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FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

Representations of Music in Late Eighteenth-Century Fiction

by

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Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

The first part of this thesis will consider how a range of eighteenth-century novels represented the relationship between non-professional musical performance and femininity. Chapter one will consider music's status as a female accomplishment, focussing on the debate about the value of musical accomplishment as it appeared in polemical writing and novels by Jane Austen, Frances Burney, Elizabeth Hervey and anonymous writers. It will examine how far these novelists presented music as a leisure activity that benefitted women in their daily lives and how they responded to a prevalent dichotomy of intellectual endeavour and musical accomplishment. It will trace the changing function of music throughout Jane Austen's fiction, placing it in the context of other novels of the time, while arguing that these women writers managed to criticise certain attitudes that motivated the pursuit of musical accomplishment without rejecting music as a creative skill. Broadly, the first chapter will investigate eighteenth-century polemical writing and novels with an eye to examining how musical accomplishment became a marker of femininity in novels. Chapter two will scrutinise the role of concerts in four eighteenth-century novels in order to consider the currency of a binary opposition between non-professional and professional spaces. It will also examine how novelists evaluated such spaces through their representations of musical performance. The second section of chapter two will explore the social and political associations given to musical instruments, examining how far the representation of musical instruments, in Frances Burney's *Camilla* and Sarah Harriet Burney's *Geraldine Fauconberg* led to a criticism of disability and foreignness. Both sections will consider how music has contributed to a debate about the rise of consumerism, the organisation of spaces, the tenuous female move into professionalism and the meaning of the term luxury. I will show that Jane Austen, Frances Burney and Ann Thacknesse responded to the premise that the professional space was an unsafe place for women by including concerts that involve both performing and non-performing heroines in various ways. Thus, they were unafraid to implicitly comment on the divides between the private and public spheres.

The second half of the thesis examines responses to music in the eighteenth century by analysing the relationship between music-making, sensibility and the responsive body. The third chapter will assess how male observers and suitors responded to female music-making, questioning both how far this altered the way in which sensibility has been understood and the central role of the body in scenes of music-making. It will traverse a wider segment of literary genres and include analysis of French and Irish, as well as English, novels to assess how far nationality affected the relationship between gender, sensibility and music. Chapter four will examine musical courtship scenes, considering how far music was used as a tool in courtship and identify it as a language specifically suited to the rules of marriage-making. It will also explore the relationship between music, femininity and courtship in novels published between 1750 and 1814.

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Introduction

[Ophelia] complied with the next request to play; and at once charmed and astonished her hearers by her exquisite taste and rapid execution. In the pathetic parts of the composition, the former quality displayed itself so advantageously, that everyone who heard, felt it was genuine, by its sweet influence on their heart.¹

In the anonymous novel *Lumley House* (1787), the heroine is distinguished and respected as a result of her music-making. Ophelia displayed herself ‘so advantageously’ on the piano that the audience was ‘charmed and astonished’. The narrator immediately makes a moral judgement about Ophelia by describing her performance as ‘genuine’, which in turn raises questions about the criteria that audiences used to appraise musical performances. Rather than offering a technical analysis of the music and song that Ophelia performed, the narrator focuses on the display of music-making and how her audience are affected by it. Like many eighteenth-century novels, *Lumley House* offers musical scenes in which the narrator links the heroine’s musical talent with an assessment of her character. As well as presenting music as a feminine mode of display, the passage from *Lumley House* also sets up a close relationship between modest performance and female morality because Ophelia’s ‘genuine’ performance had a ‘sweet influence on their [the audience’s] heart’. This relationship questions the construction of a musically accomplished woman. This passage also raises pertinent questions about how far novels used music as a way of commenting on the female character, the extent to which novels advocated musical education and music’s role in fulfilling the aims of courtship fiction.

In *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education*, Hannah More estimated that, between the ages of six and eighteen, the average musically accomplished girl spent a

¹ *Lumley-House*, 3 vols (London, 1787), I, 65. This is a courtship novel about the journey of a heroine, Ophelia, her obstacles and her eventual marriage to the hero, Belvour.

staggering fourteen thousand and four hundred hours practising the piano.² After surveying women's musical routines, the musicologist Hohl Trillini surmised that the average daily practice time for such eighteenth-century women was between four and eight hours.³ Amateur music-making thus played a formative role in the lives of leisured women and this is also evidenced by huge debate surrounding women's musical education in late eighteenth-century polemical writing. The best of this provided a series of judgements on the value, environment, performance conditions, motivations and functions behind women performing music.⁴ All of the novels used as case-studies in this thesis demonstrate that music-making, sheet music, treatises on musical accomplishment and the physical musical instruments themselves all embodied a range of social codes; some of which the novelists identified as a prescription of the patriarchal society. Patriarchal control was explicit in the way that conduct books, paintings and numerous eighteenth-century sources promoted amateur music-making amongst women to prevent them from entering the professional space. Sheet music contained carefully chosen song lyrics, and notated music was often designed for specific musical instruments, which were thought to be most suitable for women.⁵ Prescriptive accounts of amateur female music-making also stemmed from both an established prejudice against the music profession, which was associated with the lower social orders in Campbell's survey of trades entitled *The London Tradesman*, and a

² Hannah More wrote: 'Suppose your pupil to begin [practising music] at six years of age, and to continue at the average of four hours a-day only, Sunday excepted, and thirteen days allowed for travelling annually, till she is eighteen, the state stands thus; 300 days multiplied by four, the number of hours amount to 1200; that number multiplied by twelve, which is the number of years, amounts to 14,400 hours'. Hannah More, *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education. With a View of the Principles and Conduct Prevalent among Women of Rank and Fortune*, 4th edn, 2 vols. (London, 1799), I, .55.

³ Regula Hohl Trillini, *The Gaze of the Listener: English Representations of Domestic Music-Making* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008), p.68.

⁴ See the following educational treatises for examples of this: Priscilla Wakefield, *Reflections on the Present Condition of the Female Sex: with Suggestions for its Improvement* (London, 1817), Hester Chapone, *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind, Addressed To a Young Lady* (London, 1777), Lord Kames (Henry Home), *Loose Hints upon Education, Chiefly The Culture of The Heart* (Edinburgh, 1781).

⁵ The pianoforte, harp, lute and voice were perceived as the musical instruments most suited to women. They were discouraged from performing on wind instruments. The following book discusses gendered instrumentation: Jacqueline Letzer and Robert Adelson, *Women Writing Opera: Creativity and Controversy in the Age of the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

simultaneous anxiety about growing female professionalism.⁶ Even Dr Burney's comprehensive *General History of Music* lamented the reputations attributed to professional musicians.⁷ Such accounts, Margaret Doody argues, indicated then that professional singers and instrumentalists occupied a similar social status to workwomen and society compared the self-display required for professional music-making with prostitution.⁸

This introduction has three aims. First, it will explain the publication dates of the novels discussed in the thesis and explore music's changing role in the novel. It will then justify its sources by explaining the prevalence of anonymous fiction and polemical treatises and comment on its choice of case-studies. Second, the introduction will question the meaning of an accomplishment and explain the decision to concentrate on music (rather than other accomplishments). Outlining the argument of the thesis within the critical field will be the third task before the introduction explains the focus on women's writing. Finally, it will outline how each chapter contributes to the dissertation's broad aims.

This thesis's decision to primarily focus on late eighteenth-century fiction is chiefly informed by the fervent debate about the role of music in women's education, which followed the publication of Mary Wollstonecraft's *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* (1787). This treatise questioned why women's education consisted primarily of

⁶ R. Campbell., *The London Tradesman. Being a Compendious View to all Trades, Professions, Arts, both Liberal and Mechanic, Now Practised In the Cities of Westminster* London, 1747). Campbell writes that 'the Grave and Rigid of all Ages have looked upon Music as of no public Utility: They imagine it effeminates the Mind, enervates the more manly Faculties', p.89.

⁷ Burney wrote that 'there are few instances of vocal performers, especially female, being brought on our stage, but by accident. The fear of seduction, profligacy, and the world's opinion, deters parents from educating their children with a view to a profession, which nothing but uncommon success and prudence, can render honourable in the eyes of the most serious part of the nation' Dr Charles Burney, Chapter xii, 'General State of Music in England during the Present Century' in *A General History of Music*, ed. by Frank Mercer (New York: Dover Publications, 1935), p.983.

⁸ In her introduction to *The Wanderer*, Margaret Anne Doody argues that 'performing singers and instrumentalists were, like actresses, thought of as being on a level with workwomen, but also as bearing about themselves, however personally innocent, the flavour of prostitution', Frances Burney, *The Wanderer or Female Difficulties* (1814) ed. by Margaret Anne Doody, Robert L Mack and Peter Sabor, 5 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p.xxiv.

accomplishments.⁹ All of the case-studies of novels analysed in this thesis consider the value of music as an accomplishment. James Chandler's point that 'the currency of "cases" has increased nearly as dramatically as the term "historical situation" itself' muses on the number of case-studies in literary studies. His argument becomes relevant when considering the value and selection of case-studies in any dissertation. Chandler also questions the critical legitimacy of the clustering of literary case studies in the romantic period.¹⁰ While he makes a relevant point about the danger of randomly selecting case-studies, the inclusion of a wide range of carefully chosen case-studies gives any thesis breadth and shows the relevance of a particular theme. To unpick the role of music in eighteenth-century literature, the dissertation will analyse passages in twenty six novels.

Works of literature that discuss the role of music in female education often echo arguments in Wollstonecraft's *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters*, which considered music's role as an accomplishment. As this educational treatise was published in 1787, I have selected eighteen case-studies of novels published after 1787. They all question the expectation that women should automatically count music as an accomplishment.¹¹ Twelve of the twenty six novels were published after 1800 when the value of women's accomplishments was still under scrutiny. After 1800, however, music began to open up more possibilities for women; novels such as Frances Burney's *The Wanderer* (1814) and Ann Thickett's *The School for Fashion* (1800) presented music as a possible profession

⁹ Mary Wollstonecraft, *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters: with Reflections on Female Conduct in The More Important Duties of Life* (London, 1787).

¹⁰ James Chandler, *England in 1819: The Politics of Literary Culture and the Case of Romantic Historicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), pp.39, 32.

¹¹ **The eighteen case-studies of novels published after 1787 are the following:** Elizabeth Hervey, *Louisa* (1790), *The Wreath of Friendship; or, A Return from India* (1790), Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Mansfield Park* (1814), *Emma* (1815), *Persuasion* (1818) In chapter two: Frances Burney, *The Wanderer or Female Difficulties* (1814), Ann Thickett, *The School For Fashion* (1800), Frances Burney, *Camilla* (1796), Sarah Harriet Burney, *Geraldine Fauconberg* (1808). In chapter three: Matthew Lewis, *The Monk* (1796), Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), Germaine De Staël, *Corinne, or Italy* (1807), Sydney Owenson, *Lady Morgan, The Wild Irish Girl* (1806), Sarah Harriet Burney, *Clarentine* (1796). In chapter four: *Woodland Cottage* (1796), Sir Walter Scott, *Waverley* (1814).

for women while Jane Austen's final novel, *Persuasion* (1818), positioned music as a space for its heroine's contemplation rather than as an accomplishment.¹²

Prior to 1787, pertinent educational treatises by John Essex, Jonas Hanway and Hester Chapone also outlined an ideal context for female music-making, but there was less of a challenge to women's role.¹³ The eight other novels, which will be examined, were published before 1787. They rarely present music in the context of feminised education and focus far less on the limitations of accomplished women.¹⁴ While generalisations should not be made solely on the basis of novels' publication dates and other factors such as a novel's genre and its nationality will be examined alongside chronology, 1787 remains a rough date for charting the increased scrutiny of music as a female accomplishment that became a feature of the late eighteenth-century novel along with the more pronounced link between music and women's social role. Novels published before 1787 presented other concerns about music's role in courtship. Owing to this, four novels published prior to 1787 are discussed in the final chapter, which focuses on courtship. A vast range of novels published between 1750 and 1814 highlighted similar functions of female music-making. In these, authors used music to present a complex version of female identity and showed how music provided women with a problematic role in courtship. This thesis has chosen to proceed thematically and as such does not take a strict chronological approach when analysing the breadth of novels across its four chapters. Instead, it discusses episodes in

¹² **The eleven case-studies of novels with publication dates after 1800 are the following:** Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Mansfield Park* (1814), *Emma* (1815), *Persuasion* (1818). Chapter two discusses Frances Burney, *The Wanderer or Female Difficulties* (1814), Ann Thickett, *The School For Fashion* (1800), Sarah Harriet Burney, *Geraldine Fauconberg* (1808). In chapter three, the novels are the following: Germaine De Staël, *Corinne, or Italy* (1807), Sydney Owenson, Lady Morgan, *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806), Sir Walter Scott, *Waverley* (1814).

¹³ John Essex, *The Young Ladies Conduct; or, Rules for Education, Under Several Heads; With Instructions Upon Dress, Both Before & After Marriage* (London, 1722), Jonas Hanway, *Thoughts on the Use and Advantages of Music, and other Amusements* (London, 1765), Hester Chapone, *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind, addressed to a Young Lady by Mrs Chapone* (London, 1777).

¹⁴ **The eight case-studies are of the following novels:** *The History of Melinda Harley* (1777), Clara Reeve, *The Two Mentors: A Modern Story* (1783). *The Artless Lovers* (1768) is discussed in chapter two. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Julie or the New Heloise* (1761) is discussed in chapter three. Chapter four examines Phoebe Gibbes, *The Woman of Fashion: Or, The History of Lady Diana Dormer* (1767), Samuel Richardson, *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753), Henry Fielding, *The History of Joseph Andrews* (1762), *The Life of Mr Jonathon Wild the Great* (1754).

novels according to their theme rather than their publication date. This approach will show how the rise of consumerism and the growing prevalence of public concerts, the increased production of novels and women's rising professionalism affected responses to music and its subsequent representation in novels. It also links the rise in published novels with the mass production of pianos and sheet music, which also occurred alongside the debate about the meaning and purpose of luxury.

As John Richetti succinctly points out, 'the eighteenth-century British novel is a unique set of documents by which we can try to hear voices.'¹⁵ Richetti's earlier book describes the novel as a 'convenient label', which goes some way to indicating the difficulty in defining this literary form.¹⁶ If novels successfully 'record and privilege specific details that shaped the daily, contingent lives of ordinary people', they become useful documents for analysing the role and function of eighteenth-century music-making.¹⁷ In this thesis, the novel is defined as a heterogeneous literary form that is made up of genres such as gothic, realist and national romance genres. These genres are all prose narratives that present a series of characters and scenes and share additional characteristics according to their type.¹⁸

When this thesis explores representations of music in novels, it argues that the eighteenth-century novel offers the set of voices that Richetti observes. The novel evinces a multiplicity of representations of music across its broad spectrum of genres. Without considering the particulars of these genres, it becomes difficult to recognise how and why novelists represent music. In addition to its analysis of novels by Austen in chapter one, the

¹⁵ John Richetti, *The English Novel in History 1700-1780* (London: Routledge, 1999), p.1.

¹⁶ John Richetti, *The Cambridge Companion to the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.1.

¹⁷ Ibid., p.10.

¹⁸ **The gothic novel, for example, usually contains a sensitive heroine who is subjected to horror and there are encounters with supernatural forces. The national romance genre, on the other hand, famously exposed issues of nationality and free expression.**

thesis refers to the evangelical novel, *Coelebs in Search of a Wife* (1809) by Hannah More, which encouraged social reform and was famous for what Anthony Mandal described as ‘reconfiguring romantic sensibility into moral sensitivity.’¹⁹ In this novel, More scrutinises the representation of music and the notion of an accomplishment more rigidly than Matthew Lewis or Ann Radcliffe do in their gothic novels: *The Monk* (1796) and *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), where music appears alongside concepts of supernaturalism and excess. The narrative of Sir Walter Scott’s historical novel, *Waverley* (1814), discussed in chapter four, is woven around an account of Scottish history, while the anonymous novels in the same chapter are concerned with courtship.²⁰

National romance novels will appear in chapter three, which discusses *Corinne* (1807) by Germaine De Staël and *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806) by Sydney Owenson. Labelled the ‘Irish Corinne’, Owenson explored the construction of national identity. Both *The Wild Irish Girl* and *Corinne* radically feature female *improvvisatrices* and celebrate musicality as a form of free emotional expression.²¹ Such was their awe of their heroines that Staël and Owenson both eccentrically re-enacted their fictional creations in their daily lives.²² Music is usefully employed by these authors in engaging in a ‘debate of national heroism’ that is not a feature of novels by authors such as Jane Austen, which focus on small family circles.²³ Of *The Wild Irish Girl*, Anthony Mandal comments that ‘the heroine’s individualism is marked [...] by her accomplishments’ (which may include music)

¹⁹ Anthony Mandal, *Jane Austen and The Popular Novel: The Determined Author* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p.102. Hannah More, *Coelebs in Search of a Wife* (London, 1809).

²⁰ Novels with a central theme of courtship include *The Artless Lovers* (London, 1768) and *Woodland Cottage* (London, 1796).

²¹ Julie Donovan, *Sydney Owenson, Lady Morgan and The Politics of Style* (California: Academica Press, 2009), p.114.

²² Julie Donovan commented that Owenson acted out the role of Glorvina in her own life, signing off on her letters as ‘Glorvina’, carried her harp around as a fashion accessory and impersonated Glorvina by attending parties dressed in celtic costume. Ibid., p.3. Donovan remarked that Staël impersonated her literary heroine too (albeit in a less flamboyant fashion compared with Owenson). Ibid., p.114.

²³ Anthony Mandal, *Jane Austen and The Popular Novel*, p.141.

while I argue that in the gothic novel entitled *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, music is more representative of mystery and escape.²⁴

One of the key aims of this thesis is to promote the novel as an important and heterogeneous literary form, which displays vitally important debates about music and its role in female education. Across the four chapters, a wide range of writing, including genres of novels, polemical writing, letters, newspapers and music collections are discussed. While novels contribute to ‘a debate about the nature of the moral and social world’ of music, their divergent aims and intentions mean that they will represent music differently.²⁵ Overlaps between the novel’s genres can certainly occur. Elements of evangelical fiction can be found in realist novels such as Austen’s *Mansfield Park* (1814) and the national romance genre explores the excess which is a feature of gothic fiction. What the thesis will show however is music’s steady appearance in the novel’s genres and its subsequent universal appeal and pervasive influence in the novel form. In its detailed analysis of various genres of novels, the thesis aims to do justice to the array of novels that discuss music.

Anonymous novels feature heavily in this thesis. This testifies to the widespread appeal of music as an entity that transcends the borders of canonical writing. By dissecting a variety of anonymous novels, this thesis will be sensitive to the eighteenth-century boom in the publication of novels by unknown authors. After all, as Robert Griffin points out, between 1750 and 1790 eighty percent of all published novels were anonymous.²⁶ While a wide range of non-canonical novelists discuss music as an accomplishment, *The School For Fashion* (1800) by Ann Thickett, *Louisa* (1790) by Elizabeth Hervey and *The Two*

²⁴ Ibid., p.144.

²⁵ John Richetti, *The English Novel in History 1700-1780* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 16.

²⁶ Robert J. Griffin, ed., *The Faces of Anonymity: Anonymous and Pseudonymous Publication from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p.1. The thesis discusses the following anonymous novels: Chapter 1: *The History of Melinda Harley* (1777), *The Wreath of Friendship; or, A Return from India* (1790), Chapter 2: *The Artless Lovers* (1768), Chapter 4: *The Artless Lovers, Woodland Cottage* (1796).

Mentors (1783) by Clara Reeve have been selected as case-studies because they offer especially passionate debates about the relationship between femininity and musical accomplishment, which are pertinent to the focus on performance in chapters one and two.²⁷

In the discussion of performance arenas in chapter two, Jane Austen's *Persuasion* (1818) and Frances Burney's *The Wanderer* (1814) are examined side-by-side as their representations of musical concerts are contrasting and claim differing amounts of space in the novels. Concerts occupy a similar function in *Persuasion* and the anonymous novel, *The Artless Lovers*. The style and purposes behind the concerts in Thicknesse's *The School For Fashion* and *The Wanderer* also merit comparison. In the same chapter, Burney's *Camilla* (1796) and Sarah Harriet Burney's *Geraldine Fauconberg* (1808) explore the relationship between otherness, nationality and musical instruments.

Novelists such as Ann Thicknesse, Elizabeth Hervey, Phebe Gibbes and Clara Reeve have traditionally been neglected by literary criticism. In chapter four, Phebe Gibbes' *The Woman of Fashion* (1767) is an example of a novel which compares a musical heroine with a woman who manipulates music as a courtship tool. This may be contrasted with the more measured relationship between music, femininity and courtship in chapter four's substantial case-study of Samuel Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753), where music has a pivotal role in the courtship between Harriet Byron and Grandison. Published in the same year as Sir Walter Scott's *Waverley* (1814), Austen's *Mansfield Park* (1814) and Burney's *The Wanderer* (1814) also present the failure of women who perform music

²⁷The following novels are a few examples of the scores of eighteenth-century novels that mention music as an amusement: Elizabeth Gunning, *The Foresters* (1796), where Marienna enchants the company throughout with her music-making. In Mary De Crespigny, *The Pavillion* (1796), the musicality of Ethelinda and Miss Corbett are contrasted. In Lady Dorothea De Bois, *Theodora* (1770), Theodora's harpsichord playing attracted the men. Harriet Lee, *The Errors of Innocence* (1786) features collective music-making in volume II (pp.149-151) and Charlotte Sanders, *The Little Family* (1796) warns against the vanity of music-making , p.102.

to attract suitors. The use of music as a comment on the courtship procedure was thus common throughout the eighteenth century.

Despite the focus on female novelists, chapter four makes reference to male canonical novelists such as Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding and Sir Walter Scott.²⁸ Fielding's *The History of Joseph Andrews* (1762) and *The Life of Mr Jonathon Wild the Great* (1754) show glimpses of men venturing into the music profession and using music for social progression. The earliest novel in this study will be Richardson's seminal novel *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753), which chapter four argues had a documented influence on Austen's fiction.²⁹ This chapter will consider the argument that Jane Austen composed a dramatic version of Richardson's novel, which was itself entitled 'Sir Charles Grandison'. Furthermore, it argues that his play displays vital perspectives about female music-making. Richardson's novel has a central focus on courtship, which is staged through the medium of music-making scenes, making it an ideal case-study for chapter four's discussion of the relationship between the body, music-making, courtship and gender and consequently the way in which these relate to sensibility and sentiment. This relationship is mimicked in later eighteenth-century novels by Austen and Burney. Analysing *Sir Charles Grandison* in chapter four makes the thematic (rather than chronological) focus of the thesis apparent, but it precedes chapter four's study of Burney and Austen, thus demonstrating the widespread relevance of this novel in a study of music's role in later eighteenth-century fiction. All of the novelists mentioned in this chapter set up a similar relationship between musical performance, propriety and courtship.

²⁸ I shall be discussing Henry Fielding, *The History of Joseph Andrews* (1762), *The Life of Mr Jonathon Wild the Great* (1754) and Sir Walter Scott's, *Waverley* (1814).

²⁹ Even though *Sir Charles Grandison* was published earlier than other novels analysed in this thesis, its influence on Austen is enough to merit its analysis in this thesis. In addition, the novel tackles debates about accomplishments, instrumentation, the relationship between music, body language and gender. Owing to the attention that this novel pays the body, courtship and their relationship with gender and music-making, it is better positioned in the second half of this thesis, which discusses responses to music.

There is a specific focus on novels by Jane Austen and Frances Burney throughout the thesis as they discuss music, musical women, concerts and their relationship with the act of courtship. Not only does music appear in practically every novel that Austen wrote, but it occupies the widest range of functions in her fiction compared with other authors of the time.³⁰ These roles briefly include music as a form of emotional escape in *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) and *Persuasion*, where it also appears in the form of a concert. Music is linked with sensibility and mirrors changing female identity in *Sense and Sensibility*, duets show strained gender relations in *Sense and Sensibility* and *Emma* (1815). Music turns into a form of female competition in *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) and *Emma*. It is the basis of a debate on female education in *Pride and Prejudice*. Music is a courtship tool in *Emma* and *Mansfield Park* and it marks Austen's changing attitude as its function changes from the early satire of accomplishments in the juvenilia to its more solitary and reflective role in *Persuasion*.³¹ Second, Austen's injection of humour and irony into her novels is a distinctive aspect of her writing, which impinges on her representation of music. Even though accomplishments are often presented satirically, music frequently appears as an index of the modest heroine in Austen's novels. This warrants further attention.³²

³⁰ **Authors such as Maria Edgeworth and Susan Ferrier frequently presented music in their novels.** Maria Edgeworth, for example, frequently referred to music and musical accomplishments in the following novels: Maria Edgeworth, *Belinda* (1801), where harp-playing is one of Belinda's accomplishments. In **Maria Edgeworth, *Patronage* (1813)** the narrator comments on the different attitudes to music-making exhibited by Lady Angelica and Caroline and **Maria Edgeworth, *Helen* (1834) contains a heroine who is taught the harp. Susan Ferrier, *Marriage* (1818) contains singing, harp-playing and a scene where Adelaide offers the visiting Mary a selection of musical instruments to amuse herself.** Susan Ferrier, *Marriage* (1818) ed. by Herbert Foltinek, 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), II, 229. **While these are valuable representations of music, which could be examined further, the novels represent an archetypal musically accomplished woman who also appears in the selected novels discussed in chapter one.**

³¹ Jane Austen, *Catharine and Other Writings* (1792), ed. by Margaret Anne Doody and Murray, 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

³² Finally, music was an influential aspect of Austen's personal life. Whilst Austen resided at Chawton, for example, she had daily access to the Austen family's music books ('Book 4' was inscribed 'Miss Jane Austen'), she copied music from printed sources and practised the piano every morning. Their extensive music collection, which is now in the possession of the Jane Austen Memorial Trust based at The Jane Austen House Museum in Chawton, consists of seventeen volumes containing hundreds of pieces of music, which range from piano sonatas to Scottish ballads and appear in both printed and handwritten form. T.F. Carpenter has identified the handwritten music in Books two, three and four, which were copied from various printed sources, as being done in Jane Austen's own hand. See Ian Gammie and Derek McCulloch, eds., *Jane Austen's Music: The Musical World of Jane Austen Seen Through the Manuscripts and Printed Editions Held By The Jane Austen Memorial Trust at Chawton with Brief Histories of Contemporary Composers and a Catalogue of More than*

Frances Burney's novels feature heavily as, at the end of the century, *The Wanderer* (1814) presents an important debate about the relationship between music, femininity and professionalism, while the earlier publication *Camilla* (1796) offers an interesting perspective on gender, otherness and instrumentation. Frances Burney was herself brought up in a family of musicians and was a practised scribe who copied and edited her musicological father's extensive publications.³³ The novels of Sarah Harriet Burney also appear as they show further evidence of a musical background and reveal an important connection between the practice of musical instruments and social class. As Frances Burney's half-sister, Sarah Harriet Burney includes countless descriptions of music-making in her novels and letters; many of these representing significant stages in courtship.³⁴

While numerous eighteenth-century novels featured music, the selected novels can be analysed to trace trends in fiction as a whole. The novels present characters that recur in other works. These include modest musical heroines, women who exploit music as a symbol of social worth, women who manipulate music for courtship and men who are entranced by musical heroines. By creating these archetypes, authors contributed to debates about musical instruments, sensibility and luxury and they considered links between music, gender, national identity and history. In this sense, music's broader functions in eighteenth-century culture become apparent. The prevalence of music in all of

300 *Musical Works* (St. Albans: Corda Music Publication, 1996). In *My Aunt Jane Austen: A Memoir*, Caroline Austen confirmed Jane Austen's commitment to practising and copying music; [Jane Austen] practised every morning [...] Much that she played from was manuscript, copied out by herself—and so neatly and correctly, that it was as easy to read as print.' Caroline Austen, *My Aunt Jane Austen: A Memoir* (1867) in J.E. Austen-Leigh, *A Memoir of Jane Austen and Other Recollections*, ed. by Kathryn Sutherland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p.171.

³³ Frances Burney edited Charles Burney, *A General History of Music; Memoirs of Dr Charles Burney 1726-1769*.

³⁴ Useful primary sources will include the journals and letters of the Burney family, which may be found at 'The Burney Centre' at McGill University; a repository where scores of letters and microfilms untapped private attitudes about how music was performed, received, and interpreted and how performance arenas were constructed. Essential manuscripts by the musicologist Charles Burney are analysed in chapter two, where music's involvement in the organisation of social spaces is openly addressed.

this fiction demonstrates the popularity of music as a way of constructing female identity and highlights the rise of consumerism in the eighteenth-century novel.³⁵

Published and distributed in enormous quantities in the late eighteenth century, polemical treatises form an integral comparison with novels in this thesis. Such treatises consider the nature and problematic role of accomplishments in female education.³⁶ They reveal a wide range of opinions on music and accomplishments and as such provide valuable insights into expectations placed on women and the difficulties inherent in prescribing an ideal system of female education. Deciphering representations of accomplishments in conduct books has enabled scholars to better understand why musical accomplishment was a popular theme in fiction, how it became associated with femininity and in what ways it was a lens for examining women's social role.

Literary critics such as Nancy Armstrong, Linda C. Hunt and Mary Poovey have recognised the value of polemical writing in representing eighteenth-century culture. Armstrong argues that conduct books reflected a changing social class structure, remarking that 'by virtue of its apparent insignificance [that of conduct books], a body of writing concerned with devising a special kind of education for women in fact played a crucial role in the rise of the new middle classes in England.'³⁷ Linda C. Hunt attests that conduct books are actually vital for interpreting the meaning of female character, claiming that 'both novel and conduct book contributed to the codification of a distinct notion of female

³⁵ Alongside better-known novels by Jane Austen and Frances Burney, I shall examine Clara Reeve, *The Two Mentors* (1783) and Elizabeth Hervey, *Louisa* (1790) in chapter one. Sarah Harriet Burney's *Geraldine Fauconberg* (1806), Ann Thacknesse's *The School For Fashion* (1800) will be discussed in chapter two. Chapter three will analyse Elizabeth Hervey's *Melissa and Marcia* (1788), Sarah Harriet Burney's *Clarentine* (1790). The final chapter will discuss Phoebe Gibbes' *The Woman of Fashion* (1767) and Sarah Harriet Burney's *Geraldine Fauconberg*.

³⁶ These include Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women: with Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects* (London, 1792), Hester Chapone, *Letters on the Improvement of The Mind, Addressed to a Young Lady*, Hannah More, *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education*.

³⁷ Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p.60.

character.’³⁸ In her argument that ‘conduct books can be as illuminating as concert reviews in determining music’s compositional, performance and reception contexts, and its cultural importance’, Leslie Ritchie uses these educational tracts to assess the relationship between gender and music-making.³⁹ When considering Jane Austen’s fiction, Linda C. Hunt and Penelope Fritzer define Austen’s output according to her reliance on conduct books. Hunt places Austen’s fiction solidly in the conduct book tradition while Fritzer argues that Austen’s novels reflect behaviour that is detailed in courtesy books.⁴⁰ Joyce Hemlow, another critic, makes a similar claim for Burney’s novels.⁴¹ Mary Poovey takes this idea further by arguing that it is impossible to understand culture without examining conduct books: ‘conduct book material provides the best access to ways in which culture defined female nature and ways in which women of this period would have experienced the social and psychological dimensions of ideology.’⁴² Clearly, then, conduct books have been attributed a great deal of influence when it comes to the eighteenth-century novel.

As Clare Brant has recently argued, however, the use of ‘conduct books’ as an unproblematic term needs re-assessing as the genre encompasses a very broad range of writing. Grouping conduct books together in one genre, Brant has argued, presents complications as the term, which actively assumes didactic content, refers to genres as diverse as letters, essays and sermons.⁴³ While this thesis extracts much of its historical background from polemical writing, it also considers Brant’s argument by acknowledging the difficulty in establishing a consensual representation of music within these conduct books. Instead, it adopts the term ‘polemical writing’ when referring to such tracts, while

³⁸ Linda C. Hunt, ‘A Woman’s Portion: Jane Austen and the Female Character’ in *Fetter’d or Free? British Women Novelists 1670-1815* ed. by Mary Anne Schofield and Cecilia Macheski (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1986), p.11.

³⁹ Leslie Ritchie, *Women Writing Music in Late Eighteenth-Century England: Social Harmony in Literature and Performance* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), p.3.

⁴⁰ Ibid., Penelope Joan Fritzer, *Jane Austen and Eighteenth-Century Courtesy Books* (Westport Ct.: Greenwood Press, 1997).

⁴¹ Joyce Hemlow, ‘Fanny Burney and The Courtesy Books’, *PMLA*, 65 (1950), 732-761.

⁴² Mary Poovey, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer: Ideology as Style in the Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley and Jane Austen* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p.16.

⁴³ Clare Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters and British Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p.61.

still arguing that this genre conveys a variety of different political and social agenda, which cannot be homogenised. To highlight this, the thesis contrasts the different arguments present in polemical writing by John Essex, Jonas Hanway and Lord Kames, which promote music as an accomplishment, with polemical writing by Mary Wollstonecraft, which challenges established traditions in female education.⁴⁴

Through the consideration of the female education system via the medium of letters, Hester Chapone's *Letters on the Improvement of the Female Mind* constitutes yet another component of the debate about female accomplishments. After all, as Girdham argues, letters can be as useful a source as educational treatises in surveying patterns of musicianship: 'Letters and diaries help us to develop an understanding of patterns of playing [music]'.⁴⁵ Letters, as Ruth Perry rightly remarked, could also be an effective 'repository for emotions' and an 'important line of communication with the outside world'.⁴⁶ In addition to the perspectives offered in educational treatises, letters contain attitudes towards musical practice, personal responses to music and its function in everyday life, which can all be compared with accounts given in novels. As chapter one will discuss, the thesis also uncovers a related concern for female welfare in moralist educational treatises by Hannah More and subversive expositions by Wollstonecraft, thus confirming polemicists' pre-existing political labels and questioning the assumption that polemical writing has to be didactic.

Brant's point about the narrow audience to which conduct books address themselves is a key reason why polemical writing is so useful in this analysis. As Brant argues, conduct literature addresses an audience of almost exclusively marriageable women who

⁴⁴ John Essex, *The Young Ladies Conduct; or, Rules for Education, Under Several Heads; With Instructions Upon Dress, Both Before & After Marriage* (London, 1722), Jonas Hanway, *Thoughts on the Use and Advantages of Music, and other Amusements* (London, 1765), Lord Kames (Henry Home), *Loose Hints upon Education, chiefly the Culture of the Heart*; Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women: with Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects*.

⁴⁵ Jane Girdham, 'At Home; Everyday Music in Eighteenth-Century Life' in Alden Cavanaugh, *Performing the "Everyday: The Culture of Genre in the Eighteenth Century* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007), p.20.

⁴⁶ Ruth Perry, *Women, Letters and the Novel* (New York: AMS Press, 1980), p.70.

are members of or aspire to join the upper middle classes.⁴⁷ It was exactly this type of audience, who learned music as an accomplishment and who become the serious and satirical subjects that perform music in novels.

Accomplishments and their function, influence and role in eighteenth-century women's education are discussed in detail throughout the thesis. *The Oxford English Dictionary* states that the word 'accomplishment' has been in use from 1561. When Ann Radcliffe referred to an accomplishment in the context of the heroine's character in *The Italian* in 1797, she was defining it as something that had been achieved; largely a positive attribute. Radcliffe wrote that 'the harmony of her [heroine's] mind [was] not the effect of torpid feelings, but the accomplishment of correct and vigilant judgment.'⁴⁸ Chapter one will demonstrate how references to the term 'accomplishment' in educational treatises by Essex and Hanway referred to a social embellishment.⁴⁹ Alternatively, to quote *The Oxford English Dictionary*, an accomplishment can refer to 'a faculty or quality that perfects or completes a person for society—that adds delicacy of taste and elegance of manners to accuracy of knowledge and correctness of thought'. These usages of the term hint that an accomplishment encompasses showiness and performance. Chapter one will discuss why accomplishments could be abused to mean superficial acquirements, embellishments that pretend to effect or complete an education which does not exist. When considering the difference between an accomplishment and a talent, it is useful to examine

⁴⁷ Clare Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters and British Culture*, p.61.

⁴⁸ Ann Radcliffe, *The Italian* (1797), ed. by Frederick Garber and E.J. Clery, 4 vols (Oxford: Oxford World Classics, 1998), III, 300.

⁴⁹ John Essex, *The Young Ladies Conduct; or, Rules for Education, Under Several Heads; With Instructions Upon Dress, Both Before & After Marriage* (London, 1722), Jonas Hanway, *Thoughts on the Use and Advantages of Music, and Other Amusements* (London, 1765).

one of Lord Chesterfield's letters of 1767 where a talent is taken to mean the natural capacity for success in some department, which is more innate than an accomplishment.⁵⁰

In James Fordyce's *Sermons to Young Women*, which prescribes an ideal system of female education, Fordyce helpfully shows the expansiveness of the term accomplishment, by surmising three categories of accomplishments; domestic (needlework), elegant (drawing, dancing and music) and intellectual (reading). Each category demands an examination in itself, but this thesis draws on the eighteenth-century move away from the practice of domestic to elegant accomplishments and chooses to focus specifically on music.⁵¹ Performing music, which sources show was an enormously popular female activity, simultaneously displayed the body, enabled women to participate in social entertainment and gave women a means of creative expression. Music was also abused by female characters for the purposes of courtship more than any other female accomplishments such as dance, drawing and needlework as music invited a male audience and facilitated more significant acts of self-display. This seems to be why its function in women's lives was questioned and challenged by novelists, letter writers and polemicists. Unlike drawing and dancing, which were also bracketed as ornamental accomplishments, music could be solitary or communal. It could also have immense power over its listeners, which explains both its impact in courtship and its close link with the theme of the body in fiction.

When this thesis analyses the role of musical accomplishment in a range of sources, it departs from Richard Leppert's analogy of musical accomplishment as a form of

⁵⁰ 'The making of verses well is an agreeable talent, which I hope you will be possessed of.' Philip Dormer Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield, *Letters Written By the Late Right Honourable Philip Dormer Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield, To His son, Philip Stanhope*, 4 vols (London, 1774), I, 6.

⁵¹ James Fordyce, *Sermons to Young Women*, 2 vols (London, 1800), I, 162.

containment that helped to produce an ideologically correct species of woman.⁵² Instead it argues that novels elevate music-making and use it as a method of characterising female identity.⁵³ Leppert's studies focus on how paintings represent music whereas my thesis chooses to focus on the role of music in novels. Leppert interestingly demonstrates how music becomes an 'embodied practice' because he claims that the visual-performative aspect of music is vital.⁵⁴ This thesis will build on that idea by exploring musical accomplishment as both a form of display and as a medium of sound that elicits a response, questioning how far responses to the display and intonation of music were informed by a patriarchal society or alternatively whether music gave some women autonomy and free expression.

Leslie Ritchie's musicological book, which outlines the majority of social and ideological contexts surrounding eighteenth-century music-making, forms a useful social history of non-professional music-making and will be taken into account when my thesis considers the close relationship between femininity and non-professional music-making.⁵⁵ My thesis joins Ritchie's study in its analysis of the relationship between music-making, gender and social relations in the eighteenth century. Unlike Ritchie, however, I focus on the novel while he uses female performers and composers as the basis of his case-studies. The two books just mentioned are not mutually exclusive either as Ritchie's insights expand on those of Richard Leppert in *Music and Image* and *The Sight of Sound*, although Ritchie argues that Leppert omits a range of performance spaces from his analysis. By exploring the motivations behind these heavily debated accomplishments and by presenting

⁵² Richard Leppert, *The Sight of Sound: Representation and the History of the Body* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp.69-70.

⁵³ As a seminal social history of non-professional music-making, Richard Leppert's *Music and Image* discusses how music was prescribed for women in a way that limited their proficiency but allowed them space for contemplation. Over two insightful books, Leppert argues that the principal function of accomplishments in the domestic economy was containment and that music helped to produce an ideologically correct species of women. Richard Leppert, *Music and Image: Domesticity, Ideology and Socio-Cultural Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

⁵⁴ Richard Leppert, *The Sight of Sound*, p.xxi.

⁵⁵ Leslie Ritchie, *Women Writing Music in Late Eighteenth-Century England*, p.3.

heroines as accomplished women, I hope to show that novelists challenged Wollstonecraft's argument that musical accomplishment enfeebles and stifles women.

Gender is a central arena of enquiry in this dissertation, as the thesis uses music to question the role of women socially, culturally and professionally and explores the huge polemical debate surrounding the value of music in women's education. By focussing on how novels represent women performing music, these chapters will use the evidence of polemical treatises and novels to argue that amateur music-making became an increasingly important component of the female character.⁵⁶ In her discussion of music's role in the nineteenth-century American novel, Petra Meyer-Frazier points to this externally strong link between domestic music-making and femininity when she argues that 'music was used in novels not to paint "real" life but to paint ideal women of the time'.⁵⁷ As Leslie Ritchie adds, 'when [women] were performing, composing, or writing about music, they were capable of defining and subverting gender roles using musical means,' either by submitting to advice (offered by polemical treatises) about the performance of amateur music-making or performed music in a way that ignored these codes of female behaviour.⁵⁸ The thesis will examine the extent to which a musical education was prescribed for women and how female novelists responded to particular prescriptions of femininity.

The collection of essays that Vivien Jones edited in 2000 'addresses the wider cultural impact of the conjunction between women and literature' by exploring the social, economic and ideological contexts in which women's writing and reading took place. The essays also aim to 'analyse the meanings attributed to, and generated by this comparatively new phenomenon'.⁵⁹ In 'Women and the Rise of the Novel: Sexual Prescripts', Ros

⁵⁶ Women were commonly performers of music in small social circles in novels, by Jane Austen and Frances Burney.

⁵⁷ Petra Meyer-Frazier, 'Music, Novels and Women: Nineteenth-Century Prescriptions for an Ideal Life', *Women and Music 10* (2006), 45-59, p.46.

⁵⁸ Leslie Ritchie, *Women Writing Music in Late Eighteenth-Century England*, p.3.

⁵⁹ Vivien Jones, ed., *Women and Literature in Britain 1700-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

Ballaster links her aim with that of Jane Spencer, Janet Todd and Catharine Gallagher when she argues that ‘for Spencer, Todd and Gallagher the central issue, as in this essay, remains one of the attempt to find a means to voice femininity in ways that confer social power on women as writers’.⁶⁰ Ballaster’s essay again explores the crucial role that notions of gender play in the formation and interpretation of the novel.⁶¹ In relation to this, my thesis will examine how music-making identifies and defines female characters in novels and how music provides another way of focussing on the female perspective. Catharine Ingrassia argues that women’s writing made the literary marketplace an expensive and unstable site of cultural activity, while Gallagher similarly claims that ‘women writers emphasised their femininity to gain financial advantage and invented ingenious similarities between their gender and occupations in doing so.’⁶² The consumption of music had a similar effect on society as the literary marketplace that Ingrassia discusses, as the performance of concerts and rapid consumption of music created similar instability. Later eighteenth-century novels such as Thicknesse’s *School for Fashion* and Burney’s *The Wanderer* certainly demonstrate Gallagher’s point that authors invented links between gender and professional music-making to question women’s social and professional role. Edward Copeland also discusses the prevalence of money in eighteenth-century women’s writing when he argues that ‘women’s fiction between 1790 and 1820 turned its attention to the ‘meaning’ of consumption, especially its meaning for women, as a concern of defining importance’ and

⁶⁰ Ros Ballaster, ‘Women and the Rise of the Novel: Sexual Prescripts’ in *Women and Literature in Britain 1700-1800*, ed. by Vivien Jones, pp.197-216, 201. Ballaster refers to Jane Spencer, *The Rise of the Woman Novelist: From Aphra Behn to Jane Austen* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), Janet Todd, *The Sign of Angellica: Women, Writing and Fiction 1660-1800* (London: Virago Press, 1989), Catharine Gallagher, *Nobody’s Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in The Marketplace 1670-1820* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

⁶¹ Ros Ballaster, ‘Women and the Rise of the Novel’, p.198.

⁶² Catharine Ingrassia, *Authorship, Commerce and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century England: A Culture of Paper Credit* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p.10, Catharine Gallagher, *Nobody’s Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in The Marketplace 1670-1820* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), p.xiii.

extends this further, stating that ‘fiction provided women with their only substantial public forum for canvassing the potential of employment.’⁶³

The issues that Gallagher, Ingrassia and Copeland raise about the role of money in the eighteenth-century novel will be tackled when I discuss how the border separating professional and non-professional music-making is negotiated by Austen, Thicknesse and Burney. Chapter two highlights the relevance of these studies that emphasise the role of money in women’s fiction and explores how music can be inserted into this relationship. Cheryl Turner, Janet Todd and Jane Spencer also comment on this simultaneous rise of female professionalism and the growth of women’s fiction in the late eighteenth century.⁶⁴ Analysing the difficulty that women faced in moving from the non-professional to the professional arena of musical performance leads neatly onto an analysis of women’s opportunities for employment at that time and how the novel provides a way of exploring this.

Scholarship has recently moved to appreciate the way in which creative arts illuminate Jane Austen’s various agendas. Austen’s representation of drama, leisure and music has appeared in twentieth-century monographs by critics such as David Selwyn, Paula Byrne, Gary Kelly and Penny Gay.⁶⁵ Robert Wallace’s *Jane Austen and Mozart* and Patrick Piggott’s previously mentioned monograph have attempted to merge the disciplines of literature and musicology. While Piggott lists the possible functions of music in Austen’s novels, he refrains from discussing any in particular detail though. None of these critics have extensively explored Austen’s representation of music accomplishment alongside the

⁶³ Edward Copeland, *Women Writing about Money: Women’s Fiction in England, 1790-1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 3, 12.

⁶⁴ Cheryl Turner, *Living By The Pen: Women Writers in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1992), Jane Spencer, *The Rise of the Woman Novelist*, Janet Todd, *The Sign of Angellica*.

⁶⁵ David Selwyn, *Jane Austen and Leisure*, Paula Byrne, *Jane Austen and the Theatre*, Penny Gay, *Jane Austen and the Theatre*, Penny Gay, ‘Pastimes’ in *Jane Austen in Context* ed. by Janet Todd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp.337-345, Gary Kelly, ‘Education and Accomplishments’ in *Jane Austen in Context*, ed. by Janet Todd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

relationship that her novels posit between sensibility, gender, music-making and the private and public spheres, which leaves a clear gap that this thesis aims to fill. In its analysis of music in Austen's novels, the dissertation will build on and expand critics' arguments about the prevalence of education as a theme in her fiction. Robert Miles, for example, identifies Austen's development of the novel of education as one of the two most important characteristics of her writing.⁶⁶ Terry Eagleton also argues that Austen believes in both innate dispositions and the importance of education, embracing both nature and nurture ideals. Austen's wider purpose, Eagleton argues, is a concern with threats to governing gentry from within and the concurrent threat of social mobility.⁶⁷ Barbara Horwitz's claim that 'Austen insists that the primary goal of education is self-knowledge' even provides a leitmotif for each of Austen's heroines that go through a learning process in which they discover more about their own characters and how they should relate to others. She is explicitly declaring that this struggle for self-improvement is presented as the most important type of education in Austen's novels. Horwitz's assertion also points to the importance of the attitude behind the pursuit of accomplishments; an idea which is reinforced by critics David Selwyn and Warren Roberts.⁶⁸ Interestingly, Horwitz argues that, for Austen, 'the effects of early miseducation are not necessarily permanently damaging.'⁶⁹ Tony Tanner appears to agree on this point when he argues that Austen prioritises the spirit in which activities are learnt and practised: 'education for Austen was much more a matter of proper conduct and truly good manners than any range of skills or information.'⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Robert Miles, *Jane Austen* (Tavistock: Northcote House, 2003), p.43.

⁶⁷ Terry Eagleton, 'Walter Scott and Jane Austen' in *The English Novel: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), p.111.

⁶⁸ Barbara J. Horwitz, *Jane Austen and the Question of Women's Education* (New York: Peter Lang, 1991), p.74, David Selwyn, *Jane Austen and Leisure*, Warren Roberts, *Jane Austen and the French Revolution* (London: Macmillan, 1979).

⁶⁹ Barbara J. Horwitz, *Jane Austen and the Question of Women's Education*, p.74.

⁷⁰ Tony Tanner, *Jane Austen* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1986), p.24.

A study of music-making in Austen's novels points to the ways in which Austen promotes specific character virtues. Just as David Selwyn remarks, Austen is more concerned by the musical performer's attitude than by the competence of the performer or quality of the performance.⁷¹ By arguing that Austen insists on keeping music as an amateur activity rather than as an activity that allows women to subvert their social role, I locate her as a novelist who represents music in a conventional way. This is because Austen uses music to give women an identity and voice; but a voice that does not challenge formulaic gender hierarchies whereby the man observes and appraises female performance and the woman has limited autonomy in courtship settings. Labelling Austen as conservative could be deemed controversial as the wealth of criticism on Austen has certainly moved beyond merely positioning Austen as a conservative or feminist. Although Marilyn Butler's study has been of paramount importance for locating Austen solidly within political history and studies by Margaret Kirkham and Claudia Johnson have firmly placed Austen within a feminist tradition, other avenues have been explored.⁷² More recent criticism by Clara Tuite and William Galperin has examined Austen's intervention in the Romantic canon while Ashley Tauchert has attempted to explain how Austen's novels can facilitate a clearer understanding of the romance genre.⁷³ By analysing the role of music and musical accomplishment in Austen's novels alongside other female writers, I aim to place Austen's fiction in an expansive context. The links that I will make between musical accomplishment and the body, as well as the relationship between femininity, courtship and music-making are not fully addressed by the other critics who write on Jane Austen. As

⁷¹ David Selwyn, *Jane Austen and Leisure* (London: Hambledon, 1999), Paula Byrne, *Jane Austen and The Theatre* (London: Hambledon, 2002).

⁷² Marilyn Butler, *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975; repr. 1987), Margaret Kirkham, *Jane Austen, Feminism and Fiction*, rev. edn (Brighton: Harvester, 1983; repr. London: Athlone, 1997), Claudia L. Johnson, *Jane Austen, Women, Politics and the Novel* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1988).

⁷³ William H. Galperin, *The Historical Austen* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), Clara Tuite, *Romantic Austen: Sexual Politics and the Literary Canon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), Ashley Tauchert, *Romancing Jane Austen: Narrative, Realism and the Possibility of a Happy Ending* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

well as arguing that Austen valued music as a female accomplishment (when practised modestly), the thesis also sees changes in the way in which music is represented throughout Austen's publishing career.

Chapter one considers the relationship between gender as a performance and the self-display involved in music-making. Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble: Feminism and The Subversion of Identity* usefully explores 'the possibility of subverting and displacing naturalised and refined notions of gender that support masculine hegemony and heterosexist power'. Butler posits the idea that gender is a constructed identity and 'a performative accomplishment, which the mundane social audience, including the actors themselves come to believe and to perform in the mode of belief'. She further maintains that 'gendered reality is created through sustained social performances' rather than existing as a fixed innate entity.⁷⁴ Applying Butler's theory about gender to music-making in the Victorian era, Solie actually adopts Butler's definition of 'girling' in her own musicological study.⁷⁵ Ruth Solie explores this idea of performative reality or 'girling' as 'a social process that forms girls appropriate to the needs of society they live in; on the other, it is their own enactment—or, in Butlerian terms, their performance—of girlhood, used both to satisfy familial and social demands on them.'⁷⁶

Performance is again a key theme in Penny Gay's *Jane Austen and the Theatre*, which links femininity, musical accomplishment and performance. It argues that the female characters in *Pride and Prejudice* 'perform the arts and roles that fashionable manners prescribe for femininity.' One of these roles is to 'be on show with their accomplishments, presenting themselves theatrically in order to win entrance into the adult

⁷⁴ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp.44, 179. Penny Gay also refers to Judith Butler's argument when she discusses theatrical behaviour in Austen's novels in Penny Gay, *Jane Austen and the Theatre*, p.12.

⁷⁵ Ruth A. Solie, *Music in Other Words: Victorian Conversations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), p.86.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p.86.

world of the audience.’⁷⁷ Butler and Solie’s insightful link between musicology and gender theory will be applied to my own analysis of novels by Jane Austen, Elizabeth Hervey and various anonymous writers in chapter one. Despite the fact that polemicists and novelists had differing ideas about how women should practise music to perform their gender, they all agree that music is a specific mark of femininity. By linking femininity with performance, this thesis argues that there is a direct relationship between the two because both involve blatant self-display. Women can obviously have autonomy over their own performances, however, so mapping performance onto notions of femininity and music-making does not automatically lead to an assertion that these acts of music-making conformed to patriarchal notions of behaviour. It does, however, present an interesting framework for considering music’s effect on women’s social role.

Chapter two will move on from this to explore music’s status as an activity that crosses borders between professionalism and recreation. It will analyse how music-making can contribute towards the organisation of private and public spaces; spaces which relate to the social and economic status of women and the idealisation of leisure-time. Music’s role in the construction of private, public, professional and non-professional social spaces often affected how novels such as Frances Burney’s *The Wanderer* (1814) and Ann Thickett’s *The School for Fashion* (1800) represented the role of women and defined their relationship with any kind of vocation. Chapter two will explore this and examine how attitudes towards performance arenas and musical instruments were informed by perspectives on social class and growing consumerism. My study positions music-making as a central theme within women’s fiction and links the growth of music consumerism with the wealth of novels published in the late eighteenth century, all of which contributed to the debate over the morality of luxury. Leslie Ritchie analyses the links between music-making and moral and

⁷⁷ Penny Gay, *Jane Austen and the Theatre*, pp. 91, 128.

social practices by arguing that ‘musical harmony’ was ‘a widely recognised metaphor for social order’.⁷⁸ She rejects the critical division of public and private spheres of musical performance, instead arguing that her book details ‘the full range of performance occasions available to women across the performative continuum’. This chapter will tackle Ritchie’s unwillingness to differentiate private from public performative spheres and scrutinise a range of criticism that has accounted for the difficulty in delineating these spaces. It draws on other musicological criticism by Marcia Citron who claims that the division between private and public music-making encourages female subjectivity to be exposed when women are supposed to remain in the background.⁷⁹ She also argues that the division of spheres puts women at a disadvantage by implying that they were ‘less worthy to be vested with authorial authority’.⁸⁰ Citron accounts for the importance of gender within the relationship between private, public, professional and non-professional spaces and I will examine her reasoning in chapter two. Chapter two will argue that many authors addressed the problem of women encroaching on the professional sphere and did so by displaying disparate attitudes towards the concert arena.⁸¹

While chapters one and two will discuss the performance of music and the debate about its value as an accomplishment in the non-professional space, the second half of the thesis will examine both responses to music that are traceable on the bodies of musical auditors and the complex relationship between music-making, sensibility, the body and courtship in novels. The third and fourth chapters will attempt to highlight the relevance of a study of music-making in relation to the debate about sensibility, which had significant political and social connotations in eighteenth-century literature and culture. Analysing

⁷⁸ Leslie Ritchie, *Women Writing Music in Late Eighteenth-Century England*, p.11.

⁷⁹ Marcia J.Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p.86.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.10.

⁸¹ Matthew Head, “‘If the Pretty Little Hand won’t Stretch’”: Music for the Fair sex in Eighteenth-Century Germany’ in *Journal of American Musicological Society*, 52/2 (1999), 203-54, p.210. Such treatises include John Essex’s *The Young Ladies Conduct*, Priscilla Wakefield’s *Reflections on the Present Condition of the Female Sex*, Hester Chapone, *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind*, Lord Kames’ *Loose Hints upon Education: Chiefly The Culture of the Heart*.

responses to music-making provides one of a multitude of possible gateways into analysing the role of the body in eighteenth-century fiction, which has been a popular topic with critics. Juliet McMaster, a literary critic, rightly argues that it was actually common to read the mind through the body during the eighteenth century.⁸² Concepts of the body and its relationship with the mind, during the eighteenth century, however, were also directly relevant to the burgeoning interest in sensibility and self-expression. Novelists such as Richardson increasingly relied on medical theory and concepts of the body to explore personal feeling. Just as Claudia L. Johnson remarks, 'sentimentality tied in with [...] ideological debates and evolving medical discourse about the nervous system'.⁸³ John Mullan persuasively comments that 'in novels the articulacy of sentiment is produced via a special kind of inward attention: a concern with feeling as articulated by the body'.⁸⁴ Studies by John Wiltshire, Anita Gorman, Brigitte Glaser and Juliet McMaster have already testified to the importance of the body as a signifier in eighteenth-century novels.⁸⁵ John Wiltshire reads the enquiries and incidents involving health in Austen's novels as Austen's development of moral character and plot device, observing that 'it has usually been understood that the body [...] is a metaphor or metonymy and that what is felt to be missing [in Austen's novels] is overt ardour or warmth or intensity of desire'.⁸⁶ Like Wiltshire, I centralise the role of the body in fiction but instead choose to analyse its relationship with music and sensibility. The extent to which Austen and contemporaries like Richardson drew on the body reveals infinitely more than previously thought about their treatment of the self, their representation of gender hierarchies and the important role that music plays in

⁸² Juliet McMaster, *Reading the Body in the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p.x.

⁸³ Claudia L. Johnson, *Equivocal Beings: Politics, Gender and Sentimentality in the 1790s: Wollstonecraft, Radcliffe, Burney, Austen* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995), p.12.

⁸⁴ John Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988; repr.2000), p.16.

⁸⁵ John Wiltshire, *Jane Austen and the Body* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), Brigitte Glaser, *The Body in Samuel Richardson's Clarissa: Contexts of and Contradictions in the Development of Character* (Heidelberg: Heidelberg University Press, 1992), Juliet McMaster, *Reading the Body in the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), Anita G. Gorman, *The Body in Illness and Health: Themes and Images in Jane Austen* (New York: Peter Land, 1993).

⁸⁶ John Wiltshire, *Jane Austen and the Body*, p.3.

eighteenth-century life. Leading on from a third chapter, which introduces the links that eighteenth-century culture forged between music-making and the body, chapter four will reinforce the importance of music as a theme that illuminates and complicates gender identities within courtship.

As the thesis discusses the role of music within fiction, it inevitably straddles the disciplines of musicology and English literature. This thesis will pinpoint exactly how a study of music-making in the novel enriches existing debates on education, the role of women, the division of private and public spaces and the growth of the middle class, referring to issues such as the relationship between leisure-time, professionalism, femininity and music-making. By examining how music is represented in a range of sources, including polemical treatises, letters, novels and music collections, I aim to uncover the social and ideological contexts surrounding late eighteenth-century fiction. Part of this study involves unpicking arguments by musicologists who have made distinct claims about the social history of eighteenth-century music-making, viewing it either as a way of reading the novel or as a way of considering eighteenth-century history. Although newspapers, polemical treatises, letters and collections of sheet music are important artefacts, which can be analysed to strengthen an understanding of the social history of eighteenth-century music-making and facilitate an in-depth study of the novel, they cannot always constitute a unified representation of music however. By no means do these sources construct any kind of conclusive social history of music, particularly as first-hand accounts of domestic music-making are scarce. Despite this, such primary sources reveal a variety of representations of music that can be compared with accounts of music found in novels. Analysing these sources together therefore provides a useful historical framework for understanding music's role in the novel.

In conclusion, this thesis aims to unravel and explore the extent to which novelists rejected attempts to control and contain women's social and economic role through the medium of music. It does this by investigating the conditions surrounding female performance and focussing on the importance of music in the novel by exploring its underlying relationship with social class, femininity and the body in eighteenth-century discourses. As well as assessing some of the key primary and secondary sources that have already been mentioned, this introduction has identified key themes and debate that the thesis will explore in its analysis of novels representing music. By clarifying and examining the role of music in the education debate and its relationship to accomplishments and talents, the first chapter will set up a framework for discussing these vital eighteenth-century debates and establish the fundamental relationship between music and women.

PART 1: THE PERFORMANCE OF MUSIC

Chapter One: Music as a Female Accomplishment

“I am sure I never heard a young lady spoken of for the first time, without being informed that she was very accomplished”, remarked Mr Bingley.

“Your list of the common extent of accomplishments”, said Darcy, “has too much truth [...] I cannot boast of knowing more than half a dozen, in the whole range of my acquaintance that are really accomplished”.

“Nor I, I am sure”, said Miss Bingley.

“Then, observed Elizabeth, “you must comprehend a great deal in your idea of an accomplished woman”.

“Oh certainly”, cried his faithful assistant, “no one can be really esteemed accomplished, who does not greatly surpass what is usually met with. A woman must have a thorough knowledge of music, singing, drawing, dancing, and the modern languages, to deserve the word, and besides all this, she must possess a certain something in her air and manner of walking, the tone of her voice, her address and expressions, or the word will be but half deserved”.

“All this she must possess”, added Darcy, “and to all this she must yet add something more substantial, in the improvement of her mind by extensive reading.”

“I am no longer surprised at your knowing *only* six accomplished women. I rather wonder now at your knowing *any*” [replied Elizabeth]¹

In the above extract, the quick-witted Elizabeth Bennet questions the existence of the ideal accomplished woman that both Mr Darcy and Miss Bingley have mechanically characterised in Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*. The argument between these four characters in *Pride and Prejudice*, as to the number of skills that determine high breeding and sophistication amongst eighteenth-century women, immediately hints at the complexity and undertones inherent in the term ‘accomplishment’. It also raises questions about the value of such skills and, through a seemingly innocuous exchange, queries exactly how accomplishments came to form part of women’s domestic and social role. By linking accomplishments with femininity and good breeding, the passage demonstrates that constructions of femininity and social class were intricately woven into accounts of accomplishments.

¹ Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), ed. by Vivien Jones, 3 vols (London: Penguin, 1996), I, 35-36. All subsequent page numbers refer to this edition.

This opening passage also compares music, drawing and dancing with the more intellectual pursuit of reading. Prior to this dialogue, Elizabeth declines Mr Hurst's invitation to play cards, preferring to read a book and, in response, Caroline Bingley sneeringly accuses Elizabeth of being a 'great reader' who has 'no pleasure in anything else'.² After Elizabeth vehemently defends herself, Mr Darcy goes on to add that every accomplished woman should read. Given the wealth of books in Mr Darcy's library, it is unsurprising that he holds reading in such high regard. Despite the obvious irony displayed in the conversation, Austen represents reading as a valuable accomplishment particularly when Mr Darcy shows admiration for women who could 'add something more substantial' to the list of feminine accomplishments, 'in the improvement of her mind by extensive reading'.³ The division that the narrator highlights between elegant accomplishments and reading was an important one and an idea that was eagerly tackled by writers of educational treatises too. Rather than Austen presenting reading and music as antithetical, she implies that they have different merits and asserts that their value depends on the attitude of the participant. By showing the difference of opinions between Miss Bingley and Mr Darcy, Austen reveals an affinity for self-evaluation and an open engagement in the eighteenth-century debate about the role of accomplishments in female education.

The conflicting opinions on accomplishments shared in this passage reflect many facets of the eighteenth-century debate about the content of female education. There are four different types of judgment here: Caroline Bingley believes that the adjective 'accomplished' is limited to selected upper class women, whereas Mr Bingley generously claims that it is applicable to most middle to upper class women. Mr Darcy argues that an accomplished woman should be well read in addition to having a range of other skills and, lastly, Elizabeth believes that very few women can live up to the ideal that the others have

²Ibid., p.34.

³ Ibid., p.35.

created. Notably, Mr Darcy and Caroline Bingley are far more severe than Elizabeth about what constitutes an accomplished woman. I shall demonstrate how this severity matches the specifications outlined in particular eighteenth-century educational treatises, which demonstrated that, as Caroline Bingley stipulates, accomplishments were prized amongst women of the upper social classes. Mr Darcy, who is even more fastidious, requires that an accomplished woman should read extensively. Elizabeth's biting closing remark at the end mocks the severity of both Darcy and Caroline Bingley's definition and explicitly questions what is required for women to become culturally ideal. Austen therefore uses this exchange and especially Elizabeth's questioning voice to inject an opinion on the role of accomplishments in female education.

In a paper that reassesses the role of accomplishments in female education, Michèle Cohen defines accomplishments as a conservative force that society prescribed to sculpt women's role in the domestic space.⁴ If Caroline Bingley and Mr Darcy's severe views are advocating the idea that women should learn multiple accomplishments and Elizabeth's voice criticises this openly, it would stand to reason that Austen radically questioned the value of female accomplishments. However, a closer look reveals that the situation is far more complex. By choosing to make almost all of her heroines accomplished and by including domestic music-making scenes in every one of her novels, Austen positions musical accomplishment as an important creative skill for women, implying a conservative agenda. Despite this, every single one of Austen's novels looks at the subject of female accomplishments with an untarnished critical lens. Austen consistently criticises Caroline Bingley and other vain, self-obsessed women who argue that the female character should be defined and judged by the accomplishments that women practise. The issue is not whether Austen advocates music as an accomplishment, but how she responds to the nature and type

⁴ Michèle Cohen, 'Accomplishments', a paper presented at the British Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, St. Hugh's College, Oxford, January 2009.

of conditions that are imposed on the practice of music. Before musical accomplishment can be celebrated in Austen's novels, certain ideological conditions must be clearly met. This chapter will explore the conditions that Austen places on the practice of music, comparing them with ideals found in various polemical treatises. Using this historical background, it will then discuss links between accomplishments, femininity and social class. It will compare Austen's representation of music with other novels of the long eighteenth century to judge how far music defined the female character and prescribed women's role and responsibilities in society. It weighs up the advice about music laid out in polemical treatises to judge the extent to which novels adhered to or rejected such advice. Cohèn shrewdly remarks that modern criticism rarely explored the pervasiveness of accomplishments in eighteenth-century female education or the close link between accomplishments and femininity, which is a gap that this chapter will fill.⁵

One of the main charges laid against female education, which many late eighteenth-century treatises articulated, was the dichotomy of ornamental accomplishments (such as music) and solid studies such as reading. Expanding on this idea in the chapter, I shall explore the contradictions inherent in this dichotomy, defend the attacks on the practice of non-professional music-making and address the contradiction that music was a frivolous activity for women who should also not appear too learned. As Richetti rightly argues, 'women novelists face the challenge of balancing full and entertaining representations of life and manners within the impossible paradoxes of idealised female personality.'⁶

⁵ Ibid. As my introduction asserted, Richard Leppert's influential monograph bridges some of this gap by acknowledging close links between musical accomplishment and femininity.

Matthew Head's comment that music was a way of disciplining the female subject largely concurs with Leppert's argument: Matthew Head, 'If the Pretty Little Hand won't Stretch': Music for the Fair sex in Eighteenth-Century Germany' in *Journal of American Musicological Society*, 52/2 (1999), 203-54, p.210.

⁶ John Richetti, *The English Novel in History 1700-1780* (London: Routledge, 1999), p.200.

Owing to the predominance of female music-making in Austen's novels, this chapter examines five of Austen's novels as case studies. For example, music as a form of female display is criticised habitually in *Catharine*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Emma* and *Mansfield Park* but its contribution to social entertainment and stamp on a heroine's character is also celebrated. When *Persuasion* was published in 1818, music is transformed into a form of family duty and a space for personal contemplation. None of Austen's novels reject musical accomplishment outright but subtly begin to re-define what constitutes an accomplished woman. The chapter will argue then that by the time that Austen wrote *Persuasion* she had grown increasingly tolerant of music as an accomplishment. Her final novel celebrates music-making by pinpointing its many advantages in much the same way as Hester Chapone did in *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind*. In summary, this chapter proposes the idea that many novels worked in an adverse way to the polemical treatises by presenting heroines who were musical yet not superficial, presenting a more detached relationship between musical accomplishments, superficiality and self-display.

I. A) Defining an accomplishment

As if setting a precedent for its role in eighteenth century women's fiction, the term accomplishment has many meanings and was used as both a noun and verb. The noun 'accomplishment' refers to a multitude of leisure activities such as music, dancing, drawing, learning languages and reading. *The Oxford English Dictionary* lists the following eighteenth-century definitions of the noun and verb. 'To accomplish' was defined as 'to fulfil or perform', to 'perfect in mental acquirements and personal grace' and 'to polish off'. Interestingly, the verb 'to perfect' is also a transitive verb with many interpretations and both of the verbs 'to accomplish' and 'to perfect' indicate a process of obtaining something. The noun accomplishment refers to an achievement, but the verb 'perfect in mental acquirements' specifies how this will be achieved, indicating the necessity for social

graces to become 'perfect in mental acquirements'. It seems therefore that society plays a part in understanding accomplishments even before they are practised.

In *Loose Hints upon Education* (1781), Lord Kames remarks that, as a genteel accomplishment, music 'need not be rejected: but in order to accomplish [women] as mothers, the knowledge of human nature and the art of improving the heart would chiefly be insisted on.'⁷ Kames uses the verb 'to accomplish' to refer to women's preparation for motherhood. It could be difficult to see how women's practice of accomplishments has such a direct effect on their social role but by using the verb to indicate a necessary rather than an optional activity, Kames argued that accomplishments ought to be an integral aspect of female education. This is in direct contrast with More and Wollstonecraft, who argued that accomplishments only detract from women's cultural role. Mary Wollstonecraft defined the noun 'accomplishment' and the verb 'to accomplish' differently to Kames. Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792) attacked the practice of accomplishments as an unnecessary aspect of female education, arguing that: 'In aiming to accomplish [women], without cultivating their understandings, they are taken out of their sphere of duties, and made ridiculous and useless when the short-lived bloom is over'.⁸ In this context, 'to accomplish' refers to the act of embellishment rather than preparation. Unlike Kames, who used the verb 'accomplish' to indicate women's duties, Wollstonecraft presented the verb as an unnecessary extra, repeating the accusation that accomplishments are superficial and frivolous adornments.

Accomplishments, therefore, had an unstable definition, which was dependent on a writer's social and political agenda. The noun can be roughly defined as an achievement and the verb 'to accomplish' means to achieve. However, although there were semantic

⁷Lord Kames (Henry Home), *Loose Hints upon Education, Chiefly The Culture of the Heart*, (Edinburgh, 1781), p.10.

⁸ Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (London, 1792), pp.9-10.

changes in the terms ‘accomplishment’ and ‘to accomplish’, the following analysis will show that eighteenth-century treatises were unified in commenting on the ideology surrounding these skills.

I. B) Representations of Musical Accomplishment pre-1787.

The attacks that Mary Wollstonecraft made against female accomplishments provoked a body of writing, which reflected the ambivalent and confused position of music as an accomplishment in culture. As the Eighteenth Century progressed, there was a proliferation of polemical literature that debated the function of these accomplishments. Late eighteenth-century polemical treatises resisted the practice of accomplishments more than those written in the earlier part of the century. With the exception of John Essex’s *The Young Ladies Conduct* (1722), which promoted dancing and music for women in the early eighteenth century, many early treatises did not discuss music as an accomplishment at all. Instead treatises published between 1700 and 1765 encouraged women to develop and sustain specific moral characteristics and urged them to learn useful skills such as needlework that befitted their role.⁹ For this reason, when my chapter discusses educational tracts that promote musical accomplishment, it jumps from analysing John Essex’s 1722 publication to examining Jonas Hanway’s *Thoughts on the Uses and Advantages of Music* (1765) and Hester Chapone’s *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind* (1777). Despite the time elapsed between their works, Essex, Hanway and Chapone all agreed that accomplishments could give women a stable identity, even if the learning of

⁹ The following early eighteenth-century treatises encourage specific character traits in women but do not focus on accomplishments: *The Whole Duty of a Woman* (London, 1701?), François de Salignac de la Mothe Fenélon, *Instructions for the Education of a Daughter by the Author of Telemachus. To which is added a Small Tract of Instructions* (London, 1708), James Bland, *The Charms of Women: or a Mirrour for Ladies* (London, 1736), William Jones, *Observations on the most Natural and Easy Way of Education Children in the Principles of Virtue and teaching them such Accomplishments as are Necessary for Trade and Business* (Bristol, 1750?).

accomplishments was prescribed for women by patriarchal society. This unity of thought provides great social insight.¹⁰

John Adams' educational tract argued that the French education system influenced female education in late eighteenth-century England, claiming that 'the education of [French and English] women, which before consisted in reading their own language, and in learning needle-work, was by degrees changed to vocal and instrumental music, and dancing.'¹¹ He stated that the shift from the practice of more domestic accomplishments (reading and needle-work) to more elegant accomplishments (music, drawing and dancing) explains why polemicists such as More and Wollstonecraft focus on criticising the role of music, drawing and dancing.¹² In point of fact, the increasing popularity of expressive skills such as music and dancing amongst women was the subject of a paragraph in *Memoirs of Dr Burney*, which was a compilation of Charles Burney's accounts of musicians and celebrated people. Although these memoirs were not published until 1832, the text is useful for its brief comparison between the function of accomplishments in the early and late eighteenth century. Referring to late eighteenth-century accomplishments as 'playthings for the nursery' and 'demonstrative embellishments', Burney yearned for a past age where women were not pressured to display accomplishments and outlined the illusive move towards the study of elegant accomplishments and their impact on women's education. His account of his own wife's education is coupled with the awareness that she was musically gifted before accomplishments were in vogue:

To excel in music, or painting, so as to rival even professors, save the highest, in those arts, had not then been regarded as the mere ordinary progress of female

¹⁰ Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women: with Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects*, pp.9-10, John Essex, *The Young Ladies Conduct; or, Rules for Education*, p.56, Jonas Hanway, *Thoughts on the Use and Advantages of Music, and Other Amusements* (London, 1722), p.63, Hester Chapone, *Letters on the Improvements of the Mind, addressed to a Young Lady by Mrs Chapone* (London, 1777).

¹¹ John Adams, *Sketches of the History, Genius, Disposition, Accomplishments, Employments, Customs and Importance of the Fair Sex* (London, 1790).

¹² *Ibid.*, pp.216-7.

education; nor had the sciences yet become playthings for the nursery. These new roads of ambition for juvenile eminence are undoubtedly improvements, where they leave not out more essential acquirements. Yet, perhaps, those who were born before this elevation was the mode; whose calls, therefore, were not so multitudinous for demonstrative embellishments, may be presumed to have risen to more solid advantages in mental attainments, and in the knowledge and practice of domestic duties, than the super-accomplished aspirants at excellence in a mass of the present moment.¹³

This move towards learning multiple accomplishments predicts the criticism of women neglecting their role and wasting their time. It also pre-empts future references to the dichotomy of ‘mental attainments’ and female accomplishments. As early as 1722, elegant accomplishments such as music began to be prioritised over the domestic duties to which Burney refers, although it is curious that Essex’s *The Young Ladies Conduct* is in the minority of early eighteenth-century treatises that consider the role of accomplishments critically.¹⁴ In the following lines, Essex recommends that women learn a vast quantity of accomplishments:

I speak not so severely, as to confine [women] always to one sort of Labour, Exercise, or Diversion; but to please your own Fancies in Variety: Sometimes to Read, to Write, to Mediate or Reflect on what you Read, and to Contemplate; sometimes to Walk, or Dance, or Sing, to play upon a Musical Instrument, or use any Modest and Decent Exercise; and to refrain from no fitting honourable Work or Labour.¹⁵

Essex’s treatise upheld a popular view that music should be a female amusement. By referring to singing and performing as a ‘modest and decent exercise’, Essex connects the activity with desirable moral attributes. Music is considered just one of the many activities that women should pursue and it is interesting to note that the passage mentions nothing about talent. Far from it, Essex states that music enables women ‘to refrain from no fitting honourable Work or Labour’, which positions their role firmly in the home. Just as Richard Leppert insightfully claims, ‘a well-bred woman who took music too seriously constituted a

¹³ Frances Burney, ed., *Memoirs of Dr Charles Burney 1726-1769* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), p.61.

¹⁴ The multiplicity of accomplishments listed can be compared with Caroline Bingley’s ideal in *Pride and Prejudice*.

¹⁵ John Essex, *The Young Ladies Conduct*, p.56.

threat to social boundaries.’¹⁶ So whereas *The Oxford English Dictionary* cites an accomplishment as a synonym for talent, it also states that after 1600 talent was defined as a ‘natural capacity for success in some department’. As Essex does not mention success or capacity, he blatantly dissociates an accomplishment from a talent. The scanty practice of music, walking and dancing, which Essex urges, notably discourages the development of any such capacity.

In 1762 *The Universal Museum or Gentleman’s and Ladies Polite Magazine of History* was uneasy about the numerous accomplishments, which women were expected to learn. It reacted against the prescriptions detailed in *The Young Ladies Conduct* by blaming music and dancing masters for creating a race of accomplished robots:

In striving to render the bodies of women amiable and their minds as disgusting as possible, [women] are assiduously instructed by their music and dancing masters who should cultivate their genius and form their understandings. They are never so much as once thought of.¹⁷

This criticism sowed the seeds for later discontent, which was expressed by Wollstonecraft in *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*. Despite this resistance, however, Hanway’s *Thoughts on the Uses and Advantages of Music* (1765) bucked this trend and advocated music as an accomplishment. Hanway’s treatise reiterated arguments first used in Essex’s work and elevated music-making’s worth as a non-professional activity amongst women:

Music may be considered as creating an additional sense, or intellectual endowment. But as being one of the delicate accomplishments, it is most to be esteemed in *women*, and in women of fortune and polite education; for others can hardly find time to apply to it. Music not only enlarges their ideas, but furnishes an employment for the mind.¹⁸

¹⁶ Richard Leppert, *Music and Image: Domesticity, Ideology and Socio-Cultural Formation in Eighteenth Century England* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988), p.40.

¹⁷ *The Universal Museum or Gentleman and Ladies Polite Magazine of History, Politics and Literature*, I, p.42.

¹⁸ Jonas Hanway, *Thoughts on the Use and Advantages of Music, and other Amusements. In Answer to a Letter relating to Modern Musical Entertainments* (London, 1765), p.63.

For Hanway, not only is music-making categorically feminine, but it is specific to the middle and upper social classes. Undoubtedly, Caroline Bingley in *Pride and Prejudice* would have approved of Hanway's version of an accomplished woman because, like John Essex, Hanway positions music as an elite activity that is suitable for the well-bred 'women of fortune and polite education.' Contrary to what Wollstonecraft later claimed, Hanway argued that musical accomplishment was an intellectual endowment as it furnished an 'employment' for the mind. Unlike Essex, however, Hanway positions musical accomplishment as a talent by stating that it enlarges ideas and employs the mind and, in doing so, dashes the dichotomy of 'solid learning' and musical accomplishment. Contradictions seemed to be a building block of the relationship between fiction and education tracts in the eighteenth century.

Hester Chapone's *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind* (1777) was a pivotal collection of letters that appeared in seven editions and advised young women about their conduct. Its chief argument was that musical accomplishment was appropriate and beneficial for women in the leisured social classes. Although this treatise was published before More and Wollstonecraft's tracts, Chapone's letter to Mrs Carter exposes an opposition to Wollstonecraft's ideas: 'I have seen nothing of Mrs Wollstonecraft's except her *Rights of Women*,—in which I discerned some strong sense, amidst many absurdities, improprieties and odious indelicacies.'¹⁹ In Chapone's treatise, she prefers to position music as an ideal form of family duty:

If you have any acquired talent of entertainment, such as music, painting, or the like, your own family are those before whom you should most wish to excel and for whom you should always be ready to exert yourself. How little sensibility has that heart, which is not more gratified by the silent pleasure painted on the countenance

¹⁹ *The Works of Mrs Chapone Containing I Letters on the Improvement of The Mind, II Miscellanies, III, Correspondence With Mr Richardson, IV Letters to Mrs Carter, V Fugitive Pieces to Which is Prefixed an Account of her Life and Character Drawn Up By Her Own Family*, 4 vols (London, 1807), II, Letter XIII to Mrs Carter, 27 June 1776, pp.202-203.

of a partial parent, or of an affectionate brother, than by the empty compliments of a visitor, who is perhaps inwardly more disposed to criticise and ridicule than to admire you!²⁰

The noun ‘talent’ and the verb ‘to excel’ both appear here, which emphasises talent more than Essex’s earlier treatise. When Chapone urges women to pursue accomplishments moderately, this is to ‘follow as genius leads’ rather than to ‘refrain from work’ as Essex advised. Neglecting accomplishments, Chapone argues, results in the abandonment of talent, which clearly posits a close relationship between talents and accomplishments: ‘As to music and drawing, I would only wish you [women] to follow as Genius leads [...] I should be sorry to see you neglect a talent, which will at least afford you an innocent amusement’ (p.173). By referring to music as an ‘innocent amusement’, Chapone implies that music belongs solely in the non-professional arena. This undoubtedly affects how far talent can be developed although, unlike arguments by Essex and Hanway, Chapone acknowledges that talent was essential to the practice of accomplishments.²¹ While Chapone encourages women to develop their talent ‘as genius leads’, this is dependent on music remaining an amusement that should be practised in the home: a practice that is observed in Austen’s fiction. Importantly, Chapone’s treatise therefore adds to the functions of music prescribed by Hanway and Essex by allowing that music should be three distinct things: a social duty, talent and form of pleasure for women. This is a step in the direction of autonomy as it advocates the importance of innate skill and personal enjoyment as well as obligation. In *Persuasion*, musical accomplishment functions as a valuable means of consolation for Anne Elliot who performs for her own pleasure, as Chapone recommends:

²⁰Hester Chapone, *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind, Addressed to a Young Lady* (London, 1777), pp.123-133. All subsequent page numbers can be found in this edition.

²¹ Priscilla Wakefield, *Reflections on the Present Condition of the Female Sex*, Lord Kames (Henry Home), *Loose Hints upon Education, Chiefly The Culture of the Heart*, John Essex, *The Young Ladies Conduct*.

I think the use of both these arts [music and drawing] is more for yourself than for others: It is but seldom that a private person has leisure or application enough to gain any high degree of excellence in them; and your own partial family are perhaps the only persons who would not much rather be entertained by the performance of a professor than by yours. With regard to yourself, it is of great consequence to have the power of filling up agreeably those intervals of time, which too often hang heavily on the hands of a woman, if her lot be cast in a retired situation.²²

Chapone embeds music into women's role by claiming that it can fill up 'intervals of time, which too often hang heavily on the hands of a woman'. If women pursue female accomplishments, Chapone urges them at the same time not to neglect their moral and social well-being or their duties. Like Hannah More, Chapone warns that 'the relish of such pleasures' should 'not interfere with a rational scheme of life, nor lead you into dissipation, with all its attendant evils of vanity and luxury' (p.174). Unlike More and Wollstonecraft, Chapone recognises the benefits of women practising accomplishments as the acquisition of a creative skill and a means of providing entertainment, even with a modest caveat added on at the end.

Published in 1775, Fordyce's *Sermons for Young Women* also advocates the pursuit of accomplishments for Christian living: 'Of [elegant accomplishments] all will be found consistent with Christian Sobriety, and several conducive to it.'²³ Fordyce claims that 'evil might, through God's blessing, be happily prevented by an early and diligent application to Female Accomplishments.' Without further explanation, such links appear arbitrary when he positions musical accomplishment as a cure for social failings. These 'evils' seem to be very wide-ranging, from bad manners and lack of self-improvement to indulging in dull discourses, but nonetheless they are all dissolved in the pursuit of learning music non-professionally. He even identifies music as the ideal accomplishment: 'music is to be recommended with more discrimination than the rest, how much so ever such a notion may

²² Hester Chapone, *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind*, p.173.

²³ James Fordyce, *Sermons to Young Women*, 2 vols (London, 1800), I, 181.

contradict the prevailing opinion.’²⁴ Fordyce’s reference to a ‘prevailing opinion’ indicates an existing opposition to the system of accomplishments and highlights the controversies that were raging at the time. Wollstonecraft actually took issue with Fordyce’s claim that practising accomplishments could inspire love and virtue by cuttingly remarking: ‘Dr Fordyce must have very little acquaintance with the human heart, if he really supposed that such conduct [pursuit of accomplishments] would bring back wandering love instead of exciting contempt’.²⁵

Lord Kames’ *Loose Hints upon Education* (1781) took a slightly different tactic to treatises by Chapone and Fordyce by presenting music-making as an important female skill that prepares women for their future maternal role. He states that music is a ‘genteel accomplishment’, which ‘need not be rejected: but in order to accomplish [women] as mothers, the knowledge of human nature and the art of improving the heart would chiefly be insisted on’.²⁶ By linking musical accomplishment to women’s maternal role, however, Kames gives accomplishments a larger social function than Essex. Like Essex and Chapone, Kames claims that ‘music serves to fill a gap in time, which some parents are at a loss how otherwise to employ.’²⁷

These polemical treatises provide substantial evidence that the debate about accomplishments heated up after 1760. Most of these accounts attempted to prescribe a system of women’s education, which involved women learning numerous accomplishments. Although the extracts from *Memoirs of Doctor Burney* and *The Universal Museum or Gentleman’s and Ladies Polite Magazine of History* show some difficulties linked to music’s popularity, this was soon overshadowed by educational treatises by Essex, Hanway, Chapone and Fordyce, which promoted the benefits of

²⁴ James Fordyce, *Sermons to Young Women*, I, 199.

²⁵ Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of The Rights of Woman*, p.122.

²⁶ Lord Kames, *Loose Hints upon Education, Chiefly The Culture of The Heart* (Edinburgh, 1781), p.10.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.244.

practising music both as a leisure activity and as a talent. Importantly, talent featured more heavily in the conception of an accomplished woman in Chapone's later treatise, which may have reacted against the trivialisation of music in Essex's earlier work. Despite referring to talent frequently, Chapone is clear that there should be limitations on how far musical talent should be fostered as it should still remain an 'amusement', even though music provided women with a space for contemplation. By positioning non-professional music-making as a female activity for the middle to upper social classes though, these sources did little to resist the established system of women learning accomplishments. The gendering of musical accomplishment and the insistence that it should be an amusement made the activity vulnerable for attack in the later eighteenth-century treatises that followed.

I.C) Musical Accomplishment in Polemical Treatises after 1787

After 1787, the volume of polemical treatises that debated the role of women and the fierceness of the attack against female accomplishments increased. Buried in early nineteenth-century novels were responses to criticisms made against female accomplishments. Criticisms appeared in Mary Wollstonecraft's *Thoughts On The Education of Daughters* (1787) and *A Vindication Of The Rights of Woman* (1792); two tracts which were vital to this debate. Making collective assumptions about the arguments contained in polemical treatises that were published at the time is always going to be problematic as polemicists frequently had different social and political agendas behind their writing, as Clare Brant's study has recently pointed out.²⁸ Although there were a series of divided opinions and responses to musical accomplishment, all late eighteenth-century treatises on female education were unified in two things: clarifying and questioning women's role. Due to this fact, classifying specific treatises as radical and others as

²⁸ Clare Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters and British Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

conservative becomes an increasingly troublesome prospect. The task of linking polemical writers as diverse as Mary Wollstonecraft and Hannah More is challenging and has led to critics commonly separating them into diverse political camps. Usually, Wollstonecraft's writing is linked with early feminism, while More's treatises emphasise the importance of women's social, religious and domestic roles. Anne K. Mellor, Mitzi Myers, Jane Nardin and Harriet Guest have all bucked this trend though and thus challenged the political divide between Wollstonecraft and Hannah More.²⁹ Anne K. Mellor claimed that More's criticism of certain elements of female education points towards a more radical interpretation of her writing. Mellor in turn argued that More's successful programme for social change, which worked within the existing social and political order, was striking evidence for this. Furthermore, Mellor added that More's writings consolidated and disseminated a revolution in the very culture of English nations, but without aiming to tear down the class system.³⁰ Despite More and Wollstonecraft's different agendas, Anne Mellor, Mitzi Myers, Jane Nardin and Harriet Guest have found distinctive similarities in their arguments about female accomplishments and Guest insightfully remarked:

Both conservative and liberal texts on the position of women published in the late Eighteenth Century and early Nineteenth Century appropriate the discourse on the division of labour to feminine employments and occupations, though they do so in service of widely divergent agendas.³¹

Guest refers to the fact that, regardless of their political beliefs, polemicists such as More and Wollstonecraft questioned the assignment of female accomplishments to women and probed the essence of women's labour (which refers to women's work in the domestic space). Nardin similarly asserts that moral writers of the time believed that practices in the

²⁹ I am referring to the following texts: Anne K. Mellor, *Mothers of the Nation: Women's Political Writing in England, 1780-1830* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2002), Harriet Guest, *Small Change: Women, Learning, Patriotism 1750-1810* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2000), Jane Nardin, 'Jane Austen, Hannah More and the Novel of Education', *Persuasions* (1998), 15-20, Mitzi Myers, 'Reform or Ruin: A Revolution in Female Manners' *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture II* (1982), 199-216.

³⁰ Anne K. Mellor, *Mothers of the Nation*, pp.13-15, 25.

³¹ Harriet Guest, *Small Change*, p.16.

fashionable world would distort the intellectual and moral development of women.³² Mitzi Myers agrees, her text placing political labels to one side to state that female education of all stripes highlighted deficiencies of fashionable training and values.³³ For Myers, defective fashion is chiefly associated with the upper social classes who are supposedly educated in accomplishments. When Austen criticises music as a form of self-display, however, her criticism is not as class-based. Owing to the different literary genres that the three writers represent, both Wollstonecraft and More undoubtedly have different aims and objectives to Austen. When Austen mocks women who practise fashionable accomplishments, she is mocking music as a form of self-display and symbol of social worth rather than undermining music's innate value. Crucially, Austen actually attacks fashion as a form of social pretence, while Nardin prefers to associate fashion with the failing education of the upper classes. If Austen were to link accomplishments to the failing education of the upper classes, as Nardin and Wollstonecraft do, accomplishments would not play as vital a role in the entertainment scenes of her novels. Irrespective of the difficulty in politically categorising polemical writers, however, it is possible to claim that all of the discussed writers were at least searching for the meaning of female education and trying to establish an ideal role for women.

In Mary Wollstonecraft's *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* (1787), she trivialises accomplishments as decorative and ornamental activities by claiming that they 'merely render the person attractive.'³⁴ Here, she states that the problem with accomplishments also relates to the superficial extent to which they were studied and practised: 'A little learning of any kind is a dangerous thing [...] Girls learn something of music, drawing, and geography; but they do not know enough to engage their attention, and

³² Jane Nardin, 'Jane Austen, Hannah More and the Novel of Education', p.17.

³³ Mitzi Myers, 'Reform or Ruin: A Revolution in Female Manners', p.201.

³⁴ Mary Wollstonecraft, *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters: with Reflections on Female Conduct in the more Important Duties of Life* (London, 1787), p.24.

render it an employment of the mind' (p.25). Accomplishments therefore cannot lead to talent as they are practised too superficially and it is through this precept that Wollstonecraft encourages the professionalism in women that Kames and Essex warned women against. Throughout *A Vindication of The Rights of Woman*, Wollstonecraft called for equality between the sexes, by persuading women that social reform was urgently needed. By outlining the problems with women's current social attitudes, Wollstonecraft argued that the current education system needed to be transformed: 'Weak, artificial beings, raised above the common wants and affectations of their race [...] undermine the very foundation of virtue, and spread corruption through the whole mass of society'.³⁵ Further on, Wollstonecraft clarifies these faults: 'It is acknowledged that [women] spend many of the first years of their lives in acquiring a smattering of accomplishments: meanwhile strength of body and mind are sacrificed to libertine notions of beauty, to the desire of establishing themselves' (p.9). Wollstonecraft subsequently claimed that this enforced creative acquisition diminished both bodily and emotional strength. She continued by asserting that, in practising accomplishments, women neglected their duties: 'In aiming to accomplish [women], without cultivating their understandings, they are taken out of their sphere of duties, and made ridiculous and useless when the short-lived bloom of beauty is over' (pp.9-10).

All of Wollstonecraft's successive arguments about female accomplishments criticise them as irrational alternatives to the more logical male education system. Challenging the ideology that accomplishments were an acceptable part of femininity, Wollstonecraft argued that accomplishments detracted from more useful learning because they indulged the senses: 'For the little knowledge that [women] are led to acquire, during the important years of youth, is merely relative to accomplishments; and accomplishments

³⁵ Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of The Rights of Woman*, p.5.

without a bottom, for unless the understanding be cultivated, superficial and monotonous is every grace. Like the charms of a made-up face, they only strike the senses in a crowd' (p.392). By arguing that accomplishments 'strike the senses in the crowd', she is claiming that they have captivating power to enrapture the human senses and contribute to excessive sensibility. She even goes so far as to compare the practice of accomplishments with the superficiality of a made-up face. When Austen criticises the practice of musical accomplishment for show and display, she mocks moral failings such as boastfulness and superficiality but Wollstonecraft criticises accomplishments as the antithesis of intellectual study and attacks the patriarchal ideology behind mainstream female education. Wollstonecraft also implies the temporality of fashionable accomplishments. She urges women to use their bodies purposefully and not be 'rendered weak and vain by indolence and frivolous pursuits', which reinforces the emphasis that she placed on rationality over display.³⁶ Wollstonecraft's discussion of accomplishments urged women to re-think the role that accomplishments had within their social lives. By locating accomplishments as a destructive force on both the body and mind and as a superficial fashionable practice, Wollstonecraft attacked the current fashion that encouraged the practice of accomplishments, in her own words, 'to render a person attractive'.³⁷

As a successful polemical writer in her own right, whose moral treatises earned her thirty thousand pounds, Hannah More famously challenged the conventions of female education in *Strictures on the Modern System of Education* (1799), which was published just seven years after the publication of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*.³⁸ While Wollstonecraft's treatises attacked female accomplishments as activities that degraded women socially, physically and emotionally, More's writing focussed on elevating

³⁶Ibid., p.390.

³⁷ Ibid., p.24.

³⁸ Jane Nardin, 'Jane Austen, Hannah More and the Novel of Education', p.12.

women's religious, cultural and domestic duties in society. The religious didacticism behind More's treatises meant that she did not explicitly promote an attack on the existing social order or question women's position in the patriarchal society as Wollstonecraft did. Instead More accepted female accomplishments as an established part of society, but agreed with Wollstonecraft about their excessive practice: 'Almost any ornamental talent is a good thing, when it is not the best thing a woman has; and talents are admirable when not made to stand proxy for virtues.'³⁹ Unlike her counterpart, More defines an accomplishment as a 'talent', although they are 'ornamental', which points more to self-display than to progress and proficiency. More's claim that accomplishments are too time-consuming is immediately at odds with claims by Essex, Kames and Hanway, who argued that music was an agreeable and safe way to spend time. For her, accomplishments had little moral value in a woman's education as she exclaimed: 'Dare I appeal to Christian parents, whether music, which fills up no trifling portion of their daughters' time, does not fill it without any moral end, or even specific object'? (p.118)

Comparisons can be drawn with Wollstonecraft here, who argued that accomplishments could be replaced by more intellectually and physically challenging activities. Importantly, for More, the adjective 'fashionable' refers to a prevailing custom, which is in opposition to the tenets of religious study. On the other hand, Wollstonecraft defines 'fashionable' as antithetical to intellectual study. Like Wollstonecraft though, More challenges the convention that urged women to learn several accomplishments by claiming that superficial learning leads to 'knowledge' that is 'affectedly disavowed' and which compromised learning; a suggestion previously made by Wollstonecraft. While Wollstonecraft challenged established social order in making this point, More accepted the cultural hierarchy that articulated inequality between the sexes and used the obligation to

³⁹ Hannah More, *Strictures on The Modern System of Female Education*, 2 vols (London, 1799), I, 103.

moral and religious duty as a motivation for women to change. Like Chapone, More acknowledged that accomplished women could be talented, while Wollstonecraft steadfastly refused to acknowledge talent as a component of accomplishments. There were a variety of different motivations percolating behind the writing of these two treatises, yet despite this Wollstonecraft and More were united in their criticism of female accomplishments as superficial fashion symbols that distracted women's attention from other wider social concerns.

The reception of More's *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education* was generally positive. Chapone did not challenge the practice of accomplishments in *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind* but wrote a letter to More that agreed with More's principles; an act which points to a fine line between what was deemed a radical argument concerning female education and what was considered conservative. It also implies that Chapone's perspectives might have changed after the publication of *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind*. After reading *Strictures on the System of Female Education*, Chapone wrote:

You [Hannah More] most successfully practice the art of pleasing and entertaining, whilst you instruct, and even whilst you rebuke; and I hope better things of the world than one lady predicted [...] I have been in a state of mind that could take in nothing but mere amusement, and hardly that, till your admirable book found its way to my heart, in spite of the weakness and confusion of my head.⁴⁰

An eminent musicologist and music teacher, Dr Charles Burney, even sent Hannah More flowers when he received a complimentary copy of her treatise. Burney's warm response to her comments on music implies that advocates of female music-making did not automatically reject the precepts in More's treatise. Burney wrote:

Your [More's] strictures on the abuse of music and dancing pleased me much. I have long seen that the study of the ornamental and fine arts, has been forced on young persons with and without genius, to such excess, as to vex, fatigue, disgust

⁴⁰ *Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Mrs Hannah More*, ed. by William Roberts, 4 vols (London, 1836), III, 68.

and determine them, whenever they become free agents, to abandon all such plagues. Music is doubtless, in itself, an innocent and necessary domestic amusement for persons of fortune and leisure, but rendered noxious, when studied at the expense of more important things [...] Music, when it fastens upon enthusiasts, often lays such hold of them, that they think of nothing else. The relation of a great foreign composer and performer at present in this country, on my extolling his genius, told me that he was nothing away from the piano-forte, but always looking at it, if one happened to be in his sights, while people were talking to him of other things.⁴¹

Here, Burney demonstrated an ambivalent response to musical accomplishment. On the one hand, he took issue with the insincere motives behind women learning music, arguing against over-enthusiasm or persistence amongst the untalented. On the other hand, Burney saw music's value as 'an innocent and necessary domestic amusement for persons of fortune and leisure', thus agreeing with the precepts outlined by Chapone, Hanway and Essex that the practice of amateur music-making should be dictated by social class more than talent. By depicting music as this 'necessary' domestic amusement, Burney moves away from the pessimistic response to musical accomplishment exhibited in *Strictures on the System of Female Education*.

After 1787, many accounts of musical accomplishment criticised its popularity amongst women of middle to upper rank. These sources show an increasingly resistant attitude towards non-professional music-making towards the end of the Eighteenth Century century. Although all polemicists acknowledged that accomplishments provided entertainment and relieved tedium, More and Wollstonecraft claimed that the pursuit of music was superficial and encouraged vanity. While Essex and Hanway claimed that music could be one of many useful accomplishments, Chapone argued that music, which could involve talent, had wider benefits and had a useful function as a form of family duty.

⁴¹ Ibid., III, 70.

These arguments prove that music inspired distinctly personal revelations, when the meaning of an accomplishment was challenged.

D) The dichotomy of musical accomplishment and ‘serious study’

How vain of young ladies; and expensive is the fashionable education of young ladies; and nothing attended to but embellishing the person whilst the mind is uncultivated, turned to no useful study! [...] [They are] ignorant of every duty; only taught to look as handsome as they can, and to be as fashionable in their phrase and gestures as in their caps and hoop-petticoats. It is vexatious to have creatures endued with reason act so irrationally.⁴²

In Dr Delany’s letter to Samuel Richardson, Delany yearns for women to cultivate their minds rather than pursue fashionable accomplishments.⁴³ When writers challenged the role of accomplishments, they were aware of a polarisation made of expressive activities that permitted self-display, like music and dancing and the pursuit of more academic studies such as reading. In the eighteenth century, it was very common to posit such an opposition between women’s intellect and female accomplishments.⁴⁴ Although Delany champions women’s intellect in a way that mirrors Wollstonecraft’s later arguments in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, ‘useful’ study was not always promoted over the learning of accomplishments. In a letter to Richardson, Lady Bradshaigh implied that intellectual women were not always met with applause:

I will not approve of learning in women. [...] Let them study domestic duties, and other necessary acquirements and they will have employment enough to keep them out of mischief, if their inclinations are not so strong that way [...] Learning cannot change nature but it can make a woman ridiculous, a woman of sense I mean.⁴⁵

⁴² *The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson: Author of Pamela, Clarissa and Sir Charles Grandison, Selected From the Original Manuscripts, Bequeathed By Him to His Family, To Which are Prefixed A Biographical Account of That Author and Observations On his Writings* by Anna Laetitia Barbauld, ed. by G.W. Tassie, 6 vols (London, 1804), IV, Letter from Dr Delany to Richardson, June 15, 1751, p.41.

⁴³ Dr Delany was the husband of Mary Delany, who was a Bluestocking.

⁴⁴ This debate continued far into the nineteenth century, as indicated by Richard Holt-Hutton, *The Relative Value of Studies and Accomplishments in the Education of Women: A Lecture intended as a Contribution towards determining the True Intellectual Standard of Female Education in the Middle Classes* (London, 1862).

⁴⁵ *The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson*, VI, Letter from Lady Bradshaigh to Richardson, 9 February, 1750, p.70.

By identifying a dichotomy, both Delany and Bradshaigh highlight an important issue about the education that women should pursue and question how far the study of accomplishments defines this social role. This subject was emphasised in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, when Wollstonecraft uses the phrase ‘the cultivation of understanding’ to depict the antithesis of accomplishments.⁴⁶ More also created a similar dichotomy of female accomplishments and ‘useful’ study in *Essays on Various Subjects* (1778), questioning the attention that fashionable accomplishments received compared with religious study:

I am at a loss to know why a young female is instructed to exhibit, in the most advantageous point of view, her skill in music, her singing, dancing, taste in dress, and her acquaintance with the most fashionable games and amusements, while her piety is to be anxiously concealed, and her knowledge affectedly disavowed.⁴⁷

Not only was this dichotomy discussed in letters and polemical treatises, novelists participated in the debate by emphasising this polarisation in order to explore the meaning of musical accomplishment and the role of women’s education in fiction. Both novelists and polemicists dismissed the value of musical accomplishment by negatively comparing it with ‘solid studies’.

In *Jane Austen and The Popular Novel: The Determined Author*, Anthony Mandal emphasises the importance of this dichotomy in *Mansfield Park*. He argues that ‘the question of social propriety is articulated through the dichotomy between specious “accomplishments” and serious principles.’⁴⁸ He defines these ‘serious principles’ thus: ‘Moral-domestic novelists compare [accomplishments] unfavourably with the ‘serious’ qualities of piety, charitableness, deference to patriarchal structures and an innate moral

⁴⁶ Wollstonecraft claimed that ‘in the education of women, the cultivation of the understanding is always subordinate to the acquirement of some corporeal accomplishment’ and created a gulf between talent and accomplishments. Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, p.41.

⁴⁷ Hannah More, *Essays on Various subjects*, 2nd edn. (London, 1778), p.38.

⁴⁸ Anthony Mandal, *Jane Austen and the Popular Novel: The Determined Author* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p.105.

sense, often combined with an appreciation of poetry, nature and more factual studies'.⁴⁹ By including this wealth of definitions for the term 'serious principle', Anthony Mandal rightly acknowledges the complexity of the term and the difficulty in identifying a uniform meaning. An intensive study of subjects like History or Religious Study with a view to developing 'serious' qualities or virtues may demand toil and fervent concentration. Such studies may be compared with the pursuit of activities, like music and drawing, which offered entertainment to the participator and audience. When eighteenth-century polemicists labelled a study as 'solid', which is a synonym for 'severe', they were generally referring to a study that required a type of substantial mental exertion that was not thought to be necessary for the performance of music. Categorising studies as factual, intellectual, or 'solid' can undoubtedly be a subjective process, however, because the individual's approach to the study was often not taken into consideration.

Writers such as Delany, More and Wollstonecraft, often accused accomplished women of lacking characteristics such as modesty, goodness, honesty and duty. The means of developing these virtues was left decidedly unresolved in polemical treatises though. Instead, accomplishments like music were represented as poor substitutions for solid learning amongst young women. Because many of the treatises discussed refer to severe or solid acquisitions in general terms, I draw on Mandal's broad definition when I refer to 'severe studies'. I also define what Delany and Wollstonecraft call the 'cultivation of understanding' as a loose term for intensive study such as reading and religious education; study that was perceived to challenge the intellect more than the practice of numerous accomplishments and encourage the acquisition of characteristics such as perception and discernment. After all, these were the characteristics that Wollstonecraft and More argued that women lacked. An examination into how and why writers compared such studies with

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.106.

real female accomplishments is more important than extracting a single definition for a 'severe study' however. The dichotomy of solid study and accomplishment will also help to explain the trivialisation of musical accomplishment in novels.

In her study on women in the eighteenth century, Katherine Rogers weighs female accomplishments against solid intellectual training and concludes that the former were ultimately frivolous: 'Solid intellectual training will make women useful wives and entertaining companions to men, but will also give them independent worth. On the other hand, the traditional training in accomplishments can aim only at pleasing men and therefore reveals a degrading anxiety to attract worthless admiration'.⁵⁰ Rogers rightly claims that female accomplishments encouraged self-display and courtship. If the adjective 'accomplished' is re-defined, however, accomplishments do not oppose solid intellectual learning but represent valuable female learning. If an accomplishment can be valued as an activity that encompasses a range of challenging skills designed to enhance women's role, rather than a scheme of superficial activities that merely replace cognitive study, then the entire dichotomy dissolves. The dichotomy then was a form of social manufacturing appropriate for the age in which it appeared and was created as a result of a fear of women entering the professional sphere and a patriarchal attempt to prescribe women's social role. My chapter, which reconsiders what is meant by an accomplishment, argues that the dichotomy of accomplishments and 'solid intellectual study' did not represent a considered response to women's social role because, with the exception of Wollstonecraft's treatises, a more ideal alternative form of education was not offered. Such treatises never argued that female professionalism was a better choice for women over the pursuit of accomplishments.

Dorothy Gardiner's view that 'one great blemish in the system of accomplishments, in its later phrases, was the pernicious habit of teaching things separately, unrelated to one

⁵⁰ Katherine M. Rogers, *Feminism in Eighteenth-Century England* (Brighton: Harvester, 1982), p.223.

another' may be a primary reason why the pursuit of accomplishments was attacked so vigorously.⁵¹ According to Gardiner, 'contemporary literature heaped scorn on the system of female education in the eighteenth century, yet the same public opinion, which condemned ignorant woman held the learned woman in detestation'.⁵² Gardiner acknowledges the contradiction that the polemicists who rejected female accomplishments in favour of encouraging women to pursue more 'solid studies', simultaneously mocked learned women. In her discussion on Jane Austen, Linda C. Hunt acknowledges the problem that 'there was considerable debate on the amount of learning a woman could absorb without becoming "masculine" as well as the universal disagreement on just what subjects of study were suited to the feminine mind'.⁵³ Gary Kelly also comments on this contradiction: 'If being "accomplished" was set against being "notable", both were set against being "learned", supposed to unfit a woman for the marriage market, genteel society and even notability'.⁵⁴ Kelly's argument is that solid studies forced women to forfeit their social role by making them unmarriedable. He adds that Austen used the novel form to illustrate direct concerns about female accomplishments.⁵⁵ Another insight can be found in Richard Leppert's assertion that musical accomplishment prepared women for their social role by keeping them away from a professional life: 'this misuse of time [from the practice of musical accomplishment] was the very source of music's usefulness because it ensured that women's use of time was non-productive'.⁵⁶ Polemical treatises by Essex, Hanway and

⁵¹ Dorothy Gardiner, *English Girlhood at School: A Study of Women's Education through Twelve Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1929), p.468. Educational treatises by Essex and Hanway provide examples of the way in which women were encouraged to learn multiple accomplishments rather than intensively concentrate on one skill, which steered women away from professionalism.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp.378-380.

⁵³ Linda C. Hunt, 'A Woman's Portion: Jane Austen and the Female Character' in *Fetter'd or Free? British Women Novelists 1670-1815*, ed. by Mary Anne Schofield and Cecilia Macheski (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1986), p.11.

⁵⁴ Gary Kelly, 'Education and Accomplishments' in Janet Todd, ed., *Jane Austen in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p.258.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.252, 258.

⁵⁶ Richard Leppert, *Music and Image: Domesticity, Ideology and Socio-Cultural Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) p.200.

Chapone prove beyond doubt that there was a widespread idealisation of this non-productive use of time.

Questions about the nature of femininity and expectations placed on women began to surface when the dichotomy of female accomplishments and intellectual training emerged.⁵⁷ Kelly and Gardiner acknowledged the contradiction that limits were placed on female proficiency in intellectual training even if women did not learn female accomplishments. The latter apparently offered women more power in the marriage market and were more befitting to their roles as wives.⁵⁸ Attempts made to criticise musical accomplishment as a form of feminine identity and criticisms that female education was defective when compared with ‘solid’ education confirms Judith Butler’s point that the rights of women were ‘effectively undermined by the constraints of the representational discourse in which it functions’ (p.7). This contradiction also confuses the definition and meaning of feminine identity in the eighteenth century.

Judith Butler’s theory positions women as constructs of a patriarchy, which limited and defined women’s activities by imposing regimes of accomplishment on them. My argument throughout this thesis is that accomplishments empowered women in society in a non-subversive way. Even though novelists such as Jane Austen and Elizabeth Hervey appeared to be challenging the role of accomplishments in female education, this next section will show how musical accomplishment played an important role in courtship, gave women recognition and identity and established middle to upper class women in the domestic sphere; even if this identity was ‘manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs’.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Richard Leppert argues that ‘culture demanded music as an appropriate mark of both femininity itself and female class status’. Richard Leppert, *Music and Image*, p.29.

⁵⁸ Dorothy Gardiner, *English Girlhood*, pp.378-380, Gary Kelly, ‘Education and Accomplishments’, p.258.

⁵⁹ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1999), p.173.

II) Representations of Musical Accomplishment in Novels

Eighteenth-century fiction cautiously explored the conditions surrounding the practice of musical accomplishment and, in doing so, actively commented on women's social role. The debate about musical education was therefore highly relevant to the construction of the fictional heroine. This section identifies a fashion for novelists to promote female learning by degrading the value of female accomplishments, but argues that this criticism is only taken so far. Paradoxically, novelists who appeared to dismiss accomplishments made their heroines noticeably accomplished and positioned music as a valuable source of entertainment, a form of family duty and showed it to be a space for women's contemplation. In line with Leslie Ritchie's established relationship between femininity, music-making and cultural identity, this section argues that music-making provided heroines with an opportunity to display characteristics such as modesty and selflessness. These tasks were performed in a way that was not distinctly subversive as they were consistent with models of the behaviour idealised in all polemical treatises.¹ Therefore, fiction that re-defined what it meant to be musically accomplished did not do this to challenge women's social role. One significant way that fiction such as Elizabeth Hervey's *Louisa* and Austen's writing departs from polemical writing is in its ability to present multiple versions of accomplished women; women that the narrator regards with varying levels of respect. From the outset, this makes deciphering authors' representations of musical accomplishment more complex, but it also shows a difference between the representations of music in these literary genres and allows a new type of accomplished woman to emerge in the form of accomplished literary heroines.

¹ Leslie Ritchie, *Women Writing Music in Late Eighteenth-Century England: Social Harmony in Literature and Performance* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), p.3.

External accomplishments, such as dancing, dressing and music, &c are no doubt necessary in a certain degree, but should this be our only care, while little or no pains is taken to cultivate the mind.²

This passage is from the anonymous novel *The History of Melinda Harley*, where the heroine Melinda is conversing with the hero, Mr Viner. After learning Melinda's views, Mr Viner tells her that 'intellectual improvement shuts up the avenues to vice, and must gradually tend to moral improvement, or to the perfection of the will and appetites. [...] Your notion of female education is very just, and I still hope to see a more rational system introduced and encouraged by the men' (pp.23-24). Straight after this comment, Mr Finchley burns some 'disruptive' women's novels; a blatant and visually dramatic attack on female education. The above comment in *The History of Melinda Harley* highlights the defects in female education and even calls for change. It mirrors both the dichotomy found in Dr Delany's letter and Wollstonecraft's use of the term 'rational' in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. Mr Viner's eagerness for a new system of education predicts Wollstonecraft's later criticisms against accomplishments and questions the relationship between intellectual improvement and the system of women learning accomplishments.

Clara Reeve's *The Two Mentors* (1783) makes a similar distinction between external accomplishments and solid education. Readers learn that the content of Sophia's education was selected in response to the view that external accomplishments were more important than 'mental accomplishments'. Sophia's adoptive mother comments that 'I would not have [Sophia] be thought unworthy of it by those who respect *external* accomplishments above *mental ones*.'³ Due to Sophia's unknown parentage, she received a different education from the couple's biological child: 'My wife ordered that Sophia should be taught French, music, drawing, and many other things that are the embellishments of the female character, and which she thought unnecessary for the humbler situation of her own

² *The History of Melinda Harley* (London, 1777), pp.16-7.

³ Clara Reeve, *The Two Mentors: A Modern Story*, 2 vols (London, 1783), I, 301. Italics are in the original.

child' (p.304). Social class invariably determined the education that a girl received. The accomplishments of French and Music are bitterly described as 'embellishments of the female character', which was a term used by Burney in *Memoirs*.⁴

Like *The History of Melinda Harley*, *The Two Mentors* does not have an ironic tone. Both novels appear to be, on first glance, an attack on accomplishments. However, the above quotations, which argue that accomplishments were superficial, contradict the positive representation of music elsewhere in *The Two Mentors*. Despite the accomplishments learnt, Sophia is a balanced and good character. Her request for a harpsichord in French demonstrates competency in two accomplishments and pleases her father. Because of Sophia's modesty and goodness, which is acknowledged readily, her accomplishments do not equate to superficiality and, in fact, musical performances provide Sophia with a role in the novel, triggering the audience's applause.

Sophia's musicality is a marker of her femininity and her music-making enables her to display qualities such as duty and modesty. Sophia is being moulded into a specific version of femininity because her adoptive mother chooses to educate her in a way that befits Sophia's gender and social class. Sophia's musical talent is vital in allowing her to gain social approval and have autonomy in the entertainment that she provides. Far from representing oppression and male domination, accomplishments become a form of empowerment for Sophia. Although patriarchal society encourages Sophia's accomplishments, the learning of musical accomplishment is not presented negatively in the novel as performing music enables Sophia to fulfil her purpose (marriage) and prove that the benefits outweigh the objections that were levelled against learning.

⁴ 'Perhaps, those who were born before this elevation was the mode; whose calls, therefore, were not so multitudinous for demonstrative embellishments, may be presumed to have risen to more solid advantages in mental attainments, and in the knowledge and practice of domestic duties, than the super-accomplished aspirants at excellence in a mass of the present moment.' Frances Burney, ed., *Memoirs of Dr Charles Burney 1726-1769* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), p.61.

Elizabeth Hervey's novel *Louisa* (1790) follows a heroine who negotiates the fashionable world and compares female accomplishments with a sterner system of female education. When Lady Bridget asks Louisa whether she is accomplished, Louisa relates her grandmother's thoughts on accomplishments: '[Grandmother thought that] too much time is spent in the present age, in the attainment of accomplishments, which she rather wished me to consider as the relaxation of leisure hours, than as the sole business of my life'.⁵ Louisa's grandmother encouraged Louisa to pursue accomplishments moderately by urging her to strive for 'everything that could meliorate my [Louisa's] disposition, or enlarge my mind' (p.20). Louisa remarks that 'the object of it [education] was more the cultivation of my mind, than the attainment of shewy accomplishments' (p.170). Despite dismissing the value of 'shewy' accomplishments, Louisa is an exceptionally proficient (yet modest) musician in her social circle. Louisa's grandmother neither prohibited nor prioritised female accomplishments. As a result of this happy medium, Louisa becomes discerning in judging the worth of other women's education, rapidly noting Miss Bensley's shortcomings:

As to mental qualities they had been wholly disregarded: Lady Bridget was persuaded that her élève passed in the world as highly accomplished; and as she herself thought of no other merit, she imagined others would be as easily satisfied. Yet how did these boasted acquirements shrink away, when investigated by a discerning eye! [...] Her execution on the harpsichord was brilliant, but often slovenly; and always devoid of taste or feeling, [She had] false Italian and French accents, [and] danced without grace. (p.64)

Two versions of accomplished women appear in this novel. Unlike Louisa, who is both accomplished but balanced and sensible, Miss Bensley is an accomplished, but vain, woman. Like Austen, Elizabeth Hervey is not merely condemning the practice of accomplishments but criticises one particular function of musical accomplishments; their use as a form of self-display or as a tool manipulated by women to prove their social worth.

⁵ Elizabeth Hervey, *Louisa*, 2 vols (London, 1790), I, 20.

Hervey draws a parallel between Louisa and Miss Bensley but, like Austen, she does not condemn the use of accomplishments in female education.

Interestingly, at one point Lady B tells Louisa to conceal her intelligence to improve her marriage prospects: 'You must remedy the defects of her education; [...] take care the men don't suspect her of being learned, for they will be afraid of her' (p.21). This comment relates to the contradiction identified by Gardiner and Kelly that women should neither pursue too many accomplishments nor become too educated as both effects marriage prospects.⁶ These unreasonable expectations were even considered to be more of a defect in the education system than the fervent pursuit of accomplishments. The pressure on women to acquire knowledge that was not to be displayed demonstrates Judith Butler's point that women's rights were 'effectively undermined by the constraints of the representational discourse in which they functioned'.⁷ On the one hand, Louisa questions her feminine identity by criticising the predominant role of external accomplishments in female education but she is unsuccessful in detaching herself from this reality by being a talented amateur musician. Louisa is also thwarted by Lady B's warning about being too learned. Louisa's confused identity can be likened to what Judith Butler calls a constructed identity: 'gender is constructed identity and performative accomplishment which the mundane social audience, including the actors themselves, come to believe and to perform in the mode of belief' (p.179).

Like Sophia in *The Two Mentors*, Louisa is accomplished within the context of a moral education. Both heroines have qualities such as goodness, modesty and wise judgment in addition to their accomplishments. As sensible and modest accomplished women, the heroines move away from the typical conception of the accomplished women,

⁶ Dorothy Gardiner, *English Girlhood at School: A Study of Women's Education through Twelve Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1929), p.468, Gary Kelly, 'Education and Accomplishments' in Janet Todd, ed., *Jane Austen in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p.258.

⁷ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p.7.

which was depicted in More and Wollstonecraft's treatises. Female accomplishments add an interesting dimension to both Sophia and Louisa's characters, providing them with a social role and a way of selflessly entertaining their friends and family. Louisa and Sophia both represent an accomplished heroine who is modest, virtuous and yet musically accomplished.

The Wreath of Friendship, or a Return from India (1790) was an anonymous novel that detailed the lives of a small social circle of friends. At first glance, the novel presents ornamental accomplishments as superficial but, like *The Two Mentors*, music simultaneously provides entertainment in the novel. The first question that Robert Mitford asks one of the heroines, Lady Julia, is whether she is accomplished: 'I presume you are fond of the more polite amusements of music and drawing?' Julia replies: 'Yes, sir, you are right, I am as fond of polite amusements as any body, but not music and drawing; I should be very sorry to sit scratching paper with a pencil all day long, or to be strumming at my harpsichord'.⁸

While Julia admits to enjoying 'polite amusements', she dismisses overtly ornamental accomplishments. Initially, she resists a stereotype imposed on her but later conforms to it when she beautifully sings 'Where's my swain, so blithe and clever' and appraises musical performances by the other central characters: Selina Courtney and Lord Westbury. Mrs Emily Scudmore presents a different yet ignorant view of female education in the same story when her letter relates her conversation with Mrs Long to Miss Darnley:

You [Miss Darnley] were very singular in many things and so *unfashionable* [...] You kept very little company besides the rector, the curate and their wives [...] and mama says there was very little to be learned from one who associates with such people, unless indeed it was a receipt for a primrose pudding and as it was not likely *we* should ever need those *accomplishments*, she would not take off our

⁸ *The Wreath of Friendship; or, A Return from India*, 3 vols (London, 1790), I, 74.

attention from those more *elegant accomplishments necessary* for every woman of fashion that is intended to live in the world.⁹

Here, Mrs Long insists on pursuing her ‘elegant accomplishments’ at the expense of forming a friendship with a sensible and religious woman. Ironically, Miss Darnley has many of the moral characteristics, such as kindness and generosity, which Mrs Long lacks, despite her claims of being accomplished. Mrs Long’s insinuation that Miss Darnley does not practise elegant accomplishments proves false when Mrs Scudmore snidely replies to Mrs Long that ‘Miss Darnley has been very highly educated and possesses every accomplishment necessary to adorn the most exalted station’ (p.239). Because Mrs Long has not befriended Miss Darnley she is found to be ignorant of the latter’s accomplishments. When Mrs Long retaliates by snapping that Miss Darnley is not flirtatious enough, she only proves that she bears a warped view of female education.

By equipping Miss Darnley with the elegant accomplishments that Mrs Long strives for, the author of *The Wreath of Friendship* presents several versions of accomplished women. The author is not criticising the role of accomplishments in women’s education. Like Hervey and Clara Reeve, the author of *The Wreath of Friendship* criticises the vanity surrounding the pursuit of musical accomplishment. Because the author puts forward multiple representations of accomplished women, it is inaccurate to claim that musical accomplishment is coupled with immorality.

⁹ Ibid., p.238. Italics are in the original.

II.b) Representations of Musical Accomplishment in Austen's Novels

When considering the role of accomplishments in Austen's novels, Gary Kelly argues that Austen, Wollstonecraft and More share the view that education in mere accomplishments disabled women for their role as moral, cultural and social reformers at home.¹⁰ This section will challenge his argument that 'Jane Austen would more likely agree with Wollstonecraft's further argument that accomplishment left women dependent on men's judgment and authority, consequently incapable of using God-given reason to guide'.¹¹ Controversially, Kelly is arguing that women's practice of accomplishments makes them vulnerable to male judgment in Austen's novels. While the opening of *Pride and Prejudice* does highlight judgments made about female accomplishments, it is Caroline Bingley, a female judge, who is most vocal about what constitutes an accomplished woman. Accomplishments certainly did not leave women dependent on men's judgment, as Kelly implies, even if they made women subject to praise or ridicule. For a start, the dialogue highlights the range of opinions in the room and a disagreement between Mr Bingley and Mr Darcy about what constitutes an accomplished woman. *Pride and Prejudice* contains four types of judgment (two of them are given by women) instead of one powerfully prevailing judgment on the subject.

Like Wollstonecraft, Austen did not value women according to the number of accomplishments they practised, yet Austen does not criticise sensible characters who practise a 'smattering' of accomplishments either, which focuses Austen's criticism on behaviour, just as Craik, Horwitz, Roberts and Fritzer have pointed out.¹² In other words,

¹⁰ See Gary Kelly, 'Education and Accomplishments' in *Jane Austen in Context*, ed. by Janet Todd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp.252-261.

¹¹ Ibid., p.258.

¹² Warren Roberts argues that 'what Austen criticised was not the accomplishments themselves but the female attitudes that, owing to the context in which they were acquired, were too often present.' Warren Roberts, *Jane Austen and the French Revolution* (London: Macmillan, 1979), p.163. Craik argues that 'Austen does not dwell much upon the actual process of learning, being more concerned with chronicling what the characters do with it.' W.A. *Jane Austen in her Time* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1969), p.42. Selwyn claims that 'what matters to Austen is the characters' state of mind, rather

Austen and Wollstonecraft use the practice of accomplishments to make different moral judgments. While Wollstonecraft criticises the physical consequences of practising accomplishments (declining bodily and emotional strength), Austen attacks the behavioural and moral consequences of spending too much time on these activities.¹³ Nevertheless, all writers articulate important arguments about the place of accomplishments within women's lives.

Owing to the comic tone of Austen's *Catharine* and the foolishness embedded in the character of Catharine's aunt, the dichotomy of severe studies and accomplishments, which is articulated by Catharine's aunt, is not quite so straightforward. In the first instance, the narrator presents the effects of practising accomplishments excessively. Accomplishments do not in any way make up for Miss Stanley's lack of sense:

Miss Stanley had been attended by the most capital Masters from the time of her being six years old to the last Spring, which comprehending a period of twelve Years had been dedicated to the acquirement of Accomplishments which were now to be displayed and in a few Years entirely neglected [...] Years which ought to have been spent in the attainment of useful knowledge and Mental Improvement had been all bestowed in learning Drawing, Italian and Music, especially the latter, and she now united to these Accomplishments, an Understanding unimproved by reading and a Mind totally devoid either of Taste or Judgement.¹⁴

Miss Stanley's excessive practice of accomplishments effectively replaces her acquisition of 'useful knowledge and mental improvement' and the narrator comments on the temporary nature of accomplishments, which function as self-display by pointing out that they will be 'entirely neglected' in the future. Catharine's aunt criticises women's education and sums up her position as such:

than musical criticism', David Selwyn, *Jane Austen and Leisure* (London: Hambledon, 1999), p.119. Barbara J Horwitz asserts that 'Austen agrees with her predecessors and contemporaries that the goal of education should be virtue, wisdom, breeding and learning in that order', Barbara J. Horwitz, *Jane Austen and the Question of Women's Education* (New York: Peter Lang, 1991), p.61. Fritzer argues that 'for Austen moderation seems the best path: accomplishment is desirable but will not redeem graver flaws', Penelope Joan Fritzer, *Jane Austen and Eighteenth-Century Courtesy Books* (Westport Ct.: Greenwood Press, 1997), p.17.

¹³ Such behavioural consequences might include becoming boastful, over-confident and vain.

¹⁴ Jane Austen, *Catharine and Other Writings* (1792), ed. by Margaret Anne Doody and Douglas Murray, 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), III, 191.

All I wished for, was to breed you up virtuously; I never wanted you to play upon the Harpsichord, or draw better than anyone else; but I had hoped to see you respectable and good; to see you able & willing to give an example of Modesty & Virtue to the Young People hereabouts. I bought you *Blair's Sermons* and *Coelebs in Search of a Wife*. (p.222)

Hannah More's *Coelebs in Search of a Wife* (1809) criticised the role of music as an accomplishment and claimed, as Catharine's aunt does, that accomplishments disguised many character defects. Both of these passages in *Catharine* refer specifically to the absence of taste and judgement within female education. The first ironic passage in *Catharine* does not attack accomplishments like More's novel but rather details the consequence of practising accomplishments excessively. Similarly, the reliability of the speaker in the second passage is questionable so her opinion cannot be taken as gospel. Proof that Austen read More's novel can be found in Austen's letters. Rather than championing More's causes, Austen jokingly tells Cassandra: 'You have by no means raised my curiosity about *Coelebs in Search of a Wife*—My disinclination for it before was affected, but now it is real; I do not like the Evangelicals—Of course I shall be delighted when I read it, like other people, but till I do, I dislike it'.¹⁵ Even if this passage is read ironically, another of Austen's letters criticises the novel for its 'pedantry & affectation' and asks whether it is written only for Classical Scholars.¹⁶ Although one of Austen's later letters acknowledges the value of More's Evangelicalism, the above comments in Austen's letters are sceptical of More's novel as a whole.¹⁷ Austen's ironic reference to classical scholars, who epitomise the solid learning that was supposedly valued over accomplishments, indicates that she did not promote classical learning over accomplishments as many would assume.

¹⁵ *Jane Austen's Letters* ed. by Deirdre Le Faye (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), Letter 66 to Cassandra Austen, 24 January, 1809, p.170.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Letter 67 to Cassandra Austen, 30 January, 1809, p.172

¹⁷ 'I am by no means convinced that we ought not all to be Evangelicals', *Ibid.*, Letter 109 to Fanny Knight, 18-20 November 1814, p.280.

The satirical allusion to More's novel in *Catharine* and the exaggerated parody of Catharine's aunt, who 'prided herself on the exact propriety and Neatness with which everything in her Family was conducted' (p.190) is robust proof that Austen took the time to weigh the value of female accomplishments against the severity of classical education. Austen mocks More's novel and the staunch aunt as much as the practice of female accomplishments. As David Selwyn argues, neither accomplishments nor any other activity were a measure of morality in Austen's novels, although Catharine's aunt would wish them to be.¹⁸ However, the story directly draws on the debate about musical accomplishment and demonstrates that Austen questioned the formula for the ideal female education.

Mansfield Park

Discussions of Austen's *Mansfield Park* (1814) commonly focus on a dichotomy of Fanny Price's moral education and the superficial accomplishments that the Bertram sisters pursue and this idea foregrounds a serious critical debate. D.Devlin not only argues that *Mansfield Park* was Austen's most profound discussion of education, but claims that Austen positions morality as opposite to accomplishments, as an amoral phenomenon.¹⁹ Anthony Mandal also acknowledges the centrality of this dichotomy in *Mansfield Park*.²⁰ Benedict's essay, which explores how Austen portrays the female middle class identity as cultural consumers, argues that Austen distinguishes ornamental from moral accomplishments, contrasting commercial values with the moral ones her novels promote.²¹ Similarly, in its argument that *Mansfield Park* and Edgeworth's *Patronage* attack female accomplishments Jenny Davidson's essay alludes to a gulf between morality and accomplishments in Austen's novels when she argues that female accomplishments represent a sign that appearances

¹⁸ David Selwyn, *Jane Austen and Leisure* (London: Hambledon Press, 1999) p.42.

¹⁹ D.D.Devlin, *Jane Austen and Education* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1975), p.5.

²⁰ Anthony Mandal, *Jane Austen and The Popular Novel: The Determined Author* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p.105.

²¹ Barbara Benedict, 'Jane Austen and the Culture of Circulating Libraries' in Paula R. Backscheider, ed., *Revising Women: Eighteenth-Century Women's Fiction and Social Engagement* (London: John Hopkins University Press, 2000), p.5.

have been cultivated at the expense of inward virtue in *Mansfield Park*.²² Like Devlin and Davidson, Kenneth Moler links fashionable accomplishments with the superficiality of the Bertrams by claiming that this is separate from the solid and substantive values of Fanny Price.²³ In her interdisciplinary study of English women and language, Howell Michaelson even argues that accomplishments transformed women into commodities and represented the decadence of idleness in *Mansfield Park*.²⁴

All of these critics state that Austen promotes a more solid and moral education over the study of ornamental accomplishments such as music. I contest this supposed dichotomy by arguing that Austen incorporates strands of both types of education into her heroines. Rather than transforming musical accomplishment into an activity that demands expertise and talent, Austen creates accomplished heroines who obey advice in educational tracts by practising music moderately, as a form of family duty and as an amusement. They do not practise music in the obsessive and vain way, which Wollstonecraft and More criticise. Austen incorporates sense, moderation and intelligence into the conception of an accomplished woman and these characteristics epitomise most of her heroines. This means that accomplishments no longer signify superficiality in Austen's novels. The dichotomy, therefore, becomes unstable. My argument is that accomplishments, the pursuit of studies like religion or reading and the eager acquirement of moral characteristics such as modesty and selflessness can merge to create a new type of accomplished woman. Craik's claim that Austen dwells more on what her characters do with education than the actual processes of learning is central to highlighting the importance of the attitudes surrounding the pursuit of

²² Jenny Davidson, 'Professional Education and Female Accomplishments: Gender and Education in Maria Edgeworth's *Patronage*' in Linda V. Troost, ed., *Eighteenth-Century Women: Studies in their Lives, Works and Culture*, 4 vols (New York: AMS Press, 2006), IV, 274.

²³ Kenneth L. Moler, *Jane Austen's Art of Allusion* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1977), p.127.

²⁴ Patricia Howell Michaelson, *Speaking Volumes: Women, Reading and Speech in the Age of Austen* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), p.132.

accomplishments.²⁵ I agree with David Selwyn that Austen does not represent a taste for music as a measure of morality, which is what other critics imply by suggesting that Austen favours a moral education.²⁶ I also expand on Craik and Selwyn's contentions by arguing that Austen makes this clear by refusing to position musical accomplishment as an unattractive alternative to what critics term the moral education of Fanny Price.

Positioning Fanny Price as the remedy for the spiritual malady that affects the Bertrams, Kenneth Moler draws a distinct line between the worldliness of the accomplished Bertram girls and the piety of Fanny Price.²⁷ By defining Mary Crawford's harp-playing as a facet of her worldly character, Patrick Piggott makes similar distinctions.²⁸ Howell Michaelson argues that *Mansfield Park* criticises the display which accomplishments encourage by claiming that they 'represent the decadence of idleness.'²⁹ Although Austen elevates female accomplishments less in *Mansfield Park* than in her other novels, I attest that she does not rigidly divide the world of accomplishments from the morality that the novel promotes. The accomplishments that Julia and Maria Bertram learn cannot solely be to blame for their declining morals; the blame lies within their attitudes towards them. The numerous accomplishments pursued show the sisters' impatience and intent for self-display, but the accomplishments themselves are not presented as destructive and useless activities. The narrator mocks the snide way in which the sisters dismiss Fanny Price and their superficial study of a 'favourite sport of the moment':

[Julia and Maria Bertram] could not but hold [Fanny Price] cheap on finding that she had but two sashes, and had never learnt French; and when they perceived her to be little struck with the duet they were so good as to play, they could do no more than make her a generous present of some of their least valued toys [...] while they

²⁵ W.A. Craik, *Jane Austen in Her Time* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1969), p.42.

²⁶ David Selwyn, *Jane Austen and Leisure*, p.119.

²⁷ Kenneth L. Moler, *Jane Austen's Art of Allusion*, p.110.

²⁸ Patrick Piggott, *The Innocent Diversion*, p.75.

²⁹ Patricia Howell Michaelson, *Speaking Volumes*, p.132.

adjourned to whatever might be the favourite holiday sport of the moment, making artificial flowers or wasting gold paper.³⁰

Instead of blaming accomplishments, the narrator is explicit about the consequences of the Bertram sisters' pursuit of accomplishments, commenting that the girls were 'entirely deficient in the less common acquirements of self-knowledge, generosity and humility. In everything, but disposition, they were admirably taught' (p.55). The absence of moral characteristics, such as generosity and humility, are caused by the sisters' spoilt upbringing and excessive study of accomplishments. Foolish Mrs Norris assisted her nieces' mindsets and their mother 'paid not the smallest attention' to their education (p.55), which encouraged their vanity and pride much more succinctly than the pursuit of music and drawing. As Craik insightfully argues, 'Jane Austen reveals that such faulty judgment may co-exist alongside the means of obtaining even a good education [in *Mansfield Park*].'³¹

Consequences of an unbalanced education can be seen in Mary Crawford who is an unsuitable wife for Edmund Bertram, the novel's future clergyman. While Mary's harp-playing is often read as Austen's critique of musical accomplishment and display, it is the function not the practice of accomplishment that Austen criticises. Used to entice Edmund, the harp is an ineffective courtship tool in the end. The harp itself is not the enemy, but the manipulative use of it. The following pastoral picture that Austen paints of Mary Crawford mocks music when it is used as a form of manipulation: 'A young woman, pretty, lively, with a harp as elegant as herself; and both placed near a window, cut down to the ground, and opening on a little lawn, surrounded by shrubs in the rich foliage of summer, was enough to catch any man's heart' (p.95). David Selwyn reflects on the nature of Mary's display by remarking that 'the display is not one of elegant accomplishments only: it also

³⁰ Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park* (1814), ed. by Tony Tanner (London: Penguin, 1996), p.51. All subsequent page numbers refer to this edition.

³¹ W.A. Craik, *Jane Austen in Her Time*, p.49.

offers a strong sexual allure'.³² Not only does Austen mock Mary for exploiting her harp-playing for the purpose of self-display, she also shows Edmund's temptation for Mary. Nothing is mentioned about the nature of Mary's education. Her musical accomplishment is not at fault but the way in which she manipulates it.

Jane Nardin plausibly claims that Fanny Price deliberately decides not to rival her cousins in brilliant accomplishments because she knows that it would endanger her position in the family.³³ If Fanny chooses not to appear accomplished, it is natural that her musical taste remains hidden, even though her musical interests start to emerge as the novel progresses. As *Mansfield Park* progresses, Fanny develops taste and appreciation for music. Despite not performing herself, Fanny Price finds herself developing into a musical heroine and actually enjoying Mary's harp playing as much as Edmund. We learn that 'Fanny could not wonder that Edmund was at the parsonage every morning; she would gladly have been there too, might she have gone in uninvited and unnoticed to hear the harp' (p.96). Fanny, whose enjoyment of music leads her to request Mary's harp performances, is described as a 'listener who seemed so much obliged, so full of wonder at the performance, and who shewed herself not wanting in taste.' Fanny is moved when Mary offers to play Edmund's favourite piece, Fanny was again 'listening with constant delight to the favourite air played, as it appeared to her, with superior tone and expression' (p.221). Like Edmund, musically curious Fanny 'went to [Mary] every two or three days; it seemed a kind of fascination' (p.221). From these extracts, Fanny's personal musical taste and her enthusiastic response to music can be gleaned, which thus complicates any dichotomy of worldly accomplishments and moral education.

³² David Selwyn, *Jane Austen and Leisure*, p.134.

³³ Jane Nardin, 'Jane Austen, Hannah More and the Novel of Education', p.18.

Conflicting attitudes towards music in *Mansfield Park* prove that there are several possible representations of music to be explored. While Mary's harp-playing can be interpreted as a symbol of her worldliness and self-display and Maria and Julia's music-making reveal their vanity, Austen celebrates Fanny Price's genuine appreciation of music. The ability to perform music well is secondary to the motivation behind the performance and to the genuine enjoyment of music. In this sense, appreciating and performing music are not about understanding or exhibiting talent in Austen's novels, nor is it about demonstrating great aptitude and theoretical awareness. Instead, characters are praised for responding to music genuinely and enjoying the creative skill without grasping at social approval. Austen's lack of focus on talent as an element of musical accomplishment points to her wariness about presenting music as anything other than an amusement. Her perspective is similar to Chapone, who valued talent but in the context of enjoying accomplishments as amusements. Constance Hill's argument that 'Austen has often ridiculed the affected love of music, but never its real appreciation' rightly claims that Austen prioritises the genuine enjoyment of music over boastful performances.³⁴

By scrutinising the motivations behind women's practice of accomplishments in *Catharine* and *Mansfield Park*, Austen alludes even more obviously to More and Wollstonecraft's debates. Austen's fiction distances itself from their challenges, however, as her novels provide a range of perspectives on music, which disconnect music from its singular potential function for self-display. Under such circumstances, musical accomplishment is not shown as an index of morality in Austen's novels. Moving away from More's pious condemnation of accomplishments, Austen's *Mansfield Park* explores the function of music in Fanny Price's life as well as showing the way that the Betrams abuse it.

³⁴ Constance Hill, *Jane Austen: Her Homes and Her Friends* (London: John Lane, 1901), p.85.

Sense and Sensibility and Emma

The effects of most of these accomplishments [music, dancing and languages] address themselves to the senses, and there are more who can see and hear, than there are who can judge and reflect.³⁵

When Hannah More compares accomplishments and religious study, she details two different responses to witnessing accomplishments. More implies that accomplishments are superficial by claiming that they appealed to those who wanted to ‘see and hear’ an activity without reflecting on it.³⁶ This advice verges on radicalism as women would have to edge further into the professional arena to acquire an advanced musical education in order to appreciate music to this extent. Paradoxically, More implies that accomplishments are practised superficially but she does not urge women to develop their talent.

Austen’s novels use comedy to separate the superficial admirers of music without creating the rigid border between genuine and superficial admirers of music that Hannah More does. Austen contrasts genuine and superficial musical judges in both single and consecutive episodes, showing this sense of pliability. Advocating a balanced response to music, Austen’s letters prove that she is as likely to mock attentive musical enthusiasts as the inattentive listeners. Speaking of particular acquaintances, one of Austen’s letters comments that ‘I cannot utterly abhor them, especially as Miss Holder owns that she has no taste for Music.’³⁷ In *Sense and Sensibility*, Austen compares those who are too selfish to listen closely to music with those who can reflect sensitively on the performance. Here Marianne Dashwood is dismayed at the superficial attention that her piano performance receives at the beginning of the novel. This is beautifully illustrated through the narrator’s ironic tone:

³⁵ Hannah More, *Essays on Various Subjects* (London, 1778), p.126.

³⁶ Mary Wollstonecraft similarly argued that ‘novels, music, poetry, and gallantry, all tend to make women the creatures of sensation, and their character is thus formed during the time they are acquiring accomplishments, the only improvement they are expected, by their station in society, to acquire’, Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, p.131.

³⁷ *Jane Austen’s Letters*, Letter 37 to Cassandra Austen, 21-22 May 1801, p.88.

Marianne's performance was highly applauded. Sir John was loud in his admiration at the end of every song, and as loud in his conversation with others while every song lasted. Lady Middleton frequently called him to order, wondered how any one's attention could be diverted from music for a moment, and asked Marianne to sing a particular song which Marianne had just finished.³⁸

The irony from the second line dashes the sincerity of the applause that Marianne receives from John and Lady Middleton. Alternatively, Marianne 'felt a respect' for Colonel Brandon because 'he heard her without being in raptures. He paid her only the compliment of attention' (p.30). Colonel Brandon would undoubtedly be Hannah More's example of one who was able to 'judge and reflect' rather than merely 'see and hear'.

The ability to listen rather than speak becomes an immensely positive trait in the sensitive Colonel Brandon. Superficial admirers of music may also be found in *Pride and Prejudice*. While the musical Georgiana Darcy never discusses music as a practice, the unmusical Lady Catharine De Bourgh advises Georgiana about practising and arrogantly acclaims that 'there are few people in England, I suppose, who have more true enjoyment of music than myself, or a better natural taste. If I had ever learnt, I should have been a great proficient'.³⁹ This claim is ironic because Lady Catharine pays no attention to Elizabeth's piano-playing: she simply 'listened to half a song, and then talked, as before, to her other nephew' (p.144). Like Mr Darcy and Caroline Bingley at the beginning of the novel, Lady Catharine De Bourgh has severe notions about what the definition of accomplishment should encompass. Austen's use of comedy here generates a parallel between genuine and superficial admirers of music and Austen argues that vanity and self-obsession should not accompany music-making. Austen, unlike More, does not utilise the inclusion of superficial admirers of music as a way of criticising music as a form of female education.

³⁸ Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), ed. by Ros Ballaster, 3 vols (London: Penguin, 1995), I, chapter vii, p.30. All subsequent page numbers refer to this edition.

³⁹ Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, II, chapter viii, p.144.

Austen's *Persuasion* and Hester Chapone's *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind* represent music in a positive way. The satire in *Catharine* and *Sense and Sensibility* that springs from characters abusing music as an accomplishment is absent in Austen's final novel. In *Persuasion*, music becomes a form of social duty and a space for the modest heroine's quiet contemplation. Rather than music appearing in the context of a competition, as in *Pride and Prejudice* and *Mansfield Park*, or as an opportunity for courtship, as in *Sense and Sensibility* and *Emma*, music has a more serious role in *Persuasion*. Anne is the only musical character within *Persuasion* and her talents are not subject to the scrutiny evident in Austen's earlier novels. Anne Elliot's solitary piano-playing gives her space for contemplation:

[Anne] played a great deal better than either of the Miss Musgroves; but having no voice, no knowledge of the harp, and no fond parents to sit by and fancy themselves delighted, her performance was little thought of, only out of civility, or to refresh the others, as she was well aware. She knew that when she played she was giving pleasure only to herself; but this was no new sensation [...] In music she had been always used to feel alone in the world.⁴⁰

Practising music creates a paradox in this case; it makes Anne painfully aware of her isolation while comforting her at the same time. Sincerity and genuine musical appreciation are pervasive forces in this scene; forces that have been absent in *Catharine* and *Pride and Prejudice*. The assertion that Anne has 'no voice' is poignant. Her singing and social voice are linked here, but this also refers to her modesty and lack of confidence. Although Anne does not sing, the audibility of her piano playing means that she makes herself heard, as long as others are listening. Despite Anne's performance being 'little thought of, only out of civility', she does offer her community refreshment, distinguishing her from any other character in *Persuasion*.

⁴⁰Jane Austen, *Persuasion* (1818), ed. by D.W.Harding, 2 vols (London: Penguin, 1985), I, chapter vi, p.73. All subsequent page numbers refer to this edition.

Chapone highlighted the importance of music in providing personal solace in *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind* when she clarified that ‘I think the use of both these arts [music and drawing] is more for yourself than for others’ (p.173), although this was not an argument that Wollstonecraft or More acknowledged. Austen also grants this autonomy to her heroine who practises music in order to console herself. Anne’s music is both an escape mechanism and a way of entertaining her family and friends, just as Austen performed to entertain her nieces and nephews.⁴¹ In *Persuasion*:

Anne, very much preferring the office of musician to a more active post, played country dances to them by the hour together; a kindness which always recommended her musical powers to the notice of Mr and Mrs Musgrove more than any thing else, and often drew this compliment; — “Well done, Miss Anne! Very well done indeed! Lord bless me! How those little fingers of yours fly about!” (p.74)

Rather than boastfully playing to strangers (like the Bertram girls and Mary Crawford in *Mansfield Park*), Anne dutifully performs to please her family and friends. Unlike the other duties that Anne performs, her musical efforts are appreciated. Even selfish Mary Musgrove never ignores Anne’s musical voice nor criticises her sister’s musical talent and instead compliments her sister’s dutiful nature. Anne plays the piano for enjoyment as much as to avoid dancing in public. Unlike dancing, which demands social interaction, piano-playing is a solitary activity which is much more suited to Anne’s shy and modest character.⁴² While she plays the piano accompaniment to the dancing, she is in the background but can still participate in the entertainment. Performing music to please one’s

⁴¹ In a letter to Cassandra, Austen pronounces that ‘yes, yes, we will have a Pianoforte [...] & I will practise country dances, that we may have some amusement for our nephew & nieces, when we have the pleasure of their company.’ *Jane Austen’s Letters*, Letter 62 to Cassandra, 27-28 December, 1808, p.161.

⁴² Donald Walker claims that, in order to perform, pianists must have their back to the audience and sit stiffly, Donald Walker, *Exercises for Ladies; Calculated to Preserve and Improve Beauty, and to Prevent and Correct Personal Defects, Inseparable from Constrained and Careless Habits; founded on Physiological Principles*, 2nd edn (London: Thomas Hurst, 1837), p.xxv. This closed body language suits Anne’s reserved character.

family was an action that Chapone encouraged in her treatise.⁴³ Chapone urged women to play for their family repeatedly and the short enthusiastic exclamations of praise that Anne receives show that she has pleased them on more than one occasion. Anne's kindness in playing country dances was a trait that 'always' recommended her musical powers to her family and the use of this world always implies that Anne performed this duty.

After Anne has been reunited with Captain Wentworth, her emotions are most vividly represented through her piano playing: 'Anne offered her services [to play the piano] as usual, and though her eyes would sometimes fill with tears as she sat at the instrument, she was extremely glad to be employed, and desired nothing in return but to be unobserved' (p.95). At this point in the story, music becomes a vehicle that allows Anne to release repressed emotions. The music provokes her tears, which the narrator does not have to explain any further. Like the use of free indirect discourse within the writing, music is a lens that reflects the heroine's secret emotions.

While the narrator conveys music as an emotional outlet sympathetically here, this is a marked change from its representation in *Sense and Sensibility* when Marianne Dashwood's music-making became an unhelpful trigger for her self-indulgent grief after Willoughby's departure.⁴⁴ The attitudes of both heroines are different, however. While Anne's grief does not prevent her doing her duty (she still offered to play for others, while Marianne played alone), Marianne's grief is entirely selfish. While Marianne has an obsessive attitude, Anne is more rational: readers are told that Anne's eyes would 'sometimes' fill with tears at the piano, while Marianne's voice was 'totally suspended by

⁴³Hester Chapone wrote that 'if you have any acquired talent of entertainment, such as music, painting, or the like, your own family are those before whom you should most wish to excel and for whom you should always be ready to exert yourself'. Hester Chapone, *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind*, pp.132-3.

⁴⁴*Sense and Sensibility* reads: 'She [Marianne] played over every favourite song that she had been used to play to Willoughby, every air in which their voices had been oftenest joined, and sat at the instrument gazing on every line of music that he had written out for her, till her heart was so heavy that no further sadness could be gained; and this nourishment of grief was every day applied. She spent whole hours at the piano-forte alternately singing and crying; her voice often suspended by her tears.' Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), ed. by Ros Ballaster, 3 vols (London: Penguin, 1995), I, chapter xvi, p.73. All subsequent page numbers refer to this edition.

her tears.⁴⁵ Reverting to the character's attitude towards music again in these instances helps to explain why Austen appears to promote music as a vehicle for emotional escape in *Persuasion* whilst previously criticising it in *Sense and Sensibility*.

Anne, who 'desired nothing in return but to be unobserved' performs her music modestly, which Chapone's treatise recommended.⁴⁶ In fact, Anne's performance in *Persuasion* is crafted in a similar way to the imaginary accomplished woman that Chapone idealises in *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind*. Music gives Anne a voice and social role at the beginning of the novel, functioning in a society where adherence to duty and modesty are promoted. Returning to Judith Butler's argument about performing gender, it is useful to consider the characterisation of Anne. Anne performs a role as a pianist, which reflects her identity and character as a heroine. The ease in which she performs music, as a form of personal consolation and family duty, is different from the struggle that Fanny Price in *Mansfield Park* and Marianne Dashwood in *Sense and Sensibility* face to assert their identity through performing and responding to music-making. Both Fanny Price and Marianne Dashwood have changing responses to music. Only towards the end of *Mansfield Park* is Fanny Price comfortable with her interest in music, when it ceases to be the evil force that draws Edmund to harpist Mary Crawford. In *Sense and Sensibility*, Marianne has to curb her obsession for piano-playing, which generates upsetting memories of Willoughby. She is forced to adopt a more moderate response to her musical studies, which shows her to be a reformed heroine.

As time progressed, Austen became more comfortable with promoting music in her novels. The abuse of music can be seen in *Catharine* and 'Jack and Alice', where music becomes a symbol of social worth. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Lady Catharine De Bourgh

⁴⁵ Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*, I, chapter xvi, p.73.

⁴⁶ Returning to *Pride and Prejudice*, Georgiana Darcy's modesty also ensured that her performances received the highest praise, as did Jane Fairfax's attitude in *Emma*.

uses music to assert social superiority, while *Sense and Sensibility* shows how Marianne Dashwood performs music excessively and Lady Middleton neglects it once she is married. Similarly, Emma's musical talents are compared unfavourably with those of Jane Fairfax in *Emma* while Mrs Elton's interest in music is superficial. The accomplished Bertram sisters are dismissed as vain and superficial and Mary Crawford is shown as a manipulator of her harp-playing in *Mansfield Park*. In *Emma* and *Sense and Sensibility*, however, the importance of music as a female skill is emphasised a little more because, as chapter three will argue, male involvement in duets is more heavily criticised. Austen's respect for music is most prominent in her final novel, *Persuasion*, where music provides Anne Elliot with a vital space for contemplation. Her amateur music-making is valued as a form of escapism that is not permitted for the more self-absorbed Marianne Dashwood in *Sense and Sensibility*. It was because Austen was conscious of the strong attacks on female accomplishments that her earlier novels use irony to consider, but later invalidate, the argument that music is purely a superficial activity. Austen is freer to celebrate musical accomplishment in *Persuasion*, than in earlier novels, as *Persuasion* was published when the ferocity of the educational debate had died down. Music becomes imprinted more strongly into Anne Elliot's character and is celebrated as a sign of the heroine's measured emotionalism and a form of personal solace. Music is no longer represented as a symbol of social worth. In the earlier novels, Austen struggled to drag music away from its association with competition, vanity and self-obsession, particularly in *Catharine* and *Pride and Prejudice*. *Persuasion* certainly focuses less on the false vanity surrounding accomplishments that was such a prominent feature in earlier novels. Many similarities can be drawn between the importance of music as a contemplative activity in *Persuasion* and in Austen's own personal life. In this respect, Austen's celebration of musical accomplishment can be distanced from the problems that More and Wollstonecraft

outlined. Instead Anne Elliot's musical talent is encouraged, elevated and celebrated, in a similar manner to the representation of musical accomplishment found in Chapone's treatise.

III) Conclusion

The period during which women became increasingly conspicuous as writers was also the period during which the pressure towards respectability, the pressure to make their writing (and behaviour), conform to codes of femininity, modesty was increasingly acutely felt.¹

As Vivien Jones remarks above, the eighteenth century saw unprecedented pressure on women to conform to codes of femininity and modesty. Performing music was one way in which women could conform to such codes and polemical treatises reinforced such a view. Music became a mark of femininity that helped women to perform their role; whether subversively or in obedience to a patriarchal society. If women followed the advice laid out in polemical treatises by the likes of Essex, Hanway and Chapone, they would pursue music as one of many 'innocent amusements', not develop their proficiency too far and perform to family and small social circles. Challenges to this sculpting of women's social role followed in treatises by More and Wollstonecraft. Due in part to More's reluctance to openly challenge existing hierarchy and her self-identification as a 'conservative', critics have struggled to neatly categorise polemicists who discussed accomplishments into either radical or conservative. The force that unites all of these polemicists, however, is the attention they give to female education and its content. All of these writers present talent as a relatively unimportant aspect of musical accomplishment. Talent did not feature at all in Essex's treatise; Hanway referred to it in a vague way while maintaining that music should be an amusement; and Chapone and More argued that talent should be the factor that

¹ Vivien Jones, ed., *Women and Literature in Britain 1700-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.10.

decides which accomplishments women should pursue. Chapone then implied that talent should be contained as music should be kept to an amusement; whereas Wollstonecraft denied its very existence in the practice of accomplishments. The reluctance to freely foster talent is one example of the way in which patriarchal society used music to keep women away from the professional space. In relation to their heroines, even Hervey and Austen did not promote theoretical expertise and competency in music, but preferred to create well-rounded accomplished heroines by prioritising specific moral characteristics over outstanding proficiency.

In *Persuasion* especially, Austen imprints musical accomplishment on Anne Elliot's character as her attitude towards her piano-playing reflects her dutiful and modest identity. In her earlier novels, Austen criticises specific character traits such as boastfulness and self-display that often accompany music-making without suggesting any alternative system of education. On this note, the dichotomy of solid moral characteristics and female accomplishments that Austen attempts to set up in *Catharine* is complicated by the heavy irony in the story and Austen's mocking characterisation of Catharine's aunt who regrets the path of her niece's education. Such a dichotomy is developed, in 1814, in *Mansfield Park*, where the comparison between moral education and female accomplishments, which critics allude to, is also complicated by the different versions of accomplished women that appear. In *Mansfield Park*, Austen criticises the selfishness and thoughtlessness behind superficial accomplished women while heralding Fanny Price's developing interest in music. The moral education, that critics claim the novel promotes, incorporates Fanny's increasing interest in music as an accomplishment. Broadly then, Austen's novels show that the majority of her heroines represent this new type of accomplished woman, who practises music modestly. Austen does not need to cure her heroines of being accomplished. Instead accomplishments often facilitate the heroine's emotional development, which Austen

presents as the most important type of education. Music is not merely about right or wrong conduct in Austen's novels. As the entire thesis argues, music is an important aspect of a heroine's characters and specific to a female space in both novels and eighteenth-century culture. Chapone's *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind* advocated the existence of accomplishments but was careful to dissuade women from pursuing music to the detriment of specific core values. By showing Anne Elliot's modesty, kindness and selflessness through her unselfish piano playing in *Persuasion*, accomplishments and the acquisition of virtue clearly do not have to be at odds with each other. By acting as a space for contemplation in *Sense and Sensibility* and *Persuasion*, music gives women an element of autonomy in a non-subversive way. Judith Butler's claims that women perform their own gender are pertinent in relation to the way that music becomes such an important mark of femininity but does not represent repression rather highlights individual creative expression.

The formula for an ideally educated woman was extremely complex. The burning of novels in *The History of Melinda Harley* (1777) points to an outright attack on a system of education that idealised ornamental accomplishments. Clara Reeve's *The Two Mentors* (1783) and Hervey's *Louisa* (1790), attempted to make this parallel between solid study and female accomplishments, appearing to promote the former through targeted speeches by heroines. The positive representation of music, as a valuable source of entertainment and a means of courtship, is at odds with the more sceptical representation of music in polemical writing. Reeve and Hervey strongly advocate a balance between these types of education. Hervey and the author of *The Wreath of Friendship* (1790) in fact present many accomplished women. The multiple representations of accomplished women in these novels demonstrate the subjectivity of 'accomplished' as an adjective and highlight the importance of the character behind the accomplished woman. Such novels do not reject

music as an accomplishment but consider other desirable attributes that would complete an accomplished woman. These two novels effectively reconsider the definition of an ‘accomplished’ woman. By outlining a range of perspectives and meanings associated with musical accomplishment, this chapter has clarified and explored an important function of music: in its role as a popular female accomplishment. It has struggled to find a unified representation of musical accomplishment, but has found a range of responses to musical accomplishment, which played an important role when formulating female characters in a range of eighteenth-century novels. Chapter two will now explore how novelists dealt with the idealisation of music as an amusement in light of the mass production of instruments, mass consumerism and the growth of female professionalism.

Chapter Two: Performance Arenas and Instrumentation

Part 1: Performance Arenas

It is a woman's participation in public spectacle that injures her, for as an object of display, she always loses value as a subject.

Anne [...] was quite impatient for the concert evening. It was a concert for the benefit of a person patronised by Lady Dalrymple. Of course they must attend. It was really expected to be a good one, and Captain Wentworth was very fond of music. If she could only have a few minutes conversation with him again, she fancied she should be satisfied.¹

As Anne Elliot excitedly and nervously anticipates a forthcoming recital, her feelings towards the concert and expectations of Captain Wentworth become the focal point of this episode from *Persuasion*.² This is one of few music-making scenes in Austen's novels where the musically accomplished heroine is a spectator rather than a performer. Anne's previous nervousness continues throughout the concert as her mood changes from happiness to frustration with Mr Elliot's intrusiveness and uneasiness about Wentworth. The concert scene thus becomes a forum for uncertainty, confusion and strained relationships in *Persuasion*.

In many eighteenth-century novels, the narrator uses concerts to comment on the self-display demanded of female performers, the collections of insincere concert spectators and the value of music as a commodity and profession. This chapter demonstrates ways in which Jane Austen, Frances Burney, Ann Thickett and Sarah Harriet Burney use venues for musical performance and musical instruments to discriminate different social classes and hierarchies.³ All of the novels discussed in this chapter use concerts as a way of

¹ Jane Austen, *Persuasion* (1818), ed. by D.W.Harding (London: Penguin, 1985), chapter vii, p.189.

² Towards the end of Austen's *Persuasion*, Anne longs to be reconciled with Captain Wentworth and views the forthcoming concert as an opportunity to develop their relationship. Even though Anne looks forward to the concert, the narrator emphasises her nervous thoughts: 'Of course they must attend' and 'it was really expected to be a good one'.

³ In addition to *Persuasion*, I shall be examining *The Artless Lovers* (London, 1768), Frances Burney, *The Wanderer or Female Difficulties* (1814) ed. by Margaret Anne Doody, Robert L Mack and Peter Sabor, 5 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) and Ann Thickett, *The School For Fashion*, 2 vols (London, 1800).

commenting on the status of music as an accomplishment. They open up the possibility that music could be practised as a trade rather than as an amusement and this follows on from chapter one's discussion about the value of musical accomplishment. These female authors explore female perspectives and related concerns about the role of women through these representations of concerts and the characters' reactions towards performance. Specifically, they represent concerts and deploy musical instruments to illustrate both the inconsistent views about the social construction of the private and public spheres and the divided perceptions about the organisation of social hierarchy. Analysing concerts and the implications of professional musical performance was also an effective way for writers to address related concerns about the eighteenth-century writing profession. By presenting the figure of the unfortunate and poverty-stricken female concert performer, Burney and Thicknesse commented on the frustrations of the female plight in a similar vein to the challenges that were proposed in Wollstonecraft's 1787 treatise entitled *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters*.

The chapter categorises two sets of responses towards concerts. Firstly, Burney and Thicknesse willingly confront the permeability of the border that separates non-professional and professional music-making as they object to social prejudice and sympathise with the plight of socially obscure women. Alternatively, by firmly locating their heroines on the periphery of the concert and shifting the focus onto the heroines' internal thought process and preoccupation with courtship, Austen and the author of *The Artless Lovers* (1768) draw an obvious divide between non-professional and professional music-making and implicitly argue that women in leisured classes should confine music to an accomplishment. In all four novels discussed, concerts are forums for turmoil, uncertainty and jealousy but such emotions are channelled for differing purposes. The novels are being discussed in pairs simply because Burney's *The Wanderer* (1814) and Thicknesse's *The School For Fashion*

(1800) expose their heroines to the treatment suffered by female concert musicians; while the heroines in *Persuasion* and *The Artless Lovers* are spectators.

I) A) Defining the Private and Public Spheres

Before claiming that concerts in novels generally occur in a public space that is considered an unsafe alternative to a domestic music-making space, this chapter will explore the problems connected with these spheres within the context of music-making. By arguing that Burney's representation of private and public music-making reflected the problematic instability of the respective spaces, I shall demonstrate how Burney's *The Wanderer* tentatively revealed an expansive leisured space, which entertained the possibility for women's financial independence but still hindered respectability. *The Wanderer* raises questions about where professionalism is located within the public sphere, the compatibility of professionalism and leisure ideals and the relationship between public and professional in society.

Habermas, Klein, Kerber, Vickery and McKeon have fiercely debated what constitutes the historically unstable private and public spheres and questioned whether the categories even exist in eighteenth-century studies.⁴ These critics have queried the assumption that private referred to a domestic space occupied by women and public referred to a professional, male-inhabited world. Even if non-professional music-making could be neatly embedded into a private sphere and professional musicians occupied a public space, there is still the problem of where professionalism begins and non-

⁴ Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, translated by Thomas Burger (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), Lawrence Klein, 'Gender and the Public/Private Distinction in the Eighteenth Century: Some Questions about Evidence and Analytic Procedure', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 29 (1995), 97-105, Dena Goodman, 'Introduction: The Public and the Nation', *Eighteenth Century Studies*, 29 (1995), 1-4, Amanda Vickery, 'Historiographical Review: Golden Age to Separate Spheres? A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women's History', *The Historical Journal*, 36 (1993), 383-414, 400, Linda K. Kerber, 'Separate Spheres, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History', *The Journal of American History* (1988), 9-39, pp.14, 21, Michael McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity: Public, Private, and the Division of Knowledge* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005).

professionalism ends. The novels discussed in this chapter deal with a leisured social class, yet characters within this broad class can be forced towards professionalism without being involved in the larger public sphere. Just as McKeon argues, social class formations led to the idealisation of non-productive leisure, which is a key issue addressed in polemical treatises that tackled the subject of women's accomplishments. McKeon claimed that 'at the higher social levels, the differential process of class formation led women and men who aspired to a proto "bourgeois" gentility to value female idleness, in the strict sense of eschewing all modes of production for the market'.⁵

Lawrence Klein claims that gender dichotomies have often been mapped onto larger ideas such as the distinctions of public and private spheres. He insists that a multiplicity of public and private spheres exist, rightly claiming that the private and public spheres were constructed ideologically and endowed with gender and class meanings.⁶ He adds that women who were traditionally occupiers of 'private spheres' had many public dimensions to their lives.⁷ The multiplicity of public spaces, Klein argues, involved an 'associative' public sphere, which was a sphere of social, discussion and production.⁸ Dena Goodman provides an equally useful assessment of the organisation of spaces, surveying arguments by Kathleen Wilson that the public sphere contributed to the formation of a national political identity. Goodman also discussed Smith's idea that the public represented an arena within which claims to citizenship, as public virtue could be staked and challenged.⁹ Amanda Vickery changes tack slightly, questioning the ideological power of separate spheres in creating the middle class or the confinement of women, while arguing that private and public had currency.¹⁰ According to Linda K. Kerber, the divisions of the

⁵ Michael McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity*, p.177.

⁶ Lawrence Klein, 'Gender and the Public/Private Distinction in the Eighteenth Century', p.101.

⁷ Ibid., pp.99, 102.

⁸ Ibid., p.104.

⁹ Dena Goodman, 'Introduction: The Public and the Nation', pp.1-4.

¹⁰ Amanda Vickery, 'Historiographical Review', p.400.

spheres even offered ways of addressing women's history and were at heart a rhetorical construction.¹¹

These different interpretations of the private and public sphere indicate the subjectivity of these spaces. When I refer to professional music-making, I allude to a small segment of the public sphere. Professionalism, in the form of small musical soirees and music teaching, only seeps into a leisured space when women capitalise on their accomplishments. In the context of this chapter, the public sphere is a social, cultural and political arena outside of the confines of the home. Professional music-making involved the exchange of money and did not have to be a full-time occupation and I define leisured social classes as those with significant free, unoccupied periods of time.

I . B) The Relationship between Music-Making and The Private and Public Spheres

By mapping the process of an expanding public sphere onto musical performance, Habermas claims that music was essential to understanding the division of spaces in the Eighteenth Century. Although Dena Goodman claims that the division of spaces that Habermas employs provides no account of women's role in the public sphere and limits the possibility of multiple spheres beyond a literate bourgeois space, Habermas' reference to the relationship between the private, public sphere and musical performance is useful for the purposes of this thesis.¹² The function of music, Habermas argued, shifted from being a tool for religious worship to a means of entertainment in the eighteenth century. This was consistent with the rise of the eighteenth-century public concert.¹³ The public, Habermas argues, may be defined as a group of people participating in the state and can also be understood through examining reading practices and a theatre-going public. His central

¹¹ Linda K. Kerber, 'Separate Spheres, Woman's Place', pp.14, 21.

¹² See Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, p.39 and Dena Goodman, 'Introduction: The Public and the Nation', p.2.

¹³ Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, p.39.

claim is that the concept of the private and public spheres is better understood in the case of concert-going than from examining readers or theatre-goers: 'The shift which produced not merely a change in the composition of the public but amounted to the very generation of the "public" as such can be categorically grasped with even more rigour in the case of the concert-going public than in the case of the reading and theatre-going public'.¹⁴ Habermas argues that the changing arena in which music was performed and conditions associated with performance made it more accessible to the middle class, even though the consumption of music was still associated with the propertied and educated class. The exchange of money at newly formed public concerts also turned music into an acquisition, shown in the following extract: 'Admission for a payment turned the musical performance into a commodity; simultaneously, however, there arose something like music not tied to a purpose. For the first time an audience gathered to listen to music as such- a public of music lovers to which anyone who was propertied and educated was admitted.'¹⁵

The production and consumption of novels increased at a similar time and rate to the rise in concerts, which presents obvious similarities between music and literature as commodities.¹⁶ The increase in the production of novels reflected the demands of a literary public sphere, who were interested in assessing literary (and musical) performances. Concerts also began to attract more socially diverse audiences.¹⁷ Habermas argues that the emergence of a socially diverse reading public in the late eighteenth century made the divisions between private and public spheres more problematic, claiming that the rise of the psychological novel and the domestic drama after 1750 mirror 'experiences about which a

¹⁴ Ibid., p.39.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ James Raven reports that 'there were 238 new titles between 1750 and 1759 and 292 titles between 1760-9 compared with 45 titles 1700-9' in *British Fiction 1750-1770 A Chronological Check-list of Prose Fiction printed in Britain and Ireland*, ed. by James Raven (Toronto: Delaware Press, 1987), p.9.

¹⁷ Habermas argues: 'Released from its [music's] functions in the service of social representation, art became an object of free choice and of changing preference. The 'taste' to which art was oriented from then on became manifest in the assessments of lay people who claimed no prerogative, since within a public everyone was entitled to judge', Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* pp.39-40.

public passionately concerned with itself sought agreement and enlightenment through the rational-critical public debate of private persons.’¹⁸ Just as eighteenth-century musical concerts invited a new educated public, who shared the experience of judging music, eighteenth-century novelists used realism to invite shared experience: ‘the psychological novel fashioned for the first time the kind of realism that allowed anyone to enter into the literary action as substitute relationships for reality.’¹⁹

One of Habermas’ central points was that increased consumption led to an expanding leisured social class and larger middle class. In a study on luxury, Maxine Berg agrees that the production and consumption of music both produced and maintained this expanding leisured society: ‘A third area of luxury consumption that became a mass phenomenon during the early nineteenth century was musical instruments and sheet music. Britain produced more musical instruments and published more music than any other European country and both areas of business were associated with remarkable technical and marketing innovation.’²⁰ Women of the domesticated classes were consumers of these musical commodities, which rapidly seeped into the home. Although the leisured space expanded and the same music can be performed and heard regardless of its performance arena, the private and public spheres are useful categories for accounting for some difference between music as a trade and as an accomplishment in the long eighteenth century. Indeed, Nancy Reich argues that ‘the distinction between the professional and non-professional woman musician was drawn more sharply in the nineteenth century than it had been in earlier periods.’²¹ Fear of the music profession and the implications of female self-display were circulated in eighteenth-century culture though and were perpetuated by

¹⁸ Ibid., p.43.

¹⁹ Ibid., p.50.

²⁰ Maxine Berg and Helen Clifford, eds., *Consumers and Luxury: Consumer Culture in Europe 1650-1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), p.212.

²¹ Nancy B. Reich, ‘Women as Musicians: A Question of Class’ in *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship*, ed. by Ruth Solie (California: University of California Press, 1993), pp.125-146, 130.

polemical writing such as Campbell's treatise and memoirs of female musicians.²²

Eighteenth-century sources such as polemical treatises, music collections and novels did in fact create a divide between (private) music that was performed in the home and professional music-making. Music collections frequently differentiated private from public musical performance in their titles and advertisements. The Fitzwilliam Museum holds a music book, published in 1787, that advertises itself 'for public and private concerts' and distinguishes 'amateurs' from 'professionals'.²³

Frances Burney's *The Wanderer* also uses the terms 'public' and 'private' to define types of music-making. The narrator alludes to Juliet's music pupils: 'Those young ladies [Juliet's music pupils] who play and sing in *public*, at those *private* rooms, of four or five hundred people, have their poor little heads so taken up, between the compliments of the company when they are in the world, and their own when they are by themselves, that there i'n't a moment left for little thought'.²⁴ When Burney applies private and public to music-making, the terms begin to overlap. Women play and sing in 'public' but the narrator ironically refers to the concert rooms as 'private' even though they contain audiences of up to five hundred people. Women are overwhelmed when they receive compliments from company 'in the world', which is different from their experience of performing privately. Burney predicts the complex relationship between private and public music-making here, uncovering ways in which the leisured sphere of music-making naturally seeps into the public space. This quotation from *The Wanderer* demonstrates both the relevance of and problems with private and public as categories in the Eighteenth Century.

²² For scandalous accounts of a musician, see *Memoirs of Mrs Billington From her Birth: Containing A Variety of Matter, Ludicrous, Theatrical, Musical and With Copies of Several Original Letters Written to her Mother, the Later Mrs Weichsel* (London, 1792).

²³ Cambridge: Fitzwilliam, MS MU1182 (4).

²⁴ Frances Burney, *The Wanderer or Female Difficulties* (1814) ed. by Margaret Anne Doody, Robert L Mack and Peter Sabor, 5 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), II, 300-301.

This chapter argues that the separate spheres offer a useful gateway into analysing the important method in which music-making illuminated social and gender divides and highlights ways in which women and their role were perceived. Therefore, this study contests the mainstream critical opinion that the spheres should not be placed in binary opposition, without denying that the private-public spheres were ideological constructions. When Marcia Citron argues that ‘musical activity rooted in the private, has less cultural justification and presumably less value than the workings and agents of the public sphere’, she opposes the dichotomy of the spheres.²⁵ If the spheres are connected with site and societal status, Citron’s feminist study argues that the private sphere does not allow for much freedom for women, who are frequently confined to one area.²⁶ It is debatable how far novelists such as Burney, Thicknesse and Austen present this private music-making space as restrictive and how far they describe the public music-making space as an arena for professionalism and liberation. Leslie Ritchie, who joins Citron in opposing the dichotomy of spheres, argues that ‘the critical division of public and private spheres of musical performance belies the large range of performing spaces open to women during the eighteenth century’ but, later in his analysis, he adds that ‘the separate spheres model has been useful for thinking about the kinds of restrictions that affected women’s ability to compose or perform.’²⁷ My analysis of *Persuasion*, *The Artless Lovers* and *The School for Fashion* and *The Wanderer* comments on the kinds of restrictions to which Ritchie refers. Citron’s objections to the division between private and public music-making arise from her claim that the hierarchy renders women ‘that much less worthy to be vested with authorial authority.’²⁸ Although Citron’s observation that ‘public-private goes well beyond binary opposition and represents the mass of contradictions that should be viewed within specific

²⁵ Marcia J. Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon*, p.104.

²⁶ Ibid., p.104.

²⁷ Leslie Ritchie, *Women Writing Music in Late Eighteenth-Century England*, pp. 3, 18.

²⁸ Marcia J. Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon*, p.10.

contexts' is fair, I do not agree that the private sphere always represents women as 'reined in and bounded' but the following study of Burney's *The Wanderer* will demonstrate that the eighteenth-century private sphere was more lenient and expansive than Citron allows.²⁹

²⁹ Ibid., pp.10, 104.

II) The Public Performer in Frances Burney's Journals and Other Sources

Responses to professional musicians appear in Burney's letters, journals and *The Wanderer* and all of these articles explore the problems and pitfalls of working women extensively. In addition to her output in her journals and novels, Frances Burney's role in transcribing her father's *General History of Music* and *Memoirs of Dr Burney* was of great significance.¹

During this writing, Frances Burney noted down a range of personal responses to music and musicians together with their reception. Dr Burney frequently shared plans for his musical writings with his daughters, which increased Frances Burney's familiarity with the profession.² Her comments about musicians in her own journals are respectful and sometimes even laudatory. Just like Juliet in *The Wanderer*, Frances Burney's sister, Esther Burney was forced to become a music teacher to earn money. When Esther asked Frances Burney for her advice on this newly conceived scheme, Burney replied: 'I at once feel for and admire your [Esther's] purposed plan [to become a music teacher]. Its success I am not afraid to say I am sure will be all you can desire. It cannot be that your willingness to give forth your talents shall be known and not be seized upon eagerly'.³ Encouraging her sister to teach music, Burney portrays a sympathetic response towards the music profession. In a later letter to her sister, Burney she sympathises with the hard life and disappointment

¹This enormous undertaking required Frances Burney to copy out four volumes for her father's *General History of Music* and compile three volumes for *Memoirs of Dr Burney*. See *The Early Diary of Frances Burney 1768-1778* ed. by Annie Raine Ellis (London, 1907), entry from 1774, p.lxviii. In her early journal in 1774, Burney defines herself as her father's secretary, thus hinting at the demanding nature of working as her father's scribe: He [Mr Crisp] tells me he has a Plan of an Invite to me for a longer Time this summer- but our History [Dr Burney's *General History of Music*] now requires its secretary & I am almost certain it will not be possible to separate them till the Work is finished'. *The Early Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney* ed. by Lars E. Troide, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), III, 32-33.

Burney's work as her father's scribe and biographer meant that she has to alter her handwriting to remain anonymous as the authoress of *Evelina*.

²In 1794, Charles Burney tells Frances that Pleyel's air cannot be reprinted as the Meza printed is different from Longman's publication. Montréal: The Burney Centre, Berg, MS 21: 54.

³*The Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney (Madame D'Arblay)*, ed. by Joyce Hemlow and Althea Douglas, 12 vols (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), IV, Letter to Esther Burney, 1 April 1799, 266.

suffered by Esther and Charles Burney, as both struggle to earn a living through music teaching.⁴

In Frances and Charles Burney's descriptions of public musicians, an appraisal of the performer's appearance and their character is always incorporated into an assessment of their talent. In April 1802, Burney links a moral attribute of Madame De Beauveau with an assessment of her musical talent. Burney writes that she had 'a look of modesty' and also 'a voice of the most interesting softness.'⁵ As another example, Burney includes many remarks on the famous soprano, Elizabeth Linley.⁶ In her journal, Frances Burney includes a detailed judgment on Linley's character, figure and talent:

Miss Linley's figure was extremely genteel and the form of her face was elegant [...] Her carriage is modest and unassuming and her countenance indicates diffidence and a strong desire of pleasing [...] I think that so young a woman, gifted with such enchanting talents and surrounded by so many admirers who can preserve herself unconscious of her charms and diffident of her powers, had merit that entitles her to the strongest approbation.⁷

Little is mentioned about Linley's vocal talent in this passage, which focuses on her 'genteel' figure, 'elegant' face and character, which has a 'strong desire of pleasing'. 'Enchanting' talents are less important. The strong emphasis on female modesty and an unassuming countenance can be found in every novel by Austen, where a heroine's modesty is an integral component of her identity as a musically accomplished woman. When Dr Burney associates these virtues with a public performer, he is attempting to justify female performance in the professional sphere. Dr Burney continues to focus on Linley's reputation, character and appearance instead of her musical ability:

[Elizabeth Linley's] musical renown though great and well-deserved did not excite more curiosity in the public ear, than her history, and the lawsuit concerning a

⁴ Ibid., XI, 124-5n.

⁵ Montréal: The Burney Centre, Berg, MS 21: 157.

⁶ Elizabeth Linley was the famous soprano whose husband, Richard Sheridan, forced her to retreat from the stage.

⁷ *The Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney*, I, 212.

contract of marriage, did in the public eye. For the beauty of her Person with her modest, amiable and interesting Deportment rendered the gazers as eager to renew their pleasure as her mellifluous voice and correct and Natural Manner of singing did the Hearers.⁸

The adjective 'public' is employed twice, which strongly emphasises performance arenas. Similarly, the singer's modesty and deportment are highlighted again as Burney is aware that the public will scrutinise Linley. As an amateur musician who wrote many accounts of eighteenth-century musicians, Lord Edgecombe also included assessments of performers' moral and religious character and their physical appearance. In the following appraisal of a singer, Agujari, Edgecombe argued that a performer's reputation was more important than their musical proficiency: 'She [Agujari] was succeeded by a young and very inferior singer with no recommendation but a very beautiful voice.'⁹ Edgecombe anticipates public response by predicting that the singer's 'beautiful voice' will be less important than her looks and character.

While Dr Burney and Edgecombe appraised professional musicians relatively kindly, other sources were infinitely more sceptical of professional musicians. Public performances, which become Juliet's financial resource in Burney's *The Wanderer*, were viewed suspiciously because they involved significant self-display.¹⁰ As Vivien Jones points out, female sexuality was uniformly represented, in conduct books, as deviant.¹¹ If, as Doody argues, professional music-making was associated with prostitution and this was a threat to a model of femininity, a fear of excessive freedom and deviant sexuality must have informed the enforced border between non-professional and professional music-

⁸ *Memoirs of Dr Charles Burney 1726-1769*, p.191.

⁹ Count Edgecombe, *Musical Reminiscences of an Old Amateur Chiefly Respecting the Italian Opera in England for the Years from 1773 to 1823* (London, 1827), p.21.

¹⁰ As my introduction explained, Margaret Ann Doody argues that professional singers and instrumentalists occupied a similar social status to workwomen and that society compared this self-display with prostitution. See introduction to Frances Burney, *The Wanderer or Female Difficulties* (1814) ed. by Margaret Anne Doody, Robert L Mack and Peter Sabor, 4 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p.xxiv.

¹¹ Vivien Jones, *Women in the Eighteenth Century: Constructions of Femininity* (London: Routledge, 1990), p.57.

making.¹² Just as Nancy Armstrong asserts, ‘it is a woman’s participation in public spectacle that injures her, for as an object of display, she always loses value as a subject.’¹³

What was common in all accounts of public performers was a judgement on their moral behaviour. The Burneys’ accounts of professional singers assessed performers’ characters and appearances, which bore more weight than appraisals of their talent. This can be related to chapter one’s point that novels which elevated musical accomplishment did so by identifying the ideal musical woman as modest, sensible and unselfish. In accounts of all musical performers, irrespective of the arena in which they perform, talent is seen as secondary to a woman possessing or displaying these other moral characteristics. Just as eighteenth-century writings prescribed ideal conditions behind the practice of non-professional music-making, the controversial decision to perform publicly needed to be justified by a good account of a musician’s character. For this reason, Frances Burney describes Juliet’s merits in *The Wanderer* before commenting on her musical talents. Contrary to the perceptions of the public performer, outlined by Doody, sources by Frances and Charles Burney refrain from discriminating private from professional music-making and thus show that the music profession did not have to be an unsafe and unrespectable arena for women. They point to the difficulty in searching for a unified representation of the public performer and also provide a rebuttal for the dismissive view of the music profession that Campbell’s treatise portrays.

¹² As Jennie Batchelor argues, the figure of the prostitute was represented in Fordyce’s *Sermons for Young Women* as a ‘walking reminder of corruptibility. Jennie Batchelor, *Dress, Distress and Desire* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p.127. Although the Magdalen House for Penitent Prostitutes sought to refigure the prostitute as an object of pathos, the charity relied on displays of virtue as evidence of the project’s success, *Ibid.*, pp. 148-9.

¹³ Nancy Armstrong, ‘The Ideology of Conduct’ in *The Ideology of Conduct: Essays in Literature and the History of Sexuality*, ed. by Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse (New York: Methuen, 1987), p.77.

III) A) 'Never, can I perform in public!': Fear of the Public Concert in *The Wanderer*

While Burney's journals and letters concede that the professional sphere can benefit women and refuse to clearly differentiate a professional from a non-professional space, *The Wanderer* does use musical performance to create a border between these spaces. The heroine's poverty means that she must enter a professional space, which is clearly delineated by those wishing to establish different social hierarchical positions and maintain respectability.¹ Crossing over into a professional sphere at this time represented a threat to women's previously established social role and was fraught with many more complications for women than for men. *The Wanderer* exposes a multiplicity of public spheres (which Vickery, Goodman and Klein argue were in existence) by introducing music teaching as an intermediary stage between private and public performance. In *The Wanderer*, the private sphere is extended to a semi-public sphere when Burney allows her heroine to capitalise on her musical accomplishment without having to offer any form of self-display that public performance invites.² This is a relatively small move though as her heroine never completely moves away from the realm of leisure. The leisured space is expanded to include a small strand of music professionalism just as the same leisured space gave way to professional female novelists such as Austen and Frances Burney.

As Janet Todd rightly points out, a concern about money is at the heart of Burney's novels.³ Edward Copeland's study, which argues that money was a central concern in women's fiction, claims that this anxiety about money leads to concern about female

¹ As chapter one argued, because certain educational treatises encouraged the leisured social classes to perform music in the domestic space, any active involvement in professional music-making, which was associated with labour, was a threat to their social position. Such writers saw the domestic space as an ideal arena for women's musical performance.

² The notion of semi-private music-making in *The Wanderer* was suggested by Professor Emma Clery.

³ Janet Todd, *The Sign of Angellica: Women, Writing and Fiction 1660-1800* (London: Virago Press, 1989), p.278.

employment in the following line: ‘In truth, fiction provided women with their only substantial public forum for canvassing the potential of employment.’⁴ *The Wanderer* explores the divide between private and public music-making and succinctly addresses this concern about employment. In doing so, it also explores the value of leisure activities, luxuries and their relative incompatibility with the professional world. Julia Epstein notes the irony that the musical talents gained by Juliet as a result of her privileged upbringing are the very things that contribute to her downward social mobility.⁵ Juliet’s accomplishment therefore was a symptom of ‘privileged upbringing’ that should not be exploited for money. By becoming a public performer, Juliet feels that her social respectability is compromised.

Juliet’s dilemma about the social implications of performing music publicly and her qualms about women’s limited choices in *The Wanderer* primarily point towards Burney’s concern with the social and economic functions of women. By questioning why women should not capitalise on their musical accomplishments, Burney made what Epstein refers to as the ‘most biting statements on femininity’ in *The Wanderer*.⁶ Epstein was not alone in reading *The Wanderer* as a revelation on the difficulties and struggles facing socially obscure women. Margaret Anne Doody claims that Burney criticises the way in which accomplishments such as music are employed as a ‘social currency’ for a place in fashionable society.⁷ The sharp divide between leisure and professionalism is complicated by music’s involvement in each sphere and by its increasingly accepted status as a luxury. Debra Silverman also argues that *The Wanderer* ‘offers a strong critique of the difficulties and limited options facing women who desired independence in eighteenth-century

⁴ Edward Copeland, *Women Writing about Money: Women’s Fiction in England, 1790-1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p.12.

⁵ Julia Epstein, *The Iron Pen: Frances Burney and the Politics of Women’s Writing* (Bristol: Classical Press, 1989), p.183.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.183.

⁷ Margaret Ann Doody, Introduction to *The Wanderer*, p. xvii.

England.⁸ Like Epstein, Silverman sees the irony that women's education meant that they were 'transformed into objects of ornamentation' and were not expected to fend for themselves.⁹ In her argument that Burney advocated female self-reliance, Cutting links Burney's concerns with those of Wollstonecraft and Mary Hays.¹⁰ Sarah D. Spence would concur in her later article, which compares Burney with Wollstonecraft: 'Burney and Wollstonecraft's most effective works show women's rights or lack thereof, women's ability to earn a living in the workplace, and political freedom [The reader therefore] forms an analogy between the similarity in the thinking of these two formidable women writers.'¹¹

In *The Wanderer*, Juliet's numerous speeches about the restrictions faced by women taps into issues that relate to fundamental female rights. Doody, Epstein, Silverman and Cutting all argue that Burney battles against the irony that socially privileged education is limited and restricted by those who refuse to accept that women should capitalise on their accomplishments. The concert scene in *The Wanderer* reveals Burney's preoccupation with social class and limitations of women through the use of blurred distinctions between professional and non-professional spaces. By ultimately removing her heroine from the music profession, Burney's novel initially reflects a conservative agenda, particularly when Juliet is able to reclaim her socially privileged position. However, Burney chooses to delve into issues that affect professional musicians and questions the limitations placed on women. I agree with Sara Salih who argues that both *The Wanderer* and *Camilla* reveal a tension between conventional conservative morality and Burney's representation of the

⁸ Debra Silverman, 'Reading Frances Burney's *The Wanderer*: The Politics of Women's Independence', *Pacific Coast Philology*, 26 (1991), 68-77, p.70.

⁹ Ibid., p.70.

¹⁰ Rose Marie Cutting, 'Defiant women: the Growth of Feminism in Fanny Burney's Novels', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 17 (1977), 519-530, p.520.

¹¹ Sarah D. Spence, 'Frances Burney and Mary Wollstonecraft: Female Difficulties and Feminism', *The Burney Journal* 7, (2004), p.18.

contradictions inherent in such moral codes.¹² Within this conservative framework, I argue that there are strong glimmers of radicalism and nowhere is this more obvious than in Burney's sympathy with professional musicians and the precarious economic situation of socially obscure women.

In *The Wanderer*, Juliet's reluctance to perform publicly is not Burney's criticism of professional performance because Juliet bitterly criticises the prejudice against female professionalism. Juliet is pressurised into performing on the harp in front of a large audience. Despite Juliet's anxieties, she is given qualification to turn her accomplishment into a trade: 'Music though by no means her only accomplishment, was the only one which she dared flatter herself to possess with sufficient knowledge, for the arduous attempt of teaching what she had learnt'.¹³ By labelling Juliet's teaching as 'arduous', the narrator sympathises with the difficulties faced by professionals.¹⁴ Juliet's shyness, concealed social identity and awareness about the prejudice faced by musicians all increases her reluctance to perform. Rather than vilify the music profession though, Juliet criticises the limited options for under-privileged women who want to capitalise on their accomplishments:

How few, she [Juliet] cried, how circumscribed, are the attainments of women! And how much fewer and more circumscribed still, are those which may, in their consequences, be useful as well as ornamental, to the higher or educated class! Those through which, in the reverses of fortune, a FEMALE may reap benefit without abasement! Those which, while preserving her from pecuniary distress, will not aggravate the hardships or sorrows of her changed condition, either by immediate humiliation, or by what, eventually her connexions may consider as a disgrace. (II, 289)

In this passionate speech, the repetition of 'few' and 'circumscribed' indicates the sad female plight. There is a polarisation of 'useful' and 'ornamental' talents, which the

¹² Sara Salih, 'Camilla and *The Wanderer*' in *The Cambridge Companion to Frances Burney*, ed. by Peter Sabor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp.38-9.

¹³ Frances Burney, *The Wanderer or Female Difficulties* (1814) ed. by Margaret Anne Doody, Robert L Mack and Peter Sabor, 4 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), II, 287.

¹⁴ As I pointed out earlier, Frances Burney also sympathised with difficulties faced by her sister, Esther, when she taught music.

narrator argues does not have to exist. Negative nouns such as ‘distress’, ‘hardship’ and ‘sorrow’ abound in the passage. This builds up to a climax when women who capitalise on their accomplishments face ‘humiliation’ and ‘disgrace’. Here Burney criticises the female education system by questioning why ornamental accomplishments should not benefit women financially. Initially, the performance arena reassures Juliet who hears that ‘the concert was to be held in private houses, and young ladies of fashion were themselves to be performers’ (II, 296). The reference to ‘private’ houses in the context of ‘ladies of fashion’ is supposed to refer to the safer realm of private music-making. This partly refers to safety in numbers, but also demonstrates Howell Michaelson’s point that musical accomplishment allowed women to display their talents in a manner that does not compromise their social respectability.¹⁵

Juliet’s social respectability is compromised, however, as she is relentlessly scrutinised within this supposedly safer sphere. The removal of Juliet’s own harp to a more public space ‘in the most conspicuous part of the upper end of the room’ (II, 307) symbolises the way that she edges into a more public space. Juliet is constantly exposed to the scorn of the wealthier social classes as this occurs, so her frustration about social class prejudice continues to brew: ‘Ah ye proud, ye rich, ye high! thought [Juliet], why will you make your power, your wealth, your state, thus repulsive to all who cannot share them? How small a portion of attention, of time, of condescension, would make your honours, your luxuries [...] not the oppression of your inferiors or dependants?’ (pp.307-8). Juliet’s indignation is marked by the list of adjectives followed by the succession of these nouns: ‘power’, ‘wealth’ and ‘state’. Also, the strength of the word ‘repulsive’ and the use of questions reflect Juliet’s fury as she contemplates the social divide that money causes.

¹⁵ Patricia Howell Michaelson, *Speaking Volumes*, p.124.

From this point onwards, Burney explores a distinction between performing music as a luxury and performing for money in more depth. Protesting against Mrs Maple and Miss Arbe's claims that music is a luxurious leisure activity rather than a serious profession, Mr Scope argues for the rights of public performers who are forced to perform music for money:

Luxury? What is it you all mean by luxury? Is it your own going to hear singing and playing? [...] and to loll at your ease, while a painter makes you look pretty [...] Luxury? Do you suppose, because such sights, and such sounds, and such flattery are luxuries to you, they are luxuries to those who produce them? [...] The better [a musician] performs, the harder he has worked. [...] He sings, perhaps when he may be ready to cry; he plays upon those harps and fiddles, when he is half dying with hunger (II, 325).

The word 'luxury' is repeated five times in this passage as its meaning is questioned. A vivid contrast emerges between those who 'loлл' at ease and the 'half-dying' musician. This passage directly refers to the increasing consumption of music and its spread into the leisured classes in the eighteenth century. In Dr George Cheyne's *An Essay of Health and Long Life* (1724), he commented that 'in England [...] luxury & all the Arts of *living well* are cultivated.'¹⁶ Cheyne, who was an eminent eighteenth-century physician, defined a luxury conventionally as a habitual use of or indulgence in what is choice or costly.¹⁷ Luxuries have always been categorised according to the era, society and consumer. In the passage from *The Wanderer*, rich women consumed music as a luxury while professionals performed music for survival. A luxury is coupled with musical accomplishment in this passage and Burney distances this example from the hard graft of professional music-making. In Berry's book on luxury, his comment that 'when goods are socially scarce, an increase in availability changes their character so that they yield less satisfaction' can be

¹⁶ George Cheyne, *An Essay of Health and Long Life* (London, 1724), p.6. Italics are in the original.

¹⁷ George Cheyne, *The English Malady: A Treatise of Nervous Diseases of all Kinds* (1733), ed. by Roy Porter (London: Routledge, 1991).

related to the increased popularity of music.¹⁸ In one sense, Burney laments that the common status of music-making means that it is not valued as a legitimate profession but as an activity that the wealthier social classes can acquire and drop at whim. Secondly music's affiliation with the leisured social classes, who perceive it as a luxury, in a setting where performance for show is more important than skill, leads to a devaluing of its status as an activity that demands skill and diligence. Burney is objecting to this assumed link between music and luxuries by questioning the distinction between music as work (in the public sphere) and pleasure (in the private sphere) and outlining both the prejudices against the former and the misconceptions about the latter. As Berry argues, however, 'the specificity of the desires for luxury goods refers to the presence of a belief—for any good to be desired as a luxury, it must be believed that possession of that good is "pleasing"'.¹⁹ As well as objecting to consumerist culture and the demand for luxuries, Burney presents Juliet's hopeless music pupils in order to reject the trend that women should learn music to fit into a society dazzled by luxury. The insensitivity of the audience and Miss Arne who was 'indifferent to what might give [Juliet] support' (p.316) along with the vanity of the other female performers (who consciously selected long pieces so that 'the compliments which the whole company united to pour forth after every performance, were so much longer') are confronted satirically here (p.315).

The disapproval of self-display and pretentious performance is similar to a sentiment expressed in Austen's *Persuasion* when the narrator compares 'real' with 'affected' taste.²⁰ Austen criticises the insincere attitudes of certain concert-goers through cursory comments, whereas Burney goes further by exploring all of the social prejudices

¹⁸ Christopher J. Berry, *The Idea of Luxury: A Conceptual and Historical Investigation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p.32.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.12.

²⁰ The narrator states that 'another hour of pleasure or of penance was to be set out, another hour of music was to give delight or the gapes, as real or affected taste for it prevailed.' Jane Austen, *Persuasion*, chapter viii, p.198.

against musical performers. Juliet is ‘discouraged and disgusted’ after the rehearsal because she feels dissatisfied with society, rather than ashamed of her performance: ‘[Juliet] was struck with fresh alarm, at the hardship of those professions which without investigation, discernment, or candour, make their decisions from commonplace prejudice, or current, but unexamined opinions’(II, 319-320). Here Burney clearly criticises the ‘commonplace prejudice’ and ‘unexamined opinions’ of the people that judge the women who are forced to enter a profession.

Through the course of ten chapters, Juliet’s feelings switch from terror about performing to anger about the prejudice held against public performers. In the dress rehearsal, what angers Juliet the most is not being forced to perform but the insincere and generous praise lavished on other (wealthier) performers while her superior performance is heard indifferently. Music-making is not about talent here. Juliet likens this silence to social alienation as she feels ‘unprotected’, ‘unsustained’ and ‘unknown’ (p.315). The novel’s hero, Harleigh, is also conscious of the prejudice associated with public musicians, but still respects Juliet:

Had I first known you [Juliet] as a public performer, and seen you in the same situations, which have shewn me your worth, I must have revered you as I do at this instant [...] but then if you would have indulged me a hearing—must I not have made it my first petition, that your accomplishments should be reserved for the resources of your leisure, and the happiness of your friends, as your own time, and your own choice? (II, 338)

Harleigh steers Juliet away from the music profession by urging that her talent should remain an accomplishment rather than a trade. Their marriage signals the end of Juliet’s professional music-making. Paradoxically, Burney appears to promote music as a luxury for her heroine while rejecting it as a frivolous activity amongst Juliet’s harp pupils. However, Harleigh is indifferent to the arena in which Juliet performs music as his affections towards Juliet have remained unperturbed. Unlike other characters in *The*

Wanderer, Harleigh thoughtfully acknowledges the difference between music as a leisure activity and its status as a profession without making generalisations about the music profession. When Juliet is saved from public performance by the attempted suicide of Elinor on the concert stage, she changes professions. The attempted suicide, therefore, becomes a metaphor for the death of Juliet's career as a performer.

Women's limited opportunities to earn money and the social prejudice against female professionalism are key issues that Juliet considers throughout the concert rehearsal. Just as Epstein concedes, 'female accomplishments turn into shameful self-display when presented publicly and for money'.²¹ The prejudices and dangers associated with a professional space impinged on opportunities for women who were forced to become financially independent. While believing in the merits of a more expansive leisured space, Burney creates a sharp division between professional and non-professional music-making and continues to make biting remarks on the trappings and limitations of female accomplishments. Burney's criticism of the latter is more apparent than any staunch criticism of the music profession. Although Juliet's turmoil about performing could initially be interpreted as a slight on the music profession, it becomes clear that Juliet's fears are a response to the plight of unfortunate women, who are at the mercy of a prejudiced society rather than anything else.

²¹ Julia Epstein, *The Iron Pen*, p.183.

III.B) Terrifying Performances in *The School For Fashion* (1800)

In Anne Thicknesse's only novel, *The School For Fashion*, she addresses similar problems to Burney by arguing that women who capitalise on their accomplishments should not be socially ostracised. Her novel exposes the problem of independent and socially obscure women by including a strong attack on fashion. It tackles the ambiguous position of the music profession as forbidden female territory in a similar way to *The Wanderer*, which raises questions as to whether Burney had encountered this novel. Although Frances Burney's letters and journals do not mention Ann Thicknesse, Frances Burney's journal alludes to Thicknesse's husband and Ann Thicknesse was also mentioned in Dr Burney's letters, which Frances Burney edited.²² Burney's knowledge of Thicknesse therefore points to the likelihood that she was familiar with *The School for Fashion*.

The heroine of *The School For Fashion* is forced to perform music publicly and confront society's prejudices just like Juliet in *The Wanderer*.²³ Both Burney and

²² Frances Burney's early journal mentioned Ann Thicknesse's husband, Philip Thicknesse. Burney wrote about an acquaintance, Dr Wall, who read Philip Thicknesse's *Tour* in front of her in 1777. Burney's journal is dated after Philip Thicknesse's marriage to Ann in 1762. Anne Raine's edition of *The Early Diaries and Journals of Frances Burney* quotes an entry Burney that wrote in 1773: 'As soon as we entered the room, the Doctor [Dr Wall], seizing me, forced me to sit [close to his chair]. He was looking over *Thicknesse's Tour*, - and we both went on with it, and made comments which, had the author heard, might have endangered our safety for the rest of his life', p.193.

Charles Burney's former employer and patron, Frances Greville warmly praised Ann Thicknesse in a letter to Dr Charles Burney: 'She [Thicknesse] is, I think, take her for all in all, the most pleasing singer I ever heard. I don't dare say the best, because I have not judgment enough to decide, but I know that I would rather hear her than any Italian I have yet heard. She is a Miss Ford, daughter to a sort of Lawyer in the city. Gordon the Violoncello, & Bartan, The Harpsichord man, accompanied her.' Montréal, The Burney Centre, Berg MS (unlabelled, miscellaneous letter from Frances Greville to Charles and Esther Burney, 2 October 1758). (Charles Burney later became a god father to Greville's daughter after living in their house as an employee). Ann Thicknesse was also known to the Bluestocking circle, with whom Burney associated. When Mary Delany saw Gainsborough's painting of Ann Thicknesse at Gainsborough's art exhibition, she commented that Thicknesse looked too bold: 'This morning I went with lady Westmoreland to see Mr Gainsborough's pictures, (the man who painted Mr Wise and Mr Lucy) and they may well be called what Mr Webb *unjustly* says of Rubens- they are *splendid impositions*. There I saw Miss Ford's picture- a whole length with her guitar; a most extraordinary figure handsome and bold- but I should be sorry to have any one I loved set forth in such a manner', *The Autobiography and Correspondence of Mary Granville, Mrs Delany*, ed. by Lady Llanover, 3 vols (London: Library of Congress, 1861), III, Letter to Mrs Dewe, 23rd October, 1760, p.605.

Hester Thrale was convinced that Philip Thicknesse was at the root of rumours involving her: 'Philip Thicknesse put it about Bath that I [Hester Thrale] was a poor girl, a mantua maker, when Mr Thrale married me. It is an odd thing but Miss Thrale likes, I see, to have it believed': *Autobiography, Letters and Literary Remains of Mrs Piozzi Thrale*, volume 1, ed. by A.Hayward (Echo library, 2006), October 1782, p.95.

Lastly, Ann Thicknesse dedicated *Sketches and Writings of Ladies of France* to Elizabeth Carter, who was another acquaintance of Frances Burney.

²³ Like Burney, who was from a family of musicians, Ann Thicknesse (1737-1824) had personal experience of society's prejudice about the music profession. As a highly accomplished woman, Ann Thicknesse (née Ford) was musical, well-

Thicknesse position their heroines as concert performers who deal with subsequent prejudice while Austen characterises her heroine as a spectator in *Persuasion*. In *The School For Fashion* and *The Wanderer*, the emotions surrounding concerts are acute and criticisms of a social structure that alienates working women are implicit. In the former novel, Euterpe struggles to conform to fashionable society. Reflecting *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* in its criticisms, *The School For Fashion* alludes to ‘an erroneous mode of education in which more pains are taken with [women’s] external appearance, and frivolous occupations, than with their morals or the improvement of their minds’.²⁴ Both Thicknesse and Wollstonecraft criticise the way that valuable subjects such as music and French are pursued superficially. A background character, Mrs Stately, also criticises women’s education thus:

[Mrs Stately] lamented with infinite concern, the depravity of the fashionable world; laying the blame entirely upon erroneous mode of Education, as their morals, she observed, were seldom or ever attended to at school; that their external appearance and a few frivolous accomplishments in which they were likewise generally very superficial, were regarded as matters of the highest importance, whilst the improvement of their minds were absolutely neglected. (I, 217)

An ‘erroneous’ mode of education is again ‘lamented’ and the narrator repeats that society focuses too much on ‘external appearance’ at the expense of ‘morals’. The narrator also questions why men are allocated more important social roles than women. Like Ann

educated and multi-lingual, speaking five languages. Passionate about pursuing a musical career, she played several instruments and was best known for her performances on the English guitar and viola da gamba. Her father, Thomas Ford, allowed Ann to perform in Sunday concerts, but thwarted her progress by forbidding her from performing music publicly at a time when musicians were held in disrepute. Determined and defiant, Thomas Ford resorted to arresting his daughter twice to prevent her public performances. Rebelling against her father, however, Ann Ford held her first subscription concert in 1780 and performed a series of subsequent concerts daily between October 24 and October 30, 1780. Additional scandal and controversy was provoked by Ford’s performance on the Viola da Gamba, which was viewed as a masculine instrument. Thicknesse’s novel is semi-autobiographical in the way in which it makes sustained criticisms of the fashionable society that claim that accomplishments should not be passageways into trades. See Danielle Grover, “‘Partly admired & partly laugh’d at every Tea Table’: The case of Mrs Ann Thicknesse and *The School for Fashion* (1800)”, *The Female Spectator*, May 2008, 5-8.

²⁴ Ann Thicknesse, *The School For Fashion*, 2 vols (London, 1800), I, 112. In Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women: with Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects* (London, 1792), the following argument is similar to the quotation from *The School For Fashion*. Wollstonecraft writes: ‘It is acknowledged that they [women] spend many of the first years of their lives in acquiring a smattering of accomplishments: meanwhile strength of body and mind are sacrificed to libertine notions of beauty, to the desire of establishing themselves.’ Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, p.9.

Thicknesse herself, Euterpe is arrested to prevent her public musical performance in chapter xix. The text reaches its climax as Euterpe ignores Mrs Stately's advice and performs publicly. Just as *The Wanderer's* Juliet anxiously awaits her first public performance, Euterpe nervously performs. Public performance is not idealised, but rather women's right and choice to enter the professional arena is strongly advocated:

The first night of [Euterpe's] appearance was the most dreadful that she had ever known; it seemed to her like going to an execution, and she was very near fainting away twice; and to add to her terror of mind, someone was so imprudent as to inform her that Fielding's people were endeavouring to enter the house to put a stop, by her father's interference, to her performance. (I, 174)

'Execution' and 'terror': two nouns that could just as easily be referring to the French Revolution, forcefully describe Euterpe's anxiety about performing. This horrified response to public performance was also a feature in *The Wanderer*, where ten chapters detail Juliet's anxiety about the implications of performing publicly. A sustained attack on repressed female liberty and the superficiality of accomplishments continues in volume 2 of *The School For Fashion* when Mrs Tudor and Lady B converse. The following speech from *The School For Fashion* criticises the restricted opportunities open to women and comments on their stifling education:

Can it be any thing but a *weak* prejudice, assisted by a wrong headed pride that should think a young woman culpable for endeavouring to gain subsistence by her talents, provided she conducts herself with modesty, prudence and propriety? Is there any difference, at least I see none, between a young woman singing, painting, or acting for a livelihood, and a lawyer, a physician, or a man either in the army or navy, earning their bread by *their* abilities? It seems to me that the *disgrace* which a young woman incurs by publicly exerting any of the above talents is being paid for it! For what does she do, that appears so criminal, but exercise more publicly indeed, those very elegant accomplishments, that persons of the very highest rank are so very anxious to attain for their own and their friends amusement? Why should it be looked upon as a greater disgrace for a woman to earn a living by her talents than a man? [...] If young women were *well educated* and were taught to become *proficients* in whatever art or science they might have an inclination to study, there would not be so many unhappy girls on the town, who are too *genteely* brought up to get their bread any other way than *that* which their misfortunes have led them to! It is true they are taught at school a great many fine accomplishments

in which they are often so very superficial that they only serve, pour passer le temps. (II, 14-17)

Both this speech and Juliet's remarkably similar outcry in *The Wanderer* outline the restrictions placed upon women.²⁵ Emphasis is still placed on preserving female 'modesty, prudence and propriety' in the above passage, as it is in *The Wanderer*. *The School for Fashion*, however, argues that these qualities can be displayed in female performers while *The Wanderer* cautiously refers to public performance as an 'immediate humiliation'. The adverb 'publicly' appears twice in the above passage, which shows that the author intends to create a barrier between the private and public spheres. The succession of questions in this passage, which direct the reader's attention, mirrors the multiple exclamation marks in the passage from *The Wanderer* as both represent two of the most passionate passages in the novels. It is arguably here that the authors launch the strongest attack on women's limited opportunities to earn money and question the value of accomplishments beyond their decorative function. Burney and Thicknesse echo Wollstonecraft's argument in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* that accomplishments are displayed for superficial purposes. For both authors, female education is inadequate and impractical and society's criticism of female musicians is unjust.

In *The School For Fashion*, Thicknesse argues that female professionals should have the same status as working men. Burney is more conservative than Thicknesse as she alludes to the barriers around female professionalism without questioning these gender hierarchies. Thicknesse also launches a stronger attack on fashion and aristocracy than Burney, whose heroine eventually retreats back into domestic life and marries an aristocrat. By allowing their heroines to edge further into professional performances, however, Burney

²⁵ The passage from *The Wanderer* reads: 'How few, she [Juliet] cried, how circumscribed, are the attainments of women! And how much fewer and more circumscribed still, are those which may, in their consequences, be useful as well as ornamental, to the higher or educated class! Those through which, in the reverses of fortune, a FEMALE may reap benefit without abasement! Those which, while preserving her from pecuniary distress, will not aggravate the hardships or sorrows of her changed condition, either by immediate humiliation, or by what, eventually her connexions may consider as a disgrace.' Frances Burney, *The Wanderer*, II, 289.

and Thicknesse achieve three things. They expand the possibilities of the leisured space for women. They question the existence and tightness of this border between private and public spaces and finally they challenge the social hierarchies that dictate the make-up of both spheres.

Burney and Thicknesse both comment on women's difficulty in securing money and ask how women can battle against social prejudice in order to enter the professional world. Problems faced by the musicians in these novels can be compared with those faced by professional female writers. Gallagher and Ingrassia comment on the plight of the female professional writer in a society where debt was considered a normal part of life.²⁶ Ingrassia positions the literary marketplace as both an unstable and expensive site of cultural activity in the eighteenth century.²⁷ Jane Spencer also remarks on the rise of the professional female writer in the period, but argues that, ironically, the rise of female professionalism coincided with women's deteriorating position.²⁸ Copeland claims that this deteriorating position was a result of women lacking legal access to money and authorship potentially causing debt.²⁹ Female authors also faced opposition from reviewers, which was famously documented in the defence of the novel in *Northanger Abbey*. The narrator urges readers to 'leave it to the Reviewers to abuse such effusions of fancy [novels] at their leisure, and over every new novel to talk in threadbare strains of the trash with which the press now groans. Let us not desert one another; we [writers] are an injured body.'³⁰ Female writers thus faced similar prejudice to female musicians. This meant that more anonymous novels were written. Analysing society's prejudice about female musicians,

²⁶ Catharine Gallagher, *Nobody's Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Marketplace 1670-1820* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), p.220.

²⁷ Catharine Ingrassia, *Authorship, Commerce and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century England: A Culture of Paper Credit* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p.10.

²⁸ Jane Spencer, *The Rise of the Woman Novelist: From Aphra Behn to Jane Austen* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), p.xi.

²⁹ Edward Copeland, *Women Writing about Money: Women's Fiction in England, 1790-1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp.1,7.

³⁰ Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (1818), ed. by Marilyn Butler, 2 vols (London: Penguin, 1995), I, chapter v, p.34.

although a substantial issue in itself, was an effective way for novelists to hint at the harsh environment surrounding the female writing profession.

III.C) A Concert for Quiet Contemplation: *Persuasion*

While concerts in *The School For Fashion* and *The Wanderer* were forums for attacks on social prejudice and were used to challenge the boundary between non-professional and professional music-making, the purpose of the concert scene in *Persuasion* is to offer the reader a female perspective while creating an initial obstacle for the hero that triggers jealousy. Unlike Juliet in *The Wanderer*, Anne Elliot has a consistently secure social position. Anne Elliot's main worries, which are articulated in the concert episode, concern courtship. She is threatened by Mr Elliot's unwelcome courtship and Captain Wentworth's indifference towards her. Austen pays less attention to the concert in *Persuasion*, which only occupies one chapter, than Burney does to Juliet's dilemma in *The Wanderer*, which spans ten chapters. The concert in *Persuasion* represents a forum for the heroine's turmoil and uneasiness but the difference lies in the fact that these internal qualms do not pose any threat to social hierarchies or question gender roles in the way that the concert scene in *The Wanderer* does.

In *Persuasion*, the concert provides a setting for rapidly changing and unstable emotions. Anne is described as being 'very, very happy' before the concert begins and this is reinforced when readers learn that 'Anne's mind was in a most favourable state for the entertainment of the evening' (p.195). Anne's 'happiness was from within' (p.194) because she 'saw nothing, thought nothing of the brilliancy of the room'. With musical expertise, Anne appreciates the performance and explains the meaning of the Italian song to Mr Elliot but without going into further detail. Eventually, Anne unhappily notices that Wentworth is ignoring her:

Anne's eyes had caught the right direction, and distinguished Captain Wentworth [...] As her eyes fell on him, his seemed to be withdrawn from her. [...] It seemed as if she had been one moment too late; and as long as she dared observe, he did not look again: but [...] she was forced to seem to restore her attention to the orchestra, and look straight forward. (p.197)

Anne becomes troubled as Wentworth's jealousy of Mr Elliot unfolds: 'Mr Elliot's speech distressed [Anne]. She had no longer any inclination to talk to him. She wished him not so near' (p.198). The interval becomes 'anxious' and '[the concert] chiefly wore the prospect of an hour of agitation. [Anne] could not quit that room in peace' (p.198). An ambivalence towards recitals, which originated from Austen's letters, appears in this scene thus: 'another hour of pleasure or of penance was to be set out, another hour of music was to give delight or the gapes, as real or affected taste for it prevailed' (p.198).³¹ While Burney's *The Wanderer* showed a dislike of both insincere concert-goers and participators who performed or watched concerts to be seen, Austen is equally dismissive of insincere audience members in *Persuasion*.³²

Letters by Burney and Austen and polemical writing by Chapone, Hannah More and Mary Wollstonecraft all despise this insincere self-display and the latter two polemicists blamed this on the pressure imposed on women to be accomplished.³³ Both Austen and Burney implicitly allude to the increasing popularity of concerts and consumption of music, but Austen's letters show greater scepticism about public concerts while Burney's journals cheerfully describe her attendance of concerts and personal assessments of performers.³⁴ Nancy Armstrong has argued that conduct book writers commonly used women who pursue amusements as inappropriate role models for young women and utilised them to

³¹ When faced with a concert at Sydney Gardens, Austen joked: 'Even the Concert will have more than its usual charm with me, as the Gardens are large enough for me to get pretty well beyond the reach of its sound.' See *Jane Austen's Letters*, ed. by Deirdre Le Faye, 3rd edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), Letter 20 to Cassandra Austen, 2 June 1799, p.43.

³² This also relates to the point about Austen's distinction between sincere and insincere auditors of music in *Sense and Sensibility*, which chapter one explored.

³³ See Hester Chapone, *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind*, Hannah More, *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education*, Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*.

³⁴ During Austen's residence in Bath between 1801 and 1806, the author lived opposite Sydney Pleasure Gardens, which meant that she was confronted with noisy entertainment on a daily basis.

demonstrate why women lacking the conduct book virtues did not make desirable wives.³⁵

While Austen merely mocks those pretentious women who attend concerts for self display, Armstrong explains how polemical writers examined how both insincerity and the necessity to conform affected women's broader domestic roles in more depth.

Anne eventually assesses the concert when she 'spoke in defence of the performance so well' to Mr Elliot. She is alarmed when Wentworth leaves the concert early and at his jealousy of Mr Elliot. This episode emphasises David Selwyn's point that 'what matters to Austen is the characters' state of mind rather than musical criticism.'³⁶ By not involving her heroine in professional music-making, Austen adheres to the conventions of educational treatises by Essex and Hanway, which stated that music should be an amusement and not a trade. Chapter one revealed how Austen uses music-making to highlight positive character traits in her heroines and so Austen's scanty reference to concerts in her novels and letters does not reflect an indifference towards music as a whole. This refusal to focus on problems concerning professional music-making can in fact be interpreted as Austen's determination to keep musical accomplishment within a tighter leisured space than Burney does.

The links that Fritzer and Hunt create between Austen's intentions and the morals found in conduct books are convincing when considering the extent to which the concert scene is focussed on Anne's perceptions and preoccupation with behaviour.³⁷ I disagree with Claudia L. Johnson's assertion that 'Austen defies every dictum about female

³⁵ Nancy Armstrong, 'The Ideology of Conduct', p.77.

³⁶ David Selwyn, *Jane Austen and Leisure*, p.119.

³⁷ As the introduction stated, Fritzer argued that 'Jane Austen, like the courtesy writers is concerned with behaviour, not only to others, but as it concerns oneself'. See Penelope Joan Fritzer, *Jane Austen and Eighteenth-Century Courtesy Books* (Westport Ct.: Greenwood Press, 1997), p.4. Linda C. Hunt also locates Austen as operating within the courtesy book tradition in her characterisation of women as she argues that 'both novel and conduct book contributed to the codification of a distinct notion of female character.' Linda C., Hunt, 'A Woman's Portion: Jane Austen and the Female Character' in *Fetter'd or Free? British Women Novelists 1670-1815* ed. by Mary Anne Schofield and Cecilia Macheski (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1986), pp.9-21, p.11.

propriety and deference revered in conduct books through characterisation of heroines' because propriety and deference are interwoven into Anne Elliot's character.³⁸ This is not to argue that *Persuasion*'s heroine remains silent when she considers the role of women. Anne famously exclaims to Captain Harville that 'men have had every advantage of us in telling their story. Education has been theirs'.³⁹ The absent female voice to which Anne refers does not have to be a subversive voice however and it is not a voice which distracts Anne from performing her social duty.

My analysis of music's role in Austen's novels is also at odds with Margaret Kirkham's characterisation of Austen as a feminist moralist in her study, which 'sets out to relate Austen as literary artist and innovator to her declared position as feminist moralist and critic of the feminist tradition'.⁴⁰ If a feminist refers to someone who actively champions women's rights, clearly Austen cannot be described thus. As *The School for Fashion* and *The Wanderer* showed, one way in which authors challenged women's role through the medium of performance was to allow their heroines to edge their way into the professional world occupied by men. Austen chooses not to do this in *Persuasion*. While music's function changes from a source of competition in Austen's earlier novels to a space for contemplation in *Persuasion*, it has not become more subversive. Anne's piano-playing in *Persuasion* is a form of family duty and becomes a space for contemplation. The concert becomes a forum where courtship is accelerated. Austen does not allow her heroines to protest against music's function as a female accomplishment as Thicknesse does in *The School for Fashion*. The modesty, selflessness and propriety of Anne Elliot become apparent when she performs music as a family duty. These values are promoted by many of the more conventional eighteenth-century educational treatises discussed in chapter one.

³⁸Claudia L. Johnson, *Jane Austen, Women, Politics and the Novel* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1988), p.xxiii.

³⁹ Jane Austen, *Persuasion* (1818), chapter xi, p.237.

⁴⁰ Margaret Kirkham, *Jane Austen, Feminism and Fiction*, rev. edn (Brighton: Harvester, 1983; repr. London: Athlone, 1997), p.xxvii.

Claudia L. Johnson's claim that Austen rejects these can be opposed on these grounds.⁴¹

Compared with Juliet in *The Wanderer* and Euterpe in *The School of Fashion*, whose combined terror about performing publicly confronts social prejudice about the professional sphere, Anne Elliot is a conventional heroine who acts responsibly and has no opportunity or inclination to encroach on the professional arena. Anne's inner turmoil affects no one and in no way questions social hierarchies.

III.D) The Oratorio in *The Artless Lovers*

In both *Persuasion* and the anonymous novel, *The Artless Lovers*, musical concerts function to convey the thoughts and feelings of the heroine rather than to challenge hierarchies.⁴² Published fifty years before *Persuasion*, *The Artless Lovers* is an anonymous novel about a heroine, Lucy Wheatley, who was brought up by a fashionable man of fortune. Lucy eventually marries Wentworth, who initially loves her from afar.⁴³ At the oratorio, Lucy watches Wentworth's every movement in a scene which focuses on Lucy's feelings. Like Anne, Lucy is a spectator and the professional musicians are not mentioned:

When I [Lucy] saw [Wentworth's] dejected attitude, for he sat side-ways, leaning his head upon his hand, and perceived that his eyes were fixed on me in a very mournful manner, I could scarcely keep mine from shedding a flood of tears. Sir Edward, still too attentive to me, observed the change of my countenance; and [...] endeavoured between the acts to give a turn to my thoughts, by telling the most

⁴¹ Claudia L. Johnson, *Jane Austen, Women, Politics and the Novel* (London, Chicago, University of Chicago, 1988), p.xxiii.

⁴² Remarkable similarities surface between the two concerts in these novels. Just as it is likely that Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* explored the issues relating to pride and prejudice at the end of Frances Burney's *Cecilia*, which was a novel that she greatly admired, it is also possible to speculate that Austen was influenced by other novels such as *The Artless Lovers*. Not only do the heroes share the same name in *Persuasion* and *The Artless Lovers*, but concerts function in the same way. In volume 28 of *The Critical Review*, which appraises *The Artless Lovers*, there is a review of *Genuine Memoirs of the Life and Adventures of the Celebrated Miss Ann Elliot*. See *The Critical Review*, XXVIII, London 1769. The review of *The Artless Lovers* may be found on pp.372-3, and a review of *Genuine Memoirs of the Life and Adventures of the Celebrated Miss Ann Elliot* on p.68. It may be a coincidence that the names of the main characters of *Persuasion* are located in this single volume of *The Critical Review*, which Austen could have accessed, but this is especially remarkable considering the similarity in the plot of both novels and their representations of concert scenes.

⁴³ Like Captain Wentworth in *Persuasion*, Wentworth in *The Artless Lovers* feels unworthy of marrying the heroine until he is financially secure. Lucy keeps encountering Wentworth but is constantly frustrated that he will not declare his feelings. During a visit to the oratorio, Lucy sits with another interested suitor, Sir Edward, while Wentworth jealously watches them at the same concert. Wentworth has previously admired Lucy's private musical performances, just as Captain Wentworth appreciated Anne's musical talent.

truly ludicrous stories with so much humour, that I could not forbear smiling at them. My smiles were directed to Wentworth; for though he was at a distance, he was, I imagined, near enough to discover easily every alteration in my countenance; but he did not appear to understand me in the sense I wished to be understood, for his melancholy seemed to increase. His melancholy did not make me more cheerful you may be sure. I began to fill my head with so many frightful ideas, that, at last, I was almost ready to faint.⁴⁴

While Lucy noticed that Wentworth's eyes 'were fixed' on her in a 'mournful manner', in *Persuasion* Anne perceives that Wentworth's eyes are 'withdrawn from her'.⁴⁵ Both heroes use the concert as a space to contemplate their relationships with the heroines. The passages are also similar because the narrators focus on female perspectives. The intrusive competing suitor, Sir Edward, who was 'too attentive' to Lucy, plays a similar role to Mr Elliot who 'distressed' Anne with his unwelcome presence. Just as Anne rapidly becomes downcast and 'had no longer any inclination to talk to [Mr Elliot]' (p.197), Lucy is 'almost ready to faint' when Wentworth is ignoring her. The passages focus on the heroine's thoughts about courtship rather than on the music. In both novels, the heroine gazes at the hero, but her look is misunderstood or ignored and the hero's jealousy upsets her immediately. The concert initially alienates the female protagonist from the hero, although they are later reconciled after resolving the misunderstanding.

Through their representations of concerts, all four novelists criticise the self-display of boastful performers and audience members. Thicknesse and Burney, however, extend this criticism of cultural insincerity by launching an attack on the prejudice against professional performers, while Austen's novels and letters do not. Social class and attitudes towards social hierarchies greatly inform the representation of concerts, as preoccupations with social class status and the expected downward social mobility; associated with public

⁴⁴ *The Artless Lovers*, 2 vols (London, 1768), I, 31.

⁴⁵ The scene in *Persuasion* reads: 'Anne's eyes had caught the right direction, and distinguished Captain Wentworth, standing among a cluster of men at a little distance. As her eyes fell on him, his seemed to be withdrawn from her. It had that appearance. [...] The performance was re-commencing, and she was forced to seem to restore her attention to the orchestra, and look straight forward. [...] Mr Elliot's speech too distressed her.', Jane Austen, *Persuasion*, chapter viii, p.197.

performance, are main reasons as to why public performance terrifies both Juliet and Euterpe. While musical accomplishment was the sign of a wealthy culture, professional music-making could actually demote women. This paradox means that, on one hand, performance arenas (rather than proficiency) could determine the reception of music-making. Due to the expansion of the leisured space, however, precisely defining performance arenas begins to present problems. Similarly, judgements made about musical accomplishment and professional performance rely on similar criteria; an assessment of the performer's character and an examination of women's role. The act of crossing borders can also be ambiguous as Juliet's dilemma demonstrates and often leads to a scrutinising of social status. What can be surmised, however, is that novelists idealise sincerity as a characteristic in any performer and will always mock the collection of insincere members of both audience and participants of the concert.

Part 2: Instrumentation

Musical instruments that feature in eighteenth-century treatises, newspapers, musical collections and novels have specific associations with social class and can reveal how writers perceive divides between non-professional and professional spaces. The popularity of musical instruments in the 1790s can be demystified by turning to the appearance of the words in eighteenth-century newspapers. The word ‘piano’ can be traced six hundred and sixty times in a range of eighteenth-century newspapers in 1790, while the noun ‘harp’ was mentioned three hundred and sixty eight times in newspapers in 1790. The fiddle can be traced only thirty eight times in newspapers in 1790.¹ This section argues that novelists commented on the rise of the middle class by alluding to the growing popularity and musical consumption of the harp and piano; these being the main instruments represented in the eighteenth-century courtship novel.

2i) The Piano: A Prized Possession

From 1790, the pianoforte replaced the harpsichord as a young woman’s instrument of choice.² The growing popularity of the piano led to its mass production in the later eighteenth century and reflected a culture that had become preoccupied with consumption.³ When Ehrlich comments that ‘in its golden age [the piano] became the centre of domestic entertainment of musical education and, not least, a coveted possession, symbolic of social emulation and achievement, within reach of an ever-widening circle of eager purchasers’,

¹ I have obtained these figures from an online search of *The Burney Collection of Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Newspapers*, The British Library, accessed on 10 July 2010.

² Rosamond E.M Harding, *The Piano-Forte: Its History Traced to the Great Exhibition of 1851* (London: Hecksher, 1978), p.81. By 1793 the famous keyboard manufacturer Broadwood had stopped producing the harpsichord as the piano now replaced this dying breed. Cyril Ehrlich, *The Piano: A History* (London: J.M.Dent, 1976), p.18.

³ The increased production in pianos led to a decrease in the price of keyboard instruments in the later eighteenth-century. At the same time, the number of households that had an income of at least fifty pounds a year doubled. Pedals were added onto the piano and the width of the keyboard adapted to the increased span of octaves, which catered to an eager group of consumers. James Parakulas, *Piano Roles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), p.122. Rosamond E. Harding argues that at least a dozen brands of pianos emerged in the late eighteenth century, which shows a rise in their popularity. Rosamond E.M Harding, *The Piano-Forte: Its History Traced to the Great Exhibition of 1851*, p.221.

she acknowledges that the piano was a sign of an elevated social class.⁴ Stana Nenadic argues that by 1810 most middle-class households owned a piano, which was placed in the most public room in the house.⁵ Loesser further asserts that the history of the piano and the history of social status are closely linked as owning a piano was a sign of a higher social status.⁶ Collections of both piano and harp music even advertised sheet music as a social companion for those in the upper social classes; confirming the piano's popularity.⁷

The piano was also associated with femininity. Ehrlich argues that 'possession of a piano was evidence of gentility, ability to play it a necessary feminine "accomplishment", recognised everywhere as "one of the primary ornaments in the education of women."'⁸ The instrument was ideal for musically accomplished women as it did not allow too much self-display and was an elegant piece of furniture. James Parakulas also locates the piano as this mark of femininity by commenting that 'women's playing [the piano] always defines their upbringing and their character'.⁹ In the 1790s, *The Piano Forte Magazine* was advertised fifty eight times in numerous newspapers.¹⁰ In 1799, *The Times* reported that this magazine had run to one hundred and twenty eight editions. Advertising a range of German, French, Italian and English music and with works by composers from Purcell to Handel and Clementi, this magazine aimed to be a fashionable addition to any gentry

⁴ Cyril Ehrlich, *The Piano: A History*, p.16.

⁵ Stana Nenadic 'Romanticism and The Urge to Consume in the First Half of The Nineteenth Century' in Maxine Berg and Helen Clifford, eds., *Consumers and Luxury: Consumer Culture in Europe 1650-1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), p.212.

⁶ Arthur Loesser, *Men, Women and Pianos: A Social History* (New York: Dover, 1990), p.267.

⁷ As early as 1745, a collection of music was entitled 'Universal Harmony, or the Gentleman and Ladies *Social* companion.' Cambridge: Fitzwilliam, MS MU1330. As well as referring to music as a 'social companion', the collection embeds elegant illustrations into the sheet music. These ornate illustrations relate to the theme of the song lyrics and cater for a social class preoccupied by elegance. Other titles of music collections and illustrations within them were addressed to 'ladies' and 'gentlemen'. In 1725, 'A Pocket Companion for Gentlemen and Ladies', which was a collection of instrumental music, appeared, laden with elaborate illustrations in Cambridge, Fitzwilliam, MS MU1274. With an approximate publication date between 1785 and 1793, 'Amusement for the Ladies, being a Selection of The Favourite Catches, Canons, Glees, Madrigals' appeared. See Cambridge, Fitzwilliam, MS MU1228.

⁸ Cyril Ehrlich, *The Piano: A History*, p.17.

⁹ James Parakulas, *Piano Roles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), pp.75-6.

¹⁰ Harrison and Co. *To The Lovers of Musick. Prospectus for The Piano-forte Magazine; With Elegant Piano Fortes (gratis) Far Superior To What are Frequently Sold for Twenty-Five Guineas Each* (London, 1796). Four newspapers that advertised *The Piano-forte magazine* were *The Morning Chronicle*, August 13, 1796, issue 8375, *The Telegraph*, August 13, 1796, *The Times*, January 16, 1799, issue 4384 and *The Morning Herald*, December 31, 1798, issue 5705. Capital letters appear in the original.

household. In its advertisement, the editor of the magazine appealed directly to ‘genteel families’:

Of the Beauty and Agreeableness of a PIANO-FORTE, as elegant ornamental furniture for the most splendid Apartment, no Person can be ignorant; and even in the few genteel Families, [...] the Pleasure and Satisfaction of possessing an Instrument so valuable, with Books of all the most favourite Vocal and Instrumental Pieces, ready for occasional Visitors, must be highly gratifying to every Person of Taste and Sensibility. By means of the PIANO-FORTE MAGAZINE, this satisfaction will now be easily attainable, at an Expense scarcely felt by any Person in decent Life and [...] it will form a valuable and lasting, as well as a most elegant and agreeable Present to all young Ladies and Gentlemen, from their Parents, Relatives or Friends, who will thus have the Pleasure of seeing them the sooner induced to undertake the Acquirement of so pleasing Accomplishment as the enchanting Art of Musick.¹¹

Not only does this advertisement elevate music as a ‘pleasing accomplishment’ but it locates piano playing as a fashionable activity that should appeal to people of ‘taste and sensibility’. Secondly, it confirms the increasing affordability of the instrument by claiming that people ‘in decent life’ will be able to afford it. Before the passage even mentions music, it positions the piano as ‘elegant ornamental furniture’, speaking to a house-proud audience who would value a fashionable addition to their furniture.

The claim by Loesser and Ehrlich that the piano was a symbol of social emulation was confirmed by *The Piano Forte Magazine*. While all of these sources asserted that the piano had a prized position in the domestic arena, identifying the piano as an instrument solely associated with wealthy women in the private sphere became increasingly problematic as the century progressed. As the piano’s popularity increased, it became cheaper and more accessible to a wider section of society. Rather than associating the piano with either the private or public sphere, Parakulas argues that ‘the piano acts as a cultural go-between as a medium through social spheres’, which would suit the expansive leisured

¹¹ Harrison and Co. *To The Lovers of musick. Prospectus for The Piano-forte Magazine; With Elegant Piano Fortes (gratis) Far Superior To What are Frequently Sold for Twenty-Five Guineas Each* (London, 1796), pp.3-4.

space that Burney revealed in *The Wanderer*.¹² As a result of this, attitudes towards the piano were split between perceptions that it was a symbol of wealth and a fear that its accessibility would encourage lower social classes to emulate the middle to upper social class.

2ii) Jane Austen's Representation of Pianos

Austen would have objected to the assertion in *The Piano Forte Magazine* that the piano should primarily function as a piece of elegant furniture. Aware of the expense of pianos, one of Austen's letters scolds Anna Lefroy for frivolously wasting money on a piano.¹³ Controversially, Austen makes the following remark despite spending thirty guineas on her own pianoforte: 'I was rather sorry to hear that [Anna Lefroy] is to have an Instrument; it seems throwing money away. They will wish the 24 G[uinea]s in the shape of Sheets & Towels six months hence; as to her playing, it never can be anything'.¹⁴ The original manuscript held at Hampshire Records Office has the verb 'is' underlined.¹⁵ Presumably, Austen emphasised this verb to show Anna Lefroy's indecision about purchasing a piano and the fact that Anna perhaps shared Austen's doubts about her need for a piano. Read in this way, Austen is not condemning people who own a piano but sees its function and value beyond a mere piece of elegant furniture. Just as Copeland argues, 'the single essential key to consumption, as women's fiction always acknowledges, is an adequate income.'¹⁶ This comment echoes Austen's concerns about finance and consumption, which Copeland argues were a feature of all eighteenth-century women's writing.¹⁷ Austen would not have agreed with Berg's argument that 'enlightenment culture adapted itself to luxury as a

¹² Ibid., p.4.

¹³ *Jane Austen's Letters*, Letter 114 to Fanny Knight, 30 November 1814, p.285. The original is located at Winchester, The Hampshire Archives, MS 23M93/28/58.

¹⁴ *Jane Austen's Letters*, Letter 114 to Fanny Knight, 30 November 1814, p.285.

¹⁵ Winchester, The Hampshire Archives: MS 23M93/65/1.

¹⁶ Edward Copeland, *Women Writing about Money*, p.7.

¹⁷ Ibid., p.3.

positive social force, viewing it with confidence as an instrument (and indication) of the progress of civilization' because, for Austen, excessive luxury debilitates rather than benefits people.¹⁸ If the concern about overindulgent purchases and consumption in Austen's letter relates to the author's anxiety about progress and industrialisation, this is another factor that points towards a conservative representation of music; a representation where modest gentrified women perform on specific instruments, with modesty and selflessness and do not cross into a professional space. Arguably, Austen would reject the following argument, posed by Stena Nenadic, that acquiring luxurious musical objects leads to a more intense celebration of the arts. Nenadic's chapter in Berg's study specifically links consumerism with a central expression of Romanticism:

The cultivation of the emotions, which was a central expression of romanticism, was achieved for many through creativity in the arts. This encouraged a desire for the material objects and facilities that allowed access to the arts as both audience and practitioner; such things as books and magazines for poetry and fiction, musical instruments, sheet music and attendance at concerts.¹⁹

Despite the expense of pianos, Austen believed that her own musical talent merited spending thirty guineas on a pianoforte.²⁰ Book two of the Austen Family's Music Collection, which T. Carpenter believes displays copied music in Jane Austen's handwriting, contains fifty piano pieces and songs that have been neatly and accurately hand-copied from printed music. Austen's letters provide proof that she spent hours copying music that was predominately notated for the piano.²¹ The neatness and precision of the handwritten musical notation in these books indicates both diligent and painstaking

¹⁸ Maxine Berg and Elizabeth Eger, eds., *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century: Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p.2.

¹⁹ Stana Nenadic 'Romanticism and the Urge to Consume in the first half of the Nineteenth Century' in *Consumers and Luxury: Consumer Culture in Europe 1650-1850* ed. by Maxine Berg and Helen Clifford (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), pp. 208-228, p.211.

²⁰ Austen writes to Cassandra: 'Yes, yes, we *will* have a pianoforte, as good a one as can be got for 30 Guineas—and I will practise country dances, that we may have some amusement for our nephews & nieces'. *Jane Austen's Letters*, Letter 63 to Cassandra Austen, 28 December, 1809, p.161.

²¹ The handwritten music in Books 2, 3 and 4, copied from various printed sources, have been identified by trustee, T.F.Carpenter Esq., as Jane Austen's handwriting, with book 4 signed 'Miss Jane Austen': 'Elizabeth [Knight] is very cruel about my writing Music; & as a punishment for her, I should insist upon always writing out all hers for her in future, if I were not punishing myself at the same time.' *Jane Austen's Letters*, Letter 17 to Cassandra Austen, 9 January 1799, p.33.

labour.²² As Piggott has argued, the art of music copying cannot be acquired without practice.²³ If Austen copied out these fifty pieces of music, it points to her enthusiasm for piano music; a passion that is also confirmed by her conscientious daily practice habits.²⁴ Austen's letters show a self-deprecating love of piano-playing. She scolds Caroline Austen for not practising enough: 'I wish you could practise your fingering oftener.'²⁵ Furthermore, Austen personifies the piano when another of her letters to Caroline jokes about the instrument's evocative nature: 'The Piano Forte often talks of you;—in various keys, tunes & expressions I allow—but be it Lesson or Country dance, Sonata or Waltz, *you* are really its' constant Theme.'²⁶ Austen clearly intends to pay Caroline a compliment by imaginatively positioning her as the subject of the piano's conversation and points to the piano's evocative powers by claiming that it acts as a communicative link between her and her niece. By granting the piano a voice and making the pianist the instrument of the music, Austen promotes the creative powers inherent in this instrument.

Initially Austen's quibble about Anna Lefroy's expensive piano and her encouragement of Caroline Austen's piano-playing appear to be at odds with each other. Austen's complex representation of the piano can be seen in *Emma*. The widespread disapproval of Frank Churchill's capricious purchase of a grand piano for Jane Fairfax is perhaps inevitable. By anonymously sending Jane Fairfax an expensive Broadwood piano (which were among the best quality and most innovative pianos at this time), Frank celebrates the musical talent of his secret fiancée.²⁷ Rather than sending Jane a small

²² Jane Austen's neat handwriting in Book 2 can be compared with the music written with an untidy scrawl that appears in book 1 of the Austen Family Music Collection, which is the handwriting of another member of the Austen family.

²³ Patrick Piggott, *The Innocent Diversion*, p.45.

²⁴ As the introduction asserted, Austen practised the piano daily; a claim which is substantiated by Caroline Austen's memoirs.

²⁵ *Jane Austen's Letters*, Letter 156 to Caroline Austen, 26 March 1817, p.337.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, Letter 149 to Caroline Austen, 23 January 1817, p.326.

²⁷ Arthur Loesser, *Men, Women, and Pianos: A Social History*, p.224. The great composer Beethoven sent a laudatory note to John Broadwood when he received a Broadwood piano as a gift: 'My very dear friend Broadwood! Never did I experience a greater pleasure than was caused by the announcement of the forthcoming arrival of this piano with which you honour me by making me a present: I shall regard it as an altar upon which I will place the choicest offerings of my

elegant piano, Frank chooses to give her a large piano, which was designed to accommodate the range and intricacy of male professional performance.²⁸ By presenting Jane with such a piano, Frank implies that she is sufficiently talented to enter the professional world. The Broadwood grand piano is an unusual gift for a prospective governess and is out of place within a novel, which otherwise deals with non-professional music-making. Nenadic remarks that John Broadwood was able to increase its production of grand pianos to a staggering four hundred pianos a year, from 1802 until 1824, which was during the period in which *Emma* was published.²⁹

Austen clearly objects to this mass production and the easy availability of luxurious pianos through characters' comments about the piano in *Emma*. Mr Knightley mutters that Frank's gesture is thoughtless. The shock and surprise of Jane's community both implies the prestige of receiving the gift and its inappropriate extravagance. First, Mrs Cole 'had been struck by the sight of a pianoforte—a very elegant looking instrument.'³⁰ Miss Bates claims that it had pained her that Jane Fairfax, who plays delightfully, should not have an instrument and describes the piano as 'our new grand pianoforte'. To maintain disguise, Frank describes it as 'a handsome present'. Enviously, Emma declares that it is a 'grand pianoforte', which is too large for Mrs Bates' house.³¹ Through the comments of the Bates and Emma herself, Austen implies that Jane Fairfax's new piano is too extravagant for someone of Jane's social stratum just as Austen's letter remarked that Anna Lefroy wasted money on her own new piano.

mind to the divine Apollo'. On p.148, Loesser quotes this letter, which is dated 3 February, 1818. Beethoven's comment usefully suggests the prestige of owning such an instrument, even though his letter is dated after the publication date of *Emma*.

²⁸ More feminine pianos might include square pianos in the form of a sewing table, or those engraved with illustrations or those with bases carved into an intricate design, while classic Broadwood pianos are more famous for quality and sonority than for delicate embellishments. Stana Nenadic argues that 'different terms, e.g. grand, cabinet, cottage denoted the different sizes of piano being made to suit the range of domestic accommodation and purchasing power that was found among the middle classes in Europe.' Stana Nenadic, 'Romanticism and The Urge to Consume in The First Half of The Nineteenth Century', p.212.

²⁹ Stana Nenadic, 'Romanticism and The Urge to Consume in The First Half of The Nineteenth Century', p.212.

³⁰ Jane Austen, *Emma* (1815), ed. by Fiona Stafford, 3 vols (London: Penguin, 1996), II, chapter viii, p.178.

³¹ *Ibid.*, II, chapter viii, p.179. A grand piano-forte differs from a piano-forte in its greater dimension and greater sonority.

While offering pleasure on occasion, the arrival of the piano in *Emma* inevitably causes unhelpful gossip and speculation about its sender. Pianos are also scrutinised in this way in *Pride and Prejudice*. Dismissing Elizabeth Bennet's talents, Lady Catharine condescendingly offers Elizabeth a chance to play on the neglected piano in the housekeeper's room, which is a way of proclaiming social superiority over Elizabeth.³² While Austen's negative representation of the surprise piano in *Emma* may be interpreted as a judgement on readily available pianos, which can be freely dispensed as unsuitable gifts for women, Austen uses the episode in *Pride and Prejudice* to criticise social superiority and to argue against treating the piano as mere elegant furniture.

Significantly, every musical heroine in Austen's novels plays the piano, which in its rightful context symbolises their gentrified economic positions as well as providing entertainment. Attitudes towards pianos in both Austen's novels and letters are underpinned by an awareness of their expense and betray her criticism of those who would manipulate them to promote social worth. Austen's negative response to the concert in *Persuasion* and wariness about the expense of pianos were both linked to a distrust of consumerism. Similarly, her personal investment in piano practice and music-copying contradicts any argument that she denies music's value. Analysing music and the piano in Austen's novels thus becomes a means of confirming Austen's distrust of luxury in the context of societal progress.

Austen's scepticism of luxury is different from the distinctions that Burney and Thicknesse make between professional music-making and luxurious accomplishments in *The Wanderer* and *The School for Fashion*. Austen creates a more distanced relationship between a luxury and an accomplishment than either Thicknesse or Burney. Unlike

³² Lady Catharine De Bourgh exclaims "[Elizabeth] is very welcome to come to Rosings every day, and play on the piano forte in Mrs Jenkinson's room. She would be in nobody's way, you know, in that part of the house" Mr Darcy looked a little ashamed of his aunt's ill-breeding.' Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), ed. by Vivien Jones, 3 vols (London: Penguin, 1996), II, chapter viii, p.144.

Austen, Thicknesse and Burney question the status of an accomplishment as an unnecessary luxury that has no utility, which is an argument that Wollstonecraft's treatise utters. On the other hand, Austen draws on representations of the piano to criticise wasteful excess and by presenting the negative confusion that surrounds Jane Fairfax's new piano in *Emma* implies that pianos had their limited place amongst the upper gentrified social classes, who had money and time to spare.

2iii) The Elegant Harp in Sources from 1780-1817

In a letter, Eliza Hancock (Jane Austen's cousin) wrote that 'I amuse myself with walking, reading, music, work etc. I have here both a harpsichord & harp (the latter is at present the fashionable instrument).'³³ In 1811, Jane Austen is obviously excited about hearing 'very good music' at Eliza's small musical gathering. Austen looks forward to hearing 'one of the Hierlings, who is a Capital on the Harp', adding: 'I expect great pleasure.'³⁴ In the late Eighteenth Century, the harp was an object of fascination and a popular instrument for women in the leisured social classes.³⁵ Although the word harp appears less frequently than the word piano in 1790s publications from *The Burney Collection of Eighteenth and Nineteenth-Century Newspapers*, the harp was always linked with the middle to upper social classes. In an advertisement for a museum collection in *The World* for example the advertiser 'respectfully presents his most sincere acknowledgments to the nobility and gentry' when he informs them he has added a harp to his museum collection.³⁶ Harp music

³³ R.A. Austen-Leigh, ed., *Austen Papers 1704-1856* (Spottiswoode, Ballantyne, 1942), Letter from Eliza Hancock to Philadelphia Walter, 27 June 1780, p.94.

³⁴ Ibid., Letter from Jane Austen to Cassandra Austen, April 18, 1811, p.166.

³⁵ The preface of a music book, published in 1800, uses the popularity of harp music and its appeal to women of the upper social classes to promote its sheet music: 'At a time when the HARP is in such vogue, and when many ladies of the first rank and fortune are known, not only to excel on that instrument, but in singing also; is it not extraordinary they should experience such difficulties in obtaining vocal compositions, fit for their use with a proper harp accompaniment [...] How unfortunate is it therefore to amateurs, to performers and for the instrument we have not more specimens of the Art of accompanying in different styles by our best harp masters'. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam, MS MU434.

³⁶ *The World*, London, January 2, 1790, issue 934. As another example, in of *The Times*, a Professor of the pedal harp 'hopes his solicitous attention in facilitating the tuition of his Pupils and rendering them Proficients will merit a preference in the estimation of the nobility and gentry'. *The Times*, London, 7 February, 1800, issue 4713.

was usually more expensive than piano music too. As an example, it was the most expensive item of music listed in 'New Music, published by Broderip and Wilkinson' in *British Gazette and Sunday Monitor*. Next to a Pleyel Concertante for piano, which was priced at 4 shillings, Madame Merelle's harp instructions and lessons were priced at 10s, 6d.³⁷

Elaborate designs and italicised lyrics frequently feature on collections of harp music, which was supposed to appeal to the upper social classes. In a music book belonging to Mrs Eliza Austen, the lyrics of harp songs are heavily ornamented and the title page contains an ornate illustration of flowers wound around a hand mirror, which is a symbol of self-reflection and an object that could easily be found on a lady's dressing table.³⁸ Further links with femininity are confirmed by the book's title page addressing itself to 'ladies'.³⁹ The elaborate italicised lyrics here may be compared with the more practical and simpler typography in both the printed and handwritten books containing piano music in the Austen Family's Music Collection. Book two of this collection shows Jane Austen's plainer and less ornate handwritten copy of selected piano music.⁴⁰ Along with the way in which Austen's novels characterise heroines as pianists rather than harpists, Austen's preference for copying out piano music in a manner that departs from the ornate italicised display of harp music confirms the author's dislike of showiness and her preference for the piano over the harp.

³⁷ *British Gazette and Sunday Monitor*, London, 16 February, 1800, issue 1059.

³⁸ See Chawton House Library, Jenkyns, MS J.Pr. Mus.1. A book of harp music entitled 'French Songs', belonging to Eliza Austen, which contains similarly elaborate type and illustrations, also appears in the Knight Collection at Chawton House Library.

³⁹ Its full title is 'The Ladies Collection of Catches, Glees, Canons, Canzonets, Madrigals Selected from The Works of The Most Eminent Composers by John Bland'.

⁴⁰ The handwritten music in Books 2, 3 and 4, copied from various printed sources, has been identified by trustee, T.F.Carpenter, as Jane Austen's handwriting, with book 4 signed 'Miss Jane Austen'. In Book 2 of this collection, Jane Austen's handwritten copy of James Hook's 'The Wedding Day', which was a song accompanied by piano music, in the collection was impeccably neat with precise staves and accurately-copied notes, but, unlike Eliza Austen's music, was not ornamented or decorated.

Other eighteenth-century images of harp-playing confirm that the harp was heavily associated with self-display and the idealisation of female accomplishment. The harp, which epitomised elegance, facilitated the display of women's bodies much more than the piano. *The Mirror of Graces or Hints on Female Accomplishments and Manners* (1811) was an anonymous treatise that associated harp-playing with upper-class society, visual elegance and the deliberate display of the body:

The harp certainly admits of the most grace, as the shape of the instrument is calculated, in every respect, to show a fine figure to advantage. The contour of the whole form, the turn and polish of a beautiful hand and arm, the richly-slippered and well-made foot on the pedal stops, the gentle motion of a lovely neck; [...] these are shown at one glance when the fair performer is seated unaffectedly, yet gracefully, at the harp.⁴¹

The full and rich description of the body in this quotation positions the body as the primary site of a harpist's elegance. Playing, tuning or maintaining the harp is not even mentioned nor is the aesthetic appeal of these body parts conducive to proficient performance, implying that this idea was secondary to idealising the female body and promoting musical accomplishment. The writer actually laments that 'the attitude at a pianoforte is not so happily adapted to grace. From the shape of the instrument, the performer must sit directly in front of a straight line of keys; and her own posture being correspondingly erect and square, it is hardly possible that it should not appear rather inelegant' (p.154). Trillini, a musicologist, goes so far as to claim that the shape of the piano is reminiscent of a coffin in the way in which it immobilises the female body, which, although far-fetched, does point towards the idea that the piano encourages more female decorum and modesty than the harp.⁴²

⁴¹ *The Mirror of Graces or Hints on Female Accomplishments and Manners and Directions for the Preservation of Health and Beauty by a Lady of Distinction* (Edinburgh, 1811), p.154.

⁴² Hohl Trillini, *The Gaze of The Listener*, p.5.

Just as Austen's music books, letters and characterisation of her heroines as pianists points to her preference for the piano over the harp (when it is not abused as a status symbol), it is likely that Austen did believe that the shape of the piano was conducive to reinforcing a sense of modesty amongst her female protagonists. As chapter one explained, it is the harp in *Mansfield Park* that is the instrument associated with Mary Crawford's vain self-display.⁴³ Mary unsuccessfully attempts to manipulate musical accomplishment into a courtship tool. For this reason, Austen represents the harp as a more dangerously seductive instrument compared with the pianoforte.

Elegance is linked with the harp and harp-playing in Frances Burney's *The Wanderer* (1814), which points to Juliet's incompetent harp pupils who treat the instrument as a fashion symbol that allows them to display their bodies. One particular music pupil, Miss Brinville, did not want to learn music until she discovered that 'an inclination of Sir Lyell Sycamore's that nothing added so much grace to beauty as playing upon the harp'.⁴⁴ It was not long before Juliet saw that 'to study [Miss Brinville's] looks at the instrument [harp] was [Miss Brinville's] principal object.' (p.235). The vanity and foolishness of Miss Brinville is evident through her posing at her harp in front of the mirror: 'To sit at the harp so as to justify the assertion of the Baronet, became [Miss Brinville's] principal study; and the glass before which she tried her attitudes and motions, told her such flattering tales, that she soon began to think the harp the sweetest instrument in the world, and that to practise it was the most delicious of occupations' (p.236). Miss Brinville becomes increasingly aware of her allure when seated at the harp.

⁴³ Austen paints a luscious picture of Mary at the harp while simultaneously and sharply implying that the instrument can be a manipulative courtship tool: 'A young woman, pretty, lively, with a harp as elegant as herself [Mary]; and placed near a window, cut down to the ground, and opening on a little lawn, surrounded by shrubs in the rich foliage of summer, was enough to catch any man's heart.' The last phrase suggests Mary's seductive power in attracting Edmund, who 'was at the parsonage every day to be indulged with his favourite instrument' (p.95). Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park* (1814), (London: Penguin, 1996), chapter vii, p.95.

⁴⁴ Frances Burney, *The Wanderer* (1814), ed. by Margaret Anne Doody, Robert L. Mack and Peter Sabor, 5 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), II, 235.

Painfully aware of the foolishness of this vain harp student, the narrator echoes Juliet's frustration and the irony that beauty is no substitution for Miss Brinville's abysmal playing: 'Of all [Juliet's] pupils, no one was so utterly hopeless as Miss Brinville, whom she found equally destitute of ear, taste, intelligence, and application. [...] Naturally dull, she [Miss Brinville] comprehended nothing that was not familiar to her, and habitually indolent, because brought up to believe that beauty would supply every accomplishment, she had no conception of energy, and not an idea of diligence.' (p.236) Again Burney does not idealise the elegance that musical accomplishment lends the female figure, particularly if the performance is poor. Wollstonecraft would agree with Burney here.⁴⁵ This is Burney's clearest criticism of a vain harpist in *The Wanderer*. Although the harp is not solely to blame for Miss Brinville's vanity, it obviously facilitates her desire for self-display.

These sources prove that the piano and harp were marketed as elegant pieces of furniture for women, effectively aiding women's quests to become accomplished. Their link with the upper to middle social classes explains why most heroines in eighteenth-century novels were either harpists or pianists. Eighteenth-century music books often arranged instrumental music for either the harp or piano, as interchangeable accompaniments for solo instruments. This showed how both instruments were considered suitable for female music-making amongst the middle to upper social classes, yet Burney and Austen both discriminated between these instruments.⁴⁶ Austen presents multiple representations of the piano, valuing its ability to contribute to her own pleasure while criticising its associations with frivolity and mass consumerism. Burney and Austen more

⁴⁵ 'In aiming to accomplish [women], without cultivating their understandings, they are taken out of their sphere of duties, and made ridiculous and useless when the short-lived bloom of beauty is over.' Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman: with Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects*, (London, 1792), pp.9-10

⁴⁶ In a music collection entitled 'Juvenile Amusement', for example, the song 'The last time I came o'er the Moor' (1800), composed by Harriet Abrams, is 'a favourite duet for 2 voices with an accompaniment for harp *or* pianoforte.' Cambridge, Fitzwilliam MS MU1211 (19). Similarly, Book 3 in the Jenkyns' Collection, in the possession of Chawton House Library, contains six pieces of music that may be performed on either the piano or the harp.

readily associated the harp with frivolity and superficiality because its shape and structure was conducive to displaying the female body and encouraging vanity. Austen consistently shows a preference for the piano, rather than the more expensive harp, which points to a criticism of frivolous luxuries as well as her dislike of showiness and self-display.

2iv) Poor, disabled fiddlers

If you love music [...] pay fiddlers to play to you; but I insist upon you neither piping nor fiddling yourself. It puts a gentleman in a very frivolous, contemptible light; brings him into a great deal of bad company [...] Few things would mortify me more than to see you with a fiddle under your chin.⁴⁷

The above advice that Lord Chesterfield gave his son in 1749 created a clear boundary between domestic and professional music-making. It also accurately depicted the deeply ingrained prejudice against fiddlers. While the harp and the piano were associated with wealth and prosperity, the fiddle was linked solely with professional musicians. It was also pointedly associated with poverty and disability. In newspapers published between 1790 and 1800, the fiddler is consistently scorned and pitied and frequently depicted as having some kind of disability. In *The English Chronicle or Universal Evening Post*, for example, a report is given on the dangers of criminals in Dublin. While picking up criminals, police chance upon a blind fiddler in Dublin: ‘In a seize on vagrants, [the police] unluckily perceived a blind girl, who has hitherto innocently acquired her subsistence by playing a fiddle, whom with some difficulty they forced away to their repository [a black cart] accompanied by a crowd of children’.⁴⁸

Fiddlers are depicted as blind in many newspapers of this era. *The Public Advertiser* reported that at Bartholomew’s Fair, Irishmen had engaged a ‘blind fiddler’ who

⁴⁷ Philip Dormer Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield, *Letters Written By the Late Right Honourable Philip Dormer Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield, to his son, Philip Stanhope*, 4 vols (London, 1788), I, Letter xlviii, 19 April, 1749, p.393.

⁴⁸ *The English Chronicle or Universal Evening Post*, London March 23, 1790, issue 1640. This report was also given in *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, London, March 26, 1790, issue 19129.

stood next to a black cat playing the bag-pipes.⁴⁹ Newspapers also describe fiddlers as poor, black, or disabled, which points to the way in which fiddlers were identified with lower social classes and criminal minority. On one occasion, *The Whitehall Evening Post* reported on a 'black fiddler' who behaved badly and was grouped with lower social class occupations, such as dustmen and chimney sweeps.⁵⁰ *The Morning Post* reported that 'a few dustmen were sent to prison for regaling themselves with a fiddle' on a Sunday and a 'black fiddler' had pleaded for liberation [from prison] 'on the ground that no one could with propriety play at the gambols of *people of their colour*'.⁵¹ The consistently used adjective 'poor' describes fiddlers who have little money or who are socially destitute. In 1794, *The Oracle and Public Advertiser* reported that a 'poor' fiddler almost choked to death and *The General Evening Post* reported that a Middlesex fiddler had just had to file for bankruptcy.⁵² Most interestingly, *The St James' Chronicle* includes a horrified letter from an amateur musician who complains about a professional fiddler who pretended to be an artiste in order to join in with a group of gentlemen fiddlers. In this letter, he discriminates 'gentlemen' musicians from professional musicians.⁵³

⁴⁹ *Public Advertiser*, London, 7 September, 1791, issue 17838. The same newspaper includes a story entitled 'The Blind Fiddler' on 8 September, 1791. In this story, the fiddler is described as a 'poor fellow' who is pitied for earning a 'scanty subsistence', while working for six hours without a break. *Public Advertiser*, London, 8 September, 1791, issue 17839.

⁵⁰ *Whitehall Evening Post*, 30 August, 1796, issue 7172.

⁵¹ *The Morning Post and Fashionable World*, 3 September, 1796, issue 7638. The italics appear in this article. A mute fiddler also appeared in *The Oracle and Public Advertiser* while *Bell's Weekly Messenger* reported the scandal that a respectable woman had just absconded from her husband to be with a 'fiddler without a nose' (which was a euphemism for a person with Syphilis), *Oracle and Public Advertiser*, 11 November, 1794, issue 18848 and *Bell's Weekly Messenger*, 6 October, 1796, issue 25.

⁵² *Oracle and Public Advertiser*, 19 December, 1796, issue 19497 and *General Evening Post*, London, 12 August, 1794, issue 9500.

⁵³ *St James' Chronicle or British Evening Post*, London, 9 April, 1795, issue 51819. The writer states that 'there is a wide difference between a public performer of any description and a Gentleman [...] [Public performers] have their respective merits but they are *not* GENTLEMEN. They are dependent on gentlemen.' The writer even justifies this remark by referring to Lord Chesterfield's dismissive comment about fiddlers.

2v) Abnormal Music-Making in *Camilla* and *Geraldine Fauconberg*

Just as disability and ethnicity characterised the representation of certain professional musicians in newspapers, these categories of marginalisation represented otherness in eighteenth-century novels. In his study on disability, Lennard J Davis aims to ‘place disability in a political, social and cultural context, that theorises and historicises deafness or blindness or disability in similarly complex ways to the way race, class and gender have been theorised.’⁵⁴ As Davis rightly remarks, people with disabilities have consistently been an oppressed and repressed group, which mirrors the way in which critics have seen women’s social role and racial difference.⁵⁵ Davis argues that the form of the novel unwittingly reinforces these stereotypes, thus promoting what he terms normalcy.⁵⁶ *Webster’s Dictionary* defines normalcy as ‘the state or fact of being normal.’⁵⁷ Despite the fact that *The Oxford English Dictionary* does not record any usage of the word ‘normal’ before 1855, deformity was still evident in novels before this date which suggested a subconscious use of this term.⁵⁸ If normality may be understood as a set of trends or behaviours that unite the majority of people, disability is a physical or mental deformity that divides them. Although such categorisation is invariably imprecise and unreliable, it is one way of distinguishing the norm from the abnormal in novels.

Instead of exploring disability, Davis examines what it means to be normal and how novels perpetuated ideals of the norm. He comments that if disability appears in an eighteenth-century novel it is rarely centrally represented and it is usually villains rather than heroes who are deformed.⁵⁹ Analysing disability as a theme in novels shows that this

⁵⁴ Lennard J. Davis, ed., *The Disability Studies Reader* (London: Routledge, 1997), p.3.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p.1.

⁵⁶ Lennard Davis, ‘Constructing Normalcy: The Bell Curve, The Novel, and the Invention of the Disabled Body in the Nineteenth Century’ in *The Disability Studies Reader* ed. by Lennard J. Davis (London: Routledge, 1997), p.9.

⁵⁷ *Webster’s Online Dictionary*: <http://www.websters-online-dictionary.org>. [accessed 5 July 2010]

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p.10.

⁵⁹ Lennard Davis, ‘Constructing Normalcy’, p.21.

literary form is explicitly linked with concepts of the norm 'from the typicality of the central character, to the normalizing devices of plot to bring deviant characters back into the norms of society, to the normalizing coda of endings'.⁶⁰

Camilla

In light of Davis' claim that the disabled characters in eighteenth-century novels are usually minor characters or villains, it is significant that in *Camilla* (1796) Frances Burney characterises Eugenia Tyrold, who is the heroine's sister and a central character, as sickly and lame.⁶¹ I agree with Haggerty's claim that 'female deformity becomes a help rather than a hindrance to self-fulfilment' for several reasons.⁶² First, Sir Tyrold's guilt about not inoculating Eugenia against small pox leads him to make her his sole heiress and so she gains financially from her disability. Second, Eugenia's disability reflects her fair and noble character as she learns to ignore the insults hurled at her. The narrator is at pains to demonstrate that the adversity that Eugenia faces is more abnormal than Eugenia's disability. This is similar to the way in which Burney condemns the prejudice that Juliet faces when she performs music professionally, denouncing it much more than the music profession itself. Camilla finds Mr Dubster's curt comment about her sister's disability distasteful. Mr Dubster says:

They tell me, ma'am, that ugly little body's a great fortune [...] Why that little lame thing, that was here drinking tea with you. Tom Hicks says she'll have a power of money [...] I had no notion that a person, who had such a hobble in their gait, would think of such a thing as going to dancing.⁶³

⁶⁰ Ibid., pp.23-6.

⁶¹ Frances Burney's *Camilla* was a novel about the matrimonial concerns of a group of young people and specifically traces the deepening love between Camilla and the hero, Edgar Mandlebert.

⁶² George E.Haggerty, *Unnatural Affections: Women and Fiction in the Later Eighteenth Century* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), p.20.

⁶³ Frances Burney, *Camilla* (1796), ed. by Edward A. Bloom and Lillian D. Bloom, 5 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), II, 77. All subsequent page numbers can be found in this edition.

Ignorantly, Mr Dubster characterises Eugenia as an ‘ugly little body’ and a ‘lame thing’ with a ‘hobble’, thus failing to understand why wealthy Camilla would socialise with a deformed woman. He creates an intellectual divide between wealth and disability. The dichotomy of wealth and deformity also appears when Mr Dubster comments on his shock that an ‘ugly little body’ should be ‘a great fortune’. Later Mr Dubster goes further and insensitively comments that Eugenia’s deformities will ruin her chance in the marriage market:

I’ll lay a wager that poor gentleman has been took in, just as I was yesterday! He thinks that young lady that’s had the small-pox so bad, is you ma’am! ‘Twould be a fine joke if such a mistake as that should get the little lame duck, as I call her, a husband! He’d be in a fine hobble when he found he’d got nothing but her ugly face for his bargain. (I, 91)

Again Eugenia is described as ‘ugly’ and her ‘hobble’ is mentioned in conjunction with an illness (small-pox). Just as newspapers automatically linked fiddlers to the ‘other’, Mr Dubster identifies Eugenia by her lameness and tells Camilla that he sees the ‘same lame little lady’ as he saw at the ball (II, 277). Mr Dubster is scandalised when Camilla sharply admits that the ‘little lame duck’ is her sister. His blatant prejudice is similar to the link that newspapers made between disability, poverty and lower social class. Eventually, this takes its toll and Eugenia feels a ‘sensation of shame for her lameness, which, hitherto, she had regularly borne with fortitude’ especially when she sees Lynmere approaching (p.566). Others treat Eugenia’s disability just as cruelly though. When Eugenia and Camilla are trapped in a barn, an unnamed boy asks Eugenia ‘what were you put up there for, Miss? to frighten the crows?’ (p.286) In a chapter entitled ‘Strictures on Deformity’, Sir Tyrold unashamedly displays Eugenia to the public and a stranger calls her the ‘little hump-back gentlewoman!’ (p.305) As Eugenia grows more depressed, Sir Tyrold introduces her to an imbecile; whom Eugenia refers to as a ‘spectacle of human degradation’ (p.311). Disability here is being used to define and contrast with Eugenia’s own abnormality. Within the

spectrum of disabilities, Burney presents hierarchies of abnormality and pronounces that mental disability is worse than physical deformity.

By displaying this range of insensitive comments about Eugenia, Frances Burney both criticises the superficiality of judging by appearances and highlights the stereotypes associated with physical disabilities. By characterising a central protagonist as disabled but rich, modest, kind and discerning, Burney portrays a different version of disability to the one that Mr Dubster and newspaper sources presented.

This sympathetic representation of Eugenia is significant when examining Burney's chapter 'Accomplished Monkeys', which describes an insensitive and mocking audience who encourage a music master to beat a group of musical monkeys. The narrator describes the monkey fiddlers thus:

[Mr Macdersey] was interrupted from proceeding [with his speech] by what the master of the booth called his *Consort of Musics*: in which not less than twenty monkeys contributed their part; one dreadfully scraping a bow across the strings of a vile kit, another beating a drum, another with a fife, a fourth with a bagpipe, and the sixteen remainder striking together tongs, shovels, and pokers, by way of marrowbones and clevers. Every body stop their ears, though no one could forbear laughing at their various contortions, and horrible grimaces, till the master of the booth, to keep them, he said, in tune, dealt about with such fierce blows with a stick, that they set up a general howling, which he called the Vocal part of his *Consort*, not more stunning to the ear, than offensive to all humanity. The audience applauded by loud shouts, but Mrs Albery, disgusted, rose to quit the booth. Camilla eagerly started up to second the motion. (III, 429-430)

The 'scraping' and striking together of loud and clashing instruments and the 'general howling' of the monkeys make an excruciating noise, which is as violent to the ear as the 'fierce blows with a stick' that the monkeys are dealt. The end of this passage is very significant. Both Mrs Albery and Camilla rise to leave as they are so disgusted by the beating of the monkeys, which was 'offensive to all humanity'. The audience's laughter at the monkeys' pained expression and the way in which the monkeys' owner mocks the

‘consort of music’ by forcing the monkeys to bang together tongs, shovels and pokers invokes the reader’s sympathy for the victimised musicians, who are not even represented as human beings. In this instance, Burney replaced human with animal characters to pinpoint racial difference and reinforce the notion of the abused ‘other’.

Dror Wahrman comments on links between racial others and animals in *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England*. He remarks that ‘[people believed in] a close affinity between the supposed lowest of the human races, the Negroes, and the apes—an affinity that clinched [...] the natural hierarchy of races’.⁶⁴ In her essay on deformity in *Camilla* and *The Wanderer*, Sara Salih argues that ‘it is intriguing that in *Camilla* spontaneous expressions of emotions frequently occur in the presence of animals.’⁶⁵ This may be true of Mrs Albery and Camilla, who compassionately respond to the monkeys, while the rest of the audience is mired in its own cruelty. Burney uses the figures of the muted monkeys to highlight insensitive attitudes towards abnormality. They are a metaphor for professional musicians because the monkeys are also subject to the narrow-minded views that Juliet encountered during musical performances in *The Wanderer*.

Geraldine Fauconberg

The Critical Review described *Geraldine Fauconberg* as an ‘elegant and well-written’ novel, which presents ‘a correct and faithful picture of genteel life’.⁶⁶ The conventional characterisation and virtues for which *Geraldine Fauconberg* was praised are played out in Burney’s wary response to race. H.F. Augstein asserts that the nineteenth century saw the

⁶⁴ Dror Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), p.130.

⁶⁵ Sara Salih, ‘*Camilla* and *The Wanderer*’ in *The Cambridge Companion to Frances Burney*, ed. by Peter Sabor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p.43.

⁶⁶ Sarah Harriet Burney’s *Geraldine Fauconberg* (1806) traced the courtship journey of a heroine. It received a positive reception on release, and *The British Critic* referred to the novel as a ‘superior performance.’ *The Letters of Sarah Harriet Burney*, ed. by Lorna J. Clark (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997) quotes *British Critic* 32 (1808, p.93), p.520. *The Letters of Sarah Harriet Burney*, quotes *The Critical Review* 16 (1809), pp.104-5.

beginning of racial theory, but also argues that particular ideas about biological essence were present in eighteenth-century treatises by Lord Kames, Stanhope Smith and Blumenbach.⁶⁷ Dror Wahrman claims that the eighteenth century saw a transformation in the way in which race was understood, adding that the later eighteenth century moved away from the idea that race was a malleable and fluid term and preferred to depict it as an innate and essential nature.⁶⁸ The three assumptions about nineteenth-century racial theory, present in this quotation from Augstein, comment on race as this innate and fixed identity to which Wahrman refers:

Nineteenth-century racial theory believes that mankind is divisible into a certain number of 'races' whose characteristics are fixed and defy the modifying influences of external circumstances. Second, the theory contains the idea that the intellectual and moral capacities may be unevenly spread within the various human races. Third, it advocates the notion that mental endowments are bound up with certain physiognomical specificities which, being defined as racial characteristics, are considered to reveal the inward nature of the individual or the population in question.⁶⁹

In her essay on race, Nussbaum shrewdly comments on the relevance of social class to distinctions and perceptions about ethnicity. She argues that race is neither a biological essence nor a discursive practice but a set of unstable meanings.⁷⁰ Nussbaum remarks that 'social rank becomes the obfuscating mask for maintaining difference without cruelty, or insisting on an inferiority here specified as blackness and savageness, but within humanity.'⁷¹

Geraldine Fauconberg draws on the second of Augstein's arguments; that moral and intellectual capacities are unevenly spread within human races. When the author

⁶⁷ H.F. Augstein, ed., *Race: The Origins of An Idea, 1760-1850* (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1996), p.ix. The eighteenth-century treatises to which I refer are Lord Kames, *Preliminary Discourse: Concerning the Origin of Men and of Languages* (1778), Rev. Samuel Stanhope Smith, *An Essay on the Causes of the Variety of Complexion and Figure in the Human Species to which are added, Strictures on Lord Kames' Discourse on the Original Diversity of Mankind* (London, 1788), J.F. Blumenbach, *On the Native Varieties of the Human Species* (Göttingen, 1795).

⁶⁸ Dror Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self*, p.86.

⁶⁹ H.F. Augstein, ed., *Race: The Origins of An Idea*, p.x.

⁷⁰ Felicity A. Nussbaum, 'Women and Race: 'A Difference of Complexion' in Vivien Jones, ed., *Women and Literature in Britain 1700-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.70.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp.69-90, p.80.

describes a professional singer as an ‘uncouth negro’ in *Geraldine Fauconberg*, she employs race to accentuate differences between social ranks. She identifies a social difference between the heroine’s domestic music-making and the ostracised professional musician. Just as Nussbaum argues that social rank divides and defines racial identity, social class becomes vital in Sarah Harriet Burney’s conception of musical performers. The black musician and blind fiddler are placed in a different social category from the heroine of *Geraldine Fauconberg*, who is a harp-playing English amateur musician. The narrator describes the black musician whose music is likened to a ‘strange, unaccountable, droning noise’:

[Mrs Neville and Miss Cecil] desired [Geraldine and Mr Archer] to stop, and listen to a strange, unaccountable, droning noise, occasionally interrupted, or, at least, overpowered by peals of laughter, and loud reiterated bursts of applause. You would have been entertained had you witnessed the confusion this simple operation occasioned. The murmuring, muttering, indistinct sound [...] preceded from honest Caesar the negro who [...] had been prevailed upon to exhibit for their amusement, one of his native dances, to no other music than that of his own nasal uncouth singing. What it most resembles is the vile twanging of a Jew’s harp; and yet it is altogether different from that, and from every thing else which European ears ever heard.⁷²

Caesar, who is quickly identified as a ‘negro’, is encouraged ‘to exhibit’ for the purpose of being mocked, just like the monkeys in *Camilla*. The presumed superiority of the white audience who mock Caesar’s ‘native dance’ and ‘nasal uncouth singing’ can be related to postcolonial discourses about the other.⁷³ The other is judged by ‘European ears’, which presupposes the superiority of the latter more strongly than in *Camilla*. First, Geraldine finds this scene entertaining while Camilla finds the monkeys’ plight distressing. Second, Geraldine starkly contrasts the negroes with the Europeans by lamenting that the negro’s

⁷² *Geraldine Fauconberg*, II, 157-158.

⁷³ Said’s *Orientalism* identifies a similar relationship of power, of domination and of hegemony that the West impose on the East. ‘Orientalism’, Said argues, ‘is a Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the orient’ and the concept reflects a similar positional superiority that is played out in this music-making scene. See Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (1978) (London: Penguin, 1995), p.3.

sound had to reach 'European ears'. Following this scene, one professional musician is characterised by his disability, while another is identified by his skin colour: a 'lame and squinting fiddler' and a negro's 'nasal uncouth singing' feature at a wedding reception.⁷⁴ Here, colour, disability and ineptitude merge. By contrast, Sarah Harriet Burney's heroine plays the piano; an instrument which was associated with increasing wealth and prosperity. By embedding abnormality, disability and racial difference in the figure of the professional musician, Sarah Harriet Burney uses music to delineate minor and marginalised characters in a manner that was conventional at this time. As Lennard Davis argues, it is the background characters who are usually disabled. Sarah Harriet Burney also links racial difference with disabilities because the negro singer and lame and squinting fiddler perform together. Race becomes an indication of the professional singer's inferiority and disability is an indication of the social difference between Geraldine, the accomplished harpist and the poor fiddler.

If an increasing distrust of other races can be observed between the publication date of *Camilla*, in 1796 and *Geraldine Fauconberg*, in 1806, this may have been affected by the events of the French Revolution and fear of foreign influence in England after the storming of the Bastille. There was immense unrest and anxiety in England following the execution of King Louis XVI in 1793, which marked a pivotal point in the French Revolution and created a fear that the influence of the French Revolution was widespread. By creating a musician who is both disabled and foreign, Sarah Harriet Burney taps into this unrest about race by using music as a way of commenting on racial binaries, which Edward Said explored years later.

By creating a dichotomy of English musical heroines and black or disabled professional musicians, authors such as Sarah Harriet Burney could use the representation

⁷⁴ Ibid., p.158.

of music in their novels to celebrate Britishness. Two dichotomies can therefore be identified in *Geraldine Fauconberg*; there is a dichotomy of leisured and professional spaces and another of Britishness and ethnic minorities. Two representations of national identity also emerge; in *Geraldine Fauconberg* Britishness is idealised, while the next chapter will explain how novels by Staël and Owenson displayed the virtues of other national identities.⁷⁵ Constructing strict non-professional and professional spaces is less important to Staël and Owenson than examining the expansive concept of nationality in their narratives.

In conclusion, Frances Burney and Sarah Harriet Burney deal with the topic of abnormality differently. The genre of music (a consort) and the cheap instruments played on by the monkeys in *Camilla* reflect a fascinating link between abnormality and professional music-making, which was also present in *Geraldine Fauconberg*. As well as demonstrating her society's prejudice towards the music profession, the chapter reveals that, throughout the eighteenth century, music-making could be a lens in which views on the 'other' can be discerned. Only one factor links the characters that Sarah Harriet Burney considered to be the 'other', whether disabled, black, or merely occupying a lower social class status and that is that their role as professional musicians. Professional musicianship, in conclusion, becomes its own category of marginalisation, which relates to the way that novels represented the professional music-making as an unsafe arena when compared with the private space.

⁷⁵ See Sydney Owenson, Lady Morgan, *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806) ed. by Kathryn KirkPatrick, 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) and Germaine De Staël, *Corinne, or Italy* (1807), translated by Sylvia Raphael (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

2vi) Conclusion

When examining concerts in Burney's *The Wanderer*, Thicknesse's *The School For Fashion*, Austen's *Persuasion* and the anonymous novel *Artless Lovers*, this chapter has argued that music-making unveiled the borders dividing the private and public spheres. Concerts also provided authors with an opportunity to focus on the female perspective and respond to the consumerism that was prevalent in the eighteenth century. In all four novels, the concert is a forum for turmoil and uncertainty, revealing both the emotional power of music on the body and the rigidity of guidelines that kept women in the non-professional space. While Burney and Thicknesse use concerts to demonstrate the precarious situation of women who struggled to become economically independent and show the prejudices against public performance, Austen and the author of *The Artless Lovers* use the concert to explore the heroine's thoughts on courtship. While all writers focus on the female perspective, Burney and Thicknesse specifically challenge the creators of these borders that separate non-professional from professional music-making and ask why they are necessary. In *The Wanderer*, Burney expands the non-professional space by allowing her heroine to teach the harp, but quickly withdraws her heroine from this space once Juliet is married. Heroines in both *The School For Fashion* and *The Wanderer* deliver impassioned speeches about working women's plights but the former criticises gender restrictions much more forcefully. While Austen does not allow her heroine to push the boundaries of these spheres, crossing this private/public border reveals moments of tension in *The School For Fashion* and *The Wanderer* as their heroines are forced to confront prejudice about social class and gender. Such tension is never resolved however as neither heroine performs publicly for very long. Rather than presenting the professional sphere as safe and welcoming, Burney and Thicknesse are concerned with the moment of crossing this social border. They want women to have the option to cross these divides, although both

novelists concede that the professional sphere is not necessarily the ideal location for women. In this sense, Burney and Thicknesse are not idealising either sphere but instead argue that there should be a smoother transition between the divide and fewer implications for women who cross it.

By ushering public performers and performances into the background, Austen remains suspicious of the professional sphere, as her letters confirm. By making Anne a spectator rather than a participant in the concert, Austen implicitly advocates music as an amusement. Although Austen valued pianos and piano-playing, her representations of the piano in *Emma* and *Pride and Prejudice* paradoxically dismiss the instrument as a consumerist item while criticising it as a symbol of social superiority. The piano's arrival in *Emma* points more strongly to Austen's dislike of frivolous waste while the episode in *Pride and Prejudice* reiterates the point made in chapter one that Austen abhors insincere motivations behind learning music as an accomplishment. None the less, the piano becomes a symbol of a gentrified society in her novels and she does not refer to cheaper instruments. In line with the polemical writing that promoted music as an accomplishment, Austen keeps heroines' musical performances in the context of small private parties and it remains a moderate and modest amusement. Views on social class seem to regulate the border between private and public music-making as the former is strongly associated with distinction and leisure. What *The School for Fashion* and *The Wanderer* show is that gender and the constraining expectations placed on women create an additional barrier.

In *Camilla*, Burney sets herself against judging appearance as a measure of moral worth. She discriminates between disabilities due to her respect for women's mental faculties rather than appearance, which relates back to her criticism of superficial vain harp-players in *The Wanderer*. In *Camilla*, Burney presents the problem of how to view

abnormality but does not see social class as the divide between the disabled and the 'normal'. The insensitive response to the musical monkeys and the prejudice faced by Juliet in *The Wanderer* are sympathetic ways in which Frances Burney portrays the plight of the professional.

PART 2: RESPONSES TO MUSIC

Chapter Three: Music, Sensibility and the Body

I [Corinne] heard Italian singers below my windows [...] I cannot tell you the emotion I felt. A flood of tears covered my face and all my memories revived. Nothing brings back the past like music. It does more than bring back the past; when music evokes the past, it appears in a clad in a mysterious and melancholy veil, like the ghosts of those who are dear to us.¹

Listening to music distresses Corinne in this episode in Staël's *Corinne* (1807). Floods of tears and the revival of memories are provoked by the music. The past supernaturally appeared 'clad in a mysterious and melancholy veil, like the ghosts of those who are dear'.

By using gothic imagery to depict music, the narrator transforms it into a supernatural force. Music is so powerful at producing tears, provoking memory and fostering grief that it becomes extraordinary. This novel draws heavily on music's ability to trigger and sustain emotions by showing music's role in fostering intense feeling in the heroine and the hero.

This passage in *Corinne* raises questions about the relationship between music, the emotions and the physical body. Music's historical association with irrationality was as much a topic in eighteenth-century fiction as music's role as a female accomplishment. Eighteenth-century novels by Radcliffe, Lewis, Staël and Austen drew on the established link between sensibility, the body and music-making to participate in popular debates.² These debates included gender hierarchies, the role of the body and the validity of aesthetic experience.

While part one of this thesis argued that musical accomplishment was used to characterise female identity, part two explores a curious link between music, masculinity

¹ Germaine De Staël, *Corinne, or Italy* (1807), translated by Sylvia Raphael (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.259.

² In this chapter, I shall be analysing Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), Matthew Lewis, *The Monk* (1796), Germaine De Staël, *Corinne* (1807), Sydney Owenson, Lady Morgan, *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806), Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) and *Emma* (1815).

and sensibility as it assesses responses to music. When the chapter discusses the relationship between sensibility, gender and musical performance, it demonstrates that symptoms of sensibility were evident on men observing female performance. This is at odds with critical opinion that has uniformly linked women with sensibility. As well as discussing novels by Austen and Sarah Harriet Burney, this chapter will explore two important French novels fifty years apart: Germaine De Staël's *Corinne* (1806) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Julie or The New Heloise* (1761). This analysis permits a discussion of the relationship between music-making, women and nationality, it demonstrates the relevance of music across eighteenth-century French history and it allows for contrasts between authors of different nationalities. Responses to music in Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and Matthew Lewis' *The Monk* (1796) will also be contrasted in a section on gothic fiction as these two novels present different relationships between music, politics and sensibility. The troubled relationship between music and the gothic thus emerges.

In a section on the national romance genre, the chapter will discuss Sydney Owenson's *The Wild Irish Girl* (1807), which offers the harp as a pertinent symbol of Irishness. This novel will be compared with Staël's *Corinne* (1806), which similarly idealises free female expression and sensibility. I shall explain how letters by Sarah Harriet Burney and Jane Austen referred to *The Wild Irish Girl* dismissively and both authors objected to dramatising the body.

Richard Leppert's argument that sight is heavily implicated in representations of eighteenth-century music-making underlines this chapter, which argues that writing of this time emphasised the body of the musician as much as their sound.³ As an art that demanded

³ Richard Leppert, *The Sight of Sound: Music, Representation, and the History of the Body* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p.xix.

an emotional response, music helped to cement the prominent role of sensibility in the eighteenth-century novel. Playing upon musical instruments, listening to others play music, or appraising music at concerts in fictional novels became an effective means for writers such as Radcliffe and Staël to convey sensibility.

I) Sensibility, Gender, Music-Making and the Sublime.

In the context of Laurence Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* (1768), sensibility refers to a capacity for refined emotion and a readiness to feel compassion for suffering. In this novel, a woman allows the hero to kiss her hand and gives him a 'look of sensibility' before her departure.⁴ Here sensibility is encapsulated in the woman's emotional response and heightened perception, which is conveyed through a look. The meaning, role and function of sensibility were scrutinised throughout the eighteenth century. Throughout this chapter, music is represented as a stimulus that triggered sensibility. Markman Ellis' pioneering study of sentiment and sensibility demonstrates ways in which the sentimental novel participated in eighteenth-century political controversies. He extends the argument that the sentimental novel was noted for its liberal and humanitarian interests by exploring ways in which sentimental novels took part in historical disputes.⁵ Sensibility, he argues, elicited fierce responses from writers of various political persuasions. Chris Jones similarly argues that 'sensibility was clearly not a uniform or unitary concept when it could be both championed and attacked from so many points of views.'⁶ Eighteenth-century writers tailored the definition of sensibility to fit their own social, political and moral agendas. In

⁴ Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy* (1768), 2 vols (London, 1775), I, 82.

⁵ Markman Ellis defines these political disputes as the emergence of anti-slavery opinion, discourse on the morality of commerce, and the movement for the reform of prostitutes. Markman Ellis, *The Politics of Sensibility: Race, Gender and Commerce in The Sentimental Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

⁶ Chris Jones rightly points to the difficulty in associating sensibility with a specific political camp as it was both enlisted as an ally by more 'conservative' writers and vilified by more radical feminists. For example, Wollstonecraft criticised artificial sensibility and more conventional conduct writers such as Chapone urged women to exhibit sensibility when practising their accomplishments. Even Burke, who was not an open advocate of the movement, claimed to have a heart of sensibility. These arguments can be found in Chris Jones, *Radical Sensibility: Literature and Ideas in the 1790s* (London: Routledge, 1993), p.4.

1796 for example, *The Monthly Magazine* referred to sensibility as ‘that peculiar structure, or habitude of mind, which disposes a man to be easily moved’, which aligns the concept with sensitivity, while in 1775 *The London Chronicle* described it as a ‘lively and delicate feeling, a quick sense of the right and wrong, in all human actions.’⁷ While this first definition refers to quickness in perception, the definition in *The London Chronicle* allows sensibility to form part of a moral judgment. In an essay entitled ‘On the delicacy of Sentiment’ in *The Universal Magazine*, the writer stresses the benevolent impulses imparted by sensibility by arguing that ‘the character of delicacy of sentiment is certainly a great refinement on humanity.’⁸ An essay entitled ‘Descant on Sensibility’ took a different view and associated sensibility with negative emotions by stating that the idea leads ‘to the abodes of misery—to scenes of distress.’⁹ What many novelists, including Austen, objected to was the exhibition of excessive sensibility. Although it is difficult to identify the point at which an exhibition of sensibility becomes an excess of sensibility, one way of differentiating the categories is to argue that an excess of sensibility involves a more intense dramatisation of the body than a display of modest sensibility.¹⁰

Medical treatises which discussed the nerves often referred to theories about medicine and the body to present sensibility as culturally acceptable. According to such treatises, delicate nerves, caused by luxurious middle-class living, justified the malfunctioning body and unstable mind. Dr George Cheyne, who was famously Samuel Richardson’s ‘dear friend’ and Physician, discussed this topic. In *The English Malady* (1733), Cheyne made nervous illnesses glamorous by referring to them as illnesses of advanced English civilization. He argued that the passions (defined as types of emotion)

⁷ ‘Ought Sensibility to be Cherished or Repressed?’ in *The Monthly Magazine*, 2 Oct 1796, pp.706-9, *The London Chronicle*, 6 July 177. See Markman Ellis, *The Politics of Sensibility*, p.5.

⁸ *The Universal Magazine* 62, April, p.172-4, 1778 cited by Markman Ellis, *The Politics of Sensibility*, p.5.

⁹ *The Lady’s Magazine*, 1775 ‘Descant on Sensibility’, pp.712-4 in Markman Ellis, *The Politics of Sensibility*, p.6.

¹⁰ While sighs and tears might be categorised as sensibility, for example, more dramatic bodily responses including outbursts of tears, fainting, screaming and trembling might be classified as an excess.

have a significant effect on the body's health.¹¹ Furthermore, nervous illness stemmed from national influence (being English) and it should not be trivialised.¹² Cheyne was not alone in his assertion that nervous distemper had significant physiological cause. Robert Whytt's influential treatise, published in 1765, justified the nervous behaviour that was frequently associated with sensibility.¹³ He did this by claiming that such disorders had physiological causes. Cheyne and Whytt justified what others might have termed an indulgent focus on the self. In particular, Cheyne's medical assertions promoted and justified sensibility as a form of behaviour at a time when it was both popularised and vilified. Ellis appropriately locates the importance of sensibility in Whytt and Cheyne's conception of the body, arguing that 'for medical writers (like Cheyne and Whytt) the concept of sensibility was the co-ordinating principle of bodily integrity, providing the basis for the overall integration of body function.'¹⁴ John Mullan acknowledges that the paradigm of illness was another way of promoting sensibility and my later analysis will demonstrate how Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* subverts this connection by using the paradigm of illness to criticise sensibility. Mullan argues:

Hypochondria and melancholy are described as types of susceptibility which tend to be evidence of refinement and 'sensibility' and yet which can also be debilitating. For the physicians, a susceptibility to the powers of feeling may be a token of refinement, but it is also the cause of disturbance.¹⁵

As Ellis insightfully argues, 'sensibility was the occasion of some anxiety because the pleasure it invoked was enigmatic and ambiguous.'¹⁶ Because of sensibility's close

¹¹ George Cheyne, *The English Malady: A Treatise of Nervous Diseases of all Kinds* (1733), ed. by Roy Porter (London: Routledge, 1991). Richardson describes Cheyne as a 'late and dear friend' in a letter. John Carroll, ed., *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1964), Letter to Samuel Richardson, 20 January, 1745, p.63.

¹² Roy Porter, introduction to *The English Malady*, p.xxvi.

¹³ John Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988; repr. 2000), p.204. Robert Whytt, *Observations on the Nature, Causes and Cure of Those Disorders Which have Commonly Been Called Nervous; To Which are Prefixed Some Remarks on the Sympathy of The Nerves* (Edinburgh, 1765). Robert Whytt was Professor of the Theory of Medicine at Edinburgh University and first physician to King George III.

¹⁴ Markman Ellis, *The Politics of Sensibility*, p.19.

¹⁵ John Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability*, p.207.

¹⁶ Markman Ellis, *The Politics of Sensibility*, p.6.

alliance with feeling, Ellis argues that sources that promoted sensibility powerfully aroused feeling: ‘the sentimental novel [...] was a recognised agent for the dissemination of argument and advice and as such was a powerful method of advertising charitable concerns in the mid century.’¹⁷ I add to Ellis’ argument by claiming that, as the trigger of emotion, music-making could elicit a similar response as the sentimental novel. As the consumption both of music and literature increased in the eighteenth century, the potential for eliciting emotional response became more pronounced.

Just as novelists reacted to criticisms against music as a female accomplishment, they were equally wary of the close relationship between sensibility and music-making; a relationship which ambivalently revealed both scepticism and celebration of the former movement as well as highlighting music’s status as a medium that encouraged irrationality. Throughout this chapter, I argue that writers drew on irrationality as a common link between music and sensibility and they treated irrationality with varying caution. Fiction reveals a variety of representations of the free irrational expression that was associated with music. Just as Ellis argues that the anxiety about sensibility revolves around its enigmatic ambiguity of experience, I claim that the fear stemming from embracing music as a trigger for sensibility was based on its association with irrationality. Not only that but an author’s nationality and political persuasion affected how they negotiated the relationship between music, irrationality and sensibility.¹⁸ Responses to music could be measured by specific signs on the body.

Gendered Sensibility

¹⁷ Ibid., p.16.

¹⁸ Ibid., p.6.

Like amateur music-making, sensibility was linked with femininity. Ellis confirms this link when he argues that ‘sensibility was a distinctly feminine field of knowledge which, although available to both men and women, was particularly associated with the behaviour and experience of women and often apostrophised as a feminine figure’.¹⁹ He quotes Barker-Benfield’s argument that ‘sensibility should be understood as a transformation of female manners, social experience and domestic economy [...] it was designed to transform male behaviour along female lines.’²⁰ Barker-Benfield similarly defines sensibility as a ‘newly accessible mode for female self-expression’ (p.23). For Janet Todd, the cult of sensibility, which she rightly defines as a movement devoted to demanding exhibitions of pathos and unqualified virtue, became firmly connected with women in the later eighteenth century.²¹

While eighteenth-century novelists were aware of the link between femininity and sensibility, it was the case that eighteenth-century music-making relied on male response. Although female characters in novels responded to music too, their roles were chiefly as performers rather than judges of the performance. In this sense, music-making scenes reveal male rather than female sensibility, which complicates the argument that women were merely the objects of sensibility. Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus point to a complex relationship between sensibility and gender when they argue that ‘the culture of refined sensibility [...] did not, however conform to rules of gender relations.’²² In music-making scenes, men displace women as the objects of sensibility. An understanding of gender’s problematic relationship with sensibility can be enhanced by a study of this role reversal in novels’ music-making scenes. By associating sensibility with the hero of the eighteenth-century novel whose body language betrays his interest in a heroine’s musical

¹⁹ Ibid., p.24.

²⁰ Ibid., p.27.

²¹ Janet Todd, *Sensibility: An Introduction* (London: Methuen, 1986).

²² Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus, eds., *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, Representations and Responsibilities* (London: Longman, 1997), p.26.

performances and whose conventional role is of the observant judge of the female performer, chapters three and four of this thesis will challenge critical assumptions that sensibility was most closely associated with women. This argument thus departs from the links that Barker-Benfield and Janet Todd make between sensibility and femininity. In providing instances of male sensibility, however, authors do not necessarily challenge established gender hierarchies as women are still located as performers of domestic music-making while men judge them; a situation which educational treatises revealed was the custom.

This chapter will show that authors chose how far to dramatise the body of a hero who responded to music. In *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) and *Emma* (1815) by Austen and *Clarentine* (1796) by Sarah Harriet Burney, for example, male sensibility can also be traced through measured rather than dramatic bodily responses to music. Signs of sensibility still characterise the heroine's response to music in Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), Lewis' *The Monk* (1796) and Staël's *Corinne* (1807), but men's responses to music hold clues to an author's position on the topic as a whole. By claiming that sensibility is also prevalent in men, who occupied traditional roles as judges of female music-making in novels, I make similar claims to Claudia Johnson in *Equivocal Beings* who maintains that sentimentality (which may be defined as the expression of sensibility) entailed the masculinisation of formerly feminine traits and argues that it becomes increasingly acceptable for men to engage in and display behaviours classically associated with women.²³ I only question the level of acceptability of such links and whether authors use these to challenge specific gender hierarchies.

²³ Claudia Johnson, *Equivocal Beings: Politics, Gender and Sentimentality in the 1790s: Wollstonecraft, Radcliffe, Burney and Austen* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995), p.14.

If, as Judith Butler argues, gender can be understood as a performative act rather than something that is innate, men perform their gender by responding to female music-making and thus exhibiting sensibility.²⁴ By displaying signs of emotive response, men were unwittingly engaging in behaviour that was historically associated with women; a fact that confuses the essence of male identity in the eighteenth century. Reading signs on men's bodies when they respond to music facilitates an interpretation of exactly how far they perform their gender. The act of performing gender here is not automatically subversive, however, as women were succumbing to their prescribed roles by practising music-making and, as chapter four will demonstrate, male response was required for the progression of courtship and socially sanctioned marriage. Authors such as Austen and Burney presented male characters that reflected a restrained (yet visible) response to female music-making in their novels in order to reinforce the conservative ideal that men were not expected to be overly affected by music, interested in music or associated with the music profession. By advocating male characters who responded dramatically to music, novels by Staël and Rousseau alternatively contested this gender categorisation much more vehemently. The extent to which men engage with sensibility is different in every novel however. The tone of a novel must also be considered when interpreting sentimental displays. When interpreting the role of sensibility in *Sense and Sensibility*, for example, Austen's irony must be considered and also in *Persuasion*, where Austen mocks Captain Benwick's sentimental displays.²⁵ Austen, along with other novelists, presents this subtle emotive response as a way of ensuring that courtship occurs.

²⁴ Judith Butler argues: 'Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance.' Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1999), p.43.

²⁵ Anne comments that she finds Benwick's manners pleasing and the Admiral replies that Benwick's manners are 'too piano' [which can be defined as restrained, subdued but is also a musical adjective associated with women] in Jane Austen *Persuasion* (1818), ed. by D.W.Harding (London: Penguin, 1985), chapter vi, p.182.

Mary Wollstonecraft took the radical step of resisting the link between sensibility and women on the grounds that it was irrational, detrimental to female autonomy and to a rational scheme of education. Her treatises, which attempted to distance women from sensibility, asserted that accounts linking women with sensibility did them a disservice by focussing on their bodies rather than their intellects. Furthermore, she blamed female accomplishments for fostering sensibility and enfeebling women by replacing healthier outdoor activities, thus linking accomplishments with a 'short-lived bloom of beauty', which was temporary and superficial.²⁶ Accomplishments enfeebled the body, according to Wollstonecraft: 'But in the education of women, the cultivation of the understanding is always subordinate to the acquirement of some corporeal accomplishment; [...] the body is prevented from attaining that grace and beauty which relaxed half-formed limbs never exhibit.'²⁷ Such accomplishments encouraged women to develop unattractive 'relaxed half-formed limbs', which replaced grace and beauty.

Wollstonecraft's argument contradicted claims that music-making accentuates female attractiveness. *The Mirror of the Graces* and Kames' *Loose Hints upon Education* (1781), for example, argued that accomplishments added grace and elegance to the female form.²⁸ Lord Kames' treatise perpetuated the image of women as objects that inspired sensibility by drawing attention to how musical accomplishment enhanced the female form: 'In this country, it is common to teach girls the harpsichord, which shows a pretty hand a

²⁶ 'In aiming to accomplish [women], without cultivating their understandings, they are taken out of their sphere of duties, and made ridiculous and useless when the short-lived bloom of beauty is over.' Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women: with Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects*, (London, 1792), pp.9-10.

²⁷ Ibid., p.41.

²⁸ Female harpists were advised to make the most of the elegance that the instrument lends them: 'Let their [women's] attitude at the piano or the harp be easy and graceful. I strongly exhort them to avoid a stiff, awkward, elbowing position at either; they must observe an elegant flow of figure at both. The latter certainly admits of most grace, as the shape of the instrument is calculated, in every respect, to show a fine figure to advantage. The contour of the whole form, the turn and polish of a beautiful hand and arm, the richly-slipped and well-made foot on the pedal stops, the gentle motion of a lovely neck, and above all, the sweetly-tempered expression of an intelligent countenance; these are shown at one glance when the fair performer is seated unaffectedly, yet gracefully, at the harp.' *The Mirror of the Graces or Hints on Female Accomplishments and Manners and Directions for the Preservation of Health and Beauty by a Lady of Distinction* (Edinburgh, 1811), p.154.

nimble finger, without ever thinking whether they have a genius for music or even an ear.’²⁹

Unlike Kames, Wollstonecraft discouraged women from performing music for the purposes of self-display and disliked music’s capacity to trigger emotional response amongst suitors.

Nancy Armstrong comments on the trend for promoting inner depth above superficial appearance, which was heralded by Wollstonecraft, when she remarks that ‘by implying that the essence of the woman lay inside or underneath her surface, the invention of depths in the self entailed making the material body of the woman appear superficial.’³⁰ Later in the century, Austen’s *Mansfield Park* (1814) and Burney’s *The Wanderer* (1814) called for rationality by using irony and satire to criticise the idealisation of the harpist’s body.³¹ In *Mansfield Park* the narrator concentrates on describing elements of the landscape to displace descriptions of Mary’s body. The narrator’s comment that the view of Mary’s harp-playing was ‘enough to catch any man’s heart’ mocks Mary’s intentions for self-display. Vanity and self-display also motivate Miss Brinville’s poor harp-playing in a scene in *The Wanderer* where she poses in front of the mirror.³² Rather than detail Miss Brinville’s figure at the harp or present the scene through the eyes of an admirer (as Owenson and Lewis do in their novels), readers learn of Miss Brinville’s beauty from her biased and vain accounts of herself. By granting Mary Crawford more talent than Burney’s Miss Brinville, Austen mocks Mary’s seductive playing. When Jan Fergus argues that Austen’s novels are didactic, she claims that Austen aims to ‘educate the emotions’ by

²⁹ Lord Kames (Henry Home), *Loose Hints upon Education, Chiefly The Culture of the Heart* (Edinburgh, 1781), p.244.

³⁰ Nancy Armstrong, ‘The Ideology of Conduct’ in *The Ideology of Conduct: Essays in Literature and the History of Sexuality*, ed. by Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse (New York: Methuen, 1987), p.114.

³¹ Austen acknowledges the seductiveness of the female harpist in her description of Mary Crawford from *Mansfield Park*: ‘A young woman, pretty, lively, with a harp as elegant as herself; and both placed near a window, cut down to the ground, and opening on a little lawn, surrounded by shrubs in the rich foliage of summer, was enough to catch any man’s heart.’ Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park* (1814), (London: Penguin, 1996), chapter vii, p.95.

³² As chapter two commented, in *The Wanderer*, Miss Brinville uses her harp for the purposes of self-display. Frances Burney makes similar judgments in *The Wanderer* where the modesty of Juliet’s harp playing is contrasted with the vain, self-satisfied pupils that she teaches. Frances Burney, *The Wanderer* (1814), ed. by Margaret Anne Doody, Robert L.Mack and Peter Sabor, 5 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

displaying different types of human nature.³³ Rather than idealising Mary Crawford and encouraging the reader to respond emotively to the music, Austen uses irony to point to the self-display inherent in Mary's music-making.

Wollstonecraft, Austen and Burney explored the link between music-making and the body to question women's social role and to criticise the self-display involved in musical accomplishment. Wollstonecraft's criticism is undoubtedly stronger as she goes further by claiming that musical accomplishment enfeebles the body, while Burney and Austen concede, at least in a satirical way, that music-making enhances the female form.

Just as Wollstonecraft chose to reject the automatic link between women and sensibility, other writers reacted to an assumed connection between the two. When polemicists wrote about the function of music in education, they either chose to rationalise music's effect on the body and guide readers in their response to music, or they celebrated music's unknown effects. This was also the case with novelists. A national contrast therefore becomes apparent between English novelists such as Austen and Sarah Harriet Burney who rationalised music's effect on the body and French novelists such as Staël and Rousseau who celebrated music's unknown effects.

One educational polemicist who moralised about music's effects was George Turnbull, whose *Observations upon Liberal Education* (1744) represented a series of arguments about music's role in education. He discriminated beneficial from harmful effects of music in the following way: 'Music certainly is one of the best relaxations from severer studies and employments, when employed to excite wholesome affections and not to inflame hurtful ones, and when good sentiments as well as sounds are conveyed'.³⁴

³³ Jan Fergus, *Jane Austen and the Didactic Novel: Northanger Abbey, Sense and Sensibility and Pride and Prejudice* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1983), p.3.

³⁴ George Turnbull, *Observations upon Liberal Education, in All its Branches; Designed for the Assistance of Young Gentlemen* (London, 1742), p.444.

Particular in its resolve that music should excite ‘wholesome affections’ and ‘good sentiments’, the treatise positions music as a powerful agent. Learning musical instruments is discouraged, but Turnball still argued that music was useful for forming the imagination (p.444). By referring to ‘hurtful’ affections that could be ‘inflamed’, the writer fears music as this powerful agent and the treatise prescribes that music should be morally uplifting. By arguing that music should only inspire good sentiments and wholesome affections, Turnball claimed that people can control the effect of music. He glosses over music’s irrational effects. According to Turnball then, music should not be an excuse for a display of excessive sensibility.

John Potter’s *Observations on the Present State of Music and Musicians* (1762)

brought together music’s multiple functions in his argument about its effect on the emotions:

The excellence of music was thought by many of the wisest ancients to have derived its original from heaven as one of the most beneficial gifts of the divine goodness to mankind: to draw and allure the untaught world into civil societies; and to soften and prepare their minds for the reception of wisdom and virtue. Sublime science always seeks to teach humanity; civilize nations; to adorn courts; to spirit armies; to inspire temples; to sweeten and reform the fierce and barbarous passions; to excite the brave and magnanimous; and above all, to enflame the pious and devout.³⁵

Music has a specific ideological purpose in this treatise, which points towards its benefits without referring to any disadvantageous function. More importantly, this treatise attempted to prescribe how people should respond to music but failed to pinpoint a single unanimous function of music. Potter presents a different relationship between music and sensibility to the one that Turnball proposes as the latter accepts music’s unknown effects. Potter also hints at music’s power when he argued that ‘music is a sublime science, whose powers are capable of inspiring all the various passions in the human breast’ (p.29). By describing

³⁵ John Potter, *Observations on the Present State of Music and Musicians* (London, 1763), p.29.

music as a 'sublime' science, Potter participated in a common discourse throughout the romantic period. Just as music became a trigger for sensibility, it was also an archway into accessing the sublime. James Beattie, another polemicist, also acknowledged a strong connection between music and the sublime: 'By each of these arts [poetry, painting and music] the sublime is attainable. That is sublime music, which inspires sublime affections, as courage and devotion, or which, by its sonorous harmonies, overwhelms the mind with a pleasing astonishment'.³⁶

When Potter and Beattie proposed that the effects of music were irrational and overwhelming, they were tapping into an important debate throughout the long eighteenth century. Although *The Oxford English Dictionary* states that the term 'sublime' was in use as early as 1667 when Milton adopted it to refer to something that was 'raised high up', the meaning of the term altered in the eighteenth century. It was in the later eighteenth century that famous treatises by Edmund Burke, Lord Kames and Immanuel Kant, which examined the causes and effects of this phenomenon, defined the sublime as an irrational impulse; an overwhelming and deeply intense feeling that particular sights and sounds triggered.³⁷ Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into The Origin on Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* attempted to explain what caused such deep impressions and elucidated specific responses to stimuli in an attempt to rationalise the sublime. This attempt at rationality was dismissed by Kant's *Critique of Judgement*, which embraced the boundlessness and unpredictability of the sublime.³⁸

In poetry by P.B. Shelley, William Wordsworth and novels by Ann Radcliffe, natural landscape was a key stimulus that provoked the intense feelings that were connected

³⁶ James Beattie, *Elements of Moral Science* (Edinburgh, 1790), 2 vols, I, 134.

³⁷ Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into The Origin on our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful with an Introductory Discourse Concerning Taste and Other Additions* (Basle, 1792), Lord Kames (Henry Home), *Elements of Criticism* (Edinburgh, 1788).

³⁸ Immanuel Kant, 'Book 1: Analytic of the Beautiful, Book 2: Analytic of the Sublime' in *Critique of Judgement* (1790), trans. by Werner Pluhar (New York: Cosimo, 2007).

with the sublime. Owing to the unpredictability and irrationality of encounters with the sublime, it was both feared and embraced by a range of writers throughout the period. The deep impressions that were felt during an encounter with the sublime were provoked by exterior stimuli, such as landscape, heightened feelings (such as horror), or arts, such as paintings and music. Both literature and the above treatises point towards the subjectivity of the experience felt and the struggle that writers faced when attempting to define such a loose concept. Paul Hamilton argues that the failure to understand the eighteenth-century sublime was celebrated by its advocates at the time. Certainly, a great deal of the poetry by Shelley and Wordsworth depicted the sublime in order to question the limits of rationality and Hamilton argues that ‘the Romantic trope of sublimity recasts failures of understanding as the successful symbolic expression of something greater than understanding.’³⁹ Representations of the sublime by Burke, Kant and Kames, however, revealed it to be an unknowable and irrational force that resisted definition.

In Kames’ *Essays and Treatises* (1788), his comment that ‘nothing animates the senses more than music’ points to the close relationship between irrationality, the sublime and the process of human listening. Kames argued that to listen to music was to access an intense form of the sublime:

Music has a commanding influence over the mind, especially in conjunction with words. Objects of sight may indeed contribute to the same end, but more faintly [...] Music having at command a great variety of emotions, may, like many objects of sight, be made to promote luxury and effeminacy of which we have instances without number, especially in vocal music. But with respect to its pure and refined pleasures, music goes hand in hand with gardening and architecture, in humanizing and polishing the mind.⁴⁰

As well as positioning music as a gateway into the sublime, Kames makes a distinction between the effect that both vocal and instrumental music have on the mind. Adding lyrics

³⁹ Paul Hamilton, ‘From Sublimity to Indeterminacy: New World Order or Aftermath of Romantic Ideology’ in Edward Larrissy, *Romanticism and Postmodernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp.13-29, 13.

⁴⁰ Lord Kames, *Elements of Criticism*, 3 vols (Edinburgh, 1762), I, 53.

onto music promotes luxury and effeminacy, Kames argues, because words can direct thoughts and behaviour. As chapter two argued, the increasing consumption of musical instruments, the popularity of concert attendance and the pursuit of music as an accomplishment led to accusations that music contributed to a society that was preoccupied by luxury. Links between amateur music-making and femininity also meant that male performers of music were often accused of effeminacy. Kames' comment details the undesirable effects of music-making and as such encourages its restricted and careful practice. In addition to Kames' claim that music promotes luxury and effeminacy, he also dismissively allows music a similar moral function to gardening and architecture. By extracting music's functions and undesirable effects in this way, Kames attempts to rationalise the experience of listening to music.

If listening to music was an effective way to access a sublime that writers struggled to understand and define, it was natural that there was a similar struggle to identify and list the exact effects of listening to music. Just as Burke's treatise attempted to prescribe how people should respond to the sublime in order to rationalise the extreme emotions that were provoked by different stimuli, polemicists who wrote about music dictated how the body responded to music and moralised about music's functions. In this sense, the irrational effect of encountering both the sublime and music, as a gateway into the sublime, was feared in the same way that excessive sensibility was. Music encouraged a particularly intimate encounter with the sublime and effectively led people into unknown and unknowable territory. Just as Waugh argues in her attempt to link the romantic and postmodernist movements, eighteenth-century attempts to define the sublime simply revealed the complete inadequacy of expression:

To experience the sublime is to recognise the inadequacy of the values produced in conceptual thought or experienced through sensory modes, to be disturbed into an

acknowledgement of the existence of that which cannot be thought, analysed, presented through any determinate form.⁴¹

The inadequacy of expression is even more relevant when considering the process of listening to music, as music washes over the body and overtakes the rational senses. To some extent, all novelists discussed accepted the argument by Turnball and Beattie that music had unpredictable and powerful effects on the body. For this reason, the struggle to rationalise music's effects meant that novelists displayed characters' body language rather than their speech during the process of active listening in novels. Novels by Radcliffe, Lewis, Rousseau, Staël and Owenson depict the sublime as a mental state provoked by overwhelming responses to music.⁴² After responding to music and subsequently accessing the sublime, the effects can be displayed on the body in the form of heightened sensibility (trembling, crying, or elated feelings). The relationship can also work the other way as sensitivity and sensibility are required for people to be moved by the effects of music and open to accessing the sublime. In novels, however, the pattern is that music triggers the sublime, which leads to heightened sensibility. Like landscape or art, music is a medium that can join the sublime and sensibility.

The eighteenth-century discourses that linked music with irrationality (whether or not in the context of the sublime) did so by trying and failing to identify the specific effects of listening to music. They also recommended how people should respond. They are successful, however, only in linking music with the unexplained and demonstrating music's power to drift listeners away from cognition and into the arena of the irrational.

⁴¹ Patricia Waugh, *Practising Postmodernism: Reading Modernism* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1992), p.31.

⁴² The novels to which I refer (and will be discussed in this chapter) are the following: Germaine De Staël, *Corinne, or Italy* (1807), Sydney Owenson, Lady Morgan, *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806), Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Julie or the New Heloise* (1761), Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), Matthew Lewis, *The Monk* (1796).

II.A) Music, Sensibility, the Sublime and the Gothic Novel

Treatises by Potter and Turnball attempted to rationalise the irrationally unmeasured feelings that music provoked but unfortunately they all failed miserably in their aim. This inability to explain music's effects on the body and mind filtered into fiction. Just as polemicists attempted to articulate the effects of listening to music, novelists tried to do this by presenting music-making scenes where music affected characters' bodies and minds in varying measures. By displaying their heroines' responses to music, Sarah Harriet Burney, Austen, Rousseau and Staël had another way of commenting on female rationality and the social role of women. Authors like Staël and Rousseau embraced the sublime by presenting susceptible protagonists who accessed it by listening to music, while Austen and Sarah Harriet Burney presented more rational responses to music. The latter two authors presented heroines who were never overwhelmed by music

To assess how far novelists use music to encourage an encounter with the sublime and show the extent to which music subsequently triggers an excess of sensibility, this chapter has chosen to examine Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and Matthew Lewis' *The Monk* (1796) as case-studies. The features of these gothic novels included suspenseful, sensational plots, supernatural happenings, enclosed spaces, excessive sensibility and macabre elements.¹ If a gothic novel can be broadly characterised by its focus on emotionally susceptible heroines who frequently exhibit excessive sensibility in response to terror, this genre of novel is a suitable case study for an

¹In Austen's *Northanger Abbey* (1817) gothic refers to the architecture of the Abbey, but the story is written as a parody of Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. In *Northanger Abbey*, Austen mocks features of Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, by satirising its allusion to ghosts, dramatic bodily responses to excessive sensibility and horror of imprisonment. Austen does this by constantly highlighting the foolishness of the heroine, Catharine Morland, who mistakes gothic fiction for reality. 'To be sure, the pointed arch was preserved —the form of [the windows] was Gothic.' Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (1817) and *Other Works*, ed. by John Davie and Terry Castle, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), II, chapter v, p.128.

examination into the relationship between music, sensibility and the sublime. Music was another stimulus that triggered this heightened sensibility in gothic novels and thus directly facilitated the heroines' encounter with the sublime.

Music contributes to what Maggie Kilgour asserts was 'a feeling or effect in [the gothic novel's] readers' that placed them in 'a state of thrilling suspense and uncertainty.'² Another feature of the gothic novel, she adds, was to encourage an intimate and insidious relationship between the text and its reader.³ In Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), music creates a shared experience between the text and the reader owing to the fact that she upholds musical characters as virtuous role models. In Frits Noske's essay on the role of music in Radcliffe's fiction, she perceives that 'in Radcliffe, music becomes an ethical category, dividing virtuous people from the villains.'⁴ For E.J.Clery, Radcliffe privileges music above the other arts: 'when even poetry-reading and sketching fail to ward off feelings of dread, music retains its powers [in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*]. Music holds a high status in Radcliffe's assessment of effect. In all of her works she comments on its ability to arouse, elevate, or soothe emotions'.⁵

In *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, music both perpetuates and relieves melancholy, becoming the emotional remedy that earlier eighteenth-century treatises prescribed for mental well-being.⁶ Without doubt, Radcliffe deploys music as a tool to inspire feelings and awaken desire and intrigue. Before he dies, St Aubert played the oboe 'to relieve, or

² Maggie Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (London: Routledge, 1995), p.6.

³ Ibid., p.6.

⁴ Frits Noske, 'Sound and Sentiment: The Functions of Music in The Gothic Novel', *Music and Letters* 62 (1981), 162-6, p.168.

⁵ E.J.Clery, *Women's Gothic from Clara Reeve to Mary Shelley* (Tavistock: Northcote, 2004), p.78.

⁶ Two examples of early eighteenth-century treatises that position music as a medicinal cure are the following: Henry Playford, *Wit and mirth; or Pills to Purge Melancholy; Being a Collection of the Best Merry Ballads and Songs, Old and New*, 6 vols (London, 1719-20). This text was a compilation of comic songs and ballads that was first published in four volumes in 1706. John O'Keeffe, *Edwin's Pills to Purge Melancholy: Containing All the Songs Sung by Mr Edwin* (London, 1788).

perhaps to indulge, the pensive temper of his mind'.⁷ Music contributes to the melancholy atmosphere in the beginning when Valancourt compares the landscape with beautiful sound: 'These scenes [...] soften the heart, like the notes of sweet music, and inspire delicious melancholy [...] They waken our best and purest feelings.' (I, 46). Expecting music to 'waken' 'best and purest feelings', Valancourt claims that virtuous feeling arises from appreciating music. This is similar to Turnball's treatise, which dictated how music should affect feeling and behaviour.⁸ It also gives weight to the link that Frits Noske made between virtue and music-making.⁹

Radcliffe certainly celebrates music's role in the novel as it has the power to soothe and inspire virtuous characters. Music was able to 'soften the heart' of Valancourt and 'inspire that delicious melancholy'. By adding the adjective 'delicious' to 'melancholy', the narrator implies that he is indulging, rather than rejecting, the feeling that music inspires. References to the heart here are poignant, especially as it is thought of as the site of emotion. Music's link with melancholy continues as it fuels Emily Aubert's low mood: 'The distant music, which now sounded a plaintive strain, aided the melancholy of her mind.' (I, 67)

Because Radcliffe rationalises every mystery in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, it becomes clear that the music is not the cause of Emily's 'gloomy and affecting visions' despite the fact that it consoles her. By identifying the elusive musical performer and rationalising the horrific scenes surrounding music, the author grants music much less power. While musical sound provoked Emily's imagination into fuelling such visions, it

⁷ Subsequent page numbers refer to the following edition: Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), ed. by Bonamy Dobrée, 4 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), I, 9.

⁸ Turnball's treatise argued that 'music certainly is one of the best relaxations from severer studies and employments, when employed to excite wholesome affections, and not to inflame hurtful ones, and when good sentiments as well as sounds are conveyed.' George Turnbull, *Observations upon Liberal Education, in All its Branches; Designed for the Assistance of Young Gentlemen*, p.444.

⁹ Noske argues that 'in Radcliffe [s novels], music becomes an ethical category dividing virtuous people from the villains' in Frits Noske, 'Sound and Sentiment', p.168.

could not really inspire such visions in Emily when these were wholly a figment of her imagination. Radcliffe warns readers about the dangers of being too transported by music, which can play tricks on the mind.

Paradoxically, Radcliffe's novel shapes characters and situations by first dwelling on the sensibility inspired by music and then insisting on a more measured and rational response. The changing role of music in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* helped to achieve Radcliffe's move from creating sensationalism at the beginning of the novel to becoming a rationalist by the end. As James Watt rightly acknowledges, 'Radcliffe framed the role of sensation and suspense in her work by explaining away the supernatural, a move which was widely equated with a rejection of "delusion" and a recovery of the rule of law.'¹⁰ Kilgour agrees that the 'novels of Radcliffe suggest a contradiction between a moral principle, expounded in the conclusion, and an aesthetic one, created through suspense.'¹¹ If 'Radcliffe's characters are measured by their responsiveness to nature, suggesting the interdependence of virtue and taste', music initially plays the role in shaping the identity of Emily St. Aubert by facilitating her sensitive response to nature.¹² Music's effects on the body occur in the form of inward thoughts rather than excessive dramatic displays and characters are disciplined if they let music fuel their imagination too much. Music then cannot be advocated when it is an expression of ungoverned emotion as it would oppose the novel's moral teaching that feelings and the imagination should be guarded.

In *The Monk* (1796), which was published four years after Radcliffe's novel, Matthew Lewis explores a dangerous relationship between music and excessive

¹⁰ James Watt, *Contesting the Gothic: Fiction, Genre and Cultural Conflict, 1764-1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.9.

¹¹ Maggie Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel*, p.32.

¹² *Ibid.*, p.119.

sensibility.¹³ Matilda's harp-playing fuels the monk's desires. When Matilda plays 'soft and plaintive' airs on the harp at first, 'Ambrosio [the monk], while he listened, felt his uneasiness subside, and a pleasing melancholy spread itself into his bosom'.¹⁴ As the music progresses, Matilda's performance on the harp simultaneously tortures and delights the monk, just like music itself has been shown to soothe and agitate. The monk's perturbation increases when Matilda changed from playing 'soft' airs to chanting loud martial chords 'with an hand bold and rapid'. Music has a tortuous rather than soothing effect on Ambrosio and the sensual sight of Matilda playing the harp brings him to the very brink of temptation:

A single look convinced [Ambrosio] that he must not trust to that of sight. The songstress sat at a little distance from his bed. The attitude in which she bent over her harp was easy and graceful; her cowl had fallen further back than usual: two coral lips were visible, ripe, fresh, and melting, and a chin, in whose dimples seemed to lurk a thousand Cupids. Her habit's long sleeve would have swept along the chords of the instrument: to prevent the inconvenience she had drawn it above her elbow; and by this means an arm was discovered, formed in the most perfect symmetry, the delicacy of the whole skin might have contended with snow in whiteness. Ambrosio dared to look on her but once: that glance sufficed to convince him how dangerous was the preference of this *seducing* object.¹⁵

Matilda's position near the bed, the lowered cowl, her ripe, fresh and melting coral lips, the reference to cupid and the white of her visible arm are all sensual images. Even Ambrosio identifies the scene as 'seducing' from within proceedings. After closing his eyes, 'there she still moved before [Ambrosio]' (p.136). The physicality of the music-making becomes the prominent feature of this episode of *The Monk*, rather than its audible effects.

¹³ This novel charts the fruitless struggles of a monk to adhere to his religion and avoid sexual temptation. Its author, Matthew Lewis, was well aware of music's allure as he witnessed his mother take up a music-master as a lover after his parents' break-up. As well as writing fiction, Lewis composed a music collection in 1808. It was entitled *Twelve Ballads, The Words and Music by M. G. Lewis*. Louis F. Peck, *A Life of Matthew G. Lewis* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), p.6.

¹⁴ Matthew Lewis, *The Monk* (1796), ed. by Howard Anderson, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), I, 132.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, I, 136.

While this episode of *The Monk* concentrates on the male gaze and displays a character who is tormented by the spectacle and sound of music-making, in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* Emily St Aubert can master the effects of music so that they comfort rather than distress her. In *The Italian or the Confessional of the Black Penitents* (1797) by Radcliffe, the villainous Schedoni is frustrated by this very existence, lamenting the fact that music does not irrationally affect women in a way that renders them his victims:

Behold, what a woman! The slave of her passions, the dupe of her senses! When pride and revenge speak in her breast, she defies obstacles, and laughs at crimes! Assail but her senses, let music, for instance, touch some feeble chord of her heart, and echo to her fancy, and lo! All her perceptions change:— she sinks from the act she had but an instant before believed meritorious, yields to some new emotions, and sinks—the victim of sound!¹⁶

Heroines have to fight against music's overwhelming powers in these novels by Radcliffe. By displaying women's increasingly rational responses to music, Radcliffe emphasised the need for female autonomy. While women in these passages appear to be in control, music has a less controlled effect on men in *The Monk*. Gender is an important factor in determining how music is received in Radcliffe's fiction. James Watt explains the difference between Radcliffe and Lewis' writing styles by referring to their different treatment of gender:

The Monk accentuated the sensationalism of a range of sources, including German ballads and folk-tales, and offered a daring or rebellious ideal of authorship. Ann Radcliffe, by contrast, privileged the 'feminine' (but not necessarily feminist) association of romance, in order to reward her heroines with an idyllic refuge from the threats posed by the outside world.¹⁷

Judging how far sensibility is advocated in gothic novels that describe bodily and mental responses to music is problematic. Although both *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *The Monk* contain a series of heightened emotional responses to music, the authors do not

¹⁶ Ann Radcliffe, *The Italian or the Confessional of the Black Penitents: A Romance* (1797), ed. by Frederick Garber and E.J.Clerly, 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), II, 177-178.

¹⁷ James Watt, *Contesting the Gothic: Fiction, Genre and Cultural Conflict, 1764-1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.4.

automatically advocate such responses. If anything, Lewis fears music's effect on male sensibility while Radcliffe is cautious about the irrational effect that music had on both the body and mind.¹⁸ Kilgour contrasts *The Mysteries of Udolpho* with *The Monk* by perceptively claiming that 'Lewis takes all the terrors that Radcliffe leaves submerged and exposes them'.¹⁹ In *The Monk*, music triggers the monk's emotions, which leads to the horrors of rape and murder. Desperately trying to concentrate on the virtuous sound of Matilda's music, Ambrosio keeps separating the beautiful sound of the innocent Matilda's music from the sensual sight of her and his desire for her, attempting to keep it unsullied and unattached. Music is a milder agent in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* as it reflects heightened sensitivity in specific virtuous characters. Radcliffe's focus on the perspective of a heroine and Emily's eventual mastery over her emotions points towards the author's aim of showing the potential and qualities of a virtuous heroine with self-control. While Radcliffe promotes a specific version of femininity, Lewis' focus is not on gender. Lewis radically displays lust, rape and murder and shows the catastrophe that ensues after their repression.

Although both Radcliffe and Lewis present dramatic displays of sensibility, which music triggers, Radcliffe does this to show her heroine's increasing mastery over her emotions while Lewis exposes vulnerable women and the danger of unrestrained male sexuality. Music functions in different ways in these two gothic novels. Music may provide characters with a means of accessing the sublime and offer them temporary emotional escape, but music's transcendental effects are eventually curtailed in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. In *The Monk*, it is the spectacle of the female performer that should be feared. Just as Watt claims, 'gothic fiction was far less a tradition with a generic identity

¹⁸As Lewis openly praised *The Mysteries of Udolpho* in his letters, he may well have been influenced by Radcliffe's representation of music as he especially draws on similar fears associated with music's effects. *A Life of Matthew G. Lewis*, Letter from Lewis to his mother, 18 May, 1794, p.208.

¹⁹ Maggie Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel*, p.142.

and significance than a domain which was open to contest from the first, constituted or structured by the often antagonistic relations between different writers and works'.²⁰ What can be surmised, however, is that Radcliffe and Lewis both describe the body in a heightened way in order to argue that music could have a profound effect on the sensibility that characterised the gothic novel.

II. B) Music, The Body and the National Romance genre.

Part of Sydney Owenson's agenda when writing *The Wild Irish Girl* (1807), Julie Donovan argues, is to 'engage with this contentious history of the harp as national symbol. Using her novel's heroine, Glorvina, as her mouthpiece, Owenson argues that Ireland owns the original copyright of the harp as national symbol, which England tried to appropriate to suit the colonial agenda'.²¹ Donovan explains that 'there was a contentious aspect to the instrument as a national symbol due to the historical tension between Britain and Ireland as to who should control the harp's iconography. Certain configurations of the harp were foisted on Ireland by Britain emphasising Ireland's position as a colonial underling'.²² Writing her novels as a response to the 1800 Act of Union, which joined Britain and Ireland as a single nation, Owenson presents a 'colonial agenda' in this novel.²³ Glorvina's immersion in her music and affinity with the Irish symbol of the harp, portrayed through dramatic displays on her body when she performs, effectively signals her dedication to the Irish cause. Defensively, Glorvina insists to Horatio that her harp is of Greek rather than Anglo-Saxon origin.²⁴

Glorvina remains fiercely proud of links between the harp and Irish culture throughout the novel even though she laments that music is the only activity for which

²⁰ Ibid., p.6.

²¹ Julie Donovan, *Sydney Owenson, Lady Morgan and The Politics of Style* (California: Academica Press, 2009), p.92.

²² Ibid., p.92.

²³ Anthony Mandal, *Jane Austen and The Popular Novel: The Determined Author* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p.142.

²⁴ Julie Donovan, *Sydney Owenson, Lady Morgan and The Politics of Style*, p.94. Sydney Owenson, *Lady Morgan, The Wild Irish Girl* (1806) ed. by Kathryn KirkPatrick, 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), I, 71. Italics are in the original.

Ireland is truly famous. She exclaims to Horatio that ‘in all which concerns my national music, I speak with national enthusiasm; [...] in *music only*, do *you* English allow us poor Irish any superiority.’²⁵ Throughout *The Wild Irish Girl*, Glorvina links music with nationhood, commenting to Horatio that ‘our national music [...] like our national character, admits of no medium in sentiment: it either sinks our spirit to despondency, by its heart-breaking pathos, or elevates it to wildness by its exhilarating animation’ (p.73). The ‘heart-breaking pathos’, ‘wildness’ and ‘exhilarating animation’ to which Glorvina refers points to immensely powerful emotions provoked by music. These are powerful enough to be recognised as the sublime and the exaggerated body language that follows shows music’s success as a medium that enables access to it.

The emotional intensity of Glorvina’s subsequent musical performances can be mapped onto an ardent emotional attachment to Ireland. Just as the theorist Judith Butler argues that gender is a constructed performance, I claim that it is possible to interpret nationality in a similar way; as a performance.²⁶ Just as music-making enabled women to perform their gender, nationality could be performed rather than be considered as an innate characteristic. When Glorvina plays the harp (which in itself is a symbol of Irishness), the intensity of the musical performance (displayed through the body) is always symptomatic of an ardent attachment to Ireland. Glorvina’s passion for her music and her nationality is shown through the trembling of her soul and similarly dramatic body language:

[Glorvina] was created for a musician—there she is borne away by the magic of the art in which she excels, and the natural enthusiasm of her impassioned character; she can sigh, she can weep, she can smile, over her harp. The sensibility of her soul

²⁵ Sydney Owenson, Lady Morgan, *The Wild Irish Girl*, I, 72.

²⁶ As the introduction argues, Butler posits the idea that gender is a constructed identity and ‘a performative accomplishment, which the mundane social audience, including the actors themselves come to believe and to perform in the mode of belief’. She further maintains that ‘gendered reality is created through sustained social performances’ rather than existing as a fixed innate entity. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp.44, 179.

trembles in her song, and the expression of her rapt countenance harmonises with her voice.²⁷

The passion of this ‘rapt countenance’ and trembling soul is exhibited whenever Glorvina talks about her country.

Interestingly, Owenson distances both the heroine and her music-making from English traditions. She chooses not to engage in the debate about accomplishments that was so prevalent in English fiction of this era. In letter viii of *The Wild Irish Girl*, Horatio twice refers to Glorvina’s musical talent as ‘native’ and rejoices in her natural uncultivated ability.²⁸ By stating that ‘the occasional visits of a strolling dancing-master, and a few musical lessons received in her early childhood from the family bard, are all the advantages these native talents have received’, the narrator shows that Glorvina clearly has not received the training in accomplishments that was a feature of polished female education in England.²⁹ In fact, this may be interpreted as a snubbing of the system of female accomplishments that England propagated and another way for Owenson to carve a separate identity for Ireland in the novel. The distancing from England is only taken so far, however, as English Horatio remains the hero of the novel. Horatio happily accepts Glorvina’s Irishness and adores her harp-playing.

Finally, Owenson pays marked attention to the way in which harp-playing accentuates the female body, which is a practice that Burney and Austen reject. In their attempts to highlight the importance of female modesty, Austen’s *Mansfield Park* (1814) and Burney’s *The Wanderer* (1814) made a point of satirising and mocking the way in which harp-playing accentuated female beauty.³⁰ Penned before the publication of

²⁷ Sydney Owenson, Lady Morgan, *The Wild Irish Girl*, II, 86.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.77.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Austen acknowledges the seductiveness of the female harpist in her description of Mary Crawford from *Mansfield Park*: ‘A young woman, pretty, lively, with a harp as elegant as herself; and both placed near a window, cut down to the ground, and opening on a little lawn, surrounded by shrubs in the rich foliage of summer, was enough to catch any man’s

Mansfield Park, one of Jane Austen's letters actually scorns Owenson's practice of using heated language in *The Wild Irish Girl*. Sarah Harriet Burney also criticised Owenson's novel.³¹ In the following passage, Owenson presents the beauty of Glorvina during her harp performance and the narrator minutely describes how the harp-playing accentuates every part of her body. There is a marked similarity between this passage and the portrayal of musical Matilda in *The Monk* as both excerpts present a man who is mesmerised by a beautiful girl playing her harp, which are spectacles that Austen rejects in *Mansfield Park*. In *The Wild Irish Girl*, Horatio describes Glorvina in the following way:

[Glorvina] seemed borne away by the magic of her own numbers [...] Conceive for a moment a form full of character, and full of grace, bending over an instrument singularly picturesque—a profusion of auburn hair fastened up to the top of the finest formed head I ever beheld, with a golden bodkin—an armlet of curious workmanship glittering above a finely turned elbow, and the loose sleeves of a flowing robe drawn up unusually high, to prevent this drapery from sweeping the chords of the instrument. The expression of the divinely touching countenance breathed all the fervour of genius under the influence of inspiration, and the contours of the face, from the peculiar uplifted position of the head, were precisely such, as lends to painting the happiest line of feature, and shade of colouring. Before I had near finished the lovely picture, her song ceased, and turning towards me, who sat opposite her, she blushed to observe how intensely my eyes were fixed on her.³²

heart.' Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park* (1814), (London: Penguin, 1996), chapter vii, p.95. As chapter two commented, in *The Wanderer*, Miss Brinville uses her harp for the purposes of self-display. Frances Burney makes similar judgments in *The Wanderer* where the modesty of Juliet's harp playing is contrasted with the vain, self-satisfied pupils that she teaches. Frances Burney, *The Wanderer* (1814), ed. by Margaret Anne Doody, Robert L. Mack and Peter Sabor, 5 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

³¹ Jane Austen wrote the following: 'We have got *Ida of Athens* by Miss Owenson; which must be very clever, because it was written as the Authoress says, in three months. — We have only read the Preface yet; but her *Irish Girl* does not make me expect much. — If the warmth of her Language could affect the Body, it might be worth reading in this weather.' *Jane Austen's Letters*, ed. by Deirdre Le Faye, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), Letter 65 to Cassandra Austen, 17-18 January 1809, p.166. Sarah Harriet Burney actually referred to Sydney Owenson as a 'nincumpoop', Burney comments that she was unable to access a copy of *The Wild Irish Girl* and concludes that she would have disliked the novel. *The Letters of Sarah Harriet Burney*, ed. by Lorna J. Clark (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997), Letter to Charlotte Francis, 20 November, 1806, p.74.

³² Sydney Owenson, Lady Morgan, *The Wild Irish Girl*, II, 97-8. The passage from *The Monk* is as follows: 'The attitude in which [Matilda] bent over her harp was easy and graceful; her cowl had fallen further back than usual: two coral lips were visible, ripe, fresh, and melting, and a chin, in whose dimples seemed to lurk a thousand Cupids. Her habit's long sleeve would have swept along the chords of the instrument: to prevent the inconvenience she had drawn it above her elbow; and by this means an arm was discovered, formed in the most perfect symmetry, the delicacy of the whole skin might have contended with snow in whiteness. Ambrosio dared to look on her but once: that glance sufficed to convince him how dangerous was the preference of this seducing object.' Matthew Lewis, *The Monk* (1796), I, 136.

In both *The Wild Irish Girl* and *The Monk* (1796), a graceful woman bends over her harp; an action which accentuates her beautiful features and allure. The spectacle of the harpist is celebrated in *The Wild Irish Girl* more than *The Monk* for the following reasons. While both Horatio and Ambrosio delight in the image, such a vision eventually tortures Ambrosio, forcing him to close his eyes. Horatio compliments Glorvina's 'firmly-formed' head of auburn hair while *The Monk* focuses on Matilda's closeness to the bed and the more sensual aspects of Matilda's body such as her ripe, fresh coral lips. Both characters comment on the loose sleeves that reveal the woman's arm, but Ambrosio describes this as white (a colour that symbolises virginity) while Horatio merely comments on the convenience of playing the harp without loose material causing any obstruction. While Horatio praises the 'divinely touching countenance', 'Ambrosio dared to look on [Matilda] but once'. Glorvina blushed to see Horatio stare at her while Matilda is unaware of Ambrosio's admiration and latent sexual desire. While watching a female harpist in this manner leads to a chain of sins in *The Monk*, the beauty of Glorvina, her musicality (and therefore her performance of her nationality) is celebrated in *The Wild Irish Girl*. These passages also show how musical women were frequently subject to the male gaze in eighteenth-century novels.

Heightened sensibility, which is provoked by music, not only points to this musical and national attachment but also shows how Owenson promotes the individual freedom and 'romantic vision of discrete cultural identity'.³³ This national romance tale merges what Anthony Mandal describes as 'potent representations of womanhood' with 'images of nationhood'.³⁴ Glorvina's affinity with her harp is therefore a key way in which Owenson characterises her national affiliation.

³³ Anthony Mandal, *Jane Austen and The Popular Novel*, p.142.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.141.

Published a year after *The Wild Irish Girl*, Staël's *Corinne* was also a national romance novel. Just as Glorvina acted as a mouthpiece for Ireland in *The Wild Irish Girl*, Staël's heroine Corinne symbolised the non-conformity, feminism and artistic greatness of Italy.³⁵ Sarah Harriet Burney described Staël's *Zulma* as 'detestably disgusting' and Staël courted radicalism in her novels by presenting heroines who were unafraid to break rules or strive for personal freedom.³⁶ Despite its radicalism, *Corinne* was popular and appeared in fourteen editions throughout England, France, Switzerland and Germany between 1807 and 1810.³⁷

Angelica Goodden asserts that it was the 'foreignness' of Staël's *Corinne* that antagonised Napoleon, who disliked the novel's revolutionary attitudes towards artistic creation and the advancement of culture in early nineteenth-century Europe.³⁸ Music reflects the author's radical agenda in the novel in several ways. Like Owenson, Staël presents a heroine whose body responds dramatically to music. The excessive sensibility of Corinne and the novel's hero, Oswald, can be detected through their hyperbolic responses to music-making. Music inspires uplifting feelings for both Corinne and Oswald. The narrator states that 'the sound of Corinne's moving, sensitive voice, singing in the stately, resonant Italian language, produced an entirely new impression on Oswald.'³⁹ Choosing to sing in Italian is one way for Corinne to immerse herself in Italian culture. Later on, Corinne's dancing with a tambourine effects similar amazement:

Shaking her tambourine in the air she began to dance, and in all her movements there was a graceful lightness, a modesty mingled with sensual delight, giving some

³⁵ Angelica Goodden, *Madame De Staël: Delphine and Corinne* (London: Grant & Cutler, 2000), p.66.

³⁶ Sarah Harriet Burney commented that Staël's *Zulma* is 'detestably disgusting' with 'offensive indecency', which makes Staël 'corrupt at heart'. *The Letters of Sarah Harriet Burney*, To Charlotte Francis, 20 November, 1806, p.74.

³⁷ Angelica Goodden, *Madame De Staël: Delphine and Corinne*, p.64. Goodden comments that some of these editions could have been pirated, p.64. After the publication of *Delphine*, the author was exiled from France by Napoleon, which enhanced her reputation as she traversed Europe, becoming an influential theorist of Romanticism and nationalism. Julie Donovan, *Sydney Owenson, Lady Morgan and The Politics of Style* (California: Academica Press, 2009), p.114.

³⁸ Angelica Goodden, *Madame De Staël*, p.11.

³⁹ Germaine De Staël, *Corinne, or Italy* (1807), transl. by Sylvia Raphael (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.33. All subsequent page numbers will refer to this edition.

idea of the power exercised by the temple dancing girls over the Indian imagination. [...] the character of the music is expressed in turn by the precision and gentleness of the movements. As she danced, Corinne made the spectators experience her own feelings, as if she had been improvising, or playing the lyre, or drawing portraits. Everything was language for her; as she looked at her, the musicians made greater efforts to make their art fully appreciated, and at the same time an indefinable passionate joy and imaginative sensitivity, stimulated all the spectators of this magical dance, transporting them into an ideal existence which was out of this world.⁴⁰

Nationalities are embraced here as Corinne invokes the ‘Indian imagination’ and presents music as a universal language that affects her multi-cultural audience. The narrator reports that ‘everything was language for [Corinne]’. Blending ‘modesty’ and ‘sensual delight’ within Corinne’s performance is unusual as one characteristic is usually promoted over the other.⁴¹ Here Corinne’s body is displayed to advantage and her performance has the effect of ‘transporting’ her audience into a supernatural realm.

In the above passage, Staël courts radicalism by allowing her heroine to improvise music and to play on instruments that were thought to be unsuitable for women. As Jacqueline Letzer argues in her book on music-making during the French Revolution, modesty was expected of eighteenth-century women; they were discouraged from composing music or playing on instruments that distorted their facial expressions or displayed too much of their bodies.⁴² Therefore, Staël made a bold decision to present Corinne dancing with a tambourine. Corinne also improvises music, which was as radical as composing music as it draws on the same spontaneous creativity. Readers are told that ‘Corinne made the spectators experience her own feelings, as if she had been

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.91.

⁴¹ In *The Monk*, for example, the beautiful sound of Matilda’s harp is contrasted with the alluring sight of her; but such a comparison does not exist in *Corinne*.

⁴² Jacqueline Letzer and Robert Adelson, *Women Writing Opera: Creativity and Controversy in the Age of the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), pp.48, 3.

improvising.’(p.91). Corinne’s talents for improvisation are also celebrated when she is first introduced in the novel.⁴³

Finally, music provokes multiple encounters with the sublime in *Corinne*, which celebrates its unknowable effects. The narrator describes an ‘ideal existence, which was out of this world’, referring to the sublime’s ability to transcend rationality and reason. The narrator does not rationalise the magical effect of Corinne’s tambourine playing and dancing, unlike Radcliffe who reveals the source of Emily’s vision and informs readers that the music was in no way supernatural. The link that Staël sets up between music-making and the sublime continues throughout *Corinne*. Music changes from having a soothing and exciting effect to fuelling the characters’ depression and pain. Music’s link with extreme emotions, here, may be compared with Burke’s conception of the sublime, which Burke explained could be associated with both ecstasy and intense misery.⁴⁴ Music certainly fosters Oswald’s pain when his spirits are depressed yet this is caused by his separation from Corinne rather than the music:

Since his misfortune Oswald had not yet had the heart to listen to music. He dreaded the enchanting harmonies which are a pleasure to the melancholy but cause genuine pain when we are burdened by real sorrows. Music revives memories that we were trying to still. When Corinne sang, Oswald would listen to her words; he would look at the streets in the evening, several voices joined together to sing the lovely songs of the great masters, as often happens in Italy, initially he would try to stay and listen to them; but then he would go away because an emotion, at once keen and vague, would bring back all his grief. (pp.160-161)

By mentioning Oswald’s heart and describing the harmonies as enchanting, the narrator reminds the reader of music’s former appeal to Oswald and its ability to trigger memories.

⁴³ Germaine De Staël, *Corinne, or Italy* (1807), p.21.

⁴⁴ Burke remarks that the sublime can provoke extreme emotions by claiming that ‘whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the *sublime*; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling.’ He also claims that ‘[the emotions associated with the sublime] are capable of producing delight; not pleasure, but a sort of delightful horror’, Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin on our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful with an Introductory Discourse Concerning Taste and Other Additions* (Basle, 1792), part 1, section VII, p.47, part II, section VIII, p.109.

Oswald's response to music is affected by his grief from this point on. The music immobilises his body, causing an outpouring of grief. Excessive sensibility affects men here as much as women. Just as Oswald becomes increasingly uncomfortable listening and responding to music, Corinne struggles to sing when she is upset: 'She tuned her lyre and, in a faltering voice, began. The expression in her eyes was beautiful but those, like Oswald, who knew he could discern the anxiety in her heart. She tried to contain her distress, however, and at least for a moment, to rise above her personal situation' (p.233). Corinne's anxious heart and her 'faltering' voice show her emotional responses to the music. After this incident, tearful encounters involving music become common in the novel, particularly just before Oswald's departure: 'Suddenly she saw Oswald, who, unable to restrain himself any longer, was hiding his head in his hands to conceal his tears. She became anxious immediately and, though the curtain had not yet fallen, she came down from her already ill-fated throne' (p.296). Being without restraint, hiding one's head and crying are dramatic responses to music, which prove that music is a strong trigger for sensibility in *Corinne*.

The sensibility exhibited in *Corinne* is a more sustained sensibility compared with the intermittent displays of sensibility displayed by Emily St Aubert in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, which in fact lessen as the novel progresses. While Corinne and Oswald closely encounter the sublime during music-making scenes, Emily St Aubert's response to music is less extreme and later rationalised. Throughout the entire narrative, Staël makes no apology for the dramatic emotional responses that mark the novel.

Like novels published after 1800, Staël's *Corinne* presented female creativity and professional success as key themes. The close relationship between excessive sensibility and music-making in the novel, however, was present in the earlier part of the century. Music is also encouraged as a gateway to the sublime in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Julie or*

the New Heloise, which was an epistolary novel published in 1761. Staël's mother followed Rousseau's *Emile* as a guide to bringing up her daughter, which warrants comparison between the authors.⁴⁵ Encountering the sublime through listening to music causes excessive sensibility in Rousseau's characters. Saint-Preux draws a close link between music and passions by telling Julie about the significant effect of music on his soul: 'What stirring sounds! What music! What delightful source of sentiments and pleasure!'⁴⁶ Saint-Preux continues by emphatically expressing his preference for Italian music over French. Again he focuses on the emotions inspired by music, exclaiming:

I began to listen to that enchanting music and I soon sensed from the emotion it provoked in me that this art had a power greater than I had imagined. Some unknown voluptuous sensation imperceptibly came over me [...] But when following a series of agreeable airs, we came to those grand expressive pieces, which can excite and depict the disorder of violent passions; I thought I was hearing the voice of grief, rage, despair; in my mind's eye I saw mothers in tears, lovers betrayed, furious tyrants and in the agitation I was forced to experience I could scarcely stay still.⁴⁷

In this passage, music becomes inextricably linked with emotion. Saint-Preux cannot separate the emotions inspired by the music from the passion exhibited by tearful mothers or betrayed lovers. The sensation that music inspires is 'unknown' and 'imperceptibly' comes over him, stealing across his soul. All of these actions are irrational at their core. Saint-Preux lacks control over his senses and is restless, which is how Burke and Kant describe the classic agitating encounter with the sublime.⁴⁸ Just as Oswald, in *Corinne*, weeps uncontrollably and is forced to retreat from Corinne's music-making when it

⁴⁵ Annette Kobak, 'Mme De Staël and Fanny Burney', *The Burney Journal* 4, (2001), 12-36, p.14.

⁴⁶ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Julie or the New Heloise* (1761), transl. by Philip Stewart, Roger D. Masters, Christopher Kelly and Jean Vaché, (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1997), p.107.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.109.

⁴⁸ Kant argues that [the experience of sublimity] is the more attractive, the more fearful it is, provided only that we are in security; and we willingly call these objects sublime, because they raise the energies of the soul above their accustomed height and discover in us a faculty of resistance of a quite different kind, which gives us courage to measure ourselves against the apparent almightiness of nature' Immanuel Kant, 'Analytic of the Sublime' in *Critique of Judgment*, Section 28, p.75.

Burke argues that 'the mind is so entirely filled with its object, that it cannot entertain any other, nor by consequence reason on that object which employs it. Hence arises the great power of the sublime, that, far from being produced by them, it anticipates our reasonings, and hurries us on by an irresistible force.' Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin on our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, Part 2, Section 1.

provokes suppressed grief, Saint-Preux also has little control to resist the immense effects of music. Rousseau for his part makes no attempt to contain the effects of experiencing this encounter with the sublime either.

The hyperbolic responses to music present in *Corinne* and *Julie* celebrate excessive sensibility despite the years that separate these publications. Staël's post-revolutionary novel elevates freedom amongst women and celebrates their creativity, while Rousseau's pre-revolutionary novel is forward-thinking in its use of music as an emotional release for especially passionate characters. The dramatised bodies in their novels contrast with the bodies presented in both Lewis' *The Monk* and Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* where these English authors present excessive sensibility as a problem to be solved and the need to curb responses to music. Despite their different agendas, both Lewis and Radcliffe reveal the dangerous aspects of music and its power to transport the mind. Staël goes a step further by celebrating music as a trigger for sensibility, just as Rousseau did before her.

In *Corinne*, music is also a universal language with no national boundaries and used to characterise the mystery, attractiveness and allure of its heroine, who is an improviser and has the freedom to perform on any instrument. While equally passionate responses to music occur in *The Wild Irish Girl*, the exaggerated body language and encounter with the sublime in Owenson's novel shows affinity with Ireland as the heroine is ardently attached to her Irish harp and performs her nationality whenever she plays. Although Corinne is presented as an embodiment of creative Italy, Staël is keener to promote the heroine's freedom and merit than to constantly remind the reader of the heroine's national affiliation. Passion in Corinne becomes an uncomfortable paradoxical force, giving Oswald and Corinne comfort and pain. By channelling this strong emotion through music-making, Staël celebrates music's unknowable and irrational effects on the body.

II. C) Restrained Bodies and Music-Making: Novels by Sarah Harriet Burney, Elizabeth Hervey and Jane Austen

The tradition in radical French novels such as *Corinne* to present music as a catalyst for intense and complex emotions that were displayed on the body was never heralded by Sarah Harriet Burney or Jane Austen. Published in the same year as Lewis' *The Monk*, Sarah Harriet Burney's courtship novel, *Clarentine* (1796) is cautious about displaying excessive sensibility and certainly does not promote it. Nevertheless, music does trigger measured emotion. In this novel, Sir Edgar Eltham is impressed by Clarentine's musical performance: '[Sir Edgar Eltham] found her [Clarentine] alone, and to his inexpressible astonishment, practising upon the harp, a very beautiful composition [...] He paused a moment at the door, in silent amazement and then eagerly advancing, at the very time she first looked up and perceived him'.⁴⁹ The hero's pause, silent amazement and then 'eager advancement' towards the performing heroine are not as dramatic as the responses seen in the novels by Staël and Rousseau and similar to the measured heroes' actions in Austen's novels.

Throughout *Clarentine*, Sarah Harriet Burney details a measured rather than an excessively emotional response in the male body. Music has little effect on Eltham, other than provoking marginal movement. Although Eltham becomes increasingly drawn to Clarentine's harp-playing, he experiences none of the sublime feelings that Staël's Oswald experienced when hearing Corinne perform: '[The harp] was soon brought; and Clarentine [...] charmed Eltham so much by the extraordinary progress she had made since he last heard her at Sidmouth, that he would not suffer her to rise' (II, 250-1). Here, Eltham is interested in the heroine's educational development and her 'extraordinary progress' on the

⁴⁹ Sarah Harriet Burney, *Clarentine*, 2 vols (London, 1796), I, 245-6.

harp. Vocally praising Clarentine's performance, Eltham's response is only given in 'animated terms' rather than being displayed on his body: 'Eltham thanked [Clarentine] when she got up, in the most animated terms, for the extreme pleasure she had given him, and was proceeding to ask her some questions concerning the music she had been playing when Miss Barclay interrupted' (II, 251).

Sarah Harriet Burney presents women who perform music and men who judge it in *Clarentine* and this pattern is followed throughout the novel. Men in *Clarentine* and Austen's novels show limited response to music through their bodies, revealing a limited level of sensibility. The inclusion of music-making scenes demonstrates one way in which authors demonstrate a distinctly cautious approach to sensibility.

In Elizabeth Hervey's *Melissa and Marcia* (1788), music's effect on the body is as tempered as it is in Sarah Harriet Burney's *Clarentine* but this time music is used as a medium to console the melancholy heroine who performs. The novel is forward-thinking as music moves from benefitting men who respond to music to becoming a consolatory device for women. Music occupies a similar function to that in *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), where Marianne Dashwood plays music to console herself. Like Marianne Dashwood, Marcia is an enthusiastic and competent musician whose conduct is compared with that of her sister, Melissa. Marcia performs music to invoke memories of an unsuitable suitor, Sir Clairfont, to whom she used to play. The narrator reports:

[Marcia] had of late somewhat neglected her music, her mind having been constantly disturbed ever since she left Gray Lodge:—But now she indulged herself in playing over St Clairfont's favourite pieces, and felt, while thus employed, an exquisite sensation of delight.—Music revived those sentiments which absence had somewhat weakened, and her imagination, at once lively and tender, represented him to her in the most charming colours.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Elizabeth Hervey, *Melissa and Marcia or The Sisters*, 2 vols (London: 1788), II, 2-3.

Here Hervey does not dramatise Marcia's body in order to show that music is channelling unhelpful sensibility. Even though Marcia 'indulged herself in playing over St Clairfont's favourite pieces', music ignites an 'exquisite sensation of delight.' Its effects are not displayed in full force on the body. Performing music as a consolatory device increases Marianne Dashwood's misery, but Hervey's Marcia delights in music. Music strengthens Marcia by reviving her sentiments, while it provokes Marianne's tears. Music is also not a symptom or cause of Marcia's sensibility.

Once Marcia has secured her hero, music no longer functions as a consolatory mechanism and is merely attached to the memory of an inappropriate suitor, St Clairfont. The narrator states that 'Marcia determined to banish his image from her heart: Her piano forte was sent away; all books of imagination excluded from her library' (II, 165). While music functions as an escape mechanism for the heroine's benefit, Hervey only takes this so far and music's links with painful memories mean that the author must discard music in line with Marcia's new resolutions. On the other hand, in Austen's later novel, Marianne is eventually reunited with her piano, having learnt to adopt a more temperate attitude towards it, so Austen sees music's function beyond that of a painful memory. Marcia's music-making disintegrates towards the end of the novel. While Hervey fails to dissociate music-making from its ability to evoke emotion and has to ultimately curtail its appearance in the novel, Austen upholds the value of music by eventually separating music from the excessive emotion that formerly characterised Marianne. For this reason, this chapter will go on to argue that music is not to blame for Marianne's excessive sensibility, it is only a symptom of it and the role of music-making is transformed in line with Marianne's own metamorphosis.

Jane Austen

In Jane Austen's fiction, the body is rarely over-dramatised or exaggerated, which separates her novels from those by Staël and Rousseau. This may justify Charlotte Brontë's comment that Austen's novels lack passion:

[Jane Austen's] business is not half so much with the human heart as with the human eyes, mouths, hands and feet [...] what throbs fast and full, though hidden, what the blood rushes through, what is the unseen seat of Life and the sentient target of death— *this* Miss Austen ignores.⁵¹

Interpreting the mind through analysing the body was a popular method employed by afore-mentioned medical treatises by Cheyne and Whytt. In addition, Lavater's *Essays on Physiognomy* (1798) was a controversial set of essays that celebrated the figure of 'man' and the ability to read a character through signs on the human body. In the context of Lavater's treatise, physiognomy can be defined as the art by which character can be judged by the study of facial features. Lavater argues that '[physiognomy] considers the character when in a state of rest'.⁵² Lavater's treatise, which relied heavily on interpreting bodily expression and body language, examined a series of human portraits and facial characteristics to make moral judgments about human behaviour and character. Even Lavater predicted the backlash against the reliability of physiognomy in chapters entitled 'Indifference about the Science of Physiognomies', 'On the Inconveniences of Physiognomy' and 'Reasons why the science of physiognomy is so often ridiculed and treated with contempt'.⁵³

The Austen family frequently mocked the practice of interpreting the mind and behaviour through analysing the body. *The Loiterer* was a periodical written by Jane Austen's brothers, James and Henry, which was sceptical about the accuracy of interpreting

⁵¹ *The Brontës: Their Lives, Friendship and Correspondence*, ed. by Thomas J. Wise, 3 vols (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980), III, Letter from Charlotte Brontë to W.S. Williams, 12 April, 1850, p.99.

⁵² Johan Caspar Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy, Designed To Promote The Knowledge and The Love of Mankind*, transl. by Henry Hunter, 3 vols (London, 1789-98), I, 23.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 19-23.

the body as a gateway into analysing the mind. The Austen brothers mock Lavater's treatise by arguing that it cannot help them to understand a friend of theirs: 'If Lavater had at that moment beheld him [their friend], a brass farthing would have been of more value than the whole system of physiognomy.'⁵⁴

Henry and James Austen's humorous comments about Lavater's representation of body language as a mirror of the mind may have affected Austen's portrayal of Marianne's illness in *Sense and Sensibility*. Further proof of Austen's scepticism towards heightened body language can be found in her letters. These documents mock those who claim to lack control over their ailing bodies as Austen promotes sturdy minds and positive attitudes towards health. In one letter, for example, Austen claims that headaches are a sign of 'being pathetic': 'Provided that [Lady Sonde] will now leave off having bad head-aches & being pathetic, I can allow her, I can wish her to be happy.'⁵⁵ On her own deathbed, Austen referred to illness as a 'dangerous indulgence at any time of life.'⁵⁶ While there are differences between representing illness and excessive sensibility, these examples point to Austen's dislike of any undue focus on the body. In any case, this chapter will argue that Austen eventually presents excessive sensibility as an illness in *Sense and Sensibility*.

⁵⁴ *The Loiterer, A Periodical Work First Published at Oxford in the Years 1789 and 1790*, James and Henry Austen (Dublin: William Porter, 1790), no. XIII Saturday April 25, 1789, p.75. Lavater's *Essays on Physiognomy* (1798) celebrated the figure of 'man' and the ability to read a character through signs on the human body. Johan Caspar Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy, Designed To Promote The Knowledge and The Love of Mankind*, transl. by Henry Hunter, 3 vols (London, 1789-98.), I, 24. James and Henry Austen dismiss 'the reigning passion for feature-hunting' and sarcastically comment that '[physiognomy] is a very commendable and innocent amusement, equally beneficial to the observed and the observer, since it will teach them both to disguise the expression of their own features, and suspect that of every body else.' *The Loiterer, A Periodical Work First Published at Oxford in the Years 1789 and 1790*, No.LI, 16 January 1790, p.309. They scorn physiognomy by commenting that 'independent of the serious advantages which may be derived from perfecting the science of physiognomy, it is productive of much entertainment; and we consider it merely as the amusement of an idle hour.' *The Loiterer, A Periodical Work First Published at Oxford in the Years 1789 and 1790*, No.LI, 16 January, 1790, p.310.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.310.

⁵⁵ *Jane Austen's Letters*, ed. by Deirdre Le Faye, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), Letter 63 to Cassandra Austen, 27-28 December, 1808, p.159.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, Letter 155 to Fanny Knight, 23 March, 1817, p.336. In another letter, Austen mocks a physician, Mr Lyford, who inspects her mother when she comments that 'he [Mr Lyford] wants my mother to look yellow and to throw out a rash, but she will do neither.' *Jane Austen's Letters*, Letter 13 to Cassandra Austen, 1 December, 1798, p.24.

Sense and Sensibility (1811) is the only one of Austen's novels to present a close relationship between excessive sensibility and music-making. Irony, however, features heavily in this relationship and Marianne's illness can be interpreted as Austen's way of censoring such excess. In the novel, the same scepticism of excessive sensibility that the Austen brothers show about heightened body language is evident. Austen positions music as a trigger for and symptom of Marianne's sensibility. Music is not to blame, however, but Marianne's own response to it is. When Marianne is distraught after Willoughby's departure, she takes comfort in her piano playing as a means of triggering Willoughby's memory:

The evening passed off in the equal indulgence of feeling. [Marianne] played over every favourite song that she had been used to play to Willoughby [...] and sat at the instrument gazing on every line of music that he had written out for her, till her heart was so heavy that no farther sadness could be gained and this nourishment of grief was every day applied. She spent whole hours at the piano-forte alternately singing and crying, her voice often totally suspended by tears. In books too, as well as in music, she courted the misery which a contrast between the past and present was certain of giving.⁵⁷

Spending 'whole hours at the piano-forte alternately singing and crying' is detrimental to Marianne's mental health. With a heavy heart that sought the 'nourishment of grief', Marianne's wretchedness is a clear act of hyperbole in this scene. The fact that Marianne 'courted the misery' means that she had a choice about how much she plays, how much she indulges the feeling and how far she responds to the music. Austen took this choice seriously as her own letters frequently mocked those who were too enthusiastic about music.⁵⁸ The sensibility that Marianne exhibits when she plays her piano after Willoughby's departure reflects her anguish, which is shown through dramatic body

⁵⁷ Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), ed. by Ros Ballaster, 3 vols (London: Penguin, 1995), I, chapter xvi, p.73. All subsequent page numbers refer to this edition.

⁵⁸ The following letters, written by Jane Austen, mock those who are over-enthusiastic about music and sympathise with the unmusical, revealing her admiration of modesty. See *Jane Austen's Letters*, ed. by Deirdre Le Faye, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), Letter 37 to Cassandra Austen, 22 May, 1801, p.88, Letter 127 to Cassandra Austen, 24 November, 1815, p.300, Letter 96 to Cassandra Austen, 7 November 1813, p.251.

language. Music becomes a channel for exhibiting excessive feeling, but indulging such intense feelings makes Marianne very ill.

Austen's refusal to approve of dramatising the body's response to music shows her reluctance to indulge the self and points to the conservative agenda to which Marilyn Butler has referred.⁵⁹ Interpreting *Sense and Sensibility* as a didactic novel that contrasts the beliefs of the two protagonists, Butler maps the concept of acceptable and unacceptable conduct onto Elinor and Marianne Dashwood.⁶⁰ Her argument that *Sense and Sensibility* is an anti-sentimentalist novel is convincing, yet music's effects on the emotions are not wholly discouraged in Austen's novels. Critics who claim that Austen is more sympathetic towards sensibility in this novel than Butler allows include Margaret Kirkham, Paula Byrne, Mary Poovey and Tony Tanner. Kirkham argues that both sisters take on the rounded character of a single central heroine and that both embody sensibility.⁶¹ Austen shows a clear contrast between the sisters however and Marianne is the only sister to repent of her sensibility when she recovers from her illness. Byrne attests that Austen does not condemn sensibility.⁶² Poovey agrees with Tony Tanner who argues that Austen avoids the systematic examination of sensibility that the novel seems to promise.⁶³ I disagree with Poovey and Tanner's arguments that Austen avoids a systematic examination of sensibility. In my opinion, Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* presents sensibility as a serious illness which

⁵⁹ Marilyn Butler wrote '[Austen] participates in a conservative reaction against more permissive, individualistic and personally expressive novel types of earlier years,' Marilyn Butler, *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas*, 2nd edn. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975; repr. 1987), p.xv.

⁶⁰ Marilyn Butler, *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas*, p.182.

⁶¹ Margaret Kirkham, *Jane Austen, Feminism and Fiction*, rev. edn (Brighton: Harvester, 1983, repr. London: Athlone, 1997), p.85.

⁶² Paula Byrne, *Jane Austen and The Theatre* (London: Hambledon, 2002), p.110.

⁶³ Mary Poovey, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer: Ideology as Style in the Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley and Jane Austen* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984). See Tony Tanner, *Jane Austen* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1986), p.203.

has a severely detrimental effect on Marianne's body.⁶⁴ These symptoms do not disappear until Marianne repents of her excessive sensibility.

Patrick Piggott's claim that Marianne's sensibility is not the cause of her misfortune is a little misguided, considering Marianne's own confession that her indulgent feelings had led to her physical neglect.⁶⁵ The narrator's description of Marianne's grief as 'nourishment' and the progressive weakening of her body also point to the fact that her sensibility has been her own doing. When Angela Leighton explores the impact of silences in *Sense and Sensibility*, which she argues are 'the voices which [Austen's] notoriously conservative and limiting language would conceal', she positions sensibility as a metaphorical prison that 'gives no access to the language of silent protest.'⁶⁶ Illness is the effect of this imprisonment, according to Leighton, and the effect of censoring Marianne's response to social conventions.⁶⁷ Leighton is influenced by Tanner's argument about the close link between secrecy and sickness.⁶⁸ While I agree with Leighton that sensibility imprisons Marianne and she makes a valid point that Marianne's illness could be interpreted as Austen's criticism of the social conventions that Marianne finds repressive, the reformatory role of the illness cannot be ignored. Marianne is effectively cured of her sensibility, which can thus be interpreted as an illness. If sensibility is an illness that

⁶⁴ The narrator mentions an astonishing number of symptoms that lead to Marianne's illness in *Sense and Sensibility*. Marianne loses her appetite, has a headache, is agitated (after writing to Willoughby), in volume 2, chapter iv, p.136. She has a careless appearance in volume 2, chapter vi, p.148. She almost faints (after seeing Willoughby) in volume 2, chapter vi, pp.148-9 and has to sniff hartshorn. Marianne's loss of appetite is mentioned in volume 2 again, along with her sickness at heart in chapter ix, p.152. Marianne suffers from a headache, stomach ache, nervous faintness, in volume 2, chapter vii, p.156. She complains of a restless pain of mind and body in volume 2, chapter xxix, p.161, and further nervous headaches in volume 2, chapter x, p.184. The narrator also states that Marianne looks unwell, loses her colour, loses weight and suffers from a nervous complaint for a few weeks in volume 2, chapters xi and xii. In addition, she neglects her appearance in volume 2, chapter xiv, p.209. Her headache, throat ache and cold are mentioned in volume 3, chapter vi, p.258. Eventually, Marianne suffers heavy, feverish pain in limbs and another sore throat in volume 3, chapter vii, p.259, which lead to her fever.

⁶⁵ Patrick Piggott, *The Innocent Diversion; A Study of Music in the Life and Writings of Jane Austen* (London: Clover Hill, 1979), p.49.

⁶⁶ Angela Leighton, 'Sense and Silences' in Robert Clark, ed., *Sense and Sensibility and Pride and Prejudice* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), pp.53-65, 54, 59.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.59.

⁶⁸ Tony Tanner, 'Secrecy and Sickness' in Tony Tanner, *Jane Austen* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1986).

requires a cure, Austen is not promoting sensibility. Considering this, Austen cannot be as sympathetic to the idea of sensibility as Kirkham and Byrne allow.

In her analysis of Marianne's illness, Anita G. Gorman convincingly argues that 'Austen employs the language of illness in order to expose behavioural as well as physical debility.'⁶⁹ What this 'behavioural debility' refers to is Marianne's sensibility, which is 'cover and cause for hysteria.'⁷⁰ Rather than acting as a cover for some kind of physical weakness, I argue that sensibility is the cause and symptom of physical weakness. I agree with Gorman that sensibility reflects this debility but I add that this is no better explored than in Marianne's music-making scenes immediately after Willoughby's departure and in her post-recovery scenes, which represent declining emotional intensity. I join Gorman in arguing that Austen presents Marianne's illness as the ultimate punishment for her indulgence in her feelings.⁷¹ This illness leads to a simultaneous physical and emotional recovery, which results in a character reformation. Marianne's response to music-making reflects her new response to sensibility as she becomes more temperate after her recovery, no longer using music to foster memory or to trigger passionate outbursts:

After dinner [Marianne] would try her piano-forte. She went to it; but the music on which her eye first rested was an opera, procured for her by Willoughby, containing some of their favourite duets, and bearing on its outward leaf her own name in his hand writing.—that would not do.—She shook her head, put the music aside, and after running over the keys for a minute complained of feebleness in her fingers and closed the instrument again; declaring however with firmness as she did so, that she should in future practise much. (III, 291)

⁶⁹ Anita G Gorman, *The Body in Illness and Health: Themes and Images in Jane Austen* (New York: Peter Land, 1993), p.1.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p.12.

⁷¹ 'Austen wants to punish Marianne twice as a cautionary tale to the Romantics of the world; The second illness reinforces Austen's point that mental suffering creates an environment in which physical sickness may erupt, that the consequence of refusing to actively participate in life is finally death.' Anita G. Gorman, *The Body in Illness and Health*, pp.54-5.

After her illness, Marianne acknowledges to Elinor that she has been cured morally, which points to the argument that Austen designed Marianne's illness to instigate a character transformation:

My illness had made me think—it has given me leisure and calmness for serious recollection. [...] I saw in my own behaviour [...] nothing but a series of imprudence towards myself, and want of kindness to others. I saw that my own feelings had prepared my sufferings, and that my want of fortitude under them had almost led me to the grave. My illness, I well knew, had been entirely brought on by myself, by such negligence of my own health. Had I died, —it would have been self-destruction. (III, 293)

Not only does Austen illustrate the danger of immersing oneself entirely in music, but she reveals the inappropriate intimacy that music can foster between two prospective suitors. Rather than interpret this episode in *Sense and Sensibility* as a straightforward promotion or rejection of sensibility, I interpret it as a scene that shows that excessive sensibility is a significant problem. It is more accurate to say that Austen's novels use music to foster emotions associated with courtship in a measured way but do not promote music as a source of personal consolation until her later works such as *Persuasion*. Music plays a role in the courtship between Colonel Brandon and Marianne in a positive and more contained way.

I agree with David Selwyn that Austen's novels focus on attitudes behind music-making rather than commenting on musical criticism and taste themselves.⁷² Obsession with music, as displayed by Marianne, is likely to result in Austen's reproach. With Austen's personal interest in music, it is extremely unlikely that she meant to vilify music as a source of pleasure yet, with every activity, it can be practised to excess. The way in which Austen mocks the body's dramatic response to music can be interpreted as her criticism of similar techniques in gothic fiction. Related to Austen's representation of excess, her portrayal of music in *Sense and Sensibility* may be compared with her satirical

⁷² David Selwyn, *Jane Austen and Leisure* (London: Hambledon, 1999), p.119.

accounts of Catharine Morland's excessive and inappropriate reading in *Northanger Abbey*. The Eighteenth Century saw a range of readers and reading material. Although *Northanger Abbey* does not criticise the readings of novels, it disapproves of an unhealthy indulgence in gothic fiction. Austen rebukes Catherine Morland's over-eager perusal of novels as much as Marianne Dashwood's indulgence in sensibility and music.⁷³ In both cases the heroines' eyes are opened to their indulgence in these leisure activities, they realise how far reality has become distorted and subsequently change their attitudes and behaviour.⁷⁴ Like reading, music triggers a sentimental response, which must be tempered. In *Sense and Sensibility*, Austen refuses to explore the benefits of characters meditating too much on music, she thinks little of music's ability to transcend reality and does not wish her characters to dwell on the irrational.

The relationship between music and memory in *Sense and Sensibility* can be compared with that in *Corinne*. Oswald listens to music to dream up images of Corinne and Marianne plays Willoughby's duets obsessively to remember her love. Interestingly, there is a gender role reversal as *Sense and Sensibility* shows a woman using music to remember a man while music helps Oswald to remember Corinne in *Corinne*. This was also the case in *Melissa and Marcia*, where Marcia played music to remember her former suitor. While Austen presents music-making as an activity that should invite female, rather than male, participation, Staël presents music as an androgynous activity. Austen is also far more critical of music being an outlet for excessive emotion. Unlike Staël, Austen uses irony to criticise Marianne's obsession with Willoughby while Oswald's fancy for Corinne never dies. Marianne's playing, which is initially wholly self-centred, has a far more

⁷³ Jacqueline Pearson comments on the wide range of readers in Jacqueline Pearson, *Women's Reading in Britain 1750-1835: A Dangerous Recreation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.10.

⁷⁴ In *Northanger Abbey*, Catherine Morland's obsession with Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* means that she concocts similarities between Radcliffe's fictions and past happenings at Northanger Abbey. She is rebuked by the hero, Henry Tilney and becomes aware of her own foolishness.

detrimental effect on her body than Oswald's immersion in music. For Staël, indulging such a feeling is commendable.

While the close relationship between excessive sensibility and music-making in *Sense and Sensibility* is comparable with that in the novels by Lewis, Radcliffe, Staël and Owenson, Austen presents this relationship satirically in order to criticise music's ability to foster emotion. The above authors provide detailed accounts of music's harmful and soothing power to provoke tears, melancholy, desire and intrigue. Radcliffe and Lewis also presented the uneasy relationship between thrill and rationality, while Staël and Owenson displayed music's association with national pride and a revolutionary focus on individual feelings. Conversely, Austen displays the danger of indulging passionate feelings in *Sense and Sensibility*. She does this to promote female rationality. Unlike *Corinne* and *The Wild Irish Girl*, where music fosters a sensibility, which energises the heroines, the role that music plays in fuelling Marianne's sadness and emotional emptiness supports a conservative moralist reading of the text. While music-making provokes sensibility, sensibility can paradoxically heighten the appreciation of music, provoke unwelcome memories, foster illicit gender relationships and have a damaging as well as beneficial effect on the body. Music's power over the body certainly cannot be disputed but it can be criticised.

Both *Sense and Sensibility* and *Emma* feature duets, which invite gender interaction and play a major role in courtship. By displaying hyperbolic sensibility in unreliable male suitors who were directly involved in music-making, Austen drew on the discourses of music and sensibility to advocate a constricted yet traditional version of masculinity. Nancy Armstrong's history of the eighteenth-century domestic novel includes a reflection on music-making in *Emma*:

In *Emma*, Frank Churchill's capricious purchase of a piano for Jane represents an intrusion of male values into the exclusively female household of her Aunt Miss Bates. The mere appearance of an object that violates the proportions and priorities of such a household is enough to generate scandalous narratives implying that Jane has given in to seduction.⁷⁵

A gift representing an intrusion of male values into the exclusively female household is an interesting concept. Not only does gift-giving intrude on this female household, but so does Frank Churchill invasion into the female music-making space. I would expand Armstrong's argument by claiming that Austen represents Frank's decision to perform a duet with both Emma and Jane as an unnecessary intrusion into the female domain of music-making and this is reflected through the following negative responses to the duet.

Fuelling rumours, Frank participates in Emma's piano performance without being invited.⁷⁶ Readers learn that 'one accompaniment to her song took [Emma] agreeably by surprise- a second, slightly but correctly taken by Frank Churchill'. This was an unwelcome intrusion as 'her [Emma's] pardon was duly begged [by Frank] at the close of the song.' (p.188) Frank Churchill then switches from singing with Emma to singing with Jane thus:

[Emma and Frank] sang together once more; and Emma would then resign her place to Miss Fairfax. [...]. With mixed feelings, [Emma] seated herself at a little distance from the numbers round the instrument, to listen. (p.188)

Frank's move from Emma to Jane is a metaphor for his outwardly changing affections. By using the verb 'to resign', the narrator implies that Emma resents her retreat from the piano. Emma then has 'mixed feelings' when hearing the second duet. Mr Knightley's muttered comment, of 'that fellow thinks of nothing but shewing off his own voice. This must not be', reveals that Frank's intervention in this female space is unwelcome.

These episodes in *Emma* support my theory that Austen agreed with the way in which polemicists positioned music as a female activity that should not trigger too much

⁷⁵ Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction*, p.87.

⁷⁶ Jane Austen, *Emma* (1815), ed. by Fiona Stafford, 3 vols (London: Penguin, 1996), II, chapter viii, p.188.

sensibility and that Austen disapproved of male intervention in the female music-making space. The duets create an uncomfortable atmosphere. Unsteady characters like Willoughby (who sings duets and writes music for Marianne), Frank Churchill, (whom Mr Knightley scorns for his capricious purchase of a piano for Jane) and Mr Elliott (who professes musical interest during the concert to impress Anne), are inappropriate suitors for the heroines and are rebuked for interfering in women's domain.

The body's response to music, in Austen's novels, is delineated by gender. Scenes of music-making in *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma* promote a conventional attitude towards gender by firmly locating music-making as an appropriate female leisure activity in line with afore-mentioned arguments by Essex, Hanway and Kames. By locating the man as the observer (who admires but not participates) and the woman as the observed musical performer, Austen confirms music's suitability for women. Unlike male duet-performers, heroes who watch and judge heroines perform music are tolerated amiably and assert their conventional gender roles in Austen's novels by subtly displaying signs of admiration on their body, which are both acknowledged and interpreted by the heroine. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Mr Darcy's body language conveys his admiration for Elizabeth:

[When Miss Bingley was playing the piano][Elizabeth] could not help observing [...] how frequently Mr Darcy's eyes were fixed on her. She hardly knew how to suppose that she could be an object of admiration to so great a man, and yet that he should look at her because he disliked her, was still more strange.⁷⁷

Mr Darcy also watches Elizabeth perform and she receives this attention with a smile:

[Mr Darcy] walked away from her, and moving with his usual deliberation towards the piano forte, stationed himself as to command a full view of the fair performer's countenance. Elizabeth saw what he was doing, and at the first convenient pause, turned to him with an arch smile.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), ed. by Vivien Jones, 3 vols (London: Penguin, 1996), I, chapter x, p.45.

⁷⁸ Ibid., II, chapter viii, p.144.

Mr Darcy does not display any dramatic emotional response to music, but merely ‘stationed himself’ to look at ‘the fair performer’s countenance’. He is relatively detached from the scene. Stillness, as well as movement, can also be a mark of admiration when a musical performance is heard. *Sense and Sensibility*’s Colonel Brandon’s silence is what marks him as a true admirer of Marianne’s piano performance.⁷⁹

As I stated earlier, Claudia L. Johnson claimed that sensibility can be viewed as a masculine, rather than feminine, trait.⁸⁰ It is true that men, not women, display a sentimental attitude to music in Austen’s novels, but male sensibility, while subtly present, is restricted and tempered. Austen places conditions upon men displaying sensibility; they must judge and admire the female performance, but not participate. Gender, however, does not, in itself, determine how much sensibility should be displayed. Just as male response to music should not be excessive, in Austen’s novels, Austen criticises women who respond to music too emotively.

Austen’s conventional representation of gendered roles in music-making scenes has implications for her broader representation of gender as well: a highly contested topic in academia. I argue that Austen’s formulaic representation of duets reflects a conservative representation of women in her novels, where women follow conventions that dictate that they should be moderately musical and perform only for social and family entertainment. This argument denies that Austen took up a ‘declared position as a feminist moralist’, which is what Margaret Kirkham claims in *Jane Austen, Feminism and Fiction*.⁸¹ It is true

⁷⁹ It also implies Austen’s dislike of superficial dramatic displays of affection. When listening to Marianne’s piano performance, Sir John and Lady Middleton praise her without paying attention, yet Colonel Brandon ‘heard her [Marianne] without being in raptures. He paid her only the compliment of attention.’ Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*, ed. by Ros Ballaster, 3 vols (London: Penguin, 1995), I, chapter vii, p.30. Brandon’s stillness is a marked difference from the movement of Mr Darcy and the agitation of Frank Churchill, but is an equal sign of respect.

⁸⁰ Claudia Johnson, *Equivocal Beings: Politics, Gender and Sentimentality in the 1790s: Wollstonecraft, Radcliffe, Burney and Austen* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995), p.14.

⁸¹ Kirkham argues that her book ‘sets out to relate Austen as a literary artist and innovator to her declared position as feminist moralist’, Margaret Kirkham, *Jane Austen, Feminism, and Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p.xxvii.

that Austen uses music to carve out a separate space for women and that music functions as a form of self-consolation for female characters in *Persuasion*. Music does not have a subversive role, however. The ideal moral qualities in women, such as moderation and modesty, can be detected through heroines' modest, self-deprecating attitudes towards performing music and their willingness to play the piano for their families' amusement. As chapter four will demonstrate, female music-making also initiates courtship and marriage; two events which reinforces traditional gender hierarchies.

Interpreting the male body as a reflection of sensibility is a valuable exercise, which challenges approaches that rely solely on links between sensibility and femininity. While the body of the musical heroine inspired sensibility in men during an age when sensibility was associated with women, the effect produced by the music is evident from signs, such as body language and movement, on the male body. In some respect, the hero's response to female music-making determined the effectiveness of the female spectacle and how far authors wished their characters to embrace irrationality. Certainly, music-making does not turn the heroes of Austen's novels into mere objects of sensibility, while it does for the heroes in novels by Staël, Owenson and Rousseau.

II) Conclusion

Accounts of the responsive body were essential to representations of music-making in the late eighteenth-century novel and drew on eighteenth-century discourses that linked music, sensibility, the sublime and the body. To respond emotively to music was a sign of sensibility in the eighteenth century, even though many writers had a problem with embracing excessive sensibility and struggled to describe an encounter with the sublime. Novels can be roughly categorised according to the severity of characters' emotional

response to music. Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and Lewis' *The Monk* present music as having an unlimited and excessive effect on the body. Music's excessive effects on the body may also be found in the Irish novel, *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806) by Owenson and these French novels: *Julie or the New Heloise* (1761) by Rousseau and *Corinne* (1807) by Staël. These novels present close relationships between music, sensibility and the sublime. Sarah Harriet Burney's *Clarentine* (1796) and Austen's novels, by contrast, present stronger arguments that music's effects on the emotions should be very contained. Austen and Burney's fiction implies the danger of an encounter with the sublime through their reluctance to dramatise the body in music-making scenes.

Interpreting responses to music-making in order to trace trends in novels of the same genre has not always produced a satisfactory result. Exaggerated responses to music, which appear in gothic and national romance fiction, do not serve the same purposes. While Owenson's national romance, *The Wild Irish Girl*, sought to elevate Ireland as an important nation through the promotion of passionate harp-playing, Radcliffe celebrated women's ability to master her emotions under adversity in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. In Lewis' *The Monk*, he presented a female harpist as an embodiment of repressed desires. Amongst French writers, Staël appeared to continue Rousseau's quest for individual's freedom, making this relevant to the plight of creative independent women, such as Corinne. Staël thus carved a significant space for the figure of the independent woman.

The ending of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* warns about the need for female autonomy and rationality, which is actually not that dissimilar from the point that Austen makes when presenting Marianne's illness as a cautionary lesson in *Sense and Sensibility*. Unlike Radcliffe, Lewis focuses on male sensibility and explores its full effects. The messages interpreted from scenes of music-making in these gothic novels are surprisingly didactic as

they warn about music's irrational effects on the body, which were outlined in treatises by Turnball and Potter.

Owenson's portrayal of Glorvina's harp-playing highlights the physicality of music-making, as Lewis does, but she makes a stronger point about nationality, promoting the creativity of the female artist. In a way, Matilda in *The Monk* and Glorvina in *The Wild Irish Girl* could be characterised as victims of the male gaze but only Lewis points to the danger of a manipulative women performing music, which all of the polemical treatises warned readers against. In the later novels, *Mansfield Park*, *Sense and Sensibility* and *The Wanderer*, the male gaze pervades music-making scenes to a lesser extent as the narrator recounts harp-playing and solitary piano-playing satirically, concentrating on the inner depth of women and focussing on the motivations behind the female performance. Staël and Rousseau's novels celebrate sensibility to the greatest extent as they present music as an effective way to access the allusive sublime. Both authors are unafraid to transgress the borders of liberty and expressiveness and use music as a way of channelling this sensibility. Arguably, this is something that none of the English novels dare to embrace.

While French authors such as Staël, Rousseau and the Irish author Owenson, celebrate the close relationship between sensibility and music and open up both music and sensibility to a male, as well as female, audience, English authors such as Lewis, Austen, Frances Burney and Sarah Harriet Burney act more cautiously by locating music-making as a female activity, just as more conventional polemical treatises advised. Some English authors used music to promote a more restricted version of sensibility, which may have arisen from a fear of being associated with French literary trends during an era when France was associated with revolution and unrest. Although the author's nationality influenced how they presented the relationship between music and sensibility in these novels, this influence was limited. Novels by Radcliffe and Lewis, for example, are in an entirely

different category to those of Austen. Radcliffe and Lewis certainly draw on music's profound effect on the mind more than Austen and Burney, for the purposes of exploring the 'unlicensed indulgence of an amoral imagination' that was a feature of gothic, rather than realist, fiction.¹ Radcliffe's decision to rationalise mysteries in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and music's negative contribution in leading to the monk's downfall in *The Monk* shares the same tentative approach to sensibility as novels by Austen and Burney, but they convey the messages differently.

Later in the century, Austen and Frances Burney were wary of the immense effects that music could have on the body and are the only English novelists to satirise and parody harpists who take themselves too seriously; again promoting female rationality. They also criticised the vanity of foolish performers later in the long eighteenth century, which was an objection made by Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). Austen and Burney distance themselves from Staël and Rousseau by refusing to dwell on music's irrational effects on the body and by avoiding a confrontation with music as a sublime experience. While this approach may promote female rationality and uncovers a dislike of emphasising a women's appearance over her intellect, it also reveals an anti-sentimentalist attitude, which is informed by their respect for female autonomy and rationality.

¹ Maggie Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel*, p.7.

Chapter Four: Musical Courtship Scenes in Eighteenth-Century Novels

I [Lucy Wheatley] exerted all my vocal powers, and had the heart-felt satisfaction to see Wentworth absolutely lost in transport, and so entirely softened that I do not know whether he could not for ever have retained, what I am sure now is, a forced silence.¹

In this episode from the anonymous novel, *The Artless Lovers*, Lucy's musical performance has the effect of rendering Wentworth 'lost in transport'. Music fosters feelings, which then develop the courtship between Wentworth and Lucy. Throughout her performance, Lucy's pleasure in the fact that Wentworth becomes 'lost in transport' and 'softened' points to the view that she knowingly plays music to attract him. For this courtship to take place and for Lucy to characterise herself as a suitable wife, however, Lucy has to present herself as a modest and unassuming performer. Regula Hohl Trillini succinctly observes there was an immense pressure on accomplished women, remarking that 'the female musician cannot deny her overpowering attraction. This provokes attempts at containment and denial'.² Female music-making thus performs an ambivalent role in this courtship scene as it triggers courtship at a moment when women's power was contained and tempered. Whether or not they promoted music as an accomplishment, polemical treatises consistently discouraged women from using music-making as a way of exploiting courtship opportunities. In *Practical Education*, Maria Edgeworth laments that 'accomplishments [...] are supposed to increase a young lady's chance in the matrimonial lottery'.³ In a similar vein, Hannah More regretfully remarks:

[Women's] new course of education [the study of accomplishments] peculiarly unfits them for the active duties of their own very important condition, while [...] they run to snatch a few of those showy acquirements that decorate the great. This is

¹ *The Artless Lovers*, 2 vols (London 1768).

² Regula Hohl Trillini, *The Gaze of the Listener: English Representations of Domestic Music-Making* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008), pp.2-3.

³ Maria Edgeworth, *Practical Education*, 2 vols, (London, 1798), II, 522.

done apparently with one or other of these views; either to make their fortune by marriage or to qualify them to become teachers of others.⁴

Hohl Trillini notes a dichotomy of the self-display inherent in music-making and an ideal conception of a wife by observing that ‘certain wifely qualities are incompatible with a willingness for physical display, but exactly that display was paradoxically used to “advertise” girls as future wives’.⁵ If modesty was upheld as an important recommendation for amateur musicians as so many polemical treatises stipulated, too much eagerness to display one’s talents and secure a suitor threatened women’s position as suitable wives. Hohl Trillini further comments on the limitations of female power because ‘to fulfil its function in courting process, music needed to be adequately seductive, but in order to ensure proper demureness it was not allowed to be impressive in its own right’ (p.3). This all relates to chapter two’s explanations of the curtailing of women’s involvement in a professional sphere. Nancy Armstrong puts it thus: ‘it is a woman’s participation in public spectacle that injures her, for as an object of display, she always loses value as a subject.’⁶

This chapter will discuss Phebe Gibbes’ *The Woman of Fashion: The History of Diana Dormer* (1767) and Samuel Richardson’s *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753), which were published prior to Wollstonecraft’s *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters*. It will go on to examine Sir Walter Scott’s *Waverley* (1814) Austen’s *Mansfield Park* (1814) and Frances Burney’s *The Wanderer* (1814), which were published in 1814, when novelists were intent on showing how the appropriate performance of music could benefit women socially and financially. These novels have been selected as case-studies as they all contrast women who boastfully exhibit their musical talents for courtship purposes with heroines who have a more moderate response to music, thus presenting the multiple

⁴ Hannah More, *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education. With a View of the Principles and Conduct Prevalent among Women of Rank and Fortune*, 4th edn, 3 vols. (London, 1800), I, 70.

⁵ Hohl Trillini, *The Gaze of the Listener*, p.3.

⁶ Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p.77.

versions of accomplished women that chapter one discussed. In Sir Walter Scott's *Waverley*, the showy accomplishments of Flora are contrasted with the rustic simplicity of Rose's music-making, while *The Woman of Fashion* compares the pretentious Lady Dormer with the modest musically accomplished heroine, Henrietta. All of the discussed novelists present the failure of women who are too eager in their attempts to perform music and secure courtship. While Scott, Burney and Austen show minor characters that perform music seductively, Gibbes is more direct by displaying the foolishness of her pretentious protagonist. These manipulative female characters do not exist in Samuel Richardson's earlier novel, *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753). Gibbes criticises a fashionable lifestyle while Richardson uses music to promote moral qualities in his protagonists.

All of these novels focus on how women approach courtship and highlight the danger of women performing music manipulatively. *Mansfield Park* is the only one of Austen's major novels to present a character playing the harp. *The Wanderer* contrasts the vanity of Miss Brinville with the modesty of Juliet to show the superficiality of accomplishments. The novels published in 1814 demonstrate how more emphasis was placed on music's influence on courtship and women's power to affect the courtship decision by the early nineteenth century.

Analysing episodes of music-making in these novels will demonstrate music's unstable and uncertain relationship with courtship where performance could both guarantee and repel it. By exploring why modest musical heroines were rewarded with husbands, this chapter reinforces the argument in the first half of the thesis that novels were more concerned with the behaviour and etiquette surrounding music-making than the music performed. Just as chapter one showed how novels presented numerous versions of accomplished women, which undermined the initial prediction that authors were critical of accomplishments, what follows is a discussion of a range of perspectives on music's

relationship with courtship. These perspectives all question whether music functioned as a strategic feminist manoeuvre in such courtship scenes or whether authors worked within more traditional parameters that presented established gender hierarchies.

In *Emma*, Austen argued that the superficial male performance of the duet is less acceptable than musically accomplished women, thus performance clearly has conditions placed upon it. Hohl Trillini argues that ‘a woman performing for a man embodies patriarchal gender relations in an exemplary way. The woman performer actively provides pleasure for the man, but is also a passive object of consumption.’⁷ Novels criticise women who exploit this role by performing to actively seek courtship, but authors still expect them to perform in some way or another. Where music and courtship are present in their novels, no author denies women the opportunity to be the performers of music in courtship scenes however and this fact cements amateur music’s solid allegiance with femininity and courtship. The debate about music’s importance as an accomplishment in female education will be considered when this chapter assesses whether authors promote or criticise music’s role in courtship.

I) An Introduction to Music and Courtship:

A) The Eighteenth-Century Courtship Novel

Courtship was one of the most central themes in eighteenth-century fiction; a theme which relates to valid concerns about social mobility and women’s insecure economic status. Music’s close relationship with and involvement in scenes that lead to courtship also testifies to its importance in eighteenth-century courtship novels. Courtship was defined as the process of paying court to a woman with a view to marriage in Samuel Richardson’s *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753), which details the process leading up to marriage. In letter 7 of

⁷ Hohl Trillini, *The Gaze of the Listener*, p.2.

volume one, Miss Alstree accuses Sir Rowland of possessing the ‘art of engaging a woman’s conversation.’ She adds that ‘you [Sir Rowland] seem to know how to turn her own artillery against her and [...] to exalt her in courtship.’⁸ This reference to courtship positions the man as the pursuer and the woman as the recipient. This analysis will show how music threatens to subvert this gender hierarchy, primarily because women play an important role in either instigating or facilitating courtship and they do this by performing music.

Responses to music can be seen on the body of both the performer and observer, which highlights the importance of interpreting body language in music-making scenes. As Richard Leppert has argued in *The Sight of Sound*, music-making should be interpreted as an embodied practice that is as much about visual display as the production of sound.⁹ Of particular interest in a study on the courtship novel is the following claim by Alan McFarlane: ‘Courtship is basically a game between prospective partners, with some interested spectators and perhaps an umpire to decide who has broken the rules if something goes wrong’.¹⁰ Music in many eighteenth-century novels was the setting for this underhand game, the medium that intensified feelings to a sufficient level and a mutual interest that drew the players together. Seen in this light, music has a vital role in establishing and accelerating the courtship process.¹¹ By playing their musical instruments, heroines subconsciously speak to the hero who registers interest by drawing closer to the spectacle or by lavishing praise on the performer. Kevin Barry’s musicological study discusses music and language as signs, comparing the two media. First, he claims that ‘a study of ideas about music during the eighteenth century is an enquiry into one part of

⁸ Samuel Richardson, *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753), ed. by Jocelyn Harris, 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), I, 48.

⁹ Richard Leppert, *The Sight of Sound. Music, Representation and the History of the Body* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p.xix.

¹⁰ Alan McFarlane, *Marriage and Love in England: Modes of Reproduction 1300-1840* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), p.293.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.303.

eighteenth-century theories about signs in general.’¹² He argues that ‘ideas about music support ideas about language, which give attention to the process of interpretation.’¹³

Another musicologist, George Springer, discusses the interpretation and delivery of music and language, defining music and language firstly as ‘culturally tempered systems of arbitrary, recurrent and structured sounds’ and then as systems that both use tones as well as sounds.¹⁴ As well as arguing that music and language are linked by their nature as structured sounds, Springer claims that their essential distinction lies in their social function as much as their technical make up.¹⁵ People perform music and utter language to communicate a message by emitting sound, but language is more prevalent in everyday life than music. Both music and language are, in Springer’s words, ‘systems of expression’ and similar in form.¹⁶ Although this comparison is plausible, there are problems with his argument that ‘form is the only means music has in conveying meaning.’¹⁷ Body language and the spectacle of the woman performing gives as much, if not more, meaning to the music-making as the sound and expression produced. Just as Richard Leppert argues, ‘sound constitutes the atmosphere supporting and confirming life on and in the terrain of the body.’¹⁸ While Springer connects language and music, as forms of expression, he acknowledges the advantages that music has in traversing space and linguistic boundaries.¹⁹ Just as McMaster, Barker-Benfield and Mullan have identified the power of body language and failure of words in conveying sensibility, music is the setting which displays this body language and replaces spoken words. The last chapter demonstrated that music can be as

¹² Kevin Barry, *Language, Music and the Sign: A Study in Aesthetics, Poetics and Poetic Practice from Collins to Coleridge* (Cambridge, 1987), p.1.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p.3.

¹⁴ George P. Springer, ‘Language and Music: Parallels and Divergences’ in *For Roman Jakobson: Essays on the Occasion of his Sixtieth Birthday* ed. by Morris Halle, Horace G. Lunt, Cornelis H. Van Schooneveld and Hugh Mclean (The Hague: Mouton, 1956), p.504.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.504.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.508.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.508.

¹⁸ Richard Leppert, *The Sight of Sound*, p.xix.

¹⁹ George P. Springer, ‘Language and Music: Parallels and Divergences’, p.513.

powerful at triggering sensibility as spoken language and courtship scenes are the ideal medium for this transformation to take place.

Positioning music as a type of language changes the way in which the female role can be perceived in musical courtship scenes. Eighteenth-century custom dictated that women were not allowed to initiate courtship, so music gave them an empowering alternative language, to which the hero always responded. In this sense, the hero's vocabulary may be seen as a language of response while the female performer speaks a language of initiation. Many music-making scenes in eighteenth-century novels played an important role in developing the relationship between a hero and heroine, culminating more often than not in marriage. If music is viewed as a type of language, women as the key performers had some autonomy and control in initiating courtship. Just as Mullan argues, actions could speak louder than words: 'In the novels of the mid eighteenth century, it is the body which acts out the powers of sentiment. These powers, in a prevailing model of sensibility, are represented as greater than those of words.'²⁰ Ellis similarly comments that 'wordless communication is capable of containing very subtle and sophisticated morally coloured statements and emotions. The mute physiological postures and mannerisms of the body, in this kind of communication, reveal the emotions.'²¹ Translating the language of music, therefore, was more about reading body language than registering sound. By viewing music as a language, which offered further meaning for the audience through the observation of a performing heroine, music can become a device that acts out 'the powers of sentiment'. Questions about the validity of this language and the subjectivity of its reception will be addressed in this chapter, which will survey the importance of music in the formulation of courtship scenes.

²⁰ John Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988; repr. 2000), p.201.

²¹ Markman Ellis, *The Politics of Sensibility: Race, Gender and Commerce in The Sentimental Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.21.

I. B) The Importance of Music in Courtship

Paula Backscheider remarks that courtship marked the single moment in a woman's life when she had power in the eighteenth century.²² In novels, music gave women this power by operating as a medium through which the heroine could communicate with the hero. What is questionable, however, is whether this power was subversive or not. After all, women primarily performed formulaic prescribed roles through the practice of music. Music's precise role in accelerating the courtship process is also ambiguous. Critical studies by Piggott, Wallace, Elizabeth Lockwood and David Selwyn have discussed the function of music in Austen's novels but music's role in other eighteenth-century novels and its relationship with courtship has generally been overlooked.²³ A study of courtship and music, however, facilitates an enquiry into the body's role in fiction. Studies by Lucy Hartley, Christopher Rivers and Graeme Tytler have all pointed towards the centrality, predominance and relevance of Lavater's theories of physiognomy in the nineteenth-century novel and this chapter will interpret scenes of music-making as ciphers that unveil the importance of the body in eighteenth-century fiction.²⁴ I agree with the link that John Mullan identifies between body language and sentiment.²⁵ Music-making scenes were central to courtship in novels by Richardson, Austen and Burney and this chapter questions the power of body language, as a key to interpreting character motivation. By concentrating on emotions, which arise during a courtship scene involving music-making, Austen, Burney and Richardson hint at their own positions on how far the self should be

²² Paula R. Backscheider, ed., *Revising Women: Eighteenth-Century Women's Fiction and Social Engagement* (London: John Hopkins University Press, 2000), p.21.

²³ Patrick Piggott, *The Innocent Diversion: A Study of Music in the Life and Writings of Jane Austen* (London: Clover Hill, 1979), Robert K. Wallace, *Jane Austen and Mozart: Classical Equilibrium in Fiction and Music* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1983), Elizabeth Lockwood, 'Jane Austen and Some Drawing-Room Music of her time,' *Music and Letters* 15, (1934), 112-119, David Selwyn, *Jane Austen and Leisure* (London: Hambledon, 1999).

²⁴ Lucy Hartley, *Physiognomy and the Meaning of Expression in Nineteenth-Century Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), Graeme Tytler, *Physiognomy in the European Novel: Faces and Fortunes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), Christopher Rivers, *Face Value: Physiognomical Thoughts and the Legible Body in Marivaux, Lavater, Balzac, Gautier and Zola* (Winsconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994).

²⁵ John Mullan argued that 'in the novels of the mid eighteenth century, it is the body which acts out the powers of sentiment. These powers, in a prevailing model of sensibility, are represented as greater than those of words.' John Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability*, p.207.

indulged in novels, which is a pertinent question for a review of sensibility and politics in eighteenth-century studies.²⁶ The development in the meaning of ‘sentiment’ in the mid eighteenth century also had an implication for the representation of gender, which led to, as Brigitte Glaser puts it, a sentimental movement that upheld ‘the tearful and trembling female body which became the foundation on which a new image of femininity was erected.’²⁷

²⁶ Marilyn Butler draws a divide between Jacobin and anti-Jacobin novelists and comments on how each has differing attitudes towards the self in Marilyn Butler, *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975; repr. 1987).

²⁷ Brigitte Glaser, *The Body in Samuel Richardson's Clarissa: Contexts of and Contradictions in the Development of Character* (Heidelberg University, 1992), p.71.

II) Music, Courtship and Literature

A) Jane Austen, Samuel Richardson and *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753)

Samuel Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison* was a pivotal novel that significantly influenced Austen's writing. The central role of music in the courtship scenes of *Sir Charles Grandison* and its influence on Austen make it an ideal case-study in this chapter. Even though Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison* was published much earlier than novels by Austen and Burney, it presents a close relationship between music-making, gender and courtship, which was mimicked in the latter half of the century. James Raven explains that this hugely popular novel went through four editions in 1753 and 1754 alone.¹ Austen's letters, juvenilia and mature novels all contain references to Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison*, which confirm Austen-Leigh's accounts that '[Jane Austen's] knowledge of Richardson's works was such as no one is likely again to acquire [...] Every circumstance narrated in *Sir Charles Grandison*, all that was ever said or done in the cedar parlour, was familiar to her; and the wedding days of Lady L. and Lady G. were as well remembered as if they had been living friends'.² Two letters that Austen wrote in 1813 refer to Harriet Byron, who was the heroine of *Sir Charles Grandison*.³ In Austen's 'Evelyn' the narrator sarcastically uses the phrase 'the best of men' to characterise its hero, Mr Gower. This was a common phrase used to describe Grandison in Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison*.⁴

¹ *British Fiction 1750-1770 A Chronological Check-List of Prose Fiction Printed in Britain and Ireland*, ed. by James Raven (Toronto: Delaware Press, 1987), p.1.

² J.E Austen-Leigh, *A Memoir of Jane Austen and Other Family Recollections* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p.71. Austen-Leigh adds that 'Richardson's power of creating, and preserving the consistency of his characters, as particularly exemplified in *Sir Charles Grandison* gratified the natural discrimination of [Austen's] mind, while her taste secured her from the errors of his prolix style and tedious narrative.' Ibid., p.141.

³ Jane Austen compares Miss Hare's hat with Harriet Byron's feather in *Jane Austen's Letters*, ed. by Deirdre Le Faye (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), Letter 87 to Cassandra Austen, 15 September, 1813, p.220. Austen jokingly compares her gratitude with that expressed by Harriet Byron in Letter 33 of *Sir Charles Grandison*. See *Jane Austen's Letters*, Letter 91 to Cassandra Austen, 11 October, 1813, p.234.

⁴ See 'Evelyn' in Jane Austen's *Catharine and Other Writings*, ed. by Margaret Anne Doody and Douglas Murray, 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), III, 175-186, 176. The editors comment on this comparison on p.343.

Margaret Doody also attributes the phrase ‘A family of love’, which appears in Austen’s ‘Jack and Alice’ to Richardson’s *Sir Charles Grandison*.⁵ B.C. Southam remarks that in volume two of ‘Love and Freindship’ (1790), Laura’s perfections are a dig at Harriet Byron’s apparent flawlessness and argues that letter five ridicules aspects of Richardson’s style.⁶ In Austen’s final minor work, *Sandition* (1817), the narrator refers to Lovelace, Richardson’s infamous character in *Clarissa*.⁷ More famously, in Austen’s *Northanger Abbey* the foolish and superficial Isabella Thorpe calls *Sir Charles Grandison* an ‘amazing horrid book’.⁸

The pivotal role of music in courtship scenes in Austen’s novels may be attributed to Richardson’s *Sir Charles Grandison*, which contains an array of musical scenes that lead directly to courtship. This chapter draws on Richardson’s novel to argue that even though Austen was influenced by the relationship that Richardson set up between music and courtship, she also departs from his practice by positioning music-making as a female space and satirising its role in courtship. Before considering the extent to which Richardson’s novel influenced the relationship that Austen sets up between music, gender and courtship, it is worth noting how Austen interpreted the role of music in a play entitled ‘Sir Charles Grandison’. This was a burlesque of Richardson’s novel, which I argue that Austen composed.⁹ While the arguments that deny Austen’s authorship of ‘Sir Charles

⁵ See ‘Jack and Alice’ in *Catharine and Other Writings*, I, 11-25, 12. See the editorial note on p.291.

⁶ Jane Austen, ‘Sir Charles Grandison’, ed. by B.C.Southam (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981), p.6.

⁷ *Sandition* in Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey, Lady Susan, The Watsons, and Sandition*, ed. by John Davie and Terry Castle (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp.321-380, p.358. See note on p.388.

⁸ Isabella cannot comprehend why Mrs Morland enjoys reading it, and sympathises with Miss Andrews because she could not read beyond the first volume. Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (1818), ed. by Marilyn Butler, 2 vols (London: Penguin, 1995), I, chapter vi, p.25.

⁹ Since B.C. Southam attributed the play ‘Sir Charles Grandison’ to Jane Austen in 1981, criticism by Margaret Anne Doody, Janet Todd and Linda Bree has questioned its authorship. Janet Todd & Linda Bree, ‘Sir Charles Grandison’ in Janet Todd & Linda Bree, eds., *Later Manuscripts: Jane Austen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. cxi-cxviii, Margaret Anne Doody, ‘Jane Austen’s “Sir Charles Grandison”’, *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 38 (1983), 220-224. In *The Works of Jane Austen*, Todd and Bree argue that within the family Anna Lefroy was accepted as the author of ‘Sir Charles Grandison’ and that Jane Austen played the role of the scribe. To substantiate their claim, they quote a letter by Anna Lefroy’s daughter, Fanny Caroline, who announced that she had ‘in Aunt Jane’s writing a drama my mother dictated to her founded on Sir Charles Grandison.’ Winchester: The Hampshire Archives, MS 2-23M93/85/2 cited by Janet Todd & Linda Bree, eds., *Later Manuscripts: Jane Austen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p.cxii. By contrast, B.C. Southam rejected the claim that Jane

Grandison' legitimately muse on the sub-standard quality of the play's writing compared with Austen's usual mastery, Janet Todd and Linda Bree concede that the manuscript was written in Jane Austen's hand and that the writing of the manuscript may have been collaborative.¹⁰ I agree with Halperin's point about the play's tone and add that the following similarities between the representation of music in this play and Jane Austen's novels are particularly striking.¹¹

The play 'Sir Charles Grandison' actually glosses over the numerous references to music in Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison*, by only mentioning music once.¹² There are similarities between the representation of music in this play and in *Mansfield Park*, however, as both works satirise the use of music as a courtship tool.¹³ Rather than

Austen's niece, Anna Lefroy, was the author, partly on the grounds that Anna was a seven year old child when the play was written. Siding with Southam, John Halperin makes a case that the play actually remains faithful to the spirit of much of Austen's early writing in its tendency toward burlesque and parody. John Halperin, *The Life of Jane Austen* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), p. 119.

¹⁰ The critics unanimously agree, however, that the manuscript was written in Jane Austen's hand. A collaborative enterprise was possible, according to Deirdre Le Faye in *A Family Record*, which claims that Jane Austen may have written 'Sir Charles Grandison' on a visit to Godermsham between 1800-1805 'with or without some degree of help from Anna Lefroy.' Deirdre Le Faye, *Jane Austen: A Family Record* (London: The British Library, 1989), p.133. On this note, Todd and Bree concede that 'Marilyn Butler's suggestion that Jane Austen or some other experienced person helped the beginning of Act 2 seems a good one.' Janet Todd & Linda Bree, eds., *Later Manuscripts*, p.cxvi, Margaret Anne Doody, 'Jane Austen's "Sir Charles Grandison"', p.220.

¹¹ B.C. Southam's introduction to this play claimed that Austen composed pages one to ten of this play in 1790, Act II was written onto paper that was watermarked 1799 and the remainder of the play was written in 1800. Jane Austen, 'Sir Charles Grandison', pp.14-15, B.C. Southam, *Jane Austen's Literary Manuscripts: A Study of The Novelist's Development* (London: Continuum, 2006), p.136. He considered the play's reference to music in Act III when estimating the chronology of its composition. 'Laure and Lenze', which was the harpsichord tune that Charlotte Grandison plays in Act III, was a pun on 'Laura et Lenza: Le Troubadour', which was a fairy ballet choreographed by Didelot and performed at the King Opera's House in London in August 1800. Jane Austen, 'Sir Charles Grandison', p.15. Newspapers advertised this ballet fifty three times between 18 April 1800 and 2 August 1800. These figures were obtained after an online search on *Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century Burney Newspaper Collections Online*, accessed on 15 July 2010. On July 19 1800, *The Times* advertised piano music that was composed by C.Bossi and adapted from the ballet. On the same date, *The Morning Chronicle* revealed that the piano piece 'Laura et Lenza' sold for 7s 6d, which was an expensive contrast with a collection of Handel's Overtures, selling for 3 shillings and a ballad entitled 'BlueBell of Scotland', which was valued at 1s 6d in the same advertisement. *The Times*, April 18, 1800, issue 4772. It perhaps indicates the popularity and exclusive nature of 'Laura et Lenza'. **Just like Austen's other piano pieces, the tune of 'Laura et Lenza' was arranged for the piano to cater for amateurs.** Jane Austen, 'Sir Charles Grandison', ed. by B.C.Southam (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981). This song does not appear in the Austen Family Music Collection. **If Act III of 'Sir Charles Grandison' was indeed composed in 1800, after the appearance of 'Laura et Lenza', it is plausible to argue that Richardson's influence on Austen's writing extended beyond the 1790s. If Austen did write this play, she would have composed Act III of 'Sir Charles Grandison' after she had drafted four of her major novels. Deirdre Le Faye argues that Austen started writing her smaller minor works in 1787. Le Faye adds that Austen probably starting writing *Elinor and Marianne* in 1795 (which became *Sense and Sensibility* in November 1797). In 1798, Austen possibly started writing *Susan* (which became *Northanger Abbey*). In 1796, Austen started writing *First Impressions* (which became *Pride and Prejudice* and was initially rejected for publication in November 1797). Deirdre Le Faye, 'Chronology of Jane Austen's Life' in Edward Copeland & Juliet McMaster, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp.1-11, 1-3.**

¹² Jane Austen, *Sir Charles Grandison*, ed. by Brian Southam (Oxford: Clarendon, 1980).

¹³ I am referring to Mary Crawford's manipulative harp-playing in *Mansfield Park*, which was discussed in chapter one.

presenting music to facilitate courtship, the play shows a woman playing the harpsichord to help the heroine to forget an inappropriate suitor. To raise Harriet's spirits, Charlotte Grandison performs 'Laure and Lenze' on the harpsichord. This section in Act III is narrated as follows:

MISS GRANDISON What is the matter, Harriet? What makes you so dull, child? I shall take care not to leave you by yourself again in a hurry, if, on my return, I am to find these gloomy fits have taken hold of you. Come I will play you my favourite tune, Laure and Lenze.

MISS BYRON I was thinking of Sir Hargrave Pollexfen, but be so good as to play my tune.

MISS GRANDISON I will directly.

*She goes to the harpsichord and plays. After she has done playing, she comes to Miss Byron.*¹⁴

The performance is reported very briefly by means of stage directions. In the original handwritten manuscript held by Chawton House Library, the conjunction 'but' is scribbled above the rest of the sentence, as an afterthought, in the line: 'I was thinking of Sir Hargrave Pollexfen *but* be so good as to play my tune.'¹⁵ Considering this adjustment to the script, it is reasonable to conclude that, instead of separating the two independent clauses with a full stop, Austen later decided to join the two exclamatory phrases with a transitional word. By adding the word 'but', which acts as a pause between the two phrases, Austen decided to purposefully link Harriet's thoughts about Sir Hargrave with her desire for music. The inclusion of 'but' more closely links the lovesick emotion with the remedy of music and more vehemently confirms music's function as a means of emotional consolation.

When considering why Charlotte's song was included in Act III, B.C.Southam suggests that a musical member of the Austen family might have irritated the others by

¹⁴ Jane Austen, *Sir Charles Grandison*, Act 3, scene 1, p.46. The italics indicate the stage directions.

¹⁵ My emphasis.

repeatedly performing this song, which he speculates might be intended as a private joke.¹⁶ Despite music's perfunctory appearance, music has four important functions in the play.

First, music acts as a form of emotional consolation for Harriet in 'Sir Charles Grandison', which matches a practice in *Sense and Sensibility* and *Persuasion* where music consoles both heroines, offering them a space for contemplation when they are mourning an absent suitor. While Charlotte performs the tune to distract Harriet from an unsuitable suitor, Marianne Dashwood and Ann Elliot perform to relieve their own sadness in *Sense and Sensibility* and *Persuasion*. As *Persuasion* was composed and published after Austen probably penned 'Sir Charles Grandison' in 1800, this could represent a development of female autonomy and an increased celebration of music as a tool for women.¹⁷ As I have previously argued, the function of music in Austen's novels changed from the juvenilia, where music frequently appeared in the form of a competition, to its role as a form of self-consolation in *Persuasion*. In this play, music has moved away from its associations as a form of female competition and shows its potential as an emotional remedy. In both types of performance, music functions to ease the pain of romantic separation. This representation of music as a consolatory device for woman differs from its presentation in Samuel Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753) where music is not an emotional remedy for the heroine. Instead it unites the hero with his heroine.

Second, the song's inclusion in 'Sir Charles Grandison' gestures at a second narrative and proves Austen's knowledge of the plot of Richardson's novel. Even though the piece does not appear in the Austen family's music collection, their collection includes a cheaper ballad entitled 'Crazy Jane', which cost 1s 6d.¹⁸ *The Times* advertised this piece

¹⁶Jane Austen, 'Sir Charles Grandison', ed. by B.C.Southam (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981), p.16.

¹⁷ Austen did not start writing *Persuasion* until 8 August 1815. Deirdre Le Faye, 'Chronology of Jane Austen's Life', p.10.

¹⁸ On 19 July 1800, *The Morning Chronicle* revealed that the piano piece 'Laura et Lenza' sold for 7s 6d, which was an expensive contrast with a collection of Handel's Overtures, selling for 3 shillings and a ballad entitled 'BlueBell of

in the same sentence as ‘Laura et Lenza.’ This makes it probable that the piece of music was known to Austen.¹⁹ Thematically, the narratives of Richardson’s novel and the ballet are very similar. In ‘Laura et Lenza: Le Troubadour’, the lovers, Laura and Lenza, have to negotiate an obstruction, Sir Edward, before they can marry just as Harriet Byron had to wait for Grandison’s love for Clementina to fade.²⁰ Similarly, in Austen’s play, Harriet must turn from Sir Hargrave Pollexfen’s unsteady romantic declarations to Grandison’s virtuous love.²¹ The protagonists venture to a castle in the ballet, which is a second setting, while Richardson’s hero journeys to Italy. When Charlotte plays ‘Laure and Lenze’ on the harpsichord to distract Harriet from Sir Pollexfen, Austen uses the music to help the heroine to forget an inappropriate suitor. Music helps the heroine to overcome the same courtship obstacle as the one detailed in the ballet’s own narrative. The music enables readers to empathise with the heroine’s plight.

Third, the song that appears in Act II of the ballet is also in Italian, which gestures at Grandison’s encounter with Italy in the novel and his failure to secure the Italian Clementina’s affections. The way in which Austen effectively translates the Italian song title into English from its original ‘Laura et Lenza’ to ‘Laure and Lenze’ could, on some level, match Richardson’s reluctance to embrace other nationalities and present the difficulty of including foreign themes or subjects into an English narrative.²²

Scotland’, which was valued at 1s 6d in the same advertisement. These figures were obtained after an online search on *Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century Burney Newspaper Collections Online*, accessed on 15 July 2010.

¹⁹ *The Times*, April 18, 1800, issue 4772. ‘Crazy Jane’ can be located in Chawton House Library: MS J. Pr. Mus. 2, 52.

²⁰ Charles Louis Didelot, *Laura et Lenza: ou le Troubadour, A Grand Ballet in Two Acts* (London, 1800).

²¹ In the ballet’s narrative, Laura’s unwavering and uncompromising virtue is tested along with her steady love for Lenza, just as the virtues of Harriet Byron are constantly reviewed in *Sir Charles Grandison*.

²² **Austen spells the song title incorrectly in this play, referring to it as ‘Laure and Lenze’ instead of ‘Laura et Lenza’. If this is not a copying error, this implies that Austen did not wish to take the role of music too seriously. Besides, Austen mischievously misspelt a song title in one of her letters for comic effect. She deliberately misquoted the first line of Sir Henry Rawley Bishop’s glee, a part-song that celebrates the figure of Bragela from the Scottish *Poems of Ossian*. The line of his chorus should say the following: ‘Strike the harp in praise of Bragela’. In her letter to Cassandra, Austen substitutes this line for the alliterative tongue-twister of ‘prike pe Parp pin praise pof Prapela’, not only mocking the tone of the song and its heroine, but musing on the authenticity of the verse by creating a nonsense version. Austen would have been aware of the correct lyrics of this song as the song appeared in Chawton: Chawton House Library: MS J: Pr. Mus4/33. In the two cases, Austen chose to pun on the song’s**

Unlike Richardson, Austen establishes women as the ideal musical performers in her play and in fact excludes men from being participants. Again this matches a trend in *Sense and Sensibility* and *Emma*, where the playing of duets by a male and female performer is discouraged. Austen's other novels display musically accomplished women too.

These important functions of music in 'Sir Charles Grandison' not only point to similar practices in Austen's novels but demonstrate her desire to consider the relationship that Richardson sets up between music and courtship in *Sir Charles Grandison*. She uses the play and her knowledge of *Sir Charles Grandison* to indicate music's importance as a space for women. To emphasise the extent to which Austen intended music to be a female space, the chapter will turn to an analysis of Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison* and compare it with Sarah Harriet Burney's *Geraldine Fauconberg*, which also confines music-making to the feminine sphere and demonstrates the relevance of music in male-authored novels too. Secondly, Austen, Richardson and Sarah Harriet Burney present music-making scenes, which advocate the curtailment of excessive sensibility before marriage; a practice that was borrowed from Richardson.

Richardson's epic novel *Sir Charles Grandison* shows a variety of music-making scenes that develop the courtship between the hero and heroine. Brigitte Glaser rightly argues that 'the body was of great importance in Richardson's works both in its presence and its absences'.²³ I would add that musical scenes show body language and intensifying emotion, while simultaneously conveying the increasing emphasis placed on promoting a

title to entertain the performers and audience, just as she aimed to amuse Cassandra in her letter. Furthermore, Austen employed humour to make music consciously reflect what it was: a source of entertainment. *Jane Austen's Letters*, Letter 71 to Cassandra Austen, 25 April 1811, p.183. Danielle Grover, 'The Role of Music and Songs in Jane Austen's Juvenilia & Letters' in *Sensibilities* 36 (2008), 42-56, p.47.

²³ Brigitte Glaser, *The Body in Samuel Richardson's Clarissa: Contexts of and Contradictions in the Development of Character* (Heidelberg: Heidelberg University Press, 1992), p.58.

virtuous version of sensibility in the novel. This chapter argues that Richardson presents music-making scenes as a forum for displaying body language, which in turn conveys characters' thoughts and feelings throughout *Sir Charles Grandison*. In the final volume of the novel, both the mobile body and instantaneousness of emotions play a vivid role in a music-making scene:

We all seated ourselves round him [...] How did our friends look upon one another, as the excellent man proceeded!—I was astonished. It was happy. [My aunt and Lucy] each took one of my hands. Tears of joy ran down my cheeks. Every one's eyes congratulated me. Every tongue but mine encored him. I was speechless. Again, he obliged us. I thought at the time, I had a foretaste of the joys of heaven! How sweet the incense of praise from a husband.²⁴

Running tears, looks, cheeks, eyes and tongues pervade this passage, which show the extent to which the body displayed emotional responses to music-making. This scene directly contrasts earlier episodes where emotional response is more measured. Harriet then becomes even more animated when Grandison approaches her after his song: '[Grandison] approached with me tender modesty; as if abashed by the applause he met with. But seeing me affected, he was concerned, I withdrew with my aunt and Lucy. He followed me. I then threw myself at his feet; embracing his knees and had speech been lent me, would have offered him the fervent vows of a heart overflowing with Love and Gratitude' (III, 275).

Only when the relationship between Harriet Byron and Grandison is sufficiently developed and their courtship has blossomed into marriage do readers feel the full drama of the effect of music, which is an important activity that unites the hero and heroine. Richardson thus confines this physical description of music-making and its effects to the end of the novel after marriage. Centrally involved in courtship, music becomes a catalyst that deepens the relationship between Grandison and Harriet Byron, but responses to music

²⁴Samuel Richardson, *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753), ed. by Jocelyn Harris, 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), III, 275. All subsequent page numbers will refer to this edition.

are clearly gendered as it is the woman, Harriet, whose emotional reactions intensify during these scenes.

Music-making was one of the ways in which Richardson could define the changing role of women and their fraught relationship with men, a relationship which was altered through the process of courtship and ultimately marriage. In *Sir Charles Grandison*, Richardson merges gendered roles through a process that Claudia L. Johnson refers to as the 'masculinisation of female gender traits.'²⁵ By presenting music-making as a male, as well as female, activity, Richardson widens the feminine sphere and gives men the authority to cross over to this space. In line with Poovey and Armstrong's persuasive arguments about the validity of conduct books as historical sources, I add that *Sir Charles Grandison* adopts and predicts the way in which these sources represent music as a way of sculpting feminine identity.²⁶ Creating a link between music and courtship, Margaret Anne Doody convincingly locates music-making as a forum for intensifying emotions in *Sir Charles Grandison*.²⁷ Interpreting the enjoyment of music as an expression of a well-ordered soul, Doody links music with exemplary morals:

Music is presented favourably throughout [*Sir Charles Grandison*]; there is no suggestion that it is inimical to the moral life. On the contrary, an enjoyment of music is one of the expressions of the well-ordered soul. Musical allusions are also important in the novel's structure; many of the most important junctures in the action are signalled by detailed references to music.²⁸

Although Richardson published *Sir Charles Grandison* before the debate about female education was at its peak, music's association with femininity was already evident by the 1750s. In 1751, John Arbuthnot insulted the genre of opera by suggesting that it encourages effeminacy. Every definition of effeminate in Johnson's Dictionary refers to the

²⁵ Claudia L. Johnson, *Equivocal Beings: Politics, Gender and Sentimentality in the 1790s: Wollstonecraft, Radcliffe, Burney, Austen* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995), p.14.

²⁶ Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), Mary Poovey, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer: Ideology as Style in The Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley and Jane Austen* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

²⁷ Margaret Ann Doody, *A Natural Passion: A Study of the Novels of Samuel Richardson* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1974).

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.353.

act of being womanly. Johnson defines effeminacy as ‘having the qualities of a woman; womanish; soft to an unmanly degree’.²⁹ Arbuthnot associates music with the effeminate in a rant about opera, where he refers to it as ‘that source of Expense, Luxury, Idleness and Sloths and Effeminacy.’³⁰ The close relationship between music and effeminacy is reinforced in polemical treatises of the time, which positioned music-making as an exclusively female activity. Although visiting an opera is different from domestic music performance, such an opinion expresses a common prejudice that music could be coupled with effeminacy. In a similar manner, in 1747 Campbell’s *The London Tradesman*, which discusses different trades practised in the eighteenth century, vilified the music profession by associating it with effeminacy as though it were a mere female accomplishment: ‘The Grave and Rigid of all Ages have looked upon Music as of no public Utility: They imagine it effeminates the Mind, enervates the more Manly Faculties’.³¹ These sources therefore show a solid relationship between amateur music-making and femininity in the earlier Eighteenth Century.

Richardson’s letters provide sustained explorations into the formulation of characters in his novels and show the impetus that he gave his correspondents who frequently commented on his writing, characterisation and the plot. Hester Chapone’s conventional views on female education in *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind* were clearly known to Richardson as he frequently corresponded with Chapone between 1750 and 1756.³² Chapone referred to Richardson as a ‘kind friend and excellent instructor’,

²⁹ Samuel Johnson’s *A Dictionary of the English Language* (London, 1755)

³⁰ John Arbuthnot, *The Miscellaneous Works of the Late Dr Arbuthnot*, 2 vols (Glasgow, 1751), II, 33.

³¹ R. Campbell., *The London Tradesman. Being a Compendious View to all Trades, Professions, Arts, Both Liberal and Mechanic* (London, 1747), p.89.

³² As chapter one stated, *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind* was an educational treatise that discussed an ideal system of education for young women. Such a treatise discussed the benefits of female accomplishments, which Mary Wollstonecraft criticised. Chapone’s treatise solidly locates music as an ideal female amusement with no reference to its practice amongst men. In Richardson’s letters to Chapone, he often laid out his plots and ideas for characterisation to Chapone for her approval John Carroll, ed., *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1964), Letter to Chapone, 25 March 1751, p. 180 and Letter to Hester Mulso, 3 September 1751, pp. 189-190.

valuing the guidance that his letters offered.³³ In a letter to Lady Bradshaigh, Richardson reveals that Chapone approves of his characterisation of Harriet Byron: ‘Miss Mulso [Chapone’s maiden name] is of opinion that no man can be drawn that will appear to so much advantage as Harriet [Byron]’³⁴ Richardson reassures Chapone about the fate of Harriet in his novel, uncovering his thoughts on women’s role thus:

To comfort you [Chapone] in relation to Harriet’s difficulties: I intend to make her shine by her cordial approbation, as she goes along, of every good action of her beloved. She is humbled by her love [...] and when she shines out the girl worthy of the man [I intend to] not exalt, but reward her.³⁵

Richardson’s comment promotes Harriet’s conventional conduct and sees her marriage as a reward. Doody argues that Richardson’s primary purpose was to write a courtship novel for a moral purpose when she claims that ‘Richardson intended to instruct, and, in his gallery of marriages and courtships, to point out right and wrong behaviour according to social duties, and particularly according to the standards of behaviour relevant to women.’³⁶

Through Harriet Byron’s tempered responses to music-making scenes, Richardson promotes female modesty and the conventional style of heroine that his letters idealised. In Paul Goring’s book, which considers the relationship between the body and politeness, he argues that ‘Richardson emblematises virtue through the somatic expressions of idealised characters’.³⁷ Harriet’s body language and display of emotions in music-making scenes reveal her modesty, so music becomes a channel for this display of virtue. Before a

³³ *The Works of Mrs Chapone Containing I Letters on the Improvements of the Mind II Miscellanies III Correspondence with Mr Richardson. IV Letters to Miss Carter, V Fugitive Pieces to Which is Prefixed An Account of Her Life and Character Drawn Up By Her Own Family*, 4 vols (London, 1807), II, Letter to Mr Richardson, November 10, 1750.

³⁴ *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*, Letter to Lady Bradshaigh, 24 March, 1751, p.180.

³⁵ Ibid, Letter to Hester Mulso, 3 Sept, 1751, p.189-190. Chapone’s approval of Richardson’s characterisation is further evident in another letter, which comments that Richardson’s characters are drawn ‘as patterns of virtue.’ *The Works of Mrs Chapone*, Letter to Mr Richardson, October 12, 1750, p. 31.

³⁶ Margaret Ann Doody, *A Natural Passion*, p.309.

³⁷ Paul Goring, *The Rhetoric of Sensibility in Eighteenth-Century Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p.147.

courtship has begun to develop between Harriet Byron and Grandison, emotions are restrained:

They made me play on the harpsichord: and after one lesson, they besought Sir Charles Grandison to sing to my playing. He would not, he said, deny any request that was made him on that day. He sung. He has a mellow manly voice, and great command of it. This introduced a little concert. Mr Beauchamp took the violin; Lord L, the bass-viol; Lord G the German-flute; Lord W sung base; Lady L, Lady G and the Earl joined in the chorus. The song was from *Alexander's Feast*. (II, 345)

A few scenes later, Harriet Byron's interaction with Grandison intensifies: 'He [Grandison] prevailed on me to give him a lesson on the harpsichord. Lady L and Lady G played. We *tried* to play. I should rather say. He himself took the violin and afterwards sat down to the harpsichord for one short lesson. He was not known to be such a master'(p.374).

Grandison's willingness to teach Harriet the harpsichord already shows his interest in her and anticipates his later position as her mentor. Despite Harriet's frustration about her inability to master the instrument, which she shares with Grandison who 'was not known to be such a master', Grandison pays Harriet more attention compared with the previous episode.

When Grandison performs with Harriet, after he has failed to pursue Clementina later in the novel, Harriet openly acknowledges Grandison's 'sweet' manner and her 'satisfaction' in a scene before he proposes to her: 'I [Harriet] was once a little out in an Italian song. In what sweet manner did [Grandison] put me in! touching the keys himself, for a minute or two. Every one wished him to proceed; but he gave up to me, in so polite a manner, that we all were satisfied with his excuses' (III, 51-2). In this scene, Grandison's failure to help Harriet perform an Italian song can be interpreted as a metaphor for his failure to alter the resolutions of his former Italian suitor, Clementina, during his visit to Italy. As Sylvia Marks claims, the Italian section of the novel provides a typical description

of problems an Englishman faces when abroad on a Grand tour.³⁸ Music is a metaphorical embodiment of this struggle.

Just as chapter two demonstrated how Sarah Harriet and Frances Burney presented a problematic relationship between national identity and music-making and chapter three showed how Owenson and Staël promoted the diversity of other nations in the national romance genre, it is interesting that in the mid Eighteenth Century Richardson uses a music-making scene to show wariness about foreign cultures in a manner that is resistant to the aims of later national romance novels by Owenson and Staël. A suspicion about Italy continues when Charlotte Grandison describes herself and her husband as a warring Italian opera couple in a conversation with Harriet: ‘It was but yesterday that [Charlotte’s husband] attempted a tune of contempt, upon my warbling an Italian air; An opera couple, we! Is it not charming to sing *at* (I cannot say *to*) each other, when we have a mind to be spiteful?’ (II, 498) This further associates Italy with emotional difficulty and conflict.

The pleasure that Harriet feels in becoming Grandison’s wife is played out in another music-making scene:

[Grandison] returned with a violin and struck up, as he entered, a minuet-tune. Harriet, my love! Called out my grandmamma. Without any other intimation, the most agreeable of men, in an instant, was on his feet, reached his hat and took me out, [...] My grandmamma afterwards called me for one lesson on the harpsichord and they made me sing. (III, 94)

Grandison joins in the performance without waiting for an invitation but dances with Harriet ‘in an instant’, which is an intimate act. Music consolidates their union as a band of

³⁸ Sylvia Kasey Marks, *Sir Charles Grandison: The Compleat Conduct Book* (Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1986), p.57.

five hundred and twenty five musicians play at their wedding and Harriet is thrilled to encounter a music room at their marital home.³⁹

B) Music and Gender in *Sir Charles Grandison*

[Grandison] must not appear [in *Sir Charles Grandison*] till, at a royal cavalcade, the drums, trumpets, fifes and tabrets, and many a fine fellow, have preceded him, and set the spectators agog, as I may call it.⁴⁰

Harriet's confidence and delight in her new identity as a married woman initially reflect Richardson's conventional politics as he promotes marriage and men as mentors. Gender relations, however, are far more complicated in this novel. For a start, Richardson defies the conventions of conduct books by positioning the hero as a performer rather than merely an observer of domestic music-making. While Austen positions only unsteady male characters, such as Willoughby and Frank Churchill, as musical performers, Richardson happily concedes that a hero can be both musical and virtuous. From analysing music-making it is evident, as Doody argues, that Richardson is creating a distinctive type of hero.⁴¹ As strong associations existed between femininity and amateur music-making in 1750, this cannot be explained by the lapse in time between the publication of *Sir Charles Grandison* in 1753 and the later publication dates of *Emma* and *Sense and Sensibility*. As Barker and Chalus argue in essays which comment on the fluidity and flexibility of gender relations, gender can be conceptualised and employed in multiple ways.⁴² Through Richardson's portrayal of music-making, he is involved in presenting a more fluid version of masculinity that allows men to be musically accomplished. By challenging the boundaries between genders through the promotion of music-making as a transgender activity, the category of gender becomes unstable. While Judith Butler argues that gender is an act which can be performed through

³⁹ This number exceeded the five hundred and twenty five vocal and instrumental performers that played in Handel's commemoration concert in London. See Harris' introduction in Samuel Richardson, *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753), ed. by Jocelyn Harris (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972).

⁴⁰ *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*, Letter to Lady Bradshaigh, 24 March, 1751, p.179.

⁴¹ Sylvia Kasey Marks, *Sir Charles Grandison: The Compleat Conduct Book*, p.242.

⁴² *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, Representations and Responsibilities*, ed. by Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus (London: Longman, 1997), p.26.

stylised displays of the body, I continue to argue that music-making cements the performance and construction of femininity in Austen's novels.⁴³ In *Sir Charles Grandison*, however, men display this performative act rather than perform their masculinity by responding to music. This means that conceptions of gender are fractured in the novel, despite arguments by critics such as Margaret Ann Doody and Sylvia Kasey Marks that Richardson's novel adheres to existing moral codes.⁴⁴

In his chapter on male music-making, Leppert acknowledges that the violin and flute were the more popular masculine instruments while women played the keyboard. He added that it was extremely rare for parents to encourage a boy's musical education.⁴⁵ The gendered use of musical practices, Leppert argued, contributed to the development of social roles and social structures.⁴⁶ By allowing his hero to sing and perform on the keyboard in volume four, Richardson allows Grandison to trespass into a feminine sphere, however unsuccessfully. Initially, Richardson ignores these conventions by opening up the sphere of feminine music-making to men. By acknowledging that his hero is 'not such a master' of music however, Richardson distances Grandison from professional musicianship, which, as earlier chapters have argued, was not considered a respectable profession. In the final volume, Cousin James and other men perform their own music where Richardson positions music as an appropriate leisure activity for men:

Several of the neighbouring gentlemen, [Grandison] told us, are performers; and he hopes to engage them as opportunities shall offer. My dear Dr Bartlett, said he, your soul is harmony: I doubt not but all these are in order—'May I ask you, my Harriet?

⁴³ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1999), p.43.

⁴⁴ Sylvia Kasey Marks argued that *Sir Charles Grandison* advocated correct moral conduct by representing 'the most complete and compelling guide in its time to the duties, dilemmas and moral choices faced by every household'. She positions the novel as conforming to conventional moral codes of the century: 'One of the more prominent subjects treated in *Sir Charles Grandison* is that of courtship [...] practical questions of how a courtship is to be conducted between people of different ranks, how forward to be and how relatives may be involved all add to the complexity and completeness of Richardson's last work.' Sylvia Kasey Marks, *Sir Charles Grandison: The Compleat Conduct Book*, p.21, Margaret Ann Doody, *A Natural Passion: A Study of the Novels of Samuel Richardson* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1974), p.353.

⁴⁵ Richard Leppert, *Music and Image*, p.107.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.107.

pointing to the harpsichord. I instantly sat down at it. It is a fine instrument. Lord G took up a violin, my uncle a bass-viol; Mr Deane a German-flute, and we had a little concert. (III, 274)

Violins, Bass-viols and German flutes were performed on by the three men, while Harriet performs on a traditionally female instrument. While men in *Sir Charles Grandison* have the freedom to alternate between ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ instruments, Harriet and Charlotte Grandison are confined to singing and performing on the keyboard. In fact, Charlotte Grandison identifies the harpsichord as a symbol of her feminine identity, but is aware that it is also a form of entrapment and subject to male control. Charlotte’s snipe that her husband is too good-natured to his ‘bird’ lessens the severity of this entrapment though: ‘My Lord [Charlotte’s husband], to be sure, has dominion over his bird. He can choose her cage. She has nothing to do but sit and sing in it—whether her instrument is mended and in tune. He has but one fault. He is *too good-natured* to his bird.’ (II, 505)

While Charlotte’s comment on Lord G’s good-nature points to a light-hearted tone, the use of music to frame comparisons between women and trapped birds was not uncommon in the period. In Austen’s *Mansfield Park*, the narrator compares Maria Bertram’s stifling marriage with the trapped starling in Sterne’s *Sentimental Journey*.⁴⁷ In *Mansfield Park*, while the Bertram party are waiting for Mr Rushworth to fetch a key to open a door to allow them to continue their countryside walk, Maria comments that ‘that iron gate, that ha-ha, give me a feeling of restraint and hardship, I cannot get out, as the starling said’ (p.127). The sense of entrapment that Maria experiences symbolises the feeling of imprisonment that causes her to elope. In Laurence Sterne’s *Sentimental Journey*, Yorick comments on the difficulty of releasing the imprisoned starling that he finds at The Bastille: ‘I fear poor creature, said I, I cannot set thee at liberty [...] I never had my

⁴⁷ Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park* (1814), ed. by Tony Tanner (London: Penguin, 1996), chapter x, p.127. See Tanner’s note on p. 460.

affections more tenderly awakened.’⁴⁸ The sympathy for the trapped starling in *Sentimental Journey* is similar to both Richardson and Austen’s interest in the plight of trapped woman.⁴⁹ Richard Leppert comments that images of birds were ‘untroubled and unproblematic statements about women, their relationships with their husbands and their society and roles allowed them by dominant culture’.⁵⁰ Although Charlotte battles with feeling trapped and Lord G’s apparent indifference, her good humour implies that she is not badly treated.

Even though Charlotte may have jokingly referred to a caged bird, music is not under female ownership in *Sir Charles Grandison*, which contrasts Austen’s novels with the play ‘Sir Charles Grandison’ where all of the key musicians are female. In *Sir Charles Grandison*, Lord G. smashes Charlotte’s harpsichord and insists on joining in her music-making, thus violating the female music-making space.⁵¹ Grandison’s participation in Harriet’s music-making and the inclusion of a group of amateur male musicians that perform in the novel provide further evidence that music is not gendered (although the division of instrumentation can be defined as such). While Richardson defies conventions of certain educational tracts here, which located music-making as a female activity, his defiance is complicated by his conventional representation of musical woman. Women only sing or perform on keyboard instruments, as educational treatises prescribed. While the representation of women in this respect is quite conservative, men are granted freedom to access activities associated with the female sphere. Richardson does subvert conventions of

⁴⁸ Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy by Mr Yorrik*, 2 vols (London, 1775), II, 26.

⁴⁹ Trapped women were the subjects of illustrations, included in Richard Leppert’s *Music and Image*. Leppert, who discusses several paintings that link musically performing women to caged birds analyses an illustration entitled *Girl at Spinnet with an Owl in a Cage* and claims that the woman’s sad face watching the bird’s response to her music reflects her empathy with the bird’s plight. The woman is dressed in formal and beautiful attire, casually leaning on a music book with a wind instrument in her hand; an instrument which was seen as unsuitable for female performers. Wistfully gazing at the bird, the woman feels trapped and music appears to be a way of releasing her frustration. Yet the woman half-smiles in a way that reflects Charlotte’s light-hearted attitude. The portrait is by Richard Houston (1721-75) after Francis Hayman, *Hearing* (1753), New Haven, CT, Yale Centre for British Art, Paul Mellon Fund. Richard Leppert, *Music and Image*, p.193.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.193.

⁵¹ Samuel Richardson, *Sir Charles Grandison*, III, 505.

conduct books, which makes him a more complex author than the didactic writer that Doody and Marks present. By granting men access to an activity associated with women, Richardson places different conditions on their intervention by separating men from the music profession, ensuring that no musical man is an expert and making sure that they perform on instruments, which are specifically classified as ‘masculine’. Richardson’s decision to present music-making as an acceptable male activity and one that promotes male, over female, freedom starkly contrasts with the way in which Austen later criticises male involvement in duets in *Emma*.

Other male authors writing at the time of Richardson also present music as androgynous. Henry Fielding in *The Life of Mr Jonathan Wild the Great* (1754) and *The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews* (1762) are two examples. While Richardson confines Grandison’s music-making to the domestic space, Fielding is even more radical in allowing his heroes to become professional musicians. In Fielding’s novels, music is explored as a professional activity amongst men.⁵² In chapter XV of the former novel, Julian, who played the fiddle with ‘tolerable skill’ decides to become a professional musician but laments that his earnings would be insufficient if he ‘depended entirely on the Generosity’ of his hearers. Because of this he and his mother are forced to steal. Julian capitalises on the fashion for musical consumption, aiming as he does to affect others with his music-making and therefore earn a living. Similarly Joseph Andrews in *The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews* acquires skills in music for his social benefit:

[Andrews] applied most of his leisure Hours to Music, in which he greatly improved himself; and became so perfect a Connoisseur in that Art, that he led the Opinion of all the other Footmen at an Opera, and they never condemned or applauded a single Song contrary to his Approbation or Dislike.⁵³

⁵² Henry Fielding, *The History of Joseph Andrews, and his Friend Mr Abraham Adams*, 2 vols, 6th edn. (London, 1762), *The Life of Mr Jonathan Wild The Great. A Journey from this World to the Next* (London, 1762).

⁵³ Henry Fielding, *The History of Joseph Andrews, and his Friend Mr Abraham*, I, 12.

Andrews initially views the music profession as an easy career option: ‘For Music, I imagined I could easily acquire the Reputation of it; for I had heard some of my School-fellows pretend to knowledge in Operas, without being able to sing or play on the fiddle’ (p.23). While *Jonathan Wild* illustrates some of the problems and prejudices about the music profession, which occur in *The London Tradesman*, Fielding’s *The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews* shows a character who capitalises on culture’s obsession with musical conversation and knowledge.⁵⁴ Although Richardson allows his hero to partake in music-making, Fielding encourages his heroes to go further by exploring society’s prejudice against musicians. While Fielding’s Jonathan Wild was able to become a musician relatively easily, Thicknesse’s Euterpe and Burney’s Juliet faced prejudice in their attempts to move from an amateur to a professional status, which demonstrates exactly how far gender restricts professional opportunities.

To conclude this section, this chapter makes two central arguments about *Sir Charles Grandison*. The first is that music has a vital function in developing female identity as women perform with and for men in a process that leads them to marriage. Harriet Byron’s changing response to music in these scenes indicates that, for a woman, sentiment is more permissible once married and also posits that a woman’s marital state limits how far she can be active in such music-making scenes in the novel. Richardson imposes conditions on the presence of sentiment. Such conditions are gender-specific as Grandison’s response to sentiment is more consistent compared with that of Harriet. Music becomes a platform for revealing the constraints on women before they marry.

The second argument is that Richardson widens the feminine sphere and subverts gender roles by placing men as both observers and participators in musical performance

⁵⁴Campbell, R., *The London Tradesman. Being a Compendious View to all Trades, Professions, Arts, Both Liberal and Mechanic, Now Practised In the Cities of Westminster* (London, 1747).

during an age where amateur music-making was linked with femininity. Richardson's conventional construction of female identity, which relies on traditions upheld in educational treatises that advocated accomplishments, is at odds with the way in which he grants the hero the feminine quality of being musically accomplished. The distancing of the hero from the music profession and his performance on masculine instruments means that male involvement in music-making is not feminised. Instead men appropriate the female music-making sphere. In this sense, *Sir Charles Grandison* differs from Austen's novels where men are ridiculed for invading the female musical territory if they do more than watch and admire. Furthermore, Austen presents music as a stronger tool for women than Richardson does; it is a form of self-consolation in *Persuasion*, a means of distracting women from an inappropriate suitor in 'Sir Charles Grandison' and a form of entertainment. In *Sir Charles Grandison*, Harriet responds to music in a manner that shows her admiration and respect for Grandison. Harriet does not use music as an emotional remedy when Grandison is pursuing Clementina. Music thus becomes a more clearly defined female space in Austen's later fiction compared with its role in Richardson's novel. With the exception of *Sense and Sensibility*, the level of sensibility displayed in characters' responses to music is consistently restrained in Austen's novels while Richardson's novel dramatises the body more explicitly once female sentiment is legitimised by marriage. Music is always involved in furthering the relationship between the hero and heroine in Richardson's work.

C) Women Performing Music to Initiate Courtship

Phebe Gibbes' *Woman of Fashion or The History of Lady Diana Dormer* (1767) takes a different approach to *Sir Charles Grandison* as it shows forceful women who perform music in a desperate attempt to secure a suitor. Gibbes compares the fashionable Lady Dormer's self-serving musical performance with the more modest performance of the

heroine, Henrietta. Early on in the novel, the narrator establishes Henrietta's healthy attitude towards her musical studies: 'What [Henrietta] has lost in modish Accomplishments, is gained in modest Diffidence; her native graces supply the Place of those she might have acquired, and, at the same Time, preserve her from that vanity so common in handsome young People of our Sex.'⁵⁵ In contrast with modest Henrietta, Lady Diana Dormer manipulatively and seductively performs music in front of the eligible bachelor, Mr Piercey. Music is employed solely as a courtship tool here. Henrietta's Aunt narrates:

Finding [Mr Piercey] had a Taste for Music, [Lady Dormer] begun to display her Eloquence on that subject [...] then tripping to the Harpsichord [asked]—"do you remember this Air playing?"—Piercy understands but little of Gallantry; he did not so much as rise from his Seat to listen—"O though Insensible!" Cried she, for whom even Music has no Charms. "Come here—which is your favourite air? I have a violent Passion for Music this Evening"—he approached.—"I resign my Seat to you", said she, "since I know you are Master of the Instrument.—Play me that charming Duet", [she said] pointing to it—"perhaps I may accompany you with my Voice".—He performed with his usual Taste and Elegance: She sung agreeably, though intolerably affected.—On his playing one of the Symphonies she turned to the Widow, who stood near her, "Ah, Je suis ravie—mon dieu, qu'il est charmant!"—"You don't understand French", Sir, smiling.—"Not at present", answered he, in that same Tone. With a pretty Air, she reached over his shoulder to turn the Leaves—their hands met.—A Beau would have seized an opportunity so favourable, for pressing one of the finest white Hands in the World, but, as I before said, he has but little Notion of fashionable gallantry. He suffered her to withdraw it would the least interruption.—Her insinuating Coquetry had no Effect on him.⁵⁶

Lady Dormer's fruitless attempts to boastfully display her talents are laughable as she trips on her way to the harpsichord and her over-enthusiasm is reflected by the rushed and fragmented prose. Desperate to perform Piercey's favourite air, Dormer attempted to 'display her eloquence' about music, rebukes Piercey for not rising from his seat and responds disappointingly when he rapidly withdraws his hand from hers. Indifferent to Dormer's efforts, Mr Piercey does not rise to listen to her and is unaffected by her performance. The narrator's final statement that 'her insinuating coquetry had no effect on

⁵⁵ Phoebe Gibbes, *The Woman of Fashion: Or, The History of Lady Diana Dormer*, 2 vols (London, 1767), I, 46.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, I, 82.

him' disapprovingly states that Dormer's attempts to use music as a courtship tool have failed miserably. Mr Piercey's close attention to Henrietta's musical performance is strikingly different:

[Mr Piercey] rose when the Song [by Lady Dormer] was finished, and with an Air of amiable Softness, taking Henrietta by the Hand, entreated her to oblige him in her Turn. She blushed.—'I ought not', said she modestly, 'to refuse, because I cannot excel'—'I shall play with great Disadvantage after her Ladyship; but there is some Merit in being humble enough to shew my Inferiority'. He led her to the instrument.—It was now my Lady's Turn to be inattentive.—She was suddenly seized with an Inclination to be talking to Penelope [...]. She continued chatting to her with an Appearance of Vivacity, till my Niece resumed her Place. (I, 83)

By rising with an 'air of amiable softness, taking Henrietta by the Hand' and turning her pages, Mr Piercey pays Henrietta more attention than Lady Dormer, who then responds jealously by turning away. Page-turning represents a form of intimacy and cooperation, which Hohl Trillini observes prefigures a subordinate form of pre-marital cooperation.⁵⁷

Gibbes shows two different responses to female music-making. The boastful Lady Dormer fails to secure a suitor after her self-seeking performance while Henrietta's music-making displays her bashful modesty and secures a husband. Performing music with a manipulative intent for courtship fails, while performing in an unassuming and modest way does not. The body language of Mr Piercey and the stark contrast between Lady Dormer and Henrietta is the primary way in which Gibbes criticises music when it is exploited for the purpose of courtship, yet paradoxically it is Henrietta's music-making that draws Piercey to Henrietta. Music, therefore, has a complex role in courtship as Gibbes argues that the attitude behind the music-making is more important than the actual display itself.

By presenting women who manipulate and exploit their musical talents, Gibbes is more radical than Richardson whose passive heroine is only permitted to respond dramatically to music after she is engaged. Later eighteenth-century novels by Austen,

⁵⁷ Regula Hohl Trillini, *The Gaze of the Listener: English Representations of Domestic Music-Making* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008), p.84.

Gibbes and Frances Burney are bolder about presenting more independent and forthright musical women who attempt to capitalise on their talents. Such authors, however, uniformly present the failure of women who perform music with the primary intention of securing courtship. Female characters such as Mary Crawford in *Mansfield Park* and Miss Brinville in *The Wanderer* do not even reach the first stage of courtship before the respective authors brush them aside.⁵⁸

Sir Walter Scott's *Waverley* (1814) presents the impressionable Waverley initially falling for Flora's seductive harp-playing, but this becomes constantly contrasted with the simpler rustic music-making of the heroine, Rose. The narrator justifies the exquisite delight that Waverley feels on encountering Flora's harp-playing in a scene that describes a similar pastoral background surrounding the harp-playing Mary Crawford in *Mansfield Park*. In *Waverley*, the narrator reports:

Few could have heard this lovely woman [Flora] with a voice where harmony was exalted by pathos, without exclaiming that the muse whom she invoked could never find a more appropriate representative [...] the wild feeling or romantic delight with which he heard the first few notes she drew from her instrument, amounted almost to a sense of pain. [Waverley] would not for worlds have quitted his place by her side; yet he almost longed for solitude, that he might decipher and examine at leisure the complication of emotions which now agitated his bosom [...] A few irregular strains introduced a prelude of a wild and peculiar tone, which harmonised well with the distant waterfall, and the soft sigh of the evening breeze in the rustling leaves of an aspen which overhung the seat of the fair harpist.⁵⁹

By contrast, Rose's simple appreciation for music is similar to that exhibited by Fanny Price as it is less showy and never seeks to dazzle its spectators:

⁵⁸ In Frances Burney's *The Wanderer*, Miss Brinville, did not want to learn music until 'an inclination of Sir Lyell Sycamore's, that nothing added so much grace to beauty as playing upon the harp', Frances Burney, *The Wanderer or Female Difficulties* (1814) ed. by Margaret Anne Doody, Robert L Mack and Peter Sabor, 5 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), II, 235. In *Mansfield Park*, the narrator states that 'a young woman, pretty, lively, with a harp as elegant as herself [Mary]; and placed near a window, cut down to the ground, and opening on a little lawn, surrounded by shrubs in the rich foliage of summer, was enough to catch any man's heart', Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park* (1814), ed. by Tony Tanner (London: Penguin, 1996), chapter vii, p.95.

⁵⁹ Sir Walter Scott, *Waverley* (1814), ed. by Andrew Hook (London: Penguin, 1972), pp.177-178.

[Rose] sung with great taste and feeling, and respect to the sense of what she uttered that might be proposed in example to ladies of much superior musical talent. [...] Her singing gave more pleasure to all the unlearned in music, and even to many of the learned, than could have been communicated by a much finer voice and more brilliant execution, unguided by the same delicacy of feeling. (p.111)

Despite being the superior musician, Flora's music-making does not have the authenticity or simplicity of Rose's. Comparisons can also be made between the rustic talent of Rose and that of Glorvina in *The Wild Irish Girl*. While Owenson celebrates an Irish native talent in contrast to a polished English music education, Scott also promotes Rose's performances through comparisons with Flora. In chapter 27, even Flora warns Waverley not to be allured by accomplishments. By showing Waverley's failed attempts to secure Flora, Scott condemns the superficial attractiveness of Flora's music-making, thereby presenting the rustic simplicity of Rose's performances as preferable. This is similar to the way in which Austen elevates Fanny Price's simple appreciation of music over Mary Crawford's self-indulgent harp-playing. Hohl Trillini aptly describes Mary as a 'consummate exploiter of the potentials of accomplishments.'⁶⁰ In the end, like Austen, Scott criticises music-making when it functions as a courtship trap and shows the danger of its allure. What follows is not Scott's rejection of music-making in itself but an implicit criticism of self-display.

Scott, Burney, Austen and Gibbes achieve the same end as they present these subversive women to criticise the manipulative use of music in a courtship setting. Instead of promoting women's independence and subversive nature, they use music to present the failure of such women's attempts to accelerate courtship. Returning to McFarlane's analogy, if music-making is seen as a language that can be spoken during courtship, female characters such as Mary Crawford, Flora and Lady Dormer speak more forcefully than characters such as Anne Elliot in *Persuasion* and Henrietta from *The Woman of Fashion*,

⁶⁰ Regula Hohl Trillini, *The Gaze of the Listener*, p.106.

who are more restrained and passive. Ultimately, this reticence is the trait that wins the heroes, which places limits on how powerful women could be during the courtship process if they wanted to ensure success in the marriage market. While providing the setting for this dialogue between the performer (woman) and observer (man), music is also subject to the codes of behaviour that temper the conditions under which it should be practised. Music provides women with the opportunity to perform their roles in courtship scenes but its potential is limited.

The Artless Lovers (1768) also showed music's limited role in the formulation of courtship.⁶¹ When Miss Grierson attempts to provoke the hero into confessing his romantic attachment for Lucy Wheatley, she shows him Lucy's musical instrument. Wentworth remarks:

[Lucy Wheatley] used, I [Miss Greierson] replied, to perform extremely well: she has the sweetest voice you ever heard. I can easily believe you, Madam, [Wentworth] replied, I have already found Miss Wheatley possessed of every charm, but that of being musical, which must still be an additional one, if such a heavenly voice can want any thing to make it more touching.⁶²

Wentworth comments that Lucy's musicality is an additional charm, rather than a deciding factor in their courtship. This insistence that musical talent is secondary to other charms is repeated later in the novel when Wentworth praises Lucy's diffidence and modesty by telling her: 'How amiable, how enchanting is that sweet diffidence [...] 'tis that which makes you so captivating. But I shall be equally charmed with you whether you sing or not; for your manner of excusing yourself is as winning as your compliance would be.'⁶³ Wentworth is more impressed with Lucy's 'manner of excusing' herself from her performance than the music that she performs. Lucy's response to her music-making matters more than her talent, just as Harriet Byron's modesty and diffidence was displayed

⁶¹ *The Artless Lovers: A Novel in a Series of Letters from Miss Lucy Wheatley in Town to Miss Annabell Grierson in the Country*, 2 vols (London, 1768).

⁶² *Ibid.*, I, 90.

⁶³ *The Artless Lovers*, II, 193.

in music-making scenes in *Sir Charles Grandison*. Austen, Burney, Scott, Gibbes and the author of *The Artless Lovers* all use such pairings to elevate specific traits in musical women. Austen elevates Fanny Price's attitude towards music over that exhibited by Mary Crawford, for example. Burney promotes Juliet's modest performances in *The Wanderer* while mocking those of Miss Brinville. Scott criticises Flora's showy harp-playing next to the more bashful Rose. The author of *The Artless Lovers* actually goes further by claiming that the hero is indifferent to the music performed. No other woman competes for Wentworth's affections musically. This puts more emphasis on Lucy's diffidence and modesty, which is exemplified (but not exclusively) by her attitude towards music-making, which attracts Wentworth.

In the anonymous novel, *Woodland Cottage* (1790), music also appears in the context of courtship but female music-making is conducted with modesty and propriety. The heroine, Matilda, unselfishly performs music to please her parents and her small community.⁶⁴ These exemplary functions of music are not incompatible with its role as a courtship tool. Matilda's musical performance renders Edmund spell-bound: '[Matilda] took her harp and striking its plaintive strings to his favourite air, she had the delight of seeing sorrow banished from his mind, and his countenance brighten with joy, whilst he hung over her enraptured and enamoured'.⁶⁵ Just as Grandison's admiration of Harriet's performance could be measured on his body, Edmund's brightened countenance and use of hyperbolic adjectives such as 'enraptured and enamoured' highlight his pleasure in Matilda's performance. Before readers learn about the effect rendered by the musical performance of another female character, Selina, readers are informed of Selina's appropriate attitude towards her musical studies. Selina admits that 'the ornamental

⁶⁴ 'Matilda's piano-forte was placed in the drawing-room; and in the evening she constantly played to her father, who was passionately fond of music; and now that he had leisure to attend more to his daughter's performance, he was charmed to find her a perfect mistress of his favourite art'. *Woodland Cottage*, 2 vols (London, 1796), I, 71.

⁶⁵ *Woodland Cottage*, II, 26.

accomplishments I was only permitted, as a recreation, and as a reward for fulfilling the household duties as I ought'. Selina's suitor, Mortimer, subsequently responds to her music-making enthusiastically:

[Mortimer] was charmed by the harmonious voice of his dear Selina, singing a plaintive song- the words expressing the loss of him she loved. Delighted and riveted to the spot, he stood and listened till she finished her lament; then he rushed forward, and in a rapture caught her in his eager arms, and poured forth all the tender sentiments he had so invariably felt for her. (II, 75)

Mortimer is entranced by the spectacle as he was 'delighted and riveted to the spot'. He subsequently 'rushed forward and caught Matilda in his eager arms' just before a marriage proposal ensues.

The importance that eighteenth-century novels placed on the attitude towards musical performance was stressed in chapter one when it surveyed the role of musical accomplishment in fiction. A modest attitude towards performance is also necessary for the completion of courtship. Despite music being the focal point of courtship scenes, however, music has an unstable and troubled existence in courtship as the hero and heroine have to deny its powers to lure and attract the opposite sex. The attitude with which music is performed therefore has more significance than what is performed or even who is performing it.

D) Sarah Harriet Burney, *Geraldine Fauconberg* (1806)

Modest musical performance also guarantees courting success in *Geraldine Fauconberg*. Just as *Sir Charles Grandison* included music-making scenes which promote moral sentiments as the courtship progresses, there is a similarly close relationship between music-making, the construction of feminine identity and the process of courtship in *Geraldine Fauconberg*. Music-making accentuates Geraldine's beauty, which is a benefit in courtship:

Lovely as she is, yet never does she look so beautiful as when thus employed [singing]; her mouth, particularly, is embellished by it [singing] to a wonderful degree; no grimaces, no affectation, disfigure the symmetry of her features; but her whole aspect is lighted up by an air of genuine sensibility, a sort of supplicating softness, that has, more than once, affected me nearly as much as her exquisite sweetness of voice.⁶⁶

The first adverb ‘lovely’ idealises this heroine, ‘beautiful’ then reinforces this conception in the same sentence. An entire phrase is devoted to the mouth, which is ‘embellished’ by singing. Geraldine’s features reflect ‘genuine sensibility’. Emphatic adjectives such as ‘exquisite’ finish off this dramatic description of the body. Such a phrase is reminiscent of the luscious image of the harpist, Glorvina, described in Owenson’s *The Wild Irish Girl*, which was published two years before *Geraldine Fauconberg*.⁶⁷ Certainly, Burney’s description is less ornamented than that in *The Wild Irish Girl*, but both episodes focus on minute details of the body in order to idealise the female harpist on display. Both episodes refer to countenance; an aspect which is ‘lit up’ by genuine sensibility in Burney’s novel and which ‘breathes’ the fervour of genius in *The Wild Irish Girl*.

These descriptions of a glowing persona illustrate what Graeme Tytler describes as nineteenth-century novelists painting a countenance. According to Tytler, character description is essentially a ‘painting’ or a ‘depiction’ that ‘had long been a commonplace in the novel in much the same way as [the author’s] tendency to refer to the beauty of a face or a physical feature as deserving the attention of a painter or sculptor.’⁶⁸ Tytler contrasts this artistic painting of character with the scepticism exhibited by nineteenth-century authors, like Jane Austen, who were unwilling to place undue emphasis on appearances.

⁶⁶ Sarah Harriet Burney, *Geraldine Fauconberg*, 4 vols, (London, 1808), I, 116.

⁶⁷ ‘Conceive for a moment a form full of character, and full of grace, bending over an instrument singularly picturesque—a profusion of auburn hair fastened up to the top of the finest formed head I ever beheld, with a golden bodkin—an armlet of curious workmanship glittering above a finely turned elbow, and the loose sleeves of a flowing robe drawn up unusually high, to prevent this drapery from sweeping the chords of the instrument. The expression of the divinely touching countenance breathed all the fervour of genius under the influence of inspiration, and the contours of the face, from the peculiar uplifted position of the head, were precisely such, as lends to painting the happiest line of feature, and shade of colouring’, Sydney Owenson, Lady Morgan, *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806), ed. by Kathryn Kirkpatrick, 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), II, 97-98.

⁶⁸ Graeme Tytler, *Physiognomy in the European Novel*, p.174.

Tyler argues that the ‘belittling of the importance of appearances is further underlined by the comical treatment that physiognomists are given in eighteenth-century fiction’ (p.141). Sarah Harriet Burney’s novels are careful to avoid an undue emphasis on the appearance of musical women at the expense of their minds and talents. In her later novel, *Traits of Nature* (1813), Burney is careful to emphasise that it was Adela’s ‘unpretending efforts’ on the piano, (which was played with ‘genuine sensibility’) that were more important than her beauty, which was accentuated by music-making.⁶⁹ This separates Burney’s practice from that of Owenson and the portrayal of Matilda in Lewis’ *The Monk*, as the latter authors demonstrate that music enhances the beauty of the female form.

The phrase ‘genuine sensibility’ has been applied to descriptions of the heroines’ music-making in both *Geraldine Fauconberg* and *Traits of Nature*. While sentiment in the earlier Eighteenth Century referred to elevated moral concerns, it began to be understood as an exaggerated predominance of feeling over rationality in the later part of the century.⁷⁰ By discriminating different types of sensibility, Burney highlights the importance of tempering sensibility and flags up the danger of displaying excessive and insincere feeling. Austen’s *Sense and Sensibility* dwelt more on the negative effects of excessive sensibility, which was as a form of disproportionate feeling, whereas Burney highlighted the importance of sensibility that was ‘genuine’.

While writing by Staël and Owenson depicted heightened emotion, emotions in Sarah Harriet Burney’s novels are more measured. Indeed, comments in the *British Critic* that *Geraldine Fauconberg* ‘does not surprise, astonish or electrify the reader’ but ‘soothes [the reader] into complacency’ prove that Burney did not advocate excesses of feeling.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Sarah Harriet Burney, *Traits of Nature*, 5 vols (London, 1813), IV, 239.

⁷⁰ R.F. Brissenden, *Virtue in Distress: Studies in The Novel of Sentiment from Richardson to Sade* (London: Macmillan, 1974), p.24.

⁷¹ *British Critic* 32 (1808), p.520 is quoted in a footnote in *The Letters of Sarah Harriet Burney*, ed. by Lorna J. Clark (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997), p.93.

When Burney analysed the character and intended function of her heroine in *Geraldine Fauconberg*, she specifically remarked that Geraldine did not fight against strong passions and that the novel advocated ‘calm virtues of domestic life’. Burney argued that ‘[Geraldine] struggles through no tremendous difficulties—combats against no inordinate passions—but presents, in a probable situation, the calm virtues of domestic life [...] the only ones of utility and advantage’.⁷² Like Austen, Burney presented the virtues of her heroine by revealing her modest reaction to the hero in musical courtship scenes.⁷³ Certainly, the way in which *The Critical Review* and *The Monthly Review* categorised *Geraldine Fauconberg* as a suitable model for contemporary women and a ‘correct and faithful picture of genteel life’ agreed with Burney’s plan to produce a novel that presents a ‘probable situation’ and ‘the calm virtues of domestic life’.⁷⁴ Such views showed that *Geraldine Fauconberg* was perceived as a more conservative text than the novels of Staël and Owenson.

Just as Richardson’s *Sir Charles Grandison* presents music-making scenes to reflect the stages in the courtship between a hero and heroine, Burney’s novel does the same. Like Richardson, Burney uses music-making to show the heroine’s increasing sentiment. Unlike Richardson, however, Burney follows a formula whereby the heroine is firmly located as the performer of music and the hero (Ferdinand) observes her. Initially, Geraldine’s stiff body language conveys her reluctance to perform in front of Ferdinand. The hero’s sister writes:

⁷² *The Letters of Sarah Harriet Burney*, Letter to unknown, April 19, 1809, p.103.

⁷³ Sarah Harriet Burney was a fan of Jane Austen’s novels. In her correspondence, Burney told Elizabeth Carrick that she ‘quite raves about’ *Pride and Prejudice*, which is a ‘charming’ novel that is her ‘prime favourite of all modern Novels’ and a book that she has read three times, *The Letters of Sarah Harriet Burney*, Letter to Elizabeth Carrick, December 6, 1813, p.176, Ibid., letter to Anna Wilbraham Grosvenor, 15 January, 1838. She also compliments *Emma* highly and referred to Austen as her ‘favourite Miss Austen’. Ibid., letter to Charlotte Barrett, March 1st 1816, p.201, letter to Anna Grosvenor, p.15. According to Lorna J.Clark, Burney also owned a copy of Austen’s *Sense and Sensibility* and *Mansfield Park*. Ibid., p.Ixi.

⁷⁴ Ibid., Letter to unknown, 19 April, 1809, p.103.

The perverse little soul [Geraldine], quietly, but steadily declined [the opportunity to perform]. My mother and Caroline both urged her in vain; [...]. I was vexed that Geraldine would not let my brother hear her full-toned, flexible, and touching voice; I am sure he would have admired it, for hers is precisely the style of singing he always professes to delight in: but Madame de St Hermine, though she did not speak, evidently approved of her pupil's refusal.⁷⁵

Like Harriet Byron, Geraldine is persistent in steadily declining the opportunity to perform. It is Miss Lesmore, Ferdinand's sister, who offers a lens through which the inclinations and personality of Geraldine can be viewed. Readers learn that Miss Lesmore 'was vexed' with Geraldine because she wanted her brother to hear 'her full-toned, flexible, and touching voice'. Miss Lesmore presents Geraldine's talent as an alluring skill, thus entertaining the possibility of courtship. She also mentions Geraldine's modesty, just as Richardson promotes Harriet's bashfulness in *Sir Charles Grandison*. When Geraldine acquires the confidence to perform, she plays the piano but will not sing:

[Geraldine] still found some plausible pretence to decline singing, but consented to play without hesitation, and acquitted herself with even more than her usual excellence. This was the first time she had ever been induced to sit down to the instrument when Ferdinand was in the room: but [...] I saw she was determined no longer to let him have any influence over her conduct. His surprise on hearing her perform in so superior a manner, was very perceptible, and, to me, very gratifying. She remained unconscious of it, however; for during the whole evening her eyes, I believe, never rested upon him a moment. (I, 53-54)

Only as Ferdinand's admiration for Geraldine grows, do readers learn about the effect of Geraldine's music-making on Ferdinand:

Geraldine placed herself at the piano-forte. She was singing, with newly-restored powers [...] a favourite air of Madame de St. Hermine's [...] my brother entered the room [...] [Ferdinand] gazed [...] my brother, Madame de St Hermine told me, stood leaning against the pianoforte in such a direction, that he could discern every variation of her expressive face. She is sure he experienced the strongest emotion [...] I seriously assure you, that no countenance ever more visibly portrayed a mind 'wrapt, enchanted, touched! [...] 'I wished your brother, said she, to go whilst the impression Geraldine had made was fresh upon his mind, whilst the tones of her soul-subduing voice still vibrated in his ear.(I,113-119)

⁷⁵ Sarah Harriet Burney, *Geraldine Fauconberg*, I, 18-19. All subsequent page numbers will refer to this edition.

This time Geraldine voluntarily places herself at the piano and sings with ‘newly-restored’ powers, showing more confidence. Madame St Hermine interprets Ferdinand’s initial gaze as reflecting an expression of ‘new born respect and heart-felt admiration’. Ferdinand describes her virtues to St Hermine and leans against the piano in a similar way Mr Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice*.⁷⁶ Ferdinand’s countenance was then ‘wrapt, enchanted and touched’. Although this information has been filtered through the perspectives of two other characters, it shows that Geraldine’s performances have an increasing influence on Ferdinand. Just before Geraldine and Ferdinand marry, Ferdinand responds most dramatically to Geraldine’s musical performance:

Geraldine began singing. The tone of her voice, the expression of her countenance, and the peculiar feeling with which she uttered the melancholy words of an extremely pathetic air she had chosen, struck me on this occasion in a more than usual degree. I thought, that with all her accustomed sweetness, I had never heard her sing in a manner so exquisitely touching; and as I looked at, and listened to her, the tears unconsciously stole into my eyes. When she had concluded, awakening, as if from an affecting dream, I turned to observe the effect a performance so admirable might have produced upon my brother: but his face, resting upon his arm, which was supported by the back of the sofa, was entirely concealed, and all sound of music had for some minutes ceased, before he changed his attitude, or raised his head. Our eyes at last met; and I instantly traced in his, unquestionable evidences of the strongest emotion. (III, 37-38)

Not only does Ferdinand display ‘unquestionable evidences of the strongest emotion’ but Geraldine’s performance also affects the narrator, Miss Lesmore, who describes her singing as ‘exquisitely touching’. ‘Tears subconsciously stole into [Miss Lesmore’s] eyes’, which sends her into a dreamy state from which she has to awaken. Concealing his face is Ferdinand’s sign that emotion has overcome him and Burney insists on hiding the strong effects that music can have on the body. Just as Austen implies music’s effect in *Pride and Prejudice* by having Darcy move towards Elizabeth, Burney hints at the gentleman’s admiration of the heroine in a similarly subtle way. Burney’s decision to filter this account

⁷⁶ ‘[Mr Darcy], moving with his usual deliberation towards the piano forte, stationed himself so as to command a full view of the fair performer’s countenance. Elizabeth saw what he was doing, and at the first convenient pause, turned to him with an arch smile.’ Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), ed. by Vivien Jones, 3 vols (London: Penguin, 1996), II, chapter viii, p.144.

through yet another narrator is further proof of her insistence on hinting at, rather than explicitly displaying, emotionally charged musical performances.

Musical courtship scenes have therefore displayed the hero's intensifying emotional response towards the musical heroine in *Geraldine Fauconberg*, which is in contrast to *Sir Charles Grandison* where intensifying emotional response can be traced in the heroine rather than the hero. Music-making is a female space in *Geraldine Fauconberg*, as it is in Austen's novels. Despite music naturally playing a role in courtship opportunities, later eighteenth-century novels by Austen and Burney are firmer in their resolve to resist male intrusion into this performance space. While Richardson and Sarah Harriet Burney present music-making as a forum for the development of female identity, the way in which Burney represents gender hierarchies through music-making is more similar to that of Austen.

In line with Richardson, however, Sarah Harriet Burney does use music to present different versions of feminine identity. In her study of Austen, Ashley Tauchert remarks that romance is a way of structuring femininity, which is pertinent to a reading of *Geraldine Fauconberg*.⁷⁷ Romance, in this context, can be defined as a courtship between the hero and heroine. In the latter novel, romance is the setting for emotional changes that are sparked in the heroine. Through music-making and its active involvement in courtship scenes, Geraldine's personality alters as her self-confidence develops. She represents a different type of femininity in the beginning to the version that is portrayed at the end of the novel. If music is not initially a way in which Geraldine can perform her gender (which is evident through her shyness about performance and her refusal to do so in an early scene), she eventually performs her gender by establishing herself as a confident musically accomplished woman who then marries the hero. The process that Judith Butler describes

⁷⁷ Ashley Tauchert, *Romancing Jane Austen: Narrative, Realism and the Possibility of a Happy Ending* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p.xii.

as ‘a sustained set of acts, posited through the gendered stylization of the body’ develops through the characterisation of Geraldine and her musical performances by the end of the novel.⁷⁸ Geraldine’s more confident performance of music ultimately becomes synonymous with her more confident performance of gender, thus proving Judith Butler’s argument that ‘performance [of gender] is through acts, gestures and articulated and enacted desires, which create the illusion of an interior’.⁷⁹ Rather than arguing that the female interior is an illusion, I claim that music-making consists of acts and gestures that reflect developing stages that affirm the heroine’s female identity.

E) Musical Accomplishment as a Pre-Marital Activity

While *Sir Charles Grandison* and *Geraldine Fauconberg* established a positive relationship between courtship and music, other eighteenth-century sources more broadly considered how accomplishments affected women’s marriage prospects and roles as wives. Such sources viewed music as an obstacle in marriage by arguing that music replaced more useful skills that befitted women’s role as wives. As early as 1740, *The Gentleman’s Magazine* stated that learning accomplishments, such as music, damaged women’s prospects as future wives:

‘Tis the misfortune of this nation that the most part of our gentlemen and tradesmen bring up their daughters at a boarding school, where time is, for the most part, employ’d in trifles, while the useful and becoming part of her education is wholly neglected [....] But no sooner does the little creature leave school, furnish’d with all these trifling accomplishments, than the father and mother are for showing her off to get her a husband [...] Let all gentlemen who have several daughters [....] take care their daughters be taught the most useful part of needle-work, all the arts of economy, writing and book-keeping [....] And when they have acquir’d these necessary accomplishments in some degree of perfection, let them also at the age of fifteen or sixteen be put apprentices to genteel and easy trades [....] From the delicacy of their make, they are, indeed, unfit for certain laborious employments.⁸⁰

⁷⁸Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p.xv.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p.176.

⁸⁰ *The Gentleman’s Magazine*, September 1739, IX, pp.525-6.

Later on, Thomas Gisborne's *An Enquiry into the Duties of the Female Sex* (1797) also argued that ornamental accomplishments did not always complement women's social role:

Ornamental accomplishments occupy the rank and estimation which ought to have been assigned to the objects of infinitely greater importance [...] If she was taught throughout the whole course of her education, though not by express precept, yet by daily and hourly admonitions, which could convey no other meaning, that dancing is for display, that music is for display, that drawing and French and Italian are for display; can it be a matter for astonishment, that during the rest of her life she should be incessantly on the watch to shine and to be admired?⁸¹

Such assertions locate accomplishments, such as music, as self-centred and frivolous activities that function for purposes of self-display, rather than furnishing a woman with a useful skill that befits her role as a wife. Although Gisborne's writing had a religious and didactic purpose, the opinions about the superficiality of accomplishment occurred in several other literary genres. In epistolary correspondence, for example, Elizabeth Montagu frequently deplored the state of the female education system when corresponding with her fellow Bluestocking, Catherine Talbot.

In a woman's education little but outward accomplishment is regarded. Some of our sex have an affection of goodness, others a contempt of it from their education; but the many good women there are in the world are merely so from nature; and, I think, it is much to the honour of untaught human nature, that women are so valuable for their merit and sense.⁸²

In the next comment, Montagu relates what she terms superficial learning to the frivolous activities of married women who pass their bad habits onto the next generation of girls:

Our married ladies are too much employed in the more necessary duties of the play-house and opera, &c to give any attention to their daughters. They have masters to give them trivial accomplishments, and so they come out into the world without the timidity of ignorance or the assistance of real improvement. They are to tread the smooth slippery path of pleasure.⁸³

⁸¹Thomas Gisborne, *An Enquiry into the Duties of the Female Sex* (1797) pp.80-3, extracted from Bridget Hill, *Women, Work and Sexual Politics in Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Blackwell Press, 1989), p.60.

⁸²*The Letters of Mrs Elizabeth Montagu, with Some of The Letters of her Correspondents* ed. by Matthew Montagu, Esq, 3 vols (Boston, 1825), II, Letter to Duchess of Portland, 1743, p.72.

⁸³Ibid, III, Letter to Mrs Scott, 28 May, 1760, pp.57-8.

Later in the eighteenth century, one of Melessina Trench's letters half-heartedly defended accomplishments by arguing that they failed to function as marriage traps and deterred the audience that they were meant to attract:

It is certain the advantages of those branches of education rigid moralists consider as only ornamental, such as foreign languages, &c, are much oftener felt in life than it appears possible they could be when the matter is theoretically considered. Mothers who cultivate them as marriage-traps are mistaken, for, generally speaking, men do not marry women for what are called accomplishments; and, upon the whole, except drawing. I think they deter as many as they attract. One man is afraid of a 'learned lady' another of having his house the *rendezvous* of wits and poets, of actors, or fiddlers or singers.⁸⁴

If Gisbourne, Montagu and Trench detach accomplishments such as music from success in courtship and the ideal role of the wife, they set up a view that contradicts music's useful function in courtship elsewhere.

Jane Austen's juvenilia satirise the utility of accomplishments in courtship and marriage, while *Emma* and *Sense and Sensibility* view the subject through the lens of married women who have abandoned music. In 'Jack and Alice', the narrator's joke about the unsuitable accomplishments possessed by a Tailor's daughter is a biting satire on members of the lower social classes who emulate aristocracy by mimicry. Alice has met a young tailor's daughter from Wales who relates a story about her education:

I have lived with her (a sister of my Mother) for 8 years of my Life, during which time she provided me with some of the first rate Masters, who taught me all the accomplishments requisite for my sex and rank. Under their instructions I learned Dancing, Music, Drawing and various Languages, by which means I became more accomplished than any other Taylor's Daughter in Wales.⁸⁵

The 'first rate masters' are exaggerated or nothing more than an ironic addition to her pretentious education. The woman's misplaced sense of social confidence leads her to propose to a man who is her social superior. After receiving an 'angry and peremptory

⁸⁴ *The Remains of the Late Mrs Richard Trench being Selections From her Journals, Letters and Other Papers*, ed by Richard Trench (London, 1862), Letter to Richard Trench, July 1805, pp.174-5.

⁸⁵ Jane Austen, 'Jack and Alice' in *Catharine and Other Writings* (1792), ed. by Margaret Anne Doody and Douglas Murray, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), I, 11-25, 19.

refusal', the woman is punished by becoming entangled in a steel animal trap when she searches for her suitor. Her heightened and misplaced sense of social superiority physically and metaphorically traps her and she is punished for treating her education as an automatic ticket to matrimony.⁸⁶ In *Catharine*, the narrator jokes that Miss Stanley's accomplishments are unsuitable for her social station:

Miss Stanley had been attended by the most capital Masters from the time of her being six years old to the last Spring, which comprehending a period of twelve Years had been dedicated to the acquirement of Accomplishments which were now to be displayed and in a few Years entirely neglected [...] Years which ought to have been spent in the attainment of useful knowledge and Mental Improvement had been all bestowed in learning Drawing, Italian and Music, especially the latter, and she now united to these Accomplishments, an Understanding unimproved by reading and a Mind totally devoid either of Taste or Judgement.⁸⁷

Class-based criticisms of accomplishments can be seen in Austen's juvenilia. Such accomplishments are detached from success in the marriage market. Austen's early writing develops into a more mature parody of married women who quit music in both *Emma* and *Sense and Sensibility*. By mocking married women who give up music, Austen criticises music's function as a courtship tool. Complications arise, however, as Austen accepts that music was designed for a period of youth and thus embraces its initial role in courtship. Austen mocks married women who quit music, while paradoxically setting up music as an activity, which plays a natural role in courtship opportunities for the young. Rather than sternly criticising music's role in courtship, Austen's later novels ambivalently accept its role as long as this is not manipulated. When assessing the role of domestic music-making in Austen's novels, Hohl Trillini argues that 'the topic of women giving up music after marriage is combined with subtle variations on the relative importance of musical accomplishment for very rich girls.'⁸⁸ She acknowledges the vital role of accomplishments

⁸⁶ This paragraph is repeated in Danielle Grover, 'The Role of Music and Songs in Jane Austen's Juvenilia & Letters' in *Sensibilities* 36 (2008), 42-56, p.46.

⁸⁷ Jane Austen, *Catharine and Other Writings*, III, 191.

⁸⁸ Regula Hohl Trillini, *The Gaze of the Listener*, p.107.

in courtship, while allowing for Austen's comedy to permeate through her representation of pretentious older musical enthusiasts who have no time to practise.

On the one hand, Wollstonecraft mocks the practice of music amongst older women in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* when commenting that 'it is very absurd to see a woman, whose brow time has marked with wrinkles, aspiring for the manners of a girl in her teens', yet Wollstonecraft also complains that the practice of music is superficial as it is only pursued during youth.⁸⁹ Hannah More also uses the example of married women to argue that accomplishments waste time better spent on other pursuits. Both arguments position accomplishments as a marriage trap, as they are discarded after the marriage itself. Paradoxically, they criticise the superficial and half-hearted practice of music while mocking those who have pursued the activity until later in life.

In both *Emma* and *Sense and Sensibility*, women are mocked for failing in their resolutions to keep up their musical practice, which positions the function of music as something more concrete than just being a tool in courtship. In Austen's *Emma*, Mrs Elton comments on the decline of musical activities amongst her newly married friends:

[Emma] and I must establish a musical club [...] Something of that nature would be particularly desirable for *me*, as an inducement to keep me in practice; for married women, you know—there is a sad story against them in general. They are but too apt to give up music [...] When I look round among my acquaintance, I tremble. Selina has entirely given up music—never touches the instrument—though she played sweetly. And the same may be said of Mrs Jeffreys—Clara Partridge, that was—[...] and of more than I can enumerate.⁹⁰

Austen presents this problem through the perspective of a ridiculous character. Prone to exaggeration, Mrs Elton offers untrustworthy opinions. Ironically, Emma is reluctant for

⁸⁹ 'It is acknowledged that [women] spend many of the first years of their lives in acquiring a smattering of accomplishments.' Mary Wollstonecraft, *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters: with Reflections on Female Conduct in The More Important Duties of Life* (London, 1787), p.28. Wollstonecraft further claimed that 'these acquirements [accomplishments] catch the senses, and open the way to the heart; but unsupported by solid good qualities, their reign is short'. Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women: with Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects* (London, 1792), p.27.

⁹⁰ Jane Austen, *Emma* (1815), ed. by Fiona Stafford, 3 vols (London: Penguin, 1996), II, chapter xiv, pp.227-8.

Mrs Elton to form this musical club and half-heartedly listens to Mrs Elton's ramblings. Mrs Elton represents Wollstonecraft's example of a 'very absurd' woman as she is keen to be as accomplished in married life as in youth. While Mrs Elton appears as though she promotes the value of music above its function as a tool in courtship, she utters this speech to boast about her expertise and grasp for social status. Other than presenting this problem through the perspective of a minor, less respected character, however, Austen presents no direct attack on married women practising music. Austen is mocking Mrs Elton for judging others on neglecting a talent that she herself has abandoned. What Austen does imply however is that, like Mary Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice*, Mrs Elton is on the cusp of being obsessed by music and the status that she feels that it brings her. Mrs Elton describes herself as 'doatingly fond of music—passionately fond' so much so that she reports that 'without music, life would be a blank to me' (II, 227).⁹¹

Austen especially mocks Mrs Elton's failed determination to persist with her musical studies despite the obstacle of being married. Mrs Elton's enthusiasm for music is superficial and false as she never starts a musical club nor performs on the piano. The question to be asked is whether the joke is centred on Mrs Elton's previous musical study being a waste of time, as More and Wollstonecraft criticise, or her determination to use music to prove social worth. In the latter case, Austen pokes fun at Mrs Elton's superficial social pretentiousness rather than her determination to foster her musical interests. She criticises the weak resolutions of older women more than she idealises music as a short-lived activity.

⁹¹Such an exaggeration can be traced back to the character of Mr Haden, in Austen's letters, whom Austen mocked for linking the unmusical with the wicked. In a letter to Cassandra, Austen mocks Mr Haden for his inflexible and extreme views on musical tastes: 'I have been listening to dreadful Insanity—It is Mr Haden's firm belief that a person *not* musical is fit for every sort of Wickedness.—I ventured to assert a little on the other side, but wished the cause in abler hands'. *Jane Austen's Letters*, Letter 37 to Cassandra Austen, 21-22 May 1801, p.88.

In *Sense and Sensibility*, the narrator mocks the musically talented Lady

Middleton's abandonment of her musical studies:

Marianne, who sang very well, at their request, went through the chief of the songs which Lady Middleton had brought into the family on her marriage, and which perhaps had lain ever since in the same position on the pianoforte, for her ladyship had celebrated that event by giving up music, although by her mother's account she had played extremely well, and by her own was very fond of it.⁹²

The implication is that Lady Middleton should pursue her piano-playing here. By commenting that 'she had played extremely well, and by her own [admission] was very fond of it', the narrator characterises Lady Middleton as musically talented. (p.30) Rather than arguing that Lady Middleton's musical talents are useless for her role as a wife and mother or criticising her prior musical education, Austen characterises Lady Middleton as foolish for leaving her music books 'in the same position on the pianoforte' since her wedding day, many years ago. Ironically, Lady Middleton had 'celebrated' the event (of marriage) by giving up music, which suggests that she manipulated music as a tool in courtship. There is no mention of Lady Middleton's marriage or domestic duties thwarting her freedom or replacing musical practice time and this implies that it was her own decision to quit music. No one or nothing is to blame except for her own laziness.

While Austen mocked Mrs Elton's remark about women quitting music after marriage, this episode from *Sense and Sensibility* complicates the argument. On the one hand, Lady Middleton's musical studies in youth were wasted time, which was an argument that More highlighted in her treatise. On the other hand, music is presented as a valuable talent, which Lady Middleton and Mrs Elton have needlessly neglected. Lady Middleton 'had played extremely well' so her practice in her youth was not wasted. Jane Austen's own letters and extensive collection of piano music demonstrate how much she valued hard work and persistence in musical studies. In other words, Austen presents music as more

⁹² Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), ed. by Ros Ballaster, 3 vols (London: Penguin, 1995), I, chapter vii, p.30.

than a mere stage in courtship by revealing the foolishness of Mrs Elton and Lady Middleton's termination of their musical studies. Conversely, she mocks both Mrs Elton's protestations about the benefit of music for married women. Music is also an activity for unmarried women in her novels. Thus, music does have a vital role in courtship but the motivations behind performance are again scrutinised so that its function is revealed to be more than a mere courtship trap. *Sense and Sensibility* and *Emma* progress from *Jack and Alice* and *Catharine* by showing examples of the ways in which music could be abused, but this superficial abuse has not affected these courtships as both Lady Middleton and Mrs Elton have already married.

Conclusion

Without Richardson and his successors, Jane Austen's achievement would not have been possible. Her work grows out of, is a reaction against and assimilation of the English domestic novel of the late eighteenth century. And this genre, superficial and trivial in the main though it may have become, is descended in uninterrupted lines from the novels of Samuel Richardson.¹

When Brissenden discussed Austen's debt to Richardson's writing, he commented on her reliance on themes in the English domestic novel, which was, as Armstrong argues, an important literary genre in the late eighteenth century.² Richardson influenced both Austen and Burney's construction of female identity, which was played out through musical courtship scenes that show the progression from a single status to marriage. In *Sir Charles Grandison*, musical performance is directly linked to the careful construction of feminine identity, reflecting the uncertain journey between singlehood and marriage and the increasing level of female sentiment that accompanies this journey. Music-making scenes gain energy and colour as courtship progresses in both *Sir Charles Grandison* and

¹ R.F. Brissenden, *Virtue in Distress: Studies in The Novel of Sentiment from Richardson to Sade* (London: Macmillan, 1974), p.97.

² Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of The Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p.60.

Geraldine Fauconberg and, as the heroine of the former novel reclaims a new feminine identity as a married woman, musical scenes become platforms for these authors to show the restriction placed on single heroines.

Later in the century, Burney's *Geraldine Fauconberg* presents music-making as a female activity intended for courtship rather than marriage. After the publication of *Sir Charles Grandison*, which gave music an important role in courtship, music began to take on more varied roles in novels and it became a forum for female self-expression. Female authors such as Gibbes and Austen presented opportunities for women to perform music for the purposes of manipulation in courtship. Burney elevates modesty in women in a similar way to Richardson, confining descriptions of the body within scenes of music-making to uphold specific virtues that nineteenth-century reviewers recognised as admirable features of the novel. However, music becomes more a space for the heroine to shine and carve out her own identity while Harriet Byron in *Sir Charles Grandison* merely responds to Grandison's thoughts or actions during music-making scenes. While Austen dramatises music's effects on the body merely for satire in *Sense and Sensibility*, Burney presents more confined body language. Both practices were separate from early nineteenth-century authors, like Staël and Owenson, who dramatise the body to openly celebrate female liberty and independence.

By arguing that Richardson presents a more fluid conception of gender than Austen or Burney, this study has challenged ideas, set up by Marks and Doody, that Richardson was first and foremost a didactic writer.³ Richardson's representation of female identity is conventional (as he places restrictions on women's display of sentiment and makes them

³ Kasey Marks argued that *Sir Charles Grandison* advocated correct moral conduct by representing 'the most complete and compelling guide in its time to the duties, dilemmas and moral choices faced by every household'. She positions the novel as conforming to conventional moral codes of the century: 'One of the more prominent subjects treated in *Sir Charles Grandison* is that of courtship [...] practical questions of how a courtship is to be conducted between people of different ranks, how forward to be and how relatives may be involved all add to the complexity and completeness of Richardson's last work.' Sylvia Kasey Marks, *Sir Charles Grandison: The Compleat Conduct Book*, p.21. Margaret Ann Doody, *A Natural Passion: A Study of the Novels of Samuel Richardson* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1974), p.353.

subordinate to men) but the idea that the music-making space should be shared by men is more subversive. While Richardson's decision to challenge the idea that men should not be musical is radical, it also promotes liberty associated with high social status and argues that men had more freedom to transgress their sphere than women did. By presenting respectable amateur male musicians, Richardson takes a less conservative stance than Austen, who, as chapter three demonstrated, presents the unnatural intrusion of men who perform duets with women. Richardson's positive portrayal of both the freedom associated with masculinity and conventionally forged links between musical instruments and gender mean that this destabilization of gender ideals is only taken so far. Austen actually resists Richardson's practice of pushing music-making into the masculine sphere by negatively portraying trans-gender music-making (through the form of the duet).

Austen's greater focus on music as an important female skill responds to the growing controversy of the later eighteenth-century debate about female education in polemical writing, which was not in such force when Richardson first composed *Sir Charles Grandison*. Austen departs from Richardson's practice as Richardson shows Harriet Byron's development only through her relationship with the hero while music does not function solely for the purposes of facilitating courtship in Austen's novels. In the latter, it is a means of entertainment, a contemplative space as well as a chance for heroines to model attributes such as modesty. In the play, 'Sir Charles Grandison', music is not merely a tool in courtship but a device for the heroine to escape from thoughts of courtship, a comment on nationality and an exclusively female space. Similarly, the journey from the performance of accomplishments to marriage never runs smoothly in Austen's juvenilia. In 'Jack and Alice' and *Catharine*, for example, social class disrupts the progression from the pursuit of accomplishments to marriage. In *Emma* and *Sense and Sensibility*, Austen presents examples of married women who are gently mocked for abusing their musical

talents. Rather than using these examples to question the status of music as an accomplishment, Austen again scrutinises the motivation behind the learning of music and criticises those who exploit it for the purposes of courtship. This exploitation is mocked in *Mansfield Park* when Mary's harp-playing ultimately fails to secure Edmund's affection. This reflects Scott's similar practice in *Waverley* when an overtly ostentatious woman fails to secure a suitor using musical means. The pairing of musical women in the fiction by Gibbes, Scott, Austen and Burney became a popular technique of criticising more controversial women who were too obvious in their attempts to secure courtship. The technique does not reject music's role in courtship, but places constraints on women's power to manipulate as a means of securing courtship. Considering McFarlane's argument that courtship is a game, I would maintain that to succeed in their missions, musical women must speak a gentler language of initiation.⁴

As well as arguing that music's contribution to courtship was a vital one and as such was a central theme in eighteenth-century fiction, this chapter has reinforced the emphasis that chapter three has placed on the body as an important site in which to read character motivations. Courtship has been a platform for authors to display the complex ways in which gender roles were negotiated in eighteenth-century fiction.

⁴ Alan McFarlane, *Marriage and Love in England: Modes of Reproduction 1300-1840* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), p.293.

Conclusion

This thesis has explored the many ways in which novels represented music in eighteenth-century culture, mainly in England. Eighteenth-century novels, polemical treatises, newspapers, music collections and letters revealed the pressure on women to be musically accomplished, which was also evidenced by countless educational treatises and music collections, the pianoforte's rise in popularity and the long practice times recorded by women such as Hannah More and Jane Austen. Despite music's popularity, the Eighteenth Century saw increasing resistance against viewing music-making as an important female skill amongst women in the leisured social classes, which was due to the rise in female professionalism, the fear of excessive consumerism and the anxiety that musical education would distract women from other duties.¹ Although novels, treatises, newspapers and letters participated in the debate about the content of female education in order to testify to music's popularity, they paradoxically presented the view that women who practised music were denying themselves a more substantial education. After the publication of Mary Wollstonecraft's *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* in 1787, more and more criticism was levelled against a system of education that promoted female accomplishments.

Out of the wide range of literary genres that participated in this debate, polemical writing offered the most detailed insights into the way in which music was embedded into women's social roles; insights that have been challenged and reinforced by a range of novelists. Pivotal treatises by Wollstonecraft and More, which challenged music's value as a form of female education, were pessimistic as they did not see the benefits of women

¹ Hogwood notes the relationship between the criticism of amateur music-making and the rise of female professionalism in Christopher Hogwood and Richard Luchett, eds., *Music in Eighteenth Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

developing this creative skill, or acquiring talent. Unlike polemical treatises, novels optimistically presented multiple versions of accomplished women and redefined the essence of musical accomplishment by characterising their heroines as musical. By assessing and contrasting the numerous musical female characters that they presented, novelists used music to highlight moral characteristics such as moderation, modesty and good sense. While polemical treatises advocated these qualities in women, they could not present plural versions of accomplished women and were one-dimensional in their criticisms or celebrations of music.

To demonstrate how analysing music has furthered an understanding of the eighteenth-century novel, this conclusion is going to highlight four key arguments that this thesis has made over the course of four chapters. My first argument has been that novels were optimistic about the value of music in women's lives. In particular, Jane Austen celebrates the role of music in her novels. Descriptions of music-making in Austen's novels, polemical writing and letters focus on the outside appearance of music-making to others and the way in which it should be displayed to exemplify specific moral characteristics such as modesty, moderation and good sense. Although Austen's early novels outline the abuse of music, she does not dismiss music as a trivial enjoyable leisure activity but uses it to criticise specific character traits. Music as a form of proficiency is given little attention in Austen's novels, which mock musical enthusiasts. Rather than merely promoting specific behavioural traits in women and belittling music's importance, Austen uses music to give women an identity and purpose in her novels. Music plays an important role in courtship opportunities and provides women with a space for contemplation. Marvin Mudrick's claim that irony was Austen's earliest and most characteristic literary device can convincingly be applied to her representation of music.² In

² Marvin Mudrick, *Jane Austen: Irony as Defense and Discovery* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968), p.1.
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all of Austen's novels except for *Persuasion*, she scorns the abuse of music to argue that it had a value beyond its misapplied function as a vehicle for social approbation. Her laudatory remarks about the piano in her letters, the pairing of her musical heroines with superficial musical amateurs and her eagerness to include music as a form of entertainment and family duty in every single novel shows that she values music, but this value is conditional on music being practised modestly in a leisured, rather than professional, space. Chapter one, however, did argue that Austen displays an increasing acceptance of music throughout the course of her publishing career. Music's value as a form of emotional consolation in the play, 'Sir Charles Grandison' and Jane Austen's *Persuasion* perhaps also points to Anne Elliot's new struggle for self-recognition: a struggle that Clara Tuite acknowledges to be a theme of Romanticism.³ The battle for self-recognition to which Tuite refers is centred around strengthening female identity within an aristocratic and paternal culture.⁴ I argue that *Persuasion* is unique in its representation of music, as music can be enjoyed for its own sake in *Persuasion* rather than being intertwined with female competition as it was in *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma*.

Related to this first argument, the dichotomy of musical accomplishment and substantial education was an artificial and convenient social construction, which did not accurately reflect the value of music in women's lives. There was a tension in novels, which outwardly appeared to be keen to fight women's cause by dismissively labelling music as a superficial accomplishment in a similar way to treatises written by More and Wollstonecraft. Such novels, however, presented musical heroines. On closer inspection, however, novels presented multiple representations of musically accomplished women and positioned heroines as musical and virtuous, rather than as superficial and frivolous. Minor

³ Clara Tuite, *Romantic Austen: Sexual Politics and the Literary Canon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.8.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.10.

characters who abused music as a symbol of social worth were contrasted with heroines who performed music for the entertainment of family and friends. Women who modestly displayed their talents for the latter function were always rewarded with marriage, making music into an economic investment for women. How to advocate the performance of music without promoting self-obsession and self-display was an issue for all novelists. As the Eighteenth Century progressed, novels contradicted arguments in treatises by Wollstonecraft and More by embedding music into women's social identity and creating a close relationship between the acquisition of musical accomplishment and women's economic success through marriage.

Considering the staggering number of novels that featured musical heroines, music thus played a vital role in the construction of the eighteenth-century fictional heroine. Novelists' positive portrayal of music as a form of education for women relates to the importance that they placed on women's creative output and value. The second key argument in this thesis emphasised the close relationship between femininity and music-making, which brought us neatly onto the role of both in courtship. Such a claim complements studies that have focussed on women's central position as subjects and writers in eighteenth-century fiction. Music specifically enabled women to play an active role in courtship during an age where the marriage decision was the most important choice that women made. The frequent success of music as a medium that connected the hero and heroine in novels' courtship scenes, which was evident in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) and *Persuasion* (1818), Burney's *The Wanderer* (1814) and Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753), implies that a primary function of musical accomplishment was to attract suitors even if authors did not intend musical women to perform merely to acquire a husband. Novels by Scott, Gibbes, Austen, Richardson and Burney showed a curtailment of the strength of a performative language of

courtship by showing the unsuccessful fate of women who displayed their musical talents in order to speak a louder language in the courtship game. While this shows patriarchal restrictions on female autonomy in the Eighteenth Century, the way in which authors positioned music in the female space benefitted women as it provided them with a unique talent that contributed to their economic and financial survival. In the later eighteenth century, novels by Austen, Scott and Burney focussed on women's role in courtship scenes and ways in which they could manipulate this in attempts to secure power. These strategies do not appear in Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison*.

After the publication of *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753), which presented music as an androgynous space, music's association with femininity was firmly established in novels by Austen and Sarah Harriet Burney. The latter novelists displayed music to give women a social identity and space for contemplation. Although it is perfectly legitimate to claim that Austen was influenced by the central way in which Richardson positions music-making within courtship scenes, Austen steadfastly refused to promote male music-making. Representing duets in *Emma* and *Sense and Sensibility* gave Austen a chance to create borders around a female music-making space and privilege the female voice while still reinforcing gender hierarchies. Rather than containing and restricting women, this hierarchy benefitted women economically as heroines secured marriage by exhibiting specific attitudes, which were relayed during music-making scenes. The negative way in which Austen represents male involvement in musical duets was not a feminist ploy. Instead Austen accepted the patriarchal premise that women should perform music modestly to attract a suitor, although this performance was a small part of the courtship process. While *Geraldine Fauconberg* and *Sir Charles Grandison* featured women who exhibited intensifying emotion in musical scenes as courtship progressed, Austen's novels did not follow this pattern. Marianne Dashwood in *Sense and Sensibility*, for example, is

forced to stop using her musical performance as an emotional outlet. For this reason, Austen allowed for a more distanced relationship between sensibility and music-making than either Sarah Harriet Burney or Richardson. There was similarly a spectrum of responses to the relationship between sensibility and music in other novels. The emotional displays in Sarah Harriet Burney's *Geraldine Fauconberg* differed from the intense responses to music that permeated through the body and soul in *The Wild Irish Girl*, *Corinne* and Rousseau's *Julie*. Comparisons between the musical Geraldine in *Geraldine Fauconberg* and the harpist Glorvina in *The Wild Irish Girl* reinforced the argument in chapter two that Sarah Harriet Burney overtly displayed her cautiousness about using music to idealise and dramatise the body.

Thirdly, this thesis has argued that music was a trigger for sensibility and novelists used music to respond to the fervent debate concerning excessive sensibility. The thesis has linked the discourses of the sublime, sensibility and the gothic by presenting music as a medium which connects all three. Music, the sublime, sensibility and the gothic novel were media and movements that questioned the limits of rationality and placed emphasis on the body as an interpretive medium. Chapter three argued that the body can be analysed as an important tool that emphasises eighteenth-century novelists' responses to irrationality, illness, autonomy and sensibility. Music plays into this focus on the body because, as Richard Leppert commented, music was as much about the display of the body as it was about the transmitted sound. Returning to Judith Butler's argument that music was a way for women to perform their gender, the thesis has challenged traditional links between femininity and sensibility by arguing that men's response to music was essential for courtship to occur and similarly complemented the way in which music enabled women to perform their gender. In the national romance and gothic genres, music was equally

important as a means of discussing the relationship between sensibility and rationality in national romances and gothic novels.

My observation in chapter three that Wollstonecraft, Burney and Austen all mocked music-making as a way of accentuating the female body is at odds with the argument in chapter one that Austen's fiction departs from Wollstonecraft's challenges against the practice of accomplishments. I would justify this contradiction by returning to the huge and diverse reaction against excessive sensibility, which was despised by writers in many different political camps. This fact also points to a uniform aim of elevating female rationality and promoting strong health amongst women. Even though there are similarities in the ways in which Wollstonecraft, Burney and Austen uphold a healthy rational female body, they have different objectives behind this. Wollstonecraft's goal was to call for reform, while Austen and Burney satirised female harpists to criticise selfishness, vanity and self-obsession. Again, Austen and Burney criticised the false motivations behind learning musical instruments, but Wollstonecraft went even further by discouraging the practice of music altogether.

In relation to the division of spaces, this thesis has fourthly argued that analysing music facilitates a discussion of the currency of eighteenth-century public and private spaces and the discourse of nationality. When chapter two discussed the role of concerts and musical instruments in novels, it explored both as a way of analysing authors' response to the new consumerist culture that Habermas' study outlined. The chapter argued against the binary opposition between private and public by providing examples of the ways in which novels and music collections adopted these terms in the context of concert performance.

The close relationship that Frances and Sarah Harriet Burney set up between professionalism, abnormality and the racial other further confirms the distance maintained between the professional and non-professional music-making spaces. A study of musical instruments and their national and social affiliations not only showed a separation between these spaces, but a polarization of different nationalities and the presumed superiority of the English culture throughout the eighteenth century. In 1753, the anxiety about the infiltration of other racial creeds into English culture was present in Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison* and shown through Grandison's struggle to help Harriet perform an Italian song following his retreat from Italian Clementina. The tension between the English and Italians was also played out when Charlotte Grandison compared her marital arguments with squabbling Italian musicians. By 1809, Sarah Harriet Burney's *Geraldine Fauconberg* still emphasised the racial stereotypes evident in newspapers by characterising professional fiddle players as poverty-stricken racial 'others' who were subject to scorn. The terrible plight of the monkey musicians in Frances Burney's *Camilla* is similar to the unfortunate figure of the female musician in *The Wanderer*, where a more frank discussion of women's limited opportunities ensues in the latter novel. By the publication date of *The Wanderer* in 1814, after a sharp rise in successful professional female writers, the professional arena was seen as a more respectable place for women than it was in the earlier eighteenth century when many women published novels anonymously. Even so, Burney places limits on female professionalism in *The Wanderer* as Juliet ultimately quits the music profession and this affects the extent to which Frances Burney and her novel can be interpreted as radical. By analysing music, scholars can see that the eighteenth-century novel tackled discourses on nationality and race even if it did not overtly challenge such discourses.

All of the preceding chapters have shown that the appearance of music-making and its role as a method of displaying feminine modesty and unselfishness made the illusion of music-making more important than its status as a reality. In fact, as chapter four demonstrated, there was a fine line between women performing music manipulatively to further courtship and women who modestly displayed their talents, even though novelists highlighted the failed attempts of the former and the success of the latter. Modest piano-playing women, who dismissed their own musical talents, frequently secured husbands in novels and were elevated as heroines while chapter four showed how women who exploited music to accelerate courtship failed in their mission. This places an emphasis on the attitude behind the performance but also on the appearance of this attitude. Performing modestly and unselfishly was necessary for female music-making and was subsequently prioritised over proficient performances, regardless of the purpose of the performance. The distancing of musical accomplishment from talent idealised music as an amateur activity rather than a profession. By idealising the attitude rather than the aptitude of musical performance, novelists also re-emphasised music as a performance of gender that had no relation to talent or the innate construction of gender identity. By using music to perform their role, women were actually succumbing to a conventional gender role. In order to break free from this prescribed gendered role, women could either refuse to participate in musical culture or exploit music as a courtship tool, but novelists usually represented the exploitation of music in courtship as a manipulation rather than as a pathway to marriage. Thus music was intimately related to women's cultural and economic role in novels.

Further research could examine how music has been represented across a broader range of novels, which would provide a deeper insight into the extent to which musical accomplishment was criticised across the eighteenth century. Examining later nineteenth-century, Victorian, novels which also represented music as an integral theme and aspect of

female identity would also be a useful comparison. Extending the range of non-English novels would also better prepare for a study on how nationality affected the reception of music. While this thesis has analysed limited music collections in Chawton House Library and the Fitzwilliam Museum and has used this to shed light on music's popularity and the prevalence of music for piano and voice, it would be interesting to closely analyse the lyrics in these songs and compare these with full songs, which have been included in novels. Extending the number of male canonical writers included in this thesis would have also given the study further breadth.

What this thesis has demonstrated, however, is the immense importance of music as a vital theme; a theme that became a mark of female identity, gave women a voice in courtship and provided entertainment. Music therefore played a pivotal role in novels by helping to illuminate a wide range of debates, which were pertinent to the long eighteenth century.

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