, no. 3 (1874; text by Paul Heyse). Example 4.1a shows the introduction to "In the Garage,"

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[62] Jakob Dorof, "In the Garage," in *Teenage Victory Songs*, last modified 19 August 2008, accessed 25 March 2012, http://tvs.soymilkrevolution.com/?p=112.

[63] Reynolds, *Motives for Allusion*, 9.

played on harmonica, and Example 4.1b shows the opening of the chorus. Example 4.1c shows the opening three measures of Brahms's lied for comparison. Examples 4.1a and 4.1c share a five-note melodic sequence that matches in terms of meter, rhythm, mode, and scale degree. Example 4.1d shows a later section of "Waldesnacht."[64] Although it is metrically displaced by two beats, this section shares an even longer, seven-note melodic sequence with Example 4.1a. Each one of these passages comes from a salient moment—the first and last phrases from Brahms, the introduction and chorus from Cuomo—which makes their musical similarities even more prominent.

This musical connection creates intertextual meaning, whether intended by the composer or not.[65] For a moment, it sounds as if Cuomo stops writing like himself and

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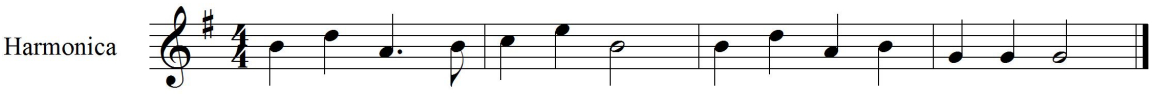
[64] As with other examples, Weezer recorded this song with the guitars tuned one semitone below standard tuning. Therefore, the music in Examples 4.1a and 4.1b sounds one semitone lower than it is notated. Examples 4.1c and 4.1d are transposed from D up to G to facilitate comparison. The eighth note in Example 4.1a appears several times in the song, first in the opening phrase played by harmonica and later in phrases played by the guitar; in the chorus, however, as shown in Example 4.1b, Cuomo omits the eighth note. In Example 4.1b, Cuomo sings the word "garage" as a one-syllable word (i.e., "g'rage").

The capitalization and punctuation in Example 4.1b are taken from Cuomo's manuscript copy of the lyrics, available here: http://www.weezerpedia.com/wiki/index.php?title=Image:In-the-Garage-lyrics.jpg.

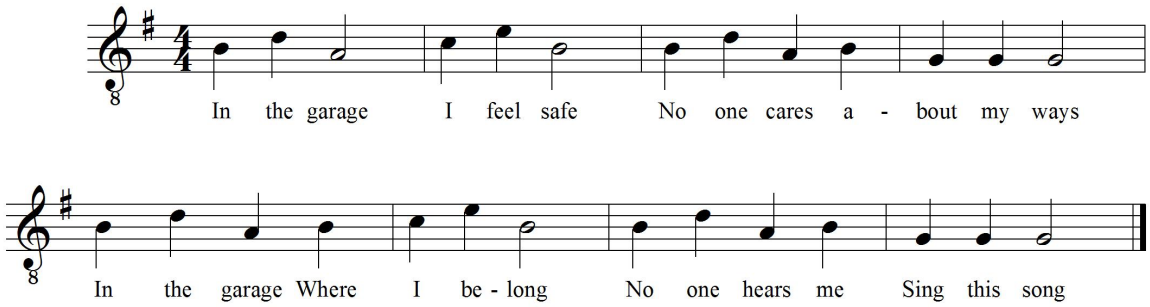
The translations for the brief excerpts of German text that appear in examples 4.1 are: "Wondrously cool woodland night" (4.1c) and "and it seems to me as if once more / I were free from all my insane anguish" (4.1d). See Emily Ezurst, "Waldesnacht, du wunderkühle," in *The LiederNet Archive*, http://www.lieder.net/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=8033.

[65] If I could show with certainty that Cuomo intentionally used Brahms's "Waldesnacht" as a model for his "In the Garage," this would be a clear example of "poietic" intertextuality. However, even if the musical similarities were merely coincidental, the connection between the two pieces would still exist as "esthesic" intertextuality. A listener familiar with Brahms's piece will hear its melody jump out at the beginning of "In the Garage" and with every repeat of the chorus, whether Cuomo intended this effect or not. See the glossary in Klein, *Intertextuality in Western Art Music*.

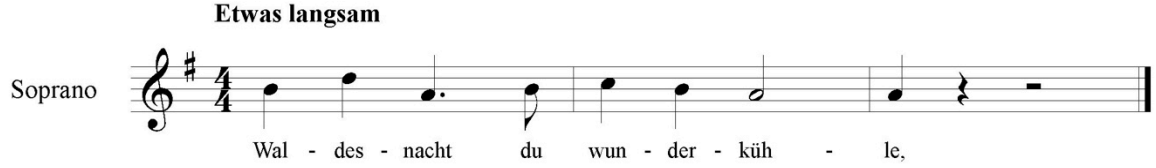
Example 4.1a: Weezer, "In the Garage," *Weezer [The Blue Album]* (1994): introduction.



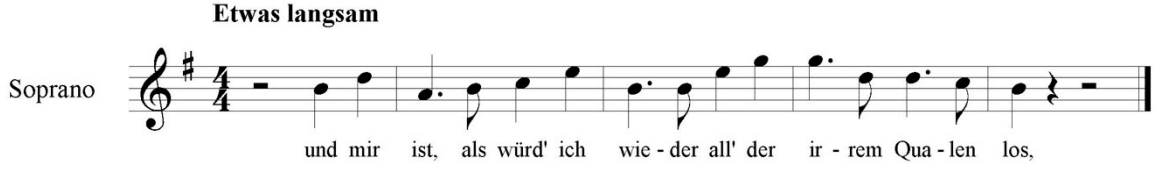
Example 4.1b: Weezer, "In the Garage," *Weezer [The Blue Album]* (1994): beginning of chorus.



Example 4.1c: Music by Johannes Brahms, text by Paul Heyse, "Waldesnacht," op. 62, no. 3 (1874): mm. 1–3, soprano, beginning of verse one.



Example 4.1d: Brahms, "Waldesnacht": mm. 17–21, soprano, excerpt from verse one.



instead writes like Brahms. To borrow Klein's language, this syntactical break is one of the "hermeneutic windows that signal the reader to look to another text for meaning,"[66] with the other text being by Brahms in this case. This example represents the kind of

[66] Klein, *Intertextuality in Western Art Music*, 97.

borrowing that Reynolds has called *assimilative allusion*,[67] in which borrowed musical content carries with it a borrowed conceptual theme, that of the isolation in Brahms's lied.

The setting of "Waldesnacht" is a chilly forest night. There are various elements of nature to observe and to interact with, but there are no other people. We might imagine that the protagonists of both "In the Garage" and "Waldesnacht" have determined to live life "free but lonely" (*frei aber einsam*), following the personal motto of the Hungarian Romantic violinist Joseph Joachim, who was a close associate of Brahms. But in fact, they reject this motto. Instead, both protagonists live "free but happy" (*frei aber froh*), which was the motto Brahms proposed as an alternative to Joachim's.[68] Both protagonists have sanctuaries that they retreat to: the garage and the forest, respectively. And both use music as a mechanism to cope with their loneliness. In "Waldesnacht," the speaker calls on the birds of the forest to sing him to sleep, perhaps to death. In "In the Garage," the speaker's main achievement is writing what he calls "stupid songs" and "stupid words," but, he notes, "I love every one." The lyrics of both pieces provide a consistent picture of

[67] Reynolds, *Motives for Allusion*, 44–67. In addition to being an example of assimilative allusion, it is also an example of "internally persuasive speech," to use the Bakhtinian term, because principal songwriter Rivers Cuomo relocates Brahms's idea to a late-twentieth-century American garage.

[68] Robert Fink discusses these two mottos in the context of Brahms's First Symphony, where Fink, too, sees a "hermeneutic window." See Robert Fink, "Desire, Repression, and Brahms's First Symphony," in *Music/Ideology: Resisting the Aesthetic*, ed. Adam Krims (Amsterdam: G & B Arts, 1998), 267–9.

the loneliness and angst that many experience, and both works suggest music as a means to escape.[69]

For any listener who recognizes the musical similarity between "In the Garage" and "Waldesnacht," the quotation amplifies the expressive impact of Weezer's song. Just like the protagonist in "Waldesnacht," the speaker of "In the Garage" is intensely lonely, and both characters find solace in music. Moreover, by quoting Brahms, Cuomo connects his listeners to Brahms's personal worldview. Like Brahms, and like the protagonist of "Waldesnacht," the character in "In the Garage" lives "free but happy."

Another example where Weezer borrow from classical music is "The Greatest Man That Ever Lived (Variations on a Shaker Hymn)" (*The Red Album*), which re-texts a tune known both by its original title, "Simple Gifts," and by a later title, "Lord of the Dance."[70] Weezer's song is in theme and variations form, with each variation imitating the style of a different band or composer. A bold experiment relative to even the most progressive structures in alternative rock music, it speaks in at least ten different stylistic voices.[71] There is a well-known precedent for treating this tune in a variations set,

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[69] The narrative arch of an adolescent coping with misfortune is present in many of Weezer's songs, leading some critics to regard them as the first "emo" band and one journalist to use the title *Teenage Victory Songs* for his exhaustive blog about the band's music. See Jakob Dorof, *Teenage Victory Songs*, http://tvs.soymilkrevolution.com/.

[70] Joseph Brackett composed "Simple Gifts" in 1848. Sydney Carter wrote an alternate text in 1967, calling it "Lord of the Dance."

[71] Cuomo names Slipknot, Jeff Buckley, Aerosmith, Nirvana, the Andrews Sisters, Elvis Presley, J.S. Bach, Ludwig van Beethoven, rap music, choral music, and Weezer as sources for the variations. Some sources also name Green Day as the model for the rock section from 3:33 to 4:06, although Cuomo never mentions them explicitly. Rivers Cuomo, "On the Making of 'The Greatest Man That Ever Lived,'" 2 parts, YouTube video, 9:54 and 9:16, from an interview for KROQ in Los Angeles, posted by

however, and that is Aaron Copland's Pulitzer Prize winning ballet *Appalachian Spring* (1943–4). Example 4.2a shows Cuomo's music and 4.2b Copland's.[72] Cuomo has claimed that he was unaware of the musical connection between his song and the hymn, only later adding the subtitle after the connection was pointed out to him,[73] but given Cuomo's extensive musical education described above, it seems likely that he was aware of "Simple Gifts," at least subconsciously, which would explain why the tunes resemble each other so closely. Given that he set the tune in theme and variations form—and at the same pitch level as in *Appalachian Spring*—Copland's work must surely be an influence as well.

"The Greatest Man That Ever Lived" is sung from the perspective of an egotistical musician. Not only is he "the greatest man that ever lived," but also he is "the baddest of the bad," "the best," "the tops," "the thing," and more. The music borrows from a series of artists and composers, including the Andrews Sisters, Aerosmith, and Nirvana, as if to suggest that these are some of "the greatest men (and women) that ever lived." Cuomo's is no objective history, however. As the composer, he controls how his history of music ends: The final variation is in the style of Weezer, placing Cuomo's band at the apex of music history. The construction of the piece is clearly teleological; it

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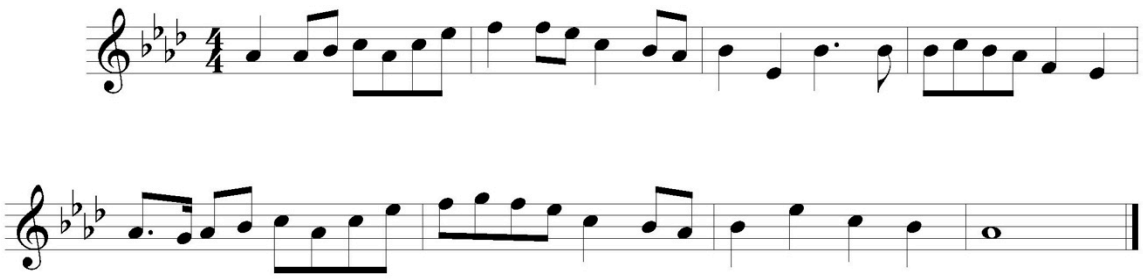
"Clayford27," 14 January 2009, Part 1 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dx4mX-rDPIQ; Part 2 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XIj6RRXtGX0.

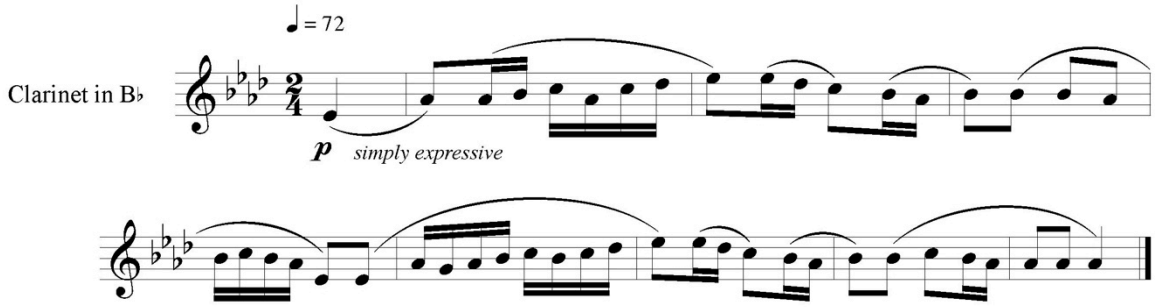
[72] Example 4.2a is transcribed from the opening theme in the piano. Therefore, it is notated at concert pitch. As with other examples, Weezer recorded this song with the guitars tuned one semitone below standard tuning. Therefore, the music in those parts would sound one semitone lower than they are notated. Example 4.2b is shown at concert pitch to facilitate comparison.

[73] See Rivers Cuomo, *Weezer [The Red Album]*, deluxe edition (DGC, 2008): liner notes.

Example 4.2a: Weezer, “The Greatest Man That Ever Lived (Variations on a Shaker Hymn),” *Weezer [The Red Album]* (2008): theme.



Example 4.2b: Aaron Copland, *Appalachian Spring* (1943–1944): rehearsal 55, Clarinet in B♭ (notated at concert pitch).



is only in the last variations that Cuomo sings, “I am the greatest man that ever lived.” By placing Weezer at the end, Cuomo presents the band as the culmination of a musical evolution. Because of this musical move and because Cuomo repeatedly sings, “I am the greatest man that ever lived,” this song seems to have inspired a psychological study on narcissism.[74] Cuomo insists, however, that the goal of the song was to project the false grandiosity of performers, including Weezer. He specifically mentions the line “I was

[74] Nathan DeWall describes thinking about this song when he designed his study. See John Tierney, “A Generation’s Vanity, Heard Through Lyrics,” *New York Times*, 25 April 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/26/science/26tier.html.

born to give" as a crack in the veneer of his braggart's persona.[75] Following this interpretation creates a pessimistic, biting sense of irony. When Cuomo sings, "I am the greatest man that ever lived," what he actually suggests is that he only *pretends* to be the greatest man that ever lived. And further, that other bands are pretending too.

Using variations in a rock song would be unusual enough, but a few of the variations land well outside the realm of recent popular music. Although the band comprises four men, one of the bands that they imitate is the Andrews Sisters. (From 3:08 to 3:33, they sing in three-part harmony and switch to a shuffle beat.) When they mimic Elvis Presley, they do not choose one of his aggressive rock songs, such as "Hound Dog" or "Jailhouse Rock," which might align with some of the other aggressive rock styles in the piece. Instead, they imitate the spoken-word section of his "Are You Lonesome Tonight." Following Presley's model almost word-for-word, Cuomo speaks more than he sings, "Somebody said, 'all the world's a stage, and each of us is a player,'" and he continues, like Presley does, by contrasting "act one" with "act two" of his metaphorical play. Both songs allude to the well-known quotation from Shakespeare's play *As You Like It* (circa 1600). According to Cuomo's explanation of his compositional process, he studied Elvis's song and incorporated some of its qualities into "The Greatest Man That Ever Lived." With a smile, Cuomo concludes, "[Elvis] cribbed that from Shakespeare, of course, and then I cribbed it from him."[76] Thereafter follows a variation of vocal

[75] See the YouTube interview cited above.

[76] The song was actually written by Lou Handman and Roy Turk (1926), not by Elvis. For Cuomo's quote, see especially 2:16–3:12 in Cuomo, "On the Making of 'The Greatest Man That Ever Lived,'" 2 parts, YouTube video, Part 1, 9:54, from an interview

polyphony, not entirely unlike the music of Shakespeare's time. Later on, there is a section of three-voice a cappella counterpoint that Cuomo initially wrote for a composition lesson with Bruce Reich at UCLA.[77]

"The Greatest Man That Ever Lived" is a highly unusual work, owing both to its large-scale variations structure as well as to some of the smaller-scale choices within each variation. It is cluttered by a host of references, both lyrical and musical, that point the listener to other texts. Although the song appears to be narcissistic, the quotation from Shakespeare suggests that it, instead, is drama about narcissism, and Cuomo agrees to act his part.

Conclusion

Weezer's music is rich with references and allusions, some of which are overt while others are subtle and mysterious. The other voices in Weezer's songs sometimes deepen and sometimes contradict their surface meanings. The appearance of a melody by Brahms in "In the Garage" effectively doubles the emotional message of the song; the loneliness of today shares something in common with the loneliness of an earlier generation. In contrast, the quotation from Shakespeare in "The Greatest Man That Ever Lived" undercuts the song's apparent narcissism. Like other artists, Cuomo boldly strides

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for KROQ in Los Angeles, posted by "Clayford27," 14 January 2009, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dx4mX-rDPIQ.

[77] Although rare, this type of three-voice polyphony is not unique in Weezer's output. There is a similar moment in the bridge of "(If You're Wondering If I Want You To) I Want You To."

onto the stage, acting out the part of a great rock star, but his real personality bears little resemblance to the character he plays in our imaginations.

Weezer's music is rich with references and allusions that often reveal layers of meaning, which is one reason why their music rewards repeated listening. Each of Weezer's songs is a cohesive work unto itself, and many Weezer fans enjoy these songs without investigating their many points of reference. Yet strangenesses, like the ungrammatical music and text of "Across the Sea" or the highly unusual form of "The Greatest Man That Ever Lived," remain in the songs nevertheless. By drawing attention to these anomalies, my goals have been to enrich the experiencing of listening to Weezer's music, to work toward a more complete understanding of a fundamental characteristic of the band's music, and to hint at the cultural sea change in post-1965 rock music, when vernacular and cultivated traditions became increasingly intertwined with one another.

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Appendix 3A: Text of "American Tune," by Paul Simon (1973).[1]

Many's the time I've been mistaken
And many times confused
Yes, and I've often felt forsaken
And certainly misused
Oh, but I'm all right, I'm all right
I'm just weary to my bones
Still, you don't expect to be
Bright and bon vivant
So far away from home, so far away from home

I don't know a soul who's not been battered
I don't have a friend who feels at ease
I don't know a dream that's not been shattered
Or driven to its knees
Oh, but it's all right, it's all right
For [we've] lived so well so long
Still, when I think of the road
We're traveling on
I wonder what went wrong
I can't help it, I wonder what's gone wrong

And I dreamed I was dying
And I dreamed that my soul rose unexpectedly
And looking back down at me
Smiled reassuringly
And I dreamed I was flying
And high above my eyes could clearly see
The Statue of Liberty
Sailing away to sea
And I dreamed I was flying

Oh, we come on the ship they call the Mayflower
We come on the ship that sailed the moon
We come in the age's most uncertain hour
And sing an American tune
Oh, it's all right, it's all right
It's all right, it's all right

[1] Paul Simon, "American Tune," *Paul Simon*, http://www.paulsimon.com/us/music/there-goes-rhymin-simon/american-tune.

You can’t be forever blessed
Still, tomorrow’s going to be another working day
And I’m trying to get some rest
That’s all I’m trying to get some rest

Appendix 3B: Text of "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded." German text by Paul Gerhardt (1656), partial English translation by James W. Alexander (1830).[2]

O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden,
Voll Schmerz und voller Hohn,
O Haupt, zum Spott gebunden
Mit einer Dornenkron',
O Haupt, sonst schön gezieret
Mit höchster Ehr' und Zier,
Jetzt aber höchst schimpfieret:
Gegrüßet sei'st du mir!

Du edles Angesichte,
Davor sonst schrickt und scheut
Das große Weltgewichte,
Wie bist du so bespeit!
Wie bist du so erbleichet!
Wer hat dein Augenlicht,
Dem sonst kein Licht nicht gleichet,
So schändlich zugericht't?

Die Farbe deiner Wangen,
Der roten Lippen Pracht
Ist hin und ganz vergangen;
Des blaßen Todes Macht
Hat alles hingenommen,
Hat alles hingerafft,
Und daher bist du kommen
Von deines Leibes Kraft.

Nun, was du, Herr, erduldet,
Ist alles meine Last;
Ich hab' es selbst verschuldet,
Was du getragen hast.
Schau her, hier steh' ich Armer,
Der Zorn verdienet hat;
Gib mir, o mein Erbarmer,
Den Anblick deiner Gnad'!

[2] Paul Gerhardt, "O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden," *The LiederNet Archive*, http://www.lieder.net/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=32075; James W. Alexander, "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded," *Hymnary.org*, http://www.hymnary.org/files/hymnary/pdf_thumbnails/96096.png.

Erkenne mich, mein Hüter,
Mein Hirte, nimm mich an!
Von dir, Quell aller Güter,
Ist mir viel Gut's getan.
Dein Mund hat mich gelabet
Mit Milch und süßer Kost;
Dein Geist hat mich begabet
Mit mancher Himmelslust.

Ich will hier bei dir stehen,
Verachte mich doch nicht!
Von dir will ich nicht gehen,
Wenn dir dein Herze bricht;
Wenn dein Haupt wird erblaßen
Im letzten Todesstoß,
Alsdann will ich dich faßen
In meinen Arm und Schoß.

Es dient zu meinen Freuden
Und kommt mir herzlich wohl,
Wenn ich in deinem Leiden,
Mein Heil, mich finden soll.
Ach, möcht' ich, o mein Leben,
An deinem Kreuze hier
Mein Leben von mir geben,
Wie wohl geschähe mir!

Ich danke dir von Herzen,
O Jesu, liebster Freund,
Für deines Todes Schmerzen,
Da du's so gut gemeint.
Ach gib, daß ich mich halte
Zu dir und deiner Treu'
Und, wenn ich nun erkalte,
In dir mein Ende sei!

Wenn ich einmal soll scheiden,
So scheide nicht von mir;
Wenn ich den Tod soll leiden,
So tritt du dann herfür;
Wenn mir am allerbängsten
Wird um das Herze sein,
So reiß mich aus den ßngsten
Kraft deiner Angst und Pein!

Erscheine mir zum Schilde,
Zum Trost in meinem Tod,
Und laß mich sehn dein Bilde
In deiner Kreuzesnot!
Da will ich nach dir blicken,
Da will ich glaubensvoll
Dich fest an mein Herz drücken.
Wer so stribt, der stirbt wohl.

O sacred head, now wounded,
with grief and shame weighed down,
now scornfully surrounded
with thorns, thine only crown:
O sacred head, what glory,
what bliss till now was thine;
yet, though despised and gory,
I joy to call thee mine.

What thou, my Lord, has suffered
was all for sinners' gain;
mine, mine was the transgression,
but thine the deadly pain.
Lo, here I fall, my Savior!
'Tis I deserve thy place;
look on me with thy favor,
and grant to me thy grace.

What language shall I borrow
to thank thee, dearest friend,
for this thy dying sorrow,
thy pity without end?
O make me thine forever;
and should I fainting be,
Lord, let me never, never
outlive my love for thee.

Appendix 3C: Text of "Inventions," by Stuart Davis (2002).[3]

When I work on my inventions
I use rubber bands and glue
When I work on my inventions
I cut some things in two
Take a peek
but keep it secret

Almost done with my invention
but I need a volunteer
When I work on my inventions
I have to plug my ears
But who said science
is quiet?

Put your hand inside the jar
Goddammit I'm in charge
Keep those wires in your mouth
don't spit 'em out
I'm inventing what will be
the thing that tells me
what invented me

I'm not nice to my inventions
when they are not nice to me
You don't know about invention
so shut up
I guess some of my inventions
don't want sleep and don't want food
I love all of my inventions
Why don't they love me?
I love all of my inventions
but they don't love me
Do they, kittie?
Do they, kittie?

Put your hand inside the jar
Goddammit, I'm in charge
Keep those wires in your mouth
Don't spit 'em out

[3] Stuart Davis, "Inventions," *The Late Stuart Davis*, http://www.stuartdavis.com/albums/late-stuart-davis/lyrics/inventions.

I’m inventing what will be
the thing that tells me
what invented me

What invented me?
someone tell me
what invented me
I must discover
what invented me?

So put my hand inside the jar
Flip the switch and boost the charge
Keep those wires in my mouth
Don’t let ’em out
This discovery will be
the one that tells me
what invented me