

discovered the same information from the notes in the boxes.”⁵ The 2009 discoveries affirmed what Brown had sensed three decades earlier from her own discovery at Yale: “There was a story and I needed to tell it” (p. 240). Yet Carlene J. Brown’s afterword makes clear that her sister never intended to have the final say on the Price narrative. As the keynote speaker at the Florence Price Music Festival (University of Arkansas, 2015), Rae Linda Brown told her audience, “the end of this story is now really the beginning. . . . It is, however, for the next generation of music scholars to delve through the music, to study it, to perform, to record it, and to tell the rest of the story” (p. 242). *The Heart of a Woman* is, undoubtedly, a gift to students and early-career scholars seeking “the tools to hear through the silences of history” (p. xi), as Brown did throughout her academic journey. But it is also a call to take Brown’s work forward, to make audible the fullness of Price’s compositional voice, and to render this resurgence into permanent visibility.

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Cursed Questions: On Music and Its Social Practices, by Richard Taruskin.
Oakland: University of California Press, 2020. 450 pp.

Both the feeling of ecstasy and the belief in the supernatural powers of music distinguish musical practice and ontology in the music cultures of non-Western peoples, thus clarifying why the oral and written traditions of all these people reveal a much more intensive engagement with music and its social practices than in the modern West. For them, music is not simply beautiful or ugly, but rather good and bad; it produces responses of tension and release for both the performer and the listener. . . . Music is conceived as a form of religious experience, which, in turn, subconsciously engenders the most material musical expression.¹

5. Ashleigh Gordon, “The Life and Music of Florence Price: An Interview with Rae Linda Brown,” *Black Perspectives* (blog), African American Intellectual History Society, May 15, 2017, <https://www.aaihs.org/the-life-and-music-of-florence-price-an-interview-with-rae-linda-brown/>.

1. Robert Lachmann, *Musik des Orients* (Breslau: Ferdinand Hirt, 1929), 93: “Beides: der ekstatische Gefühlsvorgang und der Glaube an seine übernatürliche Wirkungskraft, findet sich auch in der Musikpraxis und Musikauffassung höher kultivierter Völker. Hieraus erklärt es sich, daß nicht nur bei Naturvölkern, sondern überall im Orient die gesamte Bevölkerung einen weit stärkeren Anteil an musikalischen Vorführungen nimmt als im modernen Abendlande. Musik ist für sie nicht schön oder häßlich, sondern auch gut und böse; die Spannung und Befreiung im Ausübenden und im Zuhörenden. . . . [Musik] wird von ihnen als eine Art religiösen Geschehens empfunden, das unbewußt noch in den profansten musikalischen Äußerungen wirkt” (my translation).

I have always thought that Richard Taruskin would find the work of Robert Lachmann (1892–1939) much to his liking. Lachmann might well feature in the dramatis personae of earlier intellectuals and music scholars, many of whom appear in the pages of *Cursed Questions* as remarkable intellectuals whose contributions to thinking about music often emanated at a distance from the more orthodox traditions of music history and historiography. From the opening pages of Taruskin’s “Introduction,” in which the reader meets “the poet and underground revolutionary Mikhaïl Larionovich Mikhaïlov,” to more contemporary analytical thought in Lev Koblyakov’s Pierre Boulez studies (chapter 9, “Unanalyzable, Is It?”), to the unexpectedly modern historical position staked out by Alexey Vasil’yevich Finagin in the 1920s (chapter 13, “A Walking Translation? On Musicology East and West”), Taruskin charts his own path through Western music history with Russia clearly in view—with his own musicological light from the East. *Ex oriente lux*.

Robert Lachmann surely would have earned a place in this pantheon of intellectual luminaries, though he himself was not a product of the East in Europe or anywhere else. Yet there are many other reasons why Taruskin might invite his readers also to read and reread Lachmann. As in *Cursed Questions*, the complex relation between East and West played a decisive role for Lachmann, though he was writing globally about them, thereby locating them in crucial historical positions in a moment of historiographic revolution for music scholarship, the emergence of comparative musicology (*vergleichende Musikwissenschaft*) in the 1920s and 1930s. At a moment of stunning intellectual efflorescence, one of many we encounter in *Cursed Questions*, musicology was freed from national boundaries that would make it German or anglophone, the modern binary that the light from the Russian East undoes for Taruskin. What Lachmann and the comparative musicologists achieved in a brief period of remarkably intensive musicological conversation is precisely what Taruskin calls for at his most hopeful moments in *Cursed Questions*, above all when he urges us to read again what music scholars who went before were able to do as they lifted up music as social practice.

Another reason why Taruskin might welcome Lachmann into his *Lebenswerk* of music and social practice is that Lachmann suffered in many ways as a result of his marginalization in Europe and the German academic world. His historical and ethnographic research employed cutting-edge scientific methods, but because he was Jewish he was forced from the directorship of the music section of the Prussian State Library (today the Berlin Staatsbibliothek). As a refugee he would reestablish comparative musicology as best he could from 1935 to 1939 at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Few twentieth-century music scholars could have posed Taruskin’s cursed questions as eloquently and tragically as Robert Lachmann.²

2. Considerable reassessment of Robert Lachmann’s work and heritage has been under way in recent years; see, for example, Ruth Katz, “The Lachmann Problem”: *An Unsung*

I have begun this review in the spirit of a book containing many of Taruskin's finest essays, wishing to recognize, reflect, and respect their wide-ranging contributions to the debates through which music scholars have charted the modern history of their field. The debates take shape around the concept of cursed questions that Taruskin traces from his translation of Mikhailov's Russian translation of Heinrich Heine's German quatrain "Zum Lazarus" (1853). From the first pages of the book, cursed questions arise at the confluence of objects and subjects, music and the contexts that make it transformative. Cursed questions "are unanswerable. . . . They are ineluctable. They are vital. They are addictive" (p. 2). They appear again and again throughout music history and throughout the chapters of this book, notably as chapter titles. To be cursed might suggest a deadly seriousness, but in this book it unleashes a special playfulness in the service of music historiography. Taruskin rather likes to tease the reader kiddingly with remarks framing passages that introduce a writer whom we might, if we read beyond the margins, know or not: "Try and guess who wrote it" (William Lyon Phelps, a central figure in chapter 12, "Which Way Is Up? On the Sociology of Taste," p. 342); "So, who do you suppose might have written this?" (A. V. Finagin, in chapter 13, p. 400).

Many chapters—and especially new footnotes added to previously published essays—ask the reader to return to earlier skirmishes with those who have taken issue with Taruskin, some of them friends, others adversaries. Revisiting such quarrels in print was for me far less interesting than the intellectual excitement that accompanied his encounters with scholars whose position in the book was dislodged by the question mark rather than the question. Taruskin's romp through the realms of the middlebrow in chapter 12, with its cast of characters at play with music appreciation and conversation across the classes, was all-round good fun, yet also a reminder that most of us spent considerable periods of our early lives with the tools and gimmicks of music appreciation, and that the soundtrack of our lives retains various passions and preferences for popular music. The *jouissance* underlying many cursed questions consistently lies in the contexts even more than in the music. So, too, does the intimacy of drawing closer to the favorites, friends, and families whose lives constitute the contexts of music. The most engaging opening to any chapter was for me that of chapter 10, "Essence *or* Context? On Musical Ontology," in which Taruskin reflects on the intimate spaces of his family's European origins in the Lithuanian-Latvian border regions not far from modern Vilnius, the city in which he delivered the

Chapter in Comparative Musicology (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Magnes Press, 2003); Robert Lachmann, *The "Oriental Music" Broadcasts, 1936–1937: A Musical Ethnography of Mandatory Palestine*, ed. Ruth F. Davis (Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, 2013); and Philip V. Bohlman, "All This Requires but a Moment of Open Revelation! Johann Gottfried Herder, Robert Lachmann, and the Global Musicological Moment," in *Remixing Music Studies: Essays in Honour of Nicholas Cook*, ed. Ananay Aguilar, Ross Cole, Matthew Pritchard, and Eric Clarke (London: Routledge, 2021), 131–47.

keynote on which the chapter was based. The loving prose with which he revisits his family's past returns frequently throughout the book, when he—yes, lovingly—reflects on Haydn (chapter 3, “Haydn and the Enlightenment?”) or Stravinsky and early music (chapter 6, “‘Alte Musik’ or ‘Early Music’? On Pseudohistory”). These strains of the personal, the quixotic, and a willingness to fight for his convictions distinguish *Cursed Questions*, affirming the deeper reasons for returning to its chapters and reading them again.

We reread for many reasons, above all our belief that returning to texts of the past will lead us to make connections to new and changing contexts. By rereading we are not simply revisiting the old to indulge again in what we remember as its pleasures, but rather we seek something new, an idea or passage with fresh meaning and perspectives we did not yet recognize on the first pass. The author we meet on the second pass is no longer the same, which is to say, she has changed because we encounter her differently on the page. She has changed, as has her text, because we have changed. For such reasons, perhaps the best-known rereader in American letters, Henry James, moves from one text to another in hopes that transformation might couple revelation with pleasure—for example, in this passage about rereading Honoré de Balzac:

The beauty of this adventure, that of seeing the dust blown off a relation that had been put away as on a shelf, almost out of reach, at the back of one's mind, consists in finding the precious object not only fresh and intact, but with its firm lacquer still further figured, gilded and enriched. . . . Our old—that is our young—feelings are very nearly what page after page most gives us.³

Those of us who reread—I am speaking for myself, but so too is James when he switches to the first-person plural “our” and “us” above—engage in a series of conscious collective practices. For many music scholars, it is the individual motivation to engage with Richard Taruskin once again as the author of texts that are familiar to various degrees that will lead them to spend the substantial amount of time required for reading and, especially, rereading the essays gathered here. The reader expects these chapters to be personal, for they surely were when they originally appeared in print or provided the basis for an address that served as the original version of a chapter. (Chapters 9 through 13, the final group, were variously delivered as keynotes.) Texts that lend themselves best to rereading are the ones that afford the literary spaces in which author and reader most often commune, whether to quarrel or to concur. In my rereading of the essays in *Cursed Questions*, Taruskin, too, is a rereader. For critics who advocate rereading, the practice shared by author and reader is among the most crucial, yet also pleasurable, motivations. Wendy Lesser, one of the most thoughtful contemporary

3. Henry James, *Notes on Novelists, with Some Other Notes* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914), 110–11.

theorists of rereading, likens the shared space of rereading thus: “You cannot reread a book from your youth without perceiving it as, among other things, a mirror. Wherever you look in that novel or poem or essay, you will find a little reflected face peering out at you—the face of your own youthful self, the original reader, the person you were when you first read the book.”⁴

The journey to the past and youthful experiences is one of the most common moves in the transformation from rereading to rewriting. Lesser’s mirror and the remembrance of things past that it makes possible may be only tangentially Lacanian and Proustian, but her evocation of the ways in which rereading takes us to our own pasts is shared by other rereaders. For some critics, the shared space of the literary experience becomes so intensely personal that it opens up entirely new texts altogether, entry into which, nonetheless, relies on a journey with the original author.

It is because the journey of rereading the chapters in *Cursed Questions* leads to such rich collections of new texts that the book opens up new contexts and the pleasure of experiencing them through music. Many of these contexts lie between and beyond the lines. Each reader may choose his own companion, turning a cursed question on its head, or batting it back to Taruskin: “So, who do you suppose might have written this?” For this reason, I introduced Robert Lachmann to my rereading, whose work as a towering figure in the history of ethnomusicology represents a sea change for understanding the relation between music and context, the most fundamental question in this book. Taruskin never ceases to ask for more rather than less of the social contexts and practices that transform music history into musicology. I expect to find Lachmann and the questions posed by his ethnomusicology the next time round, when I, eagerly, reread Taruskin. I have every reason to believe they will be there, for as he writes in his final sentences about the strings in the musicologist’s bow, “there cannot be too many” (p. 436).

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Beethoven 1806, by Mark Ferraguto. AMS Studies in Music. New York: Oxford University Press, 2019. xxi, 245 pp.

In *Beethoven 1806*, Mark Ferraguto addresses a number of issues that confront Beethoven scholarship some 250 years after the composer’s birth: the ubiquitous narratives of struggle and triumph in Beethoven biography and criticism; the privileging of certain works, often considered “heroic” in character, in the shaping of Beethoven’s image in popular culture and critical assessments; the limitations of the musical score and musical analysis as sources

4. Wendy Lesser, *Nothing Remains the Same: Rereading and Remembering* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002), 4.