WHAT IS GALANT COUNTERPOINT?: EXAMINING THE STRICT TREATMENT OF FOLK MELODY IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY MUSIC

by

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Throughout the eighteenth century, folk melody found itself constricted within the confines of the Classical art music tradition. The clearest evidence of this relationship appears in the fugal treatment of folk melody. Through this lens we see the courtly styles and tastes of Western Europe manipulating the expression of folk elements. Within the ruling aesthetic, the representation of the folk functions as a reference to the primitive or simple. When the "simple" melodies of the folk conform to the rigid counterpoint inherited from the sixteenth century, we see conflicting gestures of musical expression, what Elaine Sisman calls "galant counterpoint." What are we to make of these contradictions of affect and style? This thesis explores the political ramifications of these gestures along with the evolution of the role of folk melody in the Western art music tradition.

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I. Introduction: Eighteenth-century Music, Folk Melody, and Aesthetics

The dawning of the age of Enlightenment brought about many changes in the cultural life of Europe. The Protestant Reformation and Counter Reformation revolutionized the place of religion in the lives of Europeans, and greater urbanization and technological advancements signaled the coming of the industrial era. During this period of flux, after the Renaissance, but before the mass industrialization of Europe, there existed nostalgia for a simpler time, a yearning for an older way of life that in many ways continues in the present day.

This desire to preserve a simpler, antiquated life exhibited itself as an integral part of the eighteenth century's musical language. Certain aspects, such as rhythm, harmony, and texture, became emblematic of nature and provincial life. These textures became symbolic of what we now call the "pastoral." Often times, folk melody, or the representation of folk melody, became associated with the pastoral as part of this musical topic.

Folk melody seeped into the classical canon in several ways: well-known tunes became the basis for church hymns and chorales; folk tunes were adapted into art songs; and still other melodies appeared in quartets and symphonies. The motivation for using these folk tunes differed in each case. For the church, these melodies served the purpose of appropriating aspects of the latent culture to ease the folk into practicing Christianity. By using familiar tunes, even illiterate peasant-folk were able to participate easily in singing hymns.

Sometimes the folk melody became a component of the pastoral musical landscape; other times it served as a salute to a patron as in Beethoven's "Razumovsky" Quartets. Others such as the Scottish publisher George Thomson sought to preserve these melodies, not in the modern sense, but rather in an "improved" state, such as an art song or in the form of a sonata. Whether preservation was the intent or not, however, it often became the result, at least within the written canon of Western art music. But in preserving it, composers often treated it to all of the techniques that developed as part of moving away from this simplicity. The use of highly codified compositional techniques in settings of folk melody provides a quintessential example. In this way the melodies were preserved in an altered or somewhat contorted form.

The conversation about "folksongs" in Germany began with Johann Gottfried von Herder, a German philosopher and literary critic, and his interest in Ossian, the Gaelic narrator and alleged author of the epic poem published by James Macpherson in 1760.[1] The interest in the Scottish epic in London brought a new publication that drew the attention of Herder, who, while describing the epic, coined the term "folksong" in Western Europe. From this jumping board, German-speaking composers and academics dominated the dialogue concerning folk music that had a particular interest in Scottish music, for example, the numerous Scottish folk tunes set by Haydn and Beethoven for George Thompson.

The work of the French philosopher Jacques Rancière in the *Politics of Aesthetics*, the Palestinian American literary critic Edward Said's *Orientalism*, and the Indian literary theorist and philosopher Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's, *Can the*

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[1] Dorothy Margaret Stuart, "'OSSIAN' MACPHERSON REVISITED," *English* 7 (37) (1948): 16-18.

Subaltern Speak, provide a framework within which the political and cultural aspects of the arts and music can be parsed out from the overall aesthetic. The picture they paint is a bleak one; however, the story may not be entirely a tragedy. I posit that the mixture of folk melody with classical figuration forms a symbiotic relationship. Each has something to benefit from proximity with the other, and their union is something new and interesting. Unfortunately, the dialogue often remains one-sided. The German philosophers Johann Gottlieb Fichte and later Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel describe a dialectic in which the thesis meets the antithesis, and the interaction of the two creates a synthesis; this synthesis is neither thesis nor antithesis but a unique combination of the two, where the sum exhibits qualities of each but is in essence something entirely new. I apply this principle to folk melody in eighteenth-century music, and I find the results compelling. The preservation of folk melody in art music is a contradiction, but this contradiction spawns a genre that is entirely its own: the intersection of folk and art music.

The treatment of folk melody in eighteenth-century music embodies a central contradiction. For while it references a more "primitive" style, it is sometimes treated to the learned techniques of serious counterpoint and subsumed within the period's classical aesthetics such that it no longer retains its original character. However, it still functions as a successful reference within the ruling aesthetic framework. I propose that this distinctive intersection of folk material and learned treatment is the quintessence of the style that Elaine Sisman once called "galant counterpoint," and that this hybrid topic is an important window through which to understand the political stakes of the period's musical aesthetics.

II. Folk and Art Music

The modern distinction between "folk" and "art" music held little or no sway in the eighteenth century. Within the ruling aesthetic regime, there existed "low" and "high" styles, but these referred to the function of the music rather than its origin.[2] The low style mobilized social or courtly dance types, while the high style referred to music associated with the church and the rigid rules to which these compositions conformed. For composers to illustrate the low style it often meant the relaxing of these rules for a particular effect. These stylistic differences grew primarily out of the earlier distinction between the *sonata da chiesa* and the *sonata da camera*, music for the church and chamber, respectively. Clearly these genres defined themselves on the basis of their function and not their origin. During this period, composers took the role of craftsmen; through their "art" they utilized the "science" of music to portray their desired affect. They often used common melodies, but were little concerned with who wrote them. Their audiences shared this disinterest in the originality of these melodies, focusing instead on the craft of the composer in adapting them.

The Scottish Aires signified nature and the pastoral in music, but not because their melodies originated with the folk. Early collectors of these melodies ascribed their origin to an earlier courtly culture, where bardic characters composed music under the patronage of a monarch.[3] These melodies found amongst the folk could only be corrupted by their oral transmission and needed to be saved, written down, before they

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[2] Matthew Gelbart. *The Invention of "Folk Music" and "Art Music": Emerging Categories from Ossian to Wagner*. (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 20.
[3] Gelbart, *The Invention of "Folk Music" and "Art Music",* 95–96.

became corrupted beyond repair. Macphearson's phony Ossian epic provides an excellent example. Macphearson claimed to have simply recorded the words of this epic as he ostensibly heard them amongst the Scottish folk and compiled the story into a single poetic narrative. Only later did scholars begin to question Ossian's authorship of the work, and begin to suspect that much of the epic poetry probably belonged not to this mythic ancient bard, but to Macphearson himself.

During the course of the eighteenth century, the manner in which composers presented the pastoral style underwent a dramatic shift. Early in the century, the pastoral signified purity, untainted by sin or industry. It provided a moral instruction for a time before the corruption of man. As the century progressed however, the pastoral, and nature as a whole, developed into an "Other," opposed by the reality of the changing, modern world. The pastoral became something exotic, and idealized, yet it differed from the exotic in that it referred not only to geographic distance (between Scotland and Europe, for example), but also temporal distance (between the past and the present).

It did not take long, however, for these to be equated.[4] European and American academics began examining the melodic content of Scottish Aires and found that they shared the same scales with the music from the Orient. Scottish music became the link between the ancient and the oriental. Western Europeans concluded that the Scottish melodies comprised of elements frozen from the past. The accuracy of these claims would not be challenged until the twentieth century.

By the end of the eighteenth century, the focus of art and aesthetics began to shift again. The process of imitating nature decreased in stature, while the new interest

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[4] Gelbart, *The Invention of "Folk Music" and "Art Music",* 113.

focused more on "genius." Herder's discussion of Ossian in particular shows evidence

of a new aesthetic attitude toward "art" as "artifice" in opposition to the primal qualities

of nature.[5] While nature and the folk equated to the universal aspects of art, the

composer's job was to create a synthesis through his skill with the science of music.

Beethoven's Ninth Symphony was said to exhibit this quality best; he emulated folk

elements, mainly in words, while transforming them into a work consistent with the

"Golden Age of High Art" in Europe, specifically Germany. [6]

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[5] Gelbart, *The Invention of "Folk Music" and "Art Music"*,191.
[6] Ibid. 209, 219.

III. "Volkslied:" beginning the discussion about the "folk;" the importance of Scotland and Germany

The relationship between Britain and the mainland of Europe as well as that between the English lowlands and the Scottish highlands forms an important aspect of this discussion. Britain, being removed geographically from the mainland, exhibited an exotic pull on the imagination of European artists and intellectuals. While the English lowlands maintained some cultural similarities with mainland Europe, the Scottish highlands provided a dichotomy in culture that proved quite compelling. A critical element cementing these relationships arrived in an essay by Herder entitled, *Extract from a Correspondence on Ossian and the Songs of Ancient Peoples*. Here Herder was the first to use the term *volkslied*, or "folksong." Herder considered Ossians's songs to be "songs of the people:" accurate representations of the thoughts and feelings of the common folk. Herder's writings on the subject of folksong have become paramount in the discussion of early categorization of folk music in Europe; thus, Scotland became emblematic of folk elements while Germany assumed the role of arbiter.

While the term *Volkslied* or "folksong" originated in Germany, the concept to which the word referred existed by other names in Britain. The terms "natural" or "national" music stood to mean the same thing as folksong and came into use concurrently. Although the importance of Herder and Germany at large should not be overemphasized in this discussion, their hegemonic status cannot be overlooked.

George Thomson, a Scottish music publisher and editor active during the latter part of the eighteenth century, collected melodies from the Scottish countryside and collaborated with the poet Robert Burns and composers Pleyel, Haydn and Beethoven

to create settings of these melodies in art songs and sonatas. Thomson commissioned works with the intent to "improve" them. "Burns advised him to 'let our native airs preserve their native features'" but Thomson had the notion that "improvement" was necessary.[7] With this in mind he spent large sums of money to hire only the preeminent composers of the day. Although Beethoven's settings of these songs are little known, they comprise a substantial portion of his oeuvre, numbering over one hundred settings. The songs do not have the reputation of being great pieces of art—Aldrich refers to them as comparable to the work of any conservatory student of composition—yet Beethoven did not succeed in Thomson's wish that these arrangements be playable by the amateur female accompanists of Scotland.[8] The editor frequently requested for Beethoven to revise the piano parts and make them more playable. Beethoven resented the idea of revising his work, but eventually succumbed to writing new, less demanding versions, which he delivered along with an additional bill. Aldrich's article also implies that Beethoven may have mainly accepted this work to fill his coffers more than anything else, despite what he said to Thomson of his interest on the Scottish melodies. This suspicion may not be entirely well placed, for although Beethoven did refer to some of his work as purely for monetary gain, the fact that his parts were consistently more complex than Thomson required hints at the fact that Beethoven did spend energy on the project. He certainly spent the time—he worked at these settings for nearly five years.[9]

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[7] Richard Aldrich, "Beethoven and George Thomson," *Music and Letters* VIII (2) (1927): 239 doi:10.1093/ml/VIII.2.234.
[8] Richard Aldrich, "Beethoven and George Thomson," 242.
[9] Richard Aldrich, "Beethoven and George Thomson," 234.

IV. Eighteenth-century Aesthetics and Topical Analysis

Eighteenth-century Europe had a highly developed culture of elite music that was centered on the customs of courtly life. The art of the previous century had focused on the representation of nature, and thus required a piece of music to have a unity of character and affect. Contrapuntal practice had been highly codified in Fux's *Gradus et Parnassum* and by the continued performance of Palestrina and Bach—composers whose mastery of counterpoint provided the gold standard for eighteenth-century musicians. Even within this structure, different levels of strictness developed in the eighteenth century and beyond. Fugue and canon, being the strictest representatives of rigid counterpoint, became references to the *stile antico*, while general practices for writing music in "counterpoint" remained commonplace. The *stile antico* became one of many different styles that began to precipitate out of the expression of different emotions or affects. Eventually these "topics" became referential within the existing body of musical literature.

The twentieth-century scholars Leonard Ratner and Wye J. Allenbrook describe "topics" as powerful tools for eighteenth century music analysis. A topic utilizes specific techniques to express particular affects within the context of eighteenth-century aesthetics. The "brilliant" topic, for example, was thrilling, fast, virtuosic, impressive, and courageous, characterized by fast rhythmic motion such as scales or arpeggios or other melodic embellishments. The *stile antico* used old methods of counterpoint such as canon and fugue to evoke solemnity, where note lengths tended to be longer, weightier, and employed the use of breves or semibreves.

The galant style took its demeanor from dances and tended to have a binary or ternary form that often featured anacrustic openings and cadences on week beats. The pastoral topic evoked the feeling of the country, of arcadia, of sheep and shepherds often with the use of compound meters and lilting rhythms such as the *siciliano* rhythm (eighth, dotted-eighth, sixteenth). Neither Ratner nor Allenbrook explore the meaning of folk melody in topical analysis, but in some cases it works to strengthen the reference to the pastoral topic, such as in Beethoven's "Pastoral" Symphony. Together with other aspects of the pastoral topic, folk melodies complete the descriptive soundscape and transport the listener back in time and far away, into the rolling hills of arcadia.

The intrinsic link between folk melody and the pastoral within this aesthetic becomes obvious in Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony, where a folk-like melody appears amidst the lilting rhythms and harmonies of the pastoral. The pastoral topic is related to the pastoralla, which was a type of music used in Christmas services to relate the story of the shepherds in pastures, their journey to Bethlehem, and their deference in the manger. Music in this genre tended to use "folk-like" melodies if not actual folk songs. It was not uncommon for these "Sinfonia pastorella" pieces to be played between sections of the mass Ordinary. Although Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony was a secular, programmatic work, its relation to the pastorella is not difficult to discern. The resemblance of the theme in the Allegretto to the folk song *ranz de vaches* from Rigi Switzerland, while likely to be "generic rather than particular," reinforces the folk elements associated with the pastorella.[10]

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[10] David Wyn Jones, *Beethoven, Pastoral Symphony* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 77.

Borrowings such as this were often not direct quotations from folk melodies, but were imitations, or representations, of how folk melody was conceived within the classical tradition. The reference to the pastoral relied more on the associations for the audience than it did on its fidelity to existing folk melody.

V. Galant Counterpoint

Galant writing in a certain sense exists in opposition to the *stile antico*. Fux's 1725 *Gradus ad Parnassum* categorically describes the rules of *antico* counterpoint from the sixteenth-century, Palestrina tradition as understood by eighteenth-century music theorists. The *stile antico* refers to the adherence to these rules as well as to the somber, serious tone of church music in general: the use of imitation and polyphonic texture in which each voice acts independently. This generally entails the preferred use of contrary motion between upper and lower voices, the approach and resolution of dissonances in specific ways, and judicious use of blending and independence between voices.

Galant music appears more often in lighter works, such as dance suites or theatrical pieces. Voltaire described the term as a practice of "seeking to please."[11] It further denotes accordance with "French courtly manner." Galant music aims more toward amateurs for social dancing and musical instruction, while the strict counterpoint of the *stile antico* tends to be restricted to professional use. Galant music relies less on strict rules concerning the use (approach and resolution) of dissonances and often incorporates more homophonic textures, and the music tends to be characterized by the use of shorter note values.

Fugal counterpoint exemplifies one of the strictest forms of composition associated with the *stile antico*. While the meaning of the term fugue has evolved many

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[11] Daniel Heartz and Bruce Alan Brown, "Galant," in *Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press., 2007–. Accessed May17, 2014. <www.oxfordmusiconline.com>.

times over the centuries, the basis for its use seems to have always been imitative counterpoint. The word fugue originates from the Latin *fuga*, meaning "flight" or "fleeing." The strictest form of imitative counterpoint is the canon, in which each voice executes the same exact musical line but with regularly staggered entrances. The fugue employs similar imitation by consecutive voices except that the fugal answer often appears transposed either up a fifth or down a fourth, and not always exactly. This necessitates a modulation to the dominant near the end of the fugue subject so that the countersubject, the contrapuntal material that follows the subject in the first voice, harmonizes with the fugal answer that enters in the second voice. The rest of the fugue proceeds along a strict formula best demonstrated by J. S. Bach in his *Well Tempered Clavier*.[12]

"Galant counterpoint," a term first proposed by Sisman in her analysis of Mozart's "Prague" Symphony, refers to the appearance of fugal writing in the context of an otherwise galant style work.[13] Another good example presents itself in the finale of Mozart's "Jupiter" Symphony, where the serious whole-note subject stands out against the otherwise galant, dance-like figures of the movement. In general, galant counterpoint means the adaptation of strict contrapuntal rules of the sixteenth century to the tastes and courtly dances of the eighteenth century. Here, learned writing, such as fugues with whole note subjects, contrasts with galant textures, styles, and forms

I contend that an even more compelling example of galant counterpoint is the fugal treatment of folk melody, such as is found in the third movement of Beethoven's

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[12] Paul M. Walker, "Fugue," in *Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, 2007–. Accessed May 17, 2014. <www.oxfordmusiconline.com>.

[13] Elaine Sisman."Genre, Gesture, and Meaning in Mozart's 'Prague Symphony'," in *Mozart Studies 2*, ed. Cliff Eisen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 49.

"Razumovsky" Quartet No. 2. In this movement, Beethoven presents the *Thème russe* within the confines of fugal, contrapuntal control. The combination of folk melody (with its associations with the pastoral) and the *stile antico* exhibits what Sisman calls "difficult" gestures: where seemingly contradictory topics become fused together. But how are we to understand this contradiction within the rhetorical framework of eighteenth-century music? This question guides the following analysis.

VI. Beethoven's String Quartet No. 8, Opus 59, "Razumovsky" No. 2

The third movement of Beethoven's string quartet number eight features the theme from a Russian folk song as requested by the Count (later Prince) Andrey Kirillovich Razumovsky who commissioned three quartets from Beethoven in 1806. This particular folk tune was later used in Modest Mussorsky's *Boris Godunov*, Sergei Rachmaninoff's *6 Marceaux* for Piano Duet, op. 11, and in Igor Stravinsky's *Firebird* ballet. Beethoven presumably adopted this theme from a collection published in 1790, edited by Ivan Prach.[14] Although the theme in its original was a solemn hymn, Beethoven transforms it into a "spritely" dance by "accelerating the tempo from andante (3/8) to allegretto (3/4) and [interpolating] rests between the notes."[15] The *Thème russe* appears in the B section, the Maggiore.

The form of the movement resembles a minuet and trio, typical of third movements from the classical period, but it is in fact an intermezzo, a type of movement that eventually became very popular with Brahms at corresponding places within a work.[16] By adding an additional "da capo," Beethoven increases the movement to five sections, ABABA. The three-four time signature implies a minuet but moves at such a clip that none but a very nimble dancer would be able to keep up. The A section, the Minore, comprises two subsections. Both are repeated. The first section is shorter, only nine bars, and makes a complete phrase with an authentic cadence in the home key of E minor. The style of the first phrase is stately and refined. The second subsection

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[14] Warren Kirkendale, *Fugue and Fugato in Rococo and Classical Chamber Music*, trans. Margaret Bent and the Authr (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1979), 234.
[15] Ibid. Ibid.
[16] Ibid. 233.

becomes a bit more raucous and features two phrases that emphasize the Neapolitan harmony, F major, (mm. 21-23 and 28-30) before climaxing on dominant harmony (mm. 24 and 31) and then fading away into another authentic cadence in the home key (mm. 33). The Minore concludes with a closing section that begins with a cadential formula (i6-iv6-V-V7-i) (beginning in mm. 38) before alternating between tonic and dominant harmony (in mm. 46) into the final authentic cadence of the A section.

The Maggiore begins with a direct modulation into the parallel major, where the last beat of the Minore forms an elision into the Maggiore. The *Theme Russ* appears directly at the onset of the B section and is marked in the score. The Maggiore unfolds as a fugato, meaning "a loosely fugal passage within a predominantly non-fugal movement."[17] The theme, or subject, appears first in the viola (m. 63) accompanied by a rapid triplet line in the second violin that resembles "species-like counterpoint."[18] The second violin then takes up the theme (m. 69), while the cello adopts the accompanying counterpoint. The viola continues with the third layer (m. 69) of "'harmonic filling'...which is added to the subject and"– nominal– "counter subject"[19] to complete the harmony. In measure 75, the cello carries the theme, the first violin plays in counterpoint, and the second violin fills in the harmony, while the viola rests. The fourth repetition of the theme (m.81) appears in the first violin and completes the cycle with the viola playing the counterpoint, the cello filling in the harmony, and the second violin resting. Measures 87-90 extend the phrase until the next set of entrances begins in

[17] Paul M. Walker, "fugato," In *Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press., 2007–. Accessed May17, 2014. <www.oxfordmusiconline.com>.
[18] Kirkendale, *Fugue and Fugato in Rococo and Classical Chamber Music,* 235.
[19] Johann Georg Albrechtsberger (1736–1809), *Gründliche Anweinsung zur Composition.* Leipzig, 1790 (Paris 1814;Leipzig, n.d. and 1821), quoted in Kirkendale, *Fugue and Fugato in Rococo and Classical Chamber Music,* 74.

measure 91. Here the cycle starts again with the theme in the viola, but the counterpoint in the second violin is no longer the slurred triplets from before, but staccato eighth-notes in disjunct motion (m. 91). The viola passes the theme to the second violin in measure 97, but instead of adding another voice and letting the viola fill in the harmony as before, the viola adopts the new counterpoint and accompanies the theme in the second violin. In measure 103, the viola and cello take the theme and play in thirds, while the violins provide the counterpoint in thirds up above. The first stretto begins in measure 115 with the cello. The next entrance in the viola arrives two bars later. The second and first violins share the same relationship beginning in measure 121. The second stretto, featuring entrances staggered by one measure, begins in measure 127 in the viola, followed by the cello, first violin and second violin in that order. The Maggiore concludes with repeated melodic fragments, first in the violin one part (mm. 134-36) and then in the cello (beginning in m. 140) with a modal shift back to E minor (m. 142) before the da capo.

The fast three-four meter of the movement with ubiquitous eighth-note subdivisions begins to sound much like compound meter. This in conjunction with the emphasis on beat two lends the movement a lilting quality. In the Maggiore the illusion that beat two is in fact the first beat becomes even stronger, and the rolling, scalar triplets contribute to the pastoral-esque auditory (and visual) landscape. The raucous F major horn calls in the Minore feel quite rustic. These rough outbursts and the rhythmic ambiguity anticipate the folk melody in the Maggiore so much so that "Beethoven may

have devised the *alla-zoppa* theme of the main section (A) with the rhythm of the song in mind."[20]

The only fugue-like elements of the Maggiore are, in Kirkendale's words, "the answers at the fifth, the disposition of the entries, the species-like counterpoints, and the strettos."[21] Overall, the movement remains rather homophonic, with melody being supplied by one voice, while the other three voices fill in figurations of the harmony, which is equally straightforward. For the most part, the movement utilizes galant texture; thus when it ventures into the *stile antico*, especially with the use of folk melody, it becomes a strange hybrid of the two: galant counterpoint.[22]

Beethoven apparently endeavored to retain a folk flavor, with the dance feel, pastoral style, and homophonic sonorities. He may not have been successful in a twentieth century sense of preservation, but his efforts functioned clearly within the eighteenth-century classical aesthetic.

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[20] Warren Kirkendale, *Fugue and Fugato in Rococo and Classical Chamber Music* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1979) 235.

[21] Kirkendale, *Fugue and Fugato in Rococo and Classical Chamber Music*, 235.

[22] This piece was not the first to utilize folk melody in rigid counterpoint. As Kirkendale reminds us, "Folk melodies had, of course, already been *adapted* for contrapuntal compositions in the renaissance, and now they make their appearance, *unchanged*, as fugue subjects." These "antithetical phenomena" became so "merged" that "song melody was hardly considered any longer to be an alien element." While some have criticized this union for elevating the "naive creature" to an "artificial environment," Beethoven's treatment of the melody, "his direct repetition of the theme thirteen times in the same two keys – the Maggiore even being played twice – [does] help to preserve an atmosphere of folk music." As Kirkendale implies, Beethoven's treatment of folk melody differs from Haydn, in that Haydn made no effort to retain a folk-like style even when the melody he used had folk origins. Kirkendale, *Fugue and Fugato in Rococo and Classical Chamber Music*, 234–35.

VII. Aesthetics and Politics

When Sisman analyses Mozart's Prague Symphony, she identifies aspects that she calls "difficult" gestures, where *topoi* combine in atypical ways.[23] The rhetoric of eighteenth-century music relies on *topoi* to convey meaning, so what do we make of gestures that seem unintelligible? Perhaps they comprise a shift in style, or maybe they hint at a subtler message. Beethoven's "Razumovsky" Quartet provides an even better example of the difficult combinations Sisman investigates. Here, Beethoven couches a Russian folk tune within a jumble of invertible, species counterpoint, and fugal imitation. This fugato has political implications.

Folk melody in eighteenth-century music does not speak for itself as a true representation of its origins. Rather it serves as an example of a contradiction where the attempt to preserve a musical gesture and style becomes sabotaged by the treatment it received at the hands of composers. While the composers referenced extra-musical ideas such as the "folk" these ideas appear constricted by the treatment to which they were subjected. Yet they remain successful as indexical references within this aesthetic paradigm.

Edward Said has discussed the treatment of the "Other" in art thoroughly and authoritatively. His analysis on this subject constructs a web of power relations that, when applied to folk melody in the eighteenth century, implies a system in which the folk music is dominated by the Western classical tradition. Although his discussion focuses mostly on an inter-cultural discourse, his ideas can also be applied here due to

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[23] Elaine Sisman, "Genre, Gesture, and Meaning in Mozart's 'Prague Symphony'," 28.

the clear external and internal relationship between the folk and classical genres. The unambiguous relation between Scottish music and "folk" music as discussed previously links Said's discussion of cultural domination in academic dialogue with the aesthetic power relations between folk and art music. As described above, both the spatial and temporal separation of folk melody from Europe played significant roles.

For Said, Orientalism does not refer to the study or academic interest in the Orient. It refers to the body of literature created by the West in order to describe the Orient. Through the early evolution of the discussion and use of folk melody in the West, folk melody changed from the relic of an older bardic culture with refined tastes to the frozen remains of an older more "primitive" aesthetic. One nineteenth-century academic described "national music... as natural to the common people as warbling is to birds."[24] Melody itself is primitive, while harmony belongs to the science of music.

Early in his introduction, Said expresses one of the central arguments of Orientalism, namely that "Orientalism is more particularly valuable as a sign of European-Atlantic power over the Orient than it is a veridic discourse about the Orient (which is what, in its academic or scholarly form, it claims to be)."[25] This same argument applies to the treatment of natural, national, folk music and indicates how subtle violence can be. Although authors who write about the "Orient" may believe themselves to be innocently exploring knowledge of some other culture, they may in fact be circumscribing this knowledge within the bounds of cultural domination in the form of language, for the very perspective of the authors themselves sets them apart

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[24] William Dauney, *Ancient Scotish [sic] Melodies from a Manuscript of the Reign of King James VI* (Edinburgh Printing and Publishing Company, 1838), quoted in Gelbart, *The Invention of "Folk Music" and "Art Music",* 140.
[25] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 6.

from their subject. In describing their subject, they imply their knowledge of it, and limit its power for discourse. As Western classical music had by this point already been highly codified into a canon of virtually uniform aesthetic content, the introduction of folk music into this environment necessarily created an "Other" to the classical music of the time. This distinction, when coupled with the treatment of these melodies to Western classical counterpoint, and even fugal texture, demonstrates the ideological domination of one genre over another.

Formulated in this way, "Orientalism" becomes a broad tool for the analysis of any cultural or societal interaction and provides a framework for describing the relationships between disparate ideologies. In the case of folk music in the classical tradition, the body of music within the tradition forms the corporeal discourse, while the injection of folk music into this tradition constructs the cage within which the two genres interact. This closed system eliminates the possibility for dialogue, creating a one-sided story of musical tastes.

Germane to this discussion are the different senses of representation. Spivak eloquently draws the distinction between "representation as 'speaking for', as in politics, and representation as 're-presentation' as in art and philosophy."[26] In the eighteenth century, references to folk music relied on the imitation of a style. The pastoral as an idyllic memory became the standard for "re-presenting" the folk character in music. This style operated within the same aesthetic regime as the other topics, even though it sometimes broke with the established rules.

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[26] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Rosalind C. Morris. *Can the subaltern speak?: reflections on the history of an idea.* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 70.

Rancière defines aesthetics not as "a theory of sensibility, taste, and pleasure for amateurs," but as a "specific mode of being of whatever falls within the domain of art... In the aesthetic regime, artistic phenomena are identified by their adherence to a specific regime of the sensible."[27] The sensible in this case refers to the *topoi* of eighteenth-century music. Each topic has a particular meaning within the genre that is comprehensible to the listener. If every component of the aesthetic has meaning, then expression within this regime becomes politically charged.

Said and Rancière agree in saying that the distinction between politics and aesthetics is a fallacious one. The depiction of anything in art implies knowledge of the object, and Said draws an imagined "distinction between pure and political knowledge," in which he claims that, "It is very easy to argue that knowledge about Shakespeare and Wordsworth is not political whereas knowledge about contemporary China or the Soviet Union is."[28] For our purposes, we will substitute the brilliant, or the signing style, for those with supposedly less political charge and the *stile antico* and the pastoral as topics as those with more overt political meaning. The *stile antico*, as a representative of the high style, implies that music with this function serves a higher aesthetic ideal, where the observation of rules of the science of music work to the advantage of the composition as an artistic work. The pastoral and its association with the folk depart from the beaten path of strict rule-following and suffer to be relegated to a lower status of art.

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[27] Jacques Rancière, *The politics of aesthetics: the distribution of the sensible* (London: Continuum, 2004) 22-23.
[28] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 9.

Interpreting Beethoven's "Razumovsky" Quartet in this way, we see folk music as the exteriority and Beethoven's treatment of the theme implies certain naturalness for how the theme should be expressed in its highest form. The progression from simple melody to complicated counterpoint draws on the authority of the classical canon as an arbiter for aesthetic rectitude. Beethoven, in his treatment of the *Thème russe*, probably had no intention of participating in aesthetic power politics; however, the piece, being dedicated to someone in nobility draws a connection between classical treatment of a folk melody and class-related political struggles. By treating folk melody to fugal writing, Beethoven, unwittingly or not, played into the power politics of social class. He brought the melody into the Western classical tradition and, in doing so, demonstrated his aesthetic authority over the folk**.**

I perhaps optimistically believe that some of the original impetus of the folk melody may be preserved, if only in a dialectical fashion. This fusion I find to be more attractive than each aesthetic separately, and I find this union to be a symbiotic relationship. These melodies provided ready-made material that, when subjected to an established aesthetic that had become somewhat static, created a new, enlivened musical expression. While this union provided new energy to the Classical tradition, it brought to bear the strengths of counterpoint and tonal harmony. Unfortunately this ended in a unilateral dialogue, where the folk elements offered their unique flavor but were denied the chance to speak for themselves. One might ask whether this relationship could ever be a bilateral exchange: whether power politics can ever be divorced from artistic, inter-cultural discourse. This gulf may never be crossed, but the challenge is a worthy effort.

The idea of using folk melody in art music became very popular especially in the nineteenth century, and gained its highest praise in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony; although the universal aspect of the "Ode to Joy" in the finale belongs mainly to the words, the folk-like elements of the song have become emblematic of the highest order of the folk-classical synthesis. As the melody was in actuality not a folk tune, the piece exemplified even more the nineteenth-century ideal of creating music that resembled the universality of the folk but retained the high aesthetic standards of the eighteenth century. This synthesis continued to develop into the twentieth century. Even with Bartok's ethnographic work, his most famous contributions have been his integration of different scales and techniques into his own music. In short, he became more well-known for his emulation of folk elements than for any direct quotations.

VIII. In Conclusion

Folk melody in the eighteenth century embodied a central paradox. First entering into Western musical literature through adaptation in hymns and chorales, pagan melodies came to serve the Christian church as well known tunes became the basis for hymns and chorales. Folk melodies were collected from the hills in Scotland and set to music in the form of art songs composed by Handel and Beethoven. Here the folk melody was "improved" with new words by Robert Burns and music by the most famous classical composers of the day. Thomson's goal was both to improve and to preserve. In some sense he did preserve these melodies, but not in the sense that became the norm during the twentieth century, in which melodies were recorded in the original form with the goal of preserving the exact melody in its proper context. Thomson sought, rather, to preserve these melodies in what the courtly aesthetic of the day saw as a higher form of art. This was the case in the eighteenth century, when the ruling aesthetic model had an established means for the treatment of these themes. In the nineteenth century, folk melody became intimately tied to the nationalistic movements in Europe. Later, in the twentieth century, preservation took on a much more clinical approach with the emerging field of ethnomusicology spearheading the effort of scientifically storing and categorizing music from cultures around the world.

Folk melody in eighteenth-century music may not speak for itself as a true representation of its origins. Rather it serves as an example of a contradiction where the attempt to preserve a musical gesture and style became sabotaged by the treatment it received at the hands of composers serving an established aesthetic regime. This

combination of musical styles provides "difficult" gestures in terms of the rhetorical framework of eighteenth-century music. The best example of these gestures appear in the fugal treatment and folk melody, which trade heavily in the art of gallant counterpoint. While the composers reference extramusical ideas such as the "folk," these ideas appear constricted by the treatment to which they are subjected. Yet they remain successful as indexical references with this aesthetic paradigm.

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