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Singing Translations: The Politics of Listening Between the Wars

A Shavian Preamble

EXASPERATED BY HIS RECEPTION AT home, George Bernard Shaw determined that his next play would open abroad. Not only that: it was to be performed in German translation. *Pygmalion* premiered at Vienna's Hofburg Theater on 16 October 1913; it was seen in Berlin, Budapest, Stockholm, Warsaw, and St. Petersburg and at New York's German-language Irving Place Theater before making its English debut the following April. Scenes that might now seem inherently British were thus first heard couched in a very different idiom. Although the German *Pygmalion* kept to Shaw's main themes of class divisions and social mobility, the Eliza that emerges from Siegfried Trebitsch's translation is more refined than her cockney counterpart. Her language is comparatively standard; it is both formal (the *Sie/du* distinction is retained) and proper ("not bloody likely" is tamed to "*Dreck*").¹ The translator also took liberties with geographical markers. After one actress's unsuccessful adoption of Viennese working-class patois in a Berlin production, Trebitsch added the instruction that "Die Figur der Eliza ist durch den ortsblichen Dialekt zu charakterisieren" (The figure of Eliza should be characterized in the local dialect).² Yet the play continued to be set in London, referring to specific places such as Tottenham Court Road, and the protagonists' decidedly English monickers were maintained. Curiously, other place names were changed, and with implications for the social standing of the characters: in the German version, Eliza comes from Dover rather than from London's Lisson Grove—then a notorious slum. The first stagings of *Pygmalion* thus inhabited an imaginary landscape stranded between the foreign and the familiar: its language sounded local but its characters were far from home.

ABSTRACT British attitudes toward German-language song repertoire were transformed in the interwar period by a potent combination of politics and technology. The use of translations gained and lost ground; native musicians struggled to compete with international stars; and new listening strategies developed around the gramophone and radio. In the process, notions of cosmopolitan connoisseurship became established that still dominate reception and performance practices today. REPRESENTATIONS 123. Summer 2013 © The Regents of the University of California. ISSN 0734-6018, electronic ISSN 1533-855X, pages 53–86. All rights reserved. Direct requests for permission to photocopy or reproduce article content to the University of California Press at <http://www.ucpressjournals.com/reprintinfo.asp>. DOI: 10.1525/rep.2013.123.3.53.

While Shaw's plays continued to be performed in Germany and Austria after the First World War, German-language productions in other countries fell out of favor.³ The war had been fought as much on the home front, in cultural and linguistic terms, as on the fields of Flanders. Shaw is again a useful barometer. The play he wrote during the hostilities, *Heartbreak House*, pilloried "cultured, leisured Europe before the war" and its tendency to put "power and culture in separate compartments."⁴ In its frenzied final act, upper-class Brits gathered at Heartbreak House compare a German bombing raid to Beethoven ("The sound in the sky: it's splendid: it's like an orchestra: it's like Beethoven" exclaims hostess Mrs. Hushabye; one of the guests responds, "By thunder. . . it is Beethoven!"). Lady Utterword, who refuses to shelter with the servants in the basement, orders her brother-in-law Randall to "play your flute to show that you are not afraid. . . . Play us 'Keep the home fires burning,'" to which the long-suffering Nurse Guinness responds, "[grimly]: THEY'LL keep the home fires burning for us: them up there." Shaw admitted that *Heartbreak House* could not be staged during the war, for "the Germans might on any night have turned the last act. . . into earnest."⁵ Yet the notion that one could hear Beethoven in falling bombs, and that underneath them one might stoically play Ivor Novello's "cheery song," implies that war could—or had begun to—dismantle society's compartmentalization of culture and power.

The triangular relationship between power, culture, and language continued to interest Shaw in the interwar years, both as a playwright and as the longest-standing chairman of the BBC's Advisory Committee on Spoken English.⁶ He had considered translating at least two of Trebitsch's plays before, in 1921, deciding on *Frau Gittes Sühne* (which became *Jitta's Atonement*). Shaw admitted that his language skills were limited to asking directions and recognizing "the proverbial bits of Goethe and Wagner and Nietzsche"; he half-jokingly complained that Trebitsch did not use words found in the dictionary. Thus it was by "some telepathic method of absorption" that Shaw managed to "divine, infer, guess, and co-invent the story."⁷ Among the many methods of translation available (and several were theorized during the 1920s), Shaw's is among the least reverential.⁸ But he goes on to make an important point. Anglophone audiences would not have understood a literal translation of Trebitsch's play: "It was necessary to translate the audience as well as the play: that is, to translate Vienna into London and New York."⁹ Not that the action was transplanted; rather, Shaw saw the translator's role as encouraging the audience to interpret the play in its own terms.¹⁰ A similar process was evident in the manner in which interwar concert audiences in London encountered another art form in the German language: the nineteenth-century songs (or lieder) of Franz Schubert, Robert Schumann, Johannes Brahms, and Hugo Wolf.

Singing in English

The self-styled “cosmopolitan magazine of the arts,” the *Dial*, recalled that in Britain it was business as usual when the Great War first started: the only casualties were “cut flowers, jewelry and music.”¹¹ America’s attitude on entering hostilities also demonstrated that “the arts are in no way native amongst us, but are house guests” who, if they behaved improperly, could be cut.¹² The characterization of music’s status within Anglo-American culture as decorative, ephemeral, and essentially foreign was hardly unfamiliar: these were, notoriously, lands without their own music, dependent on visiting performers.¹³ The war thus brought an abrupt if temporary halt to the dominance of foreign and particularly, of course, German musicians over musical life.¹⁴ Now classed as enemy aliens, Germans were dismissed from orchestras, opera companies, and hotel dance bands; German-owned piano firms and artist-management agencies were taken over.¹⁵ Living composers, for example Richard Strauss and Engelbert Humperdinck, were no longer played, to avoid the necessity of paying royalties to the enemy. Eventually even music by dead composers—including the tremendously popular Richard Wagner—was also removed from the repertoire. The problem was not Wagner’s political beliefs, the *New York Tribune* critic H. E. Krehbiel commented: it was that the language of his libretto was the enemy’s vernacular.¹⁶

Wagner was not, though, the only (twice-buried) musical casualty in this war on language. Also caught in the crossfire were “the songs of Schubert, Schumann, [Robert] Franz, Brahms and other masters of German lyricism.”¹⁷ Their suppression was basically self-censorship on the part of singers, encouraged by the press and associations such as the American Legion.¹⁸ While at the outset politically motivated, the deletion of German songs from recital programs had a significant impact on concert repertoires and on the profiles of previously ignored local musicians. Native composers and performers were promoted, and the use of English texts, including translations of foreign works, was encouraged. The idea of a national opera company gained ground in London.¹⁹ Initially, classical song was caught up in the movement toward singing in English, encouraged in some quarters as a means of enhancing “music appreciation,” with its overtones of democratization and education. However, there was soon a countermovement in favor of original language versions, a privileging of “authentic” performance that related, in complex ways, to ideas of cultural internationalism and the use of music to define social hierarchies.²⁰

German romantic lieder now hold an exalted place in the classical repertoire; they are prized as a lyrical form that, through rarefied musical and literary expression, emphasizes individual subjectivity.²¹ Yet the uses to which they were put between the wars—the *songwork* they executed, to

borrow Gary Tomlinson's term—demonstrated a remarkable social and aesthetic mobility.²² Modest in scale—for voice and, typically, piano accompaniment (although, for reasons of sound quality, early recordings used a small orchestra instead)—and with roots in domestic music making they slipped between private and public spheres: they were still sung in the parlor (or listened to on gramophone records and radio broadcasts) and used in singing lessons, but they were also heard in salons and concert halls. Songs similarly traveled fairly easily between categories of high-, low-, and middle-brow art: Schubert was programmed in formal recitals, vaudeville, and sound films; “appreciation” of his music was encouraged through academic publications and lectures broadcast on the radio.²³ The question, at least among the middle and upper classes, was less whether one listened to Schubert than *how* one did so.

There had not been the epidemic of *Liederabend* (evening song recitals) in London that there had been in Berlin and Vienna at the turn of the century.²⁴ The first professional lieder recitals were presented in Britain in the 1880s and, although two decades later and on the cusp of war, the *Musical Times* referred to a “cult of Lieder singing” having taken hold (spearheaded by German mezzo-soprano Elena Gerhardt), they more often appeared in public concerts alongside opera arias, instrumental works, and popular material.²⁵ In London the ballad concert had long been king. Sponsored by music publishers such as Boosey and Hawkes (who were owned by Chappells, which also ran the Queen's Hall venue) as a means to advertise their wares, ballad concerts were lengthy miscellanies that featured multiple singers and instrumentalists.²⁶ Tenor Steuart Wilson later explained that until 1914 “a singer's concert life was largely ballad concerts and concert parties”; they did not die out completely during the interwar period but were overtaken by more specialized recitals.²⁷

The different spaces and formats in which songs were encountered inevitably had an impact on performance practices and listening strategies. Despite the small forces involved, and what is often said to be their “intimacy,” lieder were often sung in surprisingly capacious surroundings.²⁸ While smaller venues may have harked back to a domestic acoustic, they could on occasion be socially exclusive. At the grand end of the scale, celebrity concerts by John McCormack and Frieda Hempel were held on Sunday afternoons (or sometimes evenings) in the Royal Albert Hall, a Victorian amphitheater with a capacity of 8,000 people and a notoriously poor acoustic. The singers tended to present mixed programs of opera arias, lieder, and songs in English; it was always noted in reviews whether or not the vocalist had managed to project to the back rows.

Better for sound was the aforementioned Queen's Hall, which opened in 1893 and held concerts until it suffered bomb damage in 1941. Located

on Langham Place, it was the lodestar for several concert halls that sprang up around Oxford Circus tube station (which opened in 1900); its reputation as the most significant venue for classical music during the interwar years was consolidated when the BBC's Broadcasting House opened next door in 1932.²⁹ The Queen's Hall seated 2,400 and, while it was used primarily for symphony concerts, also hosted vocal recitals by major stars. The patrons of Queen's Hall were well heeled, cosmopolitan, and frequently foreign.³⁰ Their exoticism is conveyed by a scene in J. B. Priestley's novel *Angel Pavement* (1930) in which the clerk Mr. Smeeth celebrates getting a long overdue raise by going to a concert there. He describes the crowd as "a queer mixture":

a good many foreigners (the kind with brown baggy stains under their eyes), Jewy people, a few wild looking young fellows with dark khaki shirts and longish hair, a sprinkling of quiet middle-aged men like himself, and any number of pleasant young girls and refined ladies. . . . On one side of him were several dark foreigners in a little party, a brown wrinkled older woman who never stopped talking Spanish or Italian or Greek or some such language, a thin young man who was carefully reading the programme, which seemed full of music itself, and, on the far side, two yellow girls. On the other side, his neighbour was a large man whose wiry grey hair stood straight up above a broad red face, obviously an Englishman but a chap rather out of the common, a bit cranky perhaps and fierce in his opinions.³¹

Smeeth's evident discomfort and fascination with the audience—the range of ethnicities, his uncertainty about whether the Jews were Jews or what languages were being spoken, and his recognition that even the Englishman was "out of the common"—characterizes attendance at Queen's Hall concerts as an elitist venture; afterwards, in the "cold drizzle of rain in Langham Place, where the big cars of the rich were nosing one another like shiny monsters" it seemed a "long and dreary" way home (although, with a typical Priestley nod to the everyman, Smeeth feels even more excited and happy than he had when he heard about his pay raise).

Smaller concert halls—seating a few hundred—were attached to piano or pianola showrooms, such as the Aeolian Hall on New Bond Street and the Steinway Hall on Wigmore Street.³² These were typically rental venues, available for hire by singers making their debuts as well as professionals.³³ While arrangements were made through concert management companies, an increasing number of which auditioned, most important was the musicians' ability to pay the rental fees: in the 1920s the Wigmore Hall charged eighteen guineas, not including the cost of printing program booklets, dues to the Performing Rights Society, and so on (Priestley's Smeeth decided a shilling for a program at the Queen's Hall was too steep; they had been that price at the Wigmore since 1917).³⁴ Such expenses made it a mainly middle-class affair: the *Monthly Musical Record* later admitted that, while the

Wigmore sometimes presented quality and talent, “often [it] did little more than enable a gathering of friends and well-wishers to hear the first public performance of a mediocrity. Money was spent with the sole object of getting a good notice in the newspapers.”³⁵ While big names could make a few hundred, regulars typically made less than twenty pounds on most of their concerts. Still more exclusive were professional concert series hosted by high-end hotels (the May Fair, the Langham, and the Ritz) and theaters; as in New York, the luxury hotel provided a newly accepted public space for women. There were a number of music clubs and societies that programmed song recitals, some of which featured students and amateurs—such as the King Cole Chamber Music Club, which held events at the Great Central Hotel on Marylebone Road—and others that were mostly professional, such as the Chelsea Music Club. Vocal concerts were also hosted by wealthy individuals, such as Mrs. Samuel Courtauld: “at home” in the West End.

The venue that best demonstrates the impact of the First World War on attitudes toward German music and musicians was the 350-seat Bechstein Hall, which had opened in 1901 next door to the Bechstein piano company’s complex of studios, offices, and piano showrooms on Wigmore Street. At the outbreak of war in July 1914, the German manager of the London firm was holidaying on the Continent; like thousands of others, he found he could not return home. His deputy had to carry on the business without any power of attorney and eventually applied to the High Court to be appointed receiver and manager. Carl Bechstein was anxious to protect his staff from allegations of trading with the enemy and from unemployment.³⁶ He confirmed that no more pianos would be received from the Berlin factory until after the war, and all proceeds of the business would remain in England. However, the County Council refused to offer a license to the hall during wartime, even when the owners offered to replace the Bechsteins with British pianos.³⁷ In 1916 the Board of Trade ordered the property to be auctioned; an agent acting for Debenhams bought everything, including 137 pianos, for the not-so-grand sum of £56,500 (the building had cost £100,000). The new lessee kept the hall almost as it had been before the war: the previous manager was rehired (he, Mr. J. K. Pearson, had a great gift, it was said, for making “both concert-goers and concert-givers feel at home,” an important asset for smaller venues), and, in fact, the only major change to the way things were run was that recitalists could now select any brand of piano.³⁸ However, it was decided that the venue should be renamed—in English.

On 16 January 1917 it reopened as the Wigmore Hall. The first concert included three of Beethoven’s violin sonatas (played by Albert Sammons accompanied by Wassily Safonoff), proving “that Teutonic classics were not to be debarred.”³⁹ However, while eighteenth- and nineteenth-century

German instrumental music was heard regularly at the Wigmore Hall throughout the war years and afterwards, the German language was not; neither were German singers. The absence of performers is unsurprising and lasted until visa restrictions were lifted in 1923; the apparent reluctance to sing or hear the German language, though, raises more complex issues.

Designed by Thomas Edward Colcutt, who was also architect for the Savoy Hotel, the relatively modestly sized Wigmore Hall, together with its luxurious building materials (its walls were built from alabaster and marble; above the small stage sat a cupola depicting the soul of music) and fine acoustics suggested that this was a place for connoisseurs. However, as mentioned, between the wars it was a rental venue, which meant that program selections were sometimes determined by a singer's ability and training as much as by any external political factors (some singers also advertised plebiscite concerts or sang certain numbers—particularly potentially contentious ones—"by request"). Nonetheless, they provide some indication of music making taking place within and on the fringes of the professional sphere. Slightly less than a third of recitals given between November 1918 and the end of 1920 included lieder.⁴⁰ For the most part, concerts featured songs from Britain and her allies France and Russia; there was also an escalating interest in folksongs from around the world and in African American spirituals.⁴¹

When lieder were sung they were almost always done in translation: if not in English, then in French. Translations were usually devised by singers or their acquaintances, which accounts for their variable quality. Ezra Pound, writing under the pseudonym William Atheling for the socialist weekly the *New Age*, was particularly sensitive to their effect. While generally a fan of Russian tenor Vladimir Rosing, he found his singing of Schumann in French "very queer":

One realized after a time that ["J'ai pardonné"] was "Ich grolle nicht"; once rendered in English as "I do not growl, when thou the heart me break, I do not growl." We might almost lay it down as axiomatic that a song must be sung in its original language. It is probably impossible to sing even Heine (the Kaiser's pet detestation) in German at present; but the perfect union of word and note is so subtle and rare a thing that, once attained, no substitute is likely to give satisfaction.⁴²

On hearing the same song a year later Pound declared: "If Rosing wishes still further and yet again to declaim 'J'ai pardonné' let him make it clear that it is their translator he is pardoning, we cannot do so."⁴³

The "union of word and note" to which Pound refers was—and remains—of vital importance for the interpretation of song and lies at the heart of objections to their being sung in translation. Partly because they are

stylistically simpler, and partly because the songs represent a close reading of typically preexisting, sometimes hallowed, texts, the poems set are prized much more for their content and imagery than opera libretti. Sung by one person on a bare stage, song also implies a closer—again, more “intimate”—correlation between the performer and musico-poetic persona than is usually attributed to theatrical role playing.⁴⁴ It is perhaps for this reason (however fallacious) that questions of linguistic authenticity—of singing in one’s mother tongue, or convincingly in another language—have been so fraught.

Gradually, as singing in English became established, more serious attempts at translation were made, sometimes supported by commentary or even pedagogical apparatus.⁴⁵ In 1921 Arthur Henry Fox Strangways (editor of the newly founded *Music and Letters* and, before that, master at Wellington College) met the English singer Steuart Wilson, who had only recently encountered Schubert’s songs and was keen “to consider translations as a practical question.”⁴⁶ They began to collaborate on translations of lieder texts “which a singer need not blush for,” many of which were published. In a lengthy article, Fox Strangways explained their motivation.⁴⁷ He claimed that the average English singer argued against translation because:

The music itself is German, and it will not sound natural with any other words. I want to sing a certain number of foreign songs, in any case, to give variety to my programme. A foreign language has the additional merit of a certain obscurity which veils difficulties of enunciation and throws a glamour over rather trivial phrases. No translation I have ever seen was worth the paper it was written on. Suppose there were a good translation—better, even, than the original, as it might well be in Schubert’s case—I should still feel awkward singing words that the composer had never heard. I have learnt the song with the original words which I should now have to unlearn.⁴⁸

Fox Strangways dismissed all these objections. He set out as his ideal a translation that could “put into an English mouth singable words which do not falsify the original, and which succeed in making singer and listener forget that there is such a thing.”⁴⁹ There were many challenges, not least cultural associations: “There are a good many songs which no one but a German can sing with any conviction”; for example, “We have no word for *der Jäger*, ‘hunter’ calls up foreign travel, and the green coat, which the plot of *Die schöne Müllerin* gives him by implication, spirits us off to Sherwood and a set of chivalrous or, at any rate, quite other ideas.”⁵⁰ With shades of Shaw, Fox Strangways advocated rewriting the situation of the song, or leaving out what is merely local: “It is to be remembered that we are translating not Goethe, but Goethe (or anyone else) as set by Schubert and sung by an Englishman, and we cannot afford to make either of the latter ridiculous.”⁵¹ Translating the songs of other countries was necessary, he concluded, much as the British

make foreign food palatable by fortifying wines and turning oranges into marmalade.

Fox Strangways's article began a debate about approaches to translation that continued in subsequent issues of *Music and Letters* and spread elsewhere. At stake was something as basic as the relative importance of textual and musical meaning. Some argued that the musical setting rather than the poetry should determine the scansion, to honor the composer's intentions.⁵² Others opined that the poetic import of the songs should be privileged. One of the most influential naysayers to translations in performance was Ernest Newman, the London *Sunday Times* critic and author of books on Richard Strauss and Hugo Wolf (many musicians credited Newman's writings and musical editions with having encouraged them to explore Wolf's oeuvre).⁵³ "Even a singer with only enough acquaintance with the foreign language to know what the lines mean will prefer to sing the song to the original words, if only for the reason that he is spared the many annoyances that are inseparable from the best translations," declared Newman, to which Michel-Dimitri Calvocoressi (himself a translator of French and Russian) rejoined that it was just as annoying to hear English—or any other language—mispronounced or sung with a "foreign" accent.

Anxiety about accent became acute in the English-speaking world during the 1920s. As indicated by the *Pygmalion* episode, before the war Shaw already felt able to lampoon the notion that elocution could facilitate social mobility; another of his targets in creating the figure of Eliza Doolittle, apparently, was the exaggerated diction of actress Mrs. Patrick Campbell.⁵⁴ While the war temporarily dampened the activities of the Society for Pure English (founded in 1913 to preserve standards), it gained currency afterwards (supported by organizations such as the English-Speaking Union), with academics, authors, and politicians convinced of the merits of defining a Standard English or "received pronunciation," or, as some did not hesitate to call it, "the best English."⁵⁵ The basic premise was that "received pronunciation" represented a "non-localized accent" but it was evident that it derived from a particular social group: the educated elite. Phonetician Daniel Jones, for instance, was explicit that his *English Pronouncing Dictionary* (1917) described the pronunciation of those Southern English families whose men had been educated at Eton or Harrow.

Objections to the notion of a standard accent were swiftly expressed, particularly as encountered on the radio (in D. H. Lawrence's 1928 novel, Lady Chatterley's dull husband is found listening to a broadcast introduced by an "idiotically velveteen-genteel sort" of voice).⁵⁶ "Standard singing" gained more ground, perhaps because it was part of vocal pedagogy, the result of exercises to allow vowels to ring out and consonants to project to the back of the hall. Still, English singers occasionally came under fire for

giving their “vowels an accent that is nothing less than nauseating.”⁵⁷ It is hard, today, to hear recordings from the period and not feel the same way (even the voice of the much loved contralto Kathleen Ferrier, prized for her Lancastrian roots, revealed, in speech and song, years of elocution lessons that for many later listeners makes her sound unconscionably posh), and we are so unused to hearing Schubert sung in translation there is no small challenge in taking them seriously.⁵⁸

But let’s try. Fox Strangways’s collaborator Wilson recorded some of their Schubert translations in 1929.⁵⁹ A comparison of their version of “Ungeduld” from *Die schöne Müllerin* with a more literal translation indicates the extent of the liberties they took in terms of content (fig. 1):

Ich schnitt’ es gern in alle Rinden sein,	I’d cut it gladly in all the bark
Ich grüb’ es gern in jeden Kieselstein,	I’d chisel it gladly in every stone,
Ich möcht es sä’n auf jedes frische Beet	I’d like to plant it in every fresh flower bed
Mit Kressensanen, der es schnell verrät,	With cress seeds, that it quickly would show,
Auf jeden weißen Zettel möcht ich’s schreiben:	On every little white paper I’d like to write:
Dein ist mein Herz und soll es ewig bleiben!	My heart is yours and it shall forever remain! ⁶⁰

Whereas Müller’s title means “Impatience,” and centers on the conceit that the protagonist’s beloved is unaware of his desire, Fox Strangways and Wilson call it “The Name” and predict, with a briskness and self-confidence typical of the age, that she will understand his intent. They reduce the emphasis on the first person—far fewer lines begin with I—while imitating (not always successfully) the poem’s rhyming couplets. They also disregard the list of natural phenomena found in Müller: the bark, stone, and cress with which the protagonist would like to mark his love are transplanted to the English countryside, with its Aspen, harebells, and marsh marigolds (the order of the middle verses is also switched). “Thine is my heart” is close to the German original syntax, but the use of archaic English places this translation in the tradition of Victorian sentimental ballads, as does the first statement, “The dearest name in all the world to me”: a curiously bland explanation of the song’s meaning in place of Müller’s more ambiguous opening.

The basic principle, in terms of singability, seems to have been to put a vowel sound on the long notes of the repeated trochaic rhythm so that, in the first line *dear- name all world* are stressed, and so on. Something similar happens in Schubert’s setting of the German, but the vowel sounds are more closed: *schnitt gern all- Rin*. Nothing places the English as quickly as their open vowels. Wilson, son of the headmaster of Clifton College in Bristol and educated at Winchester and Cambridge, exemplifies “received

7 THE NAME 17

Ungeduld

Rather fast. Orig. A ma.

6

1 The dearest name in all the world to me I
 2 I'll fling a message for the wind to bear And
 3 A starling shall be my in-ter-pre-ter, And
 4 Oh, no! for love will find a quicker way, What-

1 read in mea-dow flow'r and wood-land tree. I
 2 breathe a-broad thro' all the list-ning air, And
 3 ev-'ry note he sings shall tell of her; Or
 4 - ev-er thought may think or word may say; Her

1 hear it when the as-pen whis-pers low, I
 2 ev-'ry time she picks a vi-o-let My
 3 prim-ro-ses I'll plant to spell her name, And
 4 eyes will read my yet un-spo-ken thought, Her

1 see it writ-ten where the king-cups blow, I
 2 thoughts shall leave it smel-ling sweet-er yet; The
 3 shake the hare-bells till they chime the same; On
 4 heart will bet-ter what my hand has wrought, And,

1 spell it out where wo-ven branches quiv-er-
 2 brook shall have a se-cret word to give her-
 3 wind-flow'rs my hopes shall hang and wa-ver-
 4 fan-cy-free, will let them woo her fa-vour-

Thine is my heart, thine is my heart, and shall be
 thine, shall be thine for ev-er!

FIGURE 1. “Ungeduld” from A. H. Fox Strangways and Stuart Wilson, *Schubert’s Songs Translated* (Oxford, 1924), 17.

pronunciation.” “All” in the first line is long and slightly drawled, “me” and “tree” elongated, “low” and “blow” rounded; “ev-er,” at the end, becomes ev-or, tailed with a rolled or postvocalic /R/. Despite southerners, and the upper classes, often dropping the R in speech, the rolled /R/ was standard practice for singers in English (as it was in most European languages). It is here that questions of accent and pronunciation become particularly tricky:

“standard singing” was something of a cosmopolitan construct, such heightened delivery identifying a singer’s training more than their mother tongue.⁶¹

Wilson’s stentorian and rather stiff delivery—the fast vibrato, his tendency to rush (slower songs sound better) and the impression that he is distinctly overparted in the higher register—does not make for a satisfactory performance according to today’s standards.⁶² But then Wilson was never said to have a beautiful voice: he was praised instead for his diction (not too clear in this recording) and his “intelligence,” the latter a means “to rescue the art [of singing] from the partnership of triviality, banality and vulgarity which did a roaring trade in the royalty ballad,” even if intelligence was also recognized as a euphemism for “indifferent vocal equipment.”⁶³ Positing education and intellect as interpretative forces had serious implications for the status of songs and their singers, as illustrated by an infamous episode from slightly later in Wilson’s career that is worth a digression here.

Mr. M. A. Wheatleigh, a retired schoolmaster living in Clapham—seemingly an exemplar of the proverbial man on the omnibus—wrote to the *Radio Times* after “listening-in” to a broadcast from London’s Queen’s Hall of the second part of Bach’s St. Matthew Passion on 2 April 1933. Although Wheatleigh praised the performance as a whole, he complained about Wilson’s “incompetent” breath control and extensive use of what he called the “intrusive H.” As Wheatleigh explained, “Pilate’s wife” became “pigh-highlet’s wigh-high”; “high priest” was rendered as “high-high pree-heist”; “purple robe” as “purple ro-hobe”; and “to” as “to-hoo.”⁶⁴ It was, he concluded, “simply ghastly,” and he wished the BBC would raise “the standard of singing in England” by not engaging anyone guilty of the “intrusive H” or the tremolo. Wilson claimed that the letter (which had been sent to him in advance) undermined his professional status; however, the BBC and Wheatleigh refused to withdraw the comments or to issue an apology, so he sued them for libel.⁶⁵ The three-day court case before the Lord Chief Justice and a King’s Bench Jury was reported extensively—and with some relish—in the national press. What was on trial, journalists seemed to scent, was less Wilson’s breath control (although, concerned that the BBC would claim it was affected by a war wound to his lung, he voluntarily undertook a medical examination) than a particular cultural hierarchy.

Wilson explained to the court that Bach’s syllabic treatment, when translated into English, had to be compromised so that one syllable was carried over two notes. The use of a so-called “intrusive H” could then be used to emphasize, lighten, or color a note; far from a sign of incompetency, it was a learned artifice, even an artistic ornament, and one, moreover, that his teacher, the famously polyglot Polish tenor Jean de Reszke, had inserted into works.⁶⁶ The counsel for the defense, Stuart Bevan, KC, observed that

the examples Wilson had given were all taken from opera, and suggested—as did other speakers—that “in Bach and concert music the ‘intrusive H’ is taboo.”⁶⁷ He also pointed out that the examples were all in French or German, asking Wilson:

Can you appreciate that, while the stolid Englishman might tolerate the introduction of an “H” in German with which he is not very familiar, it would be quite different if he heard his own language distorted in the same way?⁶⁸

Wilson resisted the distinction proposed between operatic and concert practice. Yet, drawing on centuries of British mistrust of florid and melodramatic (for which read foreign) singing, it was seized on as a means to disparage the use of the “intrusive H”: on the second day of the trial, the Lord Chief Justice Hewart conjectured, causing much merriment, that it was, in fact, “a dramatic gasp.”⁶⁹ The majority of those called as expert witnesses—the great and good of English music making, many of whom, including Wilson, entertained the court with sung extracts, wit, and innuendo—claimed to dislike the use of aspiration for articulation, but conceded that it was often a deliberate affectation, used by internationally prominent singers (Enrico Caruso, Beniamino Gigli, Conchita Supervia, Emma Albani, and Dame Nellie Melba).⁷⁰ In other words, use of the “intrusive H” was not necessarily a sign of poor breath control but a question of taste.

Several of Wheatleigh’s claims about Wilson’s rendition—notably the number, placement, and effectiveness of instances of the “intrusive H”—were discredited by other witnesses. The retired schoolmaster stood his ground, however, against suggestions that he should have sought professional advice before passing judgment on the performance.⁷¹ The prosecution was keen to distinguish between Wheatleigh’s views as a layman, and those of the “accredited critic” (they were not helped by one such admitting that “he might like it on a Tuesday and dislike it on a Thursday”).⁷² The music press, which had expanded rapidly after the war, was dismissive of the lawyers’ technical understanding (Bevan mistook his Adam’s apple for his diaphragm). They were also determined to contrast adverse criticism from a professional reviewer, “as a result of attendance at a performance to which he has been invited by a performer’s agent” and comments “published casually in the form of a letter,” which “is rarely well-informed or balanced, and is always uninvited and therefore impertinent.”⁷³ In a private meeting with the BBC’s chairman, Wilson had objected to “the man-in-the-street” having his views published in the *Radio Times*, particularly when it concerned praise or criticism of individuals (readers’ letters, he thought, “ought to be strictly confined to broad questions, such as ‘jazz’ or ‘anti-jazz’”).⁷⁴ Wheatleigh responded that to his mind listeners were as much entitled to their opinions as the “grand professional critic.” Musical taste was, it seems,

a matter of etiquette as much as artistic judgment: instead of the case of the “intrusive H,” this became a case against the intrusive listener, a member of the general public daring to offer his opinion on something to which he had been granted access by the great democratizer, radio.

The question of taste having been jettisoned, the case rested on whether the publication of Wheatleigh’s letter constituted legitimate criticism or professional defamation.⁷⁵ In his summary, Lord Hewart urged the jury to be “extremely liberal,” observing: “A critic can use ridicule, sarcasm, and irony as weapons so long as he does not use them unfairly.”⁷⁶ As Wilson relayed in a letter to his friend, Australian organist William McKie, “The learned Judge summed up dead against me and the nine intelligent men and three reasonable women said ‘Balls to you’”: after forty-five minutes of deliberation the jury awarded Wilson £2,000 in damages and costs.⁷⁷ Many thought the sum excessive, but the BBC did not appeal: in an internal memo the director general, Lord Reith, observed that in such cases a British jury tended to lean toward the individual, rather than company and corporation; and that to appeal might seem like an unjustified use of their monetary power.⁷⁸

Wilson’s victory throws a curious light on British musical life in the 1930s. Using translations was in keeping with the BBC’s mandate to inform and educate as well as to entertain, yet it was evident that Wilson, among others, did not want to give the man-in-the-street a critical voice.⁷⁹ One reviewer of *Schubert’s Songs Translated* had explained that the English generally assumed translations to be “for the ignorant and vulgar”: the “‘best’ people. . . . the people who mattered[,] would sing the original text, no doubt.”⁸⁰ The assumption had nothing to do with linguistic abilities—far from it—but depended on “a long tradition of pedantry and snobbishness.”⁸¹ Schubert’s songs may be sung at home in English, but in company—in London concert halls and in “the drawing-rooms of the highly cultivated”—the original language was still considered best.⁸² In bringing his translations before the public, Wilson’s purpose seems to have been to prove that the English were no less cultivated than continental Europeans. He was, however, swimming very much against the tide: not too long after the hiatus of the war, the concert world—and eventually even the recording industry—displayed a preference for original language versions sung by foreign musicians.

German Returns

Lieder in German had begun to regain momentum in London in 1920. On one level their return was driven by frustration. A critic—probably Newman—wrote in the London *Times* :

We are beginning to be a little tired of “British” song recitals. They are only first cousins of the “group” recital, after all, and heaven knows, we are tired enough of that. We submit for consideration the view that nationality has nothing and personality everything to do with the matter. The singer is not a political agent, he is a “person” who gets up for an hour or so and tries to say what he stands for in music.⁸³

On another level, German reappeared in tandem with professional musicians resuming the international circuit. “Devout crowds” apparently greeted Gerhardt at the Queen’s Hall in 1922, even if the appearance of German musicians remained a sensitive issue in other quarters.⁸⁴ The gradual return of German and Austrian singers to London stages increased the number—and arguably the quality—of performances.⁸⁵ Yet the proliferation of recitals and recordings did not necessarily mean that lieder became more popular, in the sense of audiences expanding. The devotion of Gerhardt’s audiences continued throughout the interwar period, but they rarely amounted to a crowd. More often they listened alone, to the gramophone. Lieder appreciation became an increasingly specialized affair; something in which one invested not only money but also time, retreating from company to listen attentively, score in hand. Fundamental to that delight in connoisseurship was the exoticism of hearing performances in the original language by foreign singers. That “foreignness” could be free floating, as will be demonstrated by an example from Irish-American tenor John McCormack’s discography. However, it is worth remembering that even as big a star as McCormack did not take the challenge of singing in German lightly, announcing in 1922—coincidentally the year of Gerhardt’s return to London—that he was going to study with Brahms’s collaborator Sir George Henschel.⁸⁶

As Anglophone singers discarded what many now admitted were “cumbersome” translations, their delivery of German became a pressing issue.⁸⁷ Richard Capell, critic, song translator, and author of the first English monograph on Schubert’s songs, complained about the vogue in London for “the imitation, as near as may be, of foreign tongues” (elsewhere he describes it as “St John’s Wood German”), which licensed “inarticulateness” among singers and lack of interest, among audiences, in the texts of vocal music.⁸⁸ Capell was not alone. Henschel, in a 1926 manual for students and teachers, declared that “the most important factor of interpretation is *not* Vocalization, which means making sound, but *Articulation*, which means ‘distinct pronunciation.’”⁸⁹ Pound heaped praise on the “unbuttered” voice of soprano Judith Litante—a relief after the “pastel and chocolate-box” tones elsewhere—and supported her decision to sing five songs from Schumann’s *Dichterliebe* in the original language. However, he found her “curious accent” detrimental, for it showed conclusively that she was not singing her mother

tongue (neither was he convinced by her French or Russian).⁹⁰ Sounding authentic was also important for the *Times* critic who ventured that, while it did not matter much if an audience fails to understand the words of songs, it should feel that the singer does so, because: “the song is then a truly personal expression.”⁹¹ Many Anglophone singers attempted to improve their language skills by studying abroad, in conservatoires and, of course, by listening to native speakers in concert and, with growing frequency, on recordings.⁹²

Today, lieder singing tends to be treated as a specialized field, distinct both from other classical forms such as opera, and from popular music. Yet, during the interwar period, singers moved fairly freely between genres and styles. What is more, Schubert’s songs, as sung in hagiographical operettas and films such as *Lilac Time* and *Blossom Time*, were endowed with a formidable sentimentalism.⁹³ In this context it seems reasonable to draw a parallel between the determination, among lieder interpreters, to sing with an authentic—or at least appropriate—accent and the delivery of contemporary vaudeville performers. Of course, vaudeville performers exaggerated ethnic accents for comic effect: German opera singer Ernestine Schumann-Heink hammed up her accent in the United States; in London, Rupert Hazell’s comedy routine was interrupted by a serenely smiling Elsie Day singing Schubert in plummy English tones.⁹⁴ But such entertainments confirmed stereotypes against which other attempts at recreating accents might be judged.

Comparing the importance of pronunciation in lieder and vaudeville blurs the boundary between high- and lowbrow culture in a way that might make today’s musicians and musicologists uncomfortable but, again, was defined more flexibly between the wars. John McCormack, one of the most successful singers of the period, took particular care to bridge popular and classical audiences. In 1918 he had explained that he always sang in English on American concert tours because he regarded it as “vitaly important” that songs

be sung to people in their own tongue, and with an enunciation that makes every word understood. . . . [because] no inconsiderable part of the enjoyment my audiences derive from my singing is attributable to this ability to “get” each word.⁹⁵

McCormack’s postwar programs showed him to be adept at connecting with different communities, for they ranged from patriotic American songs to Italian opera arias and, of course, to sentimental favorites such as “Mother Machree” or “Danny Boy.” In the latter repertoire his pronunciation stressed his ethnic identity.⁹⁶ For instance, his first sound film, *Song o’ My Heart* (1930), includes a scene in which Irish villagers complain that Sean O’Carolan—McCormack, essentially playing himself as a famous singer who has retired from the stage to return home—does not have the real “nyaah” in his voice (of course they are later proved wrong).⁹⁷ Yet McCormack’s Irish

accent (and that of other non-English singers, such as Scot Harry Lauder) was also credited with making his singing of English intelligible, for his “Gaelic method of voice production” (along with his Italian training) caused him to lengthen vowel sounds: the word “brook” should not, in any case, be pronounced “bruk,” protested one reviewer in his defense.⁹⁸ Indeed, it was said that McCormack never sang in English, but always approached it from “a foreign standpoint,” with Irish open vowels, the French tendency to begin each syllable with a consonant, and Italian phrasing.⁹⁹

McCormack’s decision to stay in America during the war (he became a citizen in 1917) and his support for the Irish cause did not endear him to English audiences, and there were protests against a proposed visit.¹⁰⁰ When he finally appeared in Europe, after a twelve-year hiatus, he surprised audiences by singing lieder not in English but in German.¹⁰¹ It was a significant step, not only for the singer’s career but also for postwar Anglophone musical culture. For all his willingness to appeal to a broad audience, McCormack was keen to prove himself a singer of international distinction: he had delighted in impressing New York’s notoriously high-minded Beethoven Association, and was no less pleased to be greeted with approval in Berlin.¹⁰² If he—the highest-earning tenor of the decade, who managed to garner approval from audiences and critics around the globe—had decided to sing in German, then it could generally be held to be best practice.

Yet while McCormack’s musicianship was unquestioned, his language skills left something to be desired. His German was italicized, an early biographer explained, with consonants overemphasized and his tone too far forward.¹⁰³ McCormack’s “natural brogue puts up a barrier between him and the German language,” another critic explained: “[his] diction always clear, always intelligible, but the vowels distorted.”¹⁰⁴ We can still hear much of this in McCormack’s recordings, despite the inevitable distractions of playback crackle and period mannerisms. His 1924 recording of Hugo Wolf’s “Wo find’ ich Trost” is freely available online.¹⁰⁵ The *Times* singled out his rendition of this particular song at the Royal Albert Hall for praise, while Compton Mackenzie, editor of the *Gramophone* magazine, described it as McCormack’s “best record.”¹⁰⁶ In order to fully appreciate the song, listeners were advised to sit down with a translation such as the one provided here:

Wo find’ ich Trost

Eine Liebe kenn ich, die ist treu,
war getreu, so lang ich sie gefunden,
hat mit tiefem Seufzen immer neu,

stets versöhnlich, sich mit mir
verbunden.

Where Shall I find Comfort

There’s a love I know, that
is so true, e’er was true since first
I did behold it, ready with forgiveness
ever new,

in its arms I gently was folded.

Welcher einst mit himmlischem
Gedulden
bitter bittern Todestropfen trank,
hing am Kreuz und büßte mein
Verschulden.
bis es in ein Meer von Gnade sank.

Und was ists nun, daß ich traurig bin,
daß ich angstvoll mich am Boden winde?
Frage: "Hüter, ist die Nacht bald hin?"

Und: "was rettet mich von Tod und
Sünde?"

Arges Herze! Ja gesteh' es nur,
du hast wieder böse Lust empfangen;
frommer Liebe, frommer Treue Spur,
ach, das ist auf lange nun vergangen.

Ja, daß ists auch, daß ich traurig bin,
daß ich angstvoll mich am Boden winde!
Hüter, Hüter, ist die Nacht bald hin?

Und was rettet mich von Tod und Sünde?

Once the crown of pain in patience
wearing,
love the bitter cup of death did drink,
on the cruel cross my all sin all bearing,
till in sweetest memory, it did sink.

Wherefore is my heart with grief still rent,
that upon the ground I writhe in anguish?
Asking: "Watchman is the night soon
spent?"

And: "how long in sin must yet I languish?"

Heart so doubting, thou dost know too
well,
that with evil thoughts thy soul was
burning;
pure affection cannot in thee dwell,
and, in vain, for what is lost thou'rt
yearning.

Therefore is my heart with grief still rent,
and upon the ground I writhe in anguish.
Watchman, watchman is the night soon
spent?

And how long in sin must yet I languish?¹⁰⁷

It is difficult, on listening to McCormack (or any singer), to disentangle voice and language. For anyone familiar with hearing the tenor sing Irish numbers, it is the seriousness of Wolf's song that first jars: it seems out of keeping with the jovial figure out-*nyahing* the yokels. Then there is the forwardness of the tone and the tightly wound vibrato, further accentuating the "ee" in "*Liebe*." The unlauted vowels of "*Sünde*" and "*Hüter*" are squeezed; the "u" of "*verbunden*" is pushed. Occasionally those vowels are doctored by the singer's rolled /R/ (on "*immer*" and "*mir*" and the line "*Bitter bittern Todestropfen trank*"), given an extra trill by McCormack's Irish accent, which brings him closer to a native German singer, if not speaker. His distance from the language, though, is apparent in the words on which he chooses to dwell; there are no directly contemporaneous recordings with which to make a comparison, but it is striking that whereas a German singer such as Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau plays up Mörike's melodrama by lingering on significant adjectives (*lange*) or particularly evocative verbs (*winde*), McCormack's tendency to swoop through long notes singles out Mörike's nouns: *Liebe*, *Treue*, *Kreuz*, *Meer*. For most Anglophone listeners to McCormack's lieder recordings, his German accent seems to have counted for less than

the perception that his performance was definitely “other” or, at least, unplaceable. As his biographer explained, “The extraordinary evocative power of the voice calls up something which, even though it be not native to the Black Forest or the Rhine, is very far from Italy and the Shannon.”¹⁰⁸

Among gramophone listeners there were increasing numbers of “original language” converts, supported—and sometimes teased—by new magazines such as the *Gramophone* (which, as mentioned, included a supplement of translations of opera and lieder, advising subscribers to read while they listen).¹⁰⁹ The pseudonymous columnist “Scrutator” facetiously warned listeners of the perils of music appreciation, explaining that, having learned to find ballads indigestible,

you discover that it is not absolutely necessary that songs be sung in English to be enjoyed, but as you usually can’t tell a word our English singers sing (without the programme), you might as well get to know what the words mean and have them properly sung in Italian, or French, or Hawaiian, or Timbuctooian. A later development of this symptom is that you despise *all* songs in English, and so far as music is concerned you are now a hot stuff “Little Englander,” the friend of every country but your own; from being a profound Conservative, you are now a radical.¹¹⁰

Just such a “radical” listener was the author of a 1925 article, “Languages on the Gramophone.” “Vocal music is only perfect when performed in its original language,” it begins; arguing that to use a translation was equivalent to leaving out one of the instruments of a trio. The ability to listen to songs repeatedly, it continues, reveals the “purely physical beauty” of other languages. The author then confesses, with a potent combination of sensuality and superiority:

The sound and distinctive pleasure of each tongue permeate the brain as completely as do the associated music and the voice of the singer. In this way an unusual but unmistakable intimacy is established with one of the most attractive essences of civilised existence.¹¹¹

Privileging listening as an intimate, civilized encounter did not mean that the audience for lieder, in concert halls or on recordings, was expanding. By 1929, McCormack’s “Wo find’ ich Trost” was marked for deletion, one of several lieder recordings that HMV dropped from its record catalogues in its yearly cull.¹¹² More Wolf recordings were available in 1908, the *Gramophone* complained, marking the start of the campaign that would result in the formation of the Hugo Wolf Society, which produced albums of the lieder sung by international stars—McCormack the only native English speaker among them.¹¹³ Although praised for introducing Wolf to the British public, the series affirmed its high-art status by being made in limited numbers, available by (a costly) subscription only. And this was symptomatic of

a transformation of the British classical music industry, which accelerated through the 1930s.

Historian Sophie Maisonneuve has noted the increased usage of the word “listener” in connection with the gramophone during the 1920s.¹¹⁴ The word was also marked in discussions of radio. In the first years of the *Radio Times*, for example, the word was always printed in inverted commas, and there was some debate about whether “listener” was the best term. (Wheatleigh, in his notorious letter, described himself by the popular early alternative, “listener-in”; “listener” gained currency when it became the title of a BBC magazine in 1929.) One letter to the magazine’s editor—from a Mr. H. Hyams, honorary secretary of the Hornsey and District Wireless Society—expressed a preference for the term “radiand,” which would mark the difference between “the man who is listening to the street corner orator and a member of the vast unseen audience.”¹¹⁵ Conventional broadcasting iconography has the family grouped around the wireless set, an arrangement prompted largely by limited amplification, but also supporting attempts to cultivate more concentrated listening, particularly to classical music.¹¹⁶ During the 1920s there was a running joke in the *Radio Times* about “wireless widows,” with cartoons of the husband wearing headphones and tinkering with his set of an evening, leaving his wife unentertained.¹¹⁷ This was not the regressive listener feared by Theodor Adorno, but one actively engaged in getting “the best” music—both technically and, it was hoped, aesthetically.¹¹⁸

Solitary listening was encouraged in discussions of lieder performances; many aficionados were dismissive of the concert experience, with its rustling program, hacking coughs, overpowering perfumes, and inane chatter.¹¹⁹ “One does not read lyrical poetry to a crowd,” explained Capell, and “the habitual listener comes to the conclusion that listening, or at any rate cold-blooded listening in a crowd, is not the true approach to Schubert’s songs.”¹²⁰ Many enjoyed the freedoms offered by becoming part of the “vast unseen audience,” not least because it brought “good music” into the home. Ivor Novello, among others, expressed delight in being able to listen, repeatedly, on his gramophone, to great performances “in the studied seclusion of your own room.”¹²¹ Novelist Rebecca West—one of the few women to enter into public debates about the function of broadcasting—went further:

Opera, which up till now one has been unable to see unless one swallowed a poker and put on one’s best clothes, one can now listen to in bed, when one has retired early and is dining off a boiled egg on a tray. . . . Even to stay at home and read a book is not so free and easy since for that one has to keep on the light; but on Saturday night recently I lay in bed in the dark and listened to Elisabeth Schumann singing. That is, I think, the ultimate luxury.¹²²

We tend to assume that the notion of interior listening has its origins in nineteenth-century ideologies of bourgeois subjectivity and romantic aesthetics.¹²³ Of course it does, to an extent, as James Johnson, Leon Botstein, and Richard Leppert, among others, have demonstrated.¹²⁴ However, the willingness of these interwar listeners to retreat from that very modern phenomenon, the crowd, sometimes was driven less by nostalgia for an earlier age than by technology: by a newfound ability to listen alone.¹²⁵ Priestley recognized that writers who came of age during the 1930s wanted literature to be difficult in order to revolt against mass communication networks; they did not want to share anything with the crowd, he explained.¹²⁶ A similar argument could be made about the modernist composers of the period.¹²⁷ That it can be said, too, about listeners to classical vocal music—particularly those who preferred original-language versions—is perhaps more provocative, for it suggests social exclusivity more than aesthetic radicalism.

Yet West's luxury of listening to Elisabeth Schumann in bed—an exoticism, maybe even eroticism, provided by the relatively modest BBC license fee—was threatened by the dire economic situation of the early 1930s. The reconstituted Incorporated Society of Musicians (ISM) published its manifesto in the London *Daily Telegraph* on 4 November 1931.¹²⁸ It claimed:

There has existed for many years past, and still exists among certain sections of the community, the idea that only a foreigner can possess the true qualities of a musician: that a foreign composer and foreign performer must of necessity be the superior of our own musicians.

Foreign performers should pay income tax on their earnings, the ISM demanded, and there should be safeguards to protect British musicians from unemployment. The *Musical Times* thought the tone of the manifesto too mild:

Music, it is true, has no frontiers, but musicians have; and the problem now is with musicians rather than the music. As to the internationalism of art, we are frankly disrespectful; so far as this country is concerned, it has long since become a one-sided arrangement under which the imports swamp the exports. And if the artist has nothing to do with politics, so much the worse for both.¹²⁹

In its "Singers of the Month" column of December 1931 the *Musical Times* opined of Gerhardt's recitals that one "is very much like another"; Schumann's singing in English "was at least distinct," and, while Polish singer Ganna Walska's costumes were becoming, they were "not becoming enough to distract one's attention from her indifferent singing. She made a hash of Schubert." The following year the National Government invoked the 1920 Aliens Order to prohibit the entry of certain musicians to Britain. Concert

management company Ibbs and Tillett protested that this would break their contracts with foreign singers such as Schumann, Alexandra Trianti, and Emmy Heim and argued that while in an ideal world a distinction would be made between good and mediocre musicians, one needed to hear them first to decide which was which. They continued: “Internationalism in the Arts, especially music, is an absolute necessity to our national life, and it is a stronger force for world peace and understanding than we can ever measure.”¹³⁰ Economic arguments against hiring foreign artists were combined with an awareness that some of those visitors were beginning to arrive in the country as political exiles: finally eroding Shaw’s separation of power and culture in society.

At the same time as the ISM published its manifesto, a new concert series began with entirely opposing aims. The “London Lieder Club” was founded by Walter Legge (and John H. Richardson) as a “backup” to the Hugo Wolf Society, whose recordings—available for advanced purchase by subscription—had received critical acclaim and spawned a number of similar projects.¹³¹ Composer societies were a significant step toward encouraging a “complete works” ethos. The Hugo Wolf Society—and by extension, the artists featured in the accompanying London Lieder Club concerts—also signaled an important shift in attitude toward which performers should be heard. David Patmore has explored how the 1931 merger of the Gramophone Company with the Columbia Graphophone Company to form EMI brought about a move away from using local musicians; instead, a smaller number of international stars were promoted.¹³² This was certainly true of the Wolf Society and Lieder Club where, with the exception of John McCormack, none of the singers were native English speakers. The standardization of performance practice through the 1930s is typically linked to recordings, to musicians becoming more used to hearing themselves played back, and so on. Recordings also tend to be thought of as a globalizing force—there have been many complaints about the erasure of national schools of performance because (at least in theory) anyone anywhere can access music from around the world. The privileging of foreign musicians sits somewhere between both arguments: on the one hand confirming the “placeless” status of performances; on the other, suggesting that, rather than contributing to some form of deracination, recordings fetishized a sort of “authenticity” dependent—alongside greater fidelity to the score—on performers being native speakers and native trained.

The Lieder Club was both musically and socially exclusive. It boasted a list of patrons including Queen Victoria’s granddaughter Princess Marie Louise and a raft of diplomats. Membership cost three guineas for eight recitals, which took place on consecutive Sunday evenings, initially in the ballroom of the Dorchester and later at the Hyde Park Hotel. The advertisements in the

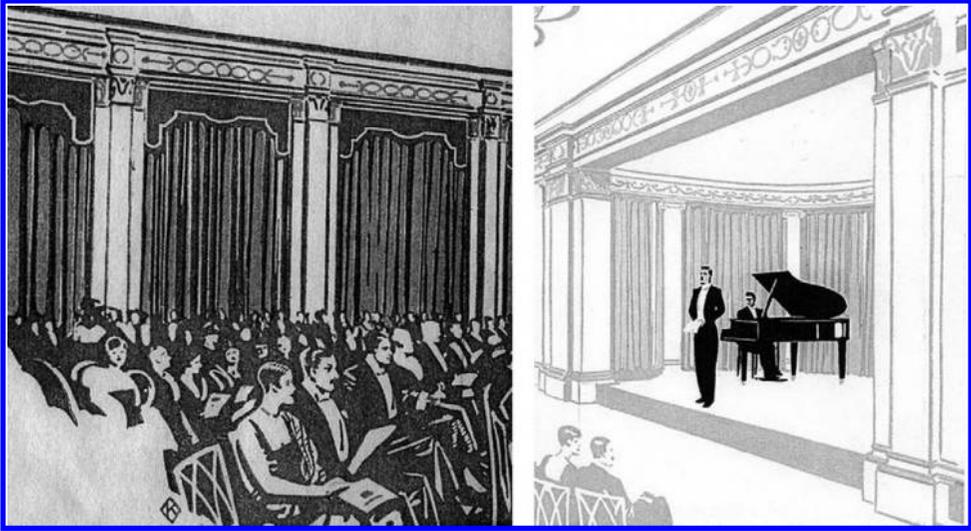


FIGURE 2. Illustrations from a May Fair Hotel program, mid-1930s. © Royal College of Music.

program (which cost two shillings) indicate the expected class of clientele: they include Jaeger, Elizabeth Arden, jewelers, corset- and shoemakers on New Bond Street, the Gleneagles Hotel, Bechstein pianos, and Alfred Imhof's record shop on New Oxford Street, which hosted events such as evenings devoted to HMV's "Connoisseur Catalogue" of rare imported records. The London Lieder Club distanced itself from other recitals hosted by hotels, but illustrations from the program for Sunday-night recitals at the May Fair are in keeping with descriptions of the audience in full evening attire, in "an atmosphere of quiet luxury to enjoy hearing the *crème de la crème* of contemporary lieder singers" (fig. 2).¹³³ *Gramophone* magazine predicted that the audience would be "brilliant and enlightened" but hoped also "that the mainstay of the club will be those gramophiles who have long known the voices of the singers . . . on records and who will deeply appreciate the chance of hearing each of them in individual and personal recitals."¹³⁴ As indicated by the audience members holding programs in the May Fair illustration, the listening practices advocated for the gramophone—of "reading" the performance through notes and translations, or even the score—were being reinscribed for concertgoers: despite our tendency to treat them as separate phenomena, live and recorded musical experience constantly entwine.

It seems unlikely, though, that many of the ordinary *Gramophone* readers would have attended the London Lieder Club—according to a survey conducted by the magazine in 1931, most readers were from the "scholastic

class”—“clerks in holy orders, music teachers, and journalists.” Independent businessmen, engineers, lawyers, doctors, and civil servants were represented, but they were outnumbered—at least in terms of who returned the questionnaire—by office workers and laborers on a weekly wage.¹³⁵ Inevitably, no simple story can be told about who listened to lieder during the 1930s, or the contexts in which they were heard: for every person who protested against foreign musicians there were those who privileged “authentic” performances by native-born representatives. And, while recordings and radio may have widened the geographical catchment of audiences, economics and class still determined who could afford to buy new issues or concert tickets. In almost all spheres, though, individualism was encouraged as the best way to appreciate lieder: intimacy being variously configured as an exclusive auditorium or listening on headphones to an imported recording or special radio broadcast.

The association between lieder and intimacy is routinely presented as a romantic phenomenon; the legacy of the Schubertiade, in which composer, singer, and audience were one. However, it really gained ground during the recording era, among the “gramophiles” listening to lieder in the original language, scores and translations to hand. The emphasis on the integrity of musical bodies, unsurprisingly perhaps, came about during the age of technological disembodiment. But that integrity was also socially determined—for it pushed the experience of classical music into ever smaller spaces, to be listened to and performed by the specially trained. If a community were being imagined through lieder performance in London between the wars it was one that, despite all efforts to the contrary, was less about nationalism than about cosmopolitanism; less about collective expression on a broad scale than of the coterie. It is a community that continues to dominate classical concerts at venues such as the Wigmore Hall, where today audience members cough or turn program pages at their peril, and no one would dare sing Schubert in English. The London audience has been translated, as Shaw recommended, but into a language that few understand. After the last song of a recent Wigmore recital by soprano Anne Schwanewilms, the audience’s silence was broken by one telling word: “*wunderbar*.”

Notes

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- and the Royal College of Music, London. My thanks to those audiences; the editorial board of *Representations*; and Nicholas Gebhardt, Wayne Heisler Jr., Roger Parker, Susan Rutherford, and Mary Ann Smart for their comments.
1. Elisabeth Knoll, *Produktive Missverständnisse: George Bernard Shaw und sein deutsche Übersetzer Siegfried Trebitsch* (Heidelberg, 1992), 87; see also Peter Conolly-Smith, "Shades of Local Colour: *Pygmalion* and Its Translation and Reception in Central Europe, 1913–1914," *SHAW: The Annual of Bernard Shaw Studies* 29 (2009): 127–44.
 2. George Bernard Shaw, *Pygmalion: Komödie in fünf Akten*, trans. Siegfried Trebitsch (Berlin, n.d.). All translations, unless otherwise noted, are my own.
 3. For more on Shaw's postwar reputation in Germany see Glenn R. Cuomo, "Saint Joan Before the Cannibals: George Bernard Shaw in the Third Reich," *German Studies Review* 16 (1993): 435–61.
 4. George Bernard Shaw, "Heartbreak House and Horseback Hall," in *Heartbreak House: A Fantasia in the Russian Manner on English Themes* (London, 1919), vii and x. The play *Heartbreak House* was premiered at New York's Garrick Theatre in 1920. London would not see another Shaw world premiere until *On the Rocks* in 1933. The works from the 1920s were all first produced in the United States (or, in the case of *The Applecart*, in Warsaw).
 5. Shaw, "Heartbreak House and Horseback Hall," xlvii.
 6. See Vivian Ducat and George Bernard Shaw, "Bernard Shaw and the King's English," *SHAW* 9 (1989): 185–97.
 7. George Bernard Shaw, "Translator's Note" to Siegfried Trebitsch's *Jitta's Atonement*, in *Translations and Tomfooleries* (London, 1926), 5. In his autobiography Trebitsch claimed Shaw had his secretary make a loose translation for him; Siegfried Trebitsch, *Chronicle of a Life*, trans. Eithne Wilkins and Ernst Kaiser (London, 1953), 263. Trebitsch's *Frau Gittas Sühne* had been premiered at Vienna's Burgtheater on 3 February 1920; Shaw's translation received its American premiere at the Shubert Theatre, New York, on 6 January 1923 and was seen at the Grand Theatre, Fulham, London, on 3 February 1925.
 8. Indeed, Shaw seems to contradict Walter Benjamin's 1923 essay, "The Task of the Translator," which begins: "Consideration of the receiver is never fruitful." However, he might have sympathized with Benjamin's portrayal of translation as an ironic gesture: see *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, vol. 1, 1913–1926, ed. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, MA, 1996), 253–63; and Paul de Man's gloss in "'Conclusions' on Walter Benjamin's 'The Task of the Translator': Messenger Lecture, Cornell University, March 4, 1983," *Yale French Studies* 97 (2000): 10–35.
 9. Shaw, "Translator's Note," 5.
 10. For a detailed account of Shaw's translation—or perhaps better, adaptation—see Bernard Frank Dukore, *Bernard Shaw, Playwright: Aspects of Shavian Drama* (Columbia, MO, 1973); on Shaw's interpretation of Trebitsch's play see Peter Gahan, "*Jitta's Atonement*: The Birth of Psychoanalysis and 'the Fetters of the Feminine Psyche,'" *SHAW* 24 (2004): 128–65.
 11. *Dial*, 3 January 1918, 33.
 12. *Ibid.*
 13. Oscar Adolf Hermann Schmitz had published an anti-English polemic in 1914, entitled *Das Land ohne Musik: englische Gesellschaftsprobleme* (Munich, 1904), but the association extended further back, at least to Carl Engel's *An Introduction to the Study of National Music* (London, 1866).
 14. This was the case in the metropolitan center of London; in provincial towns such as Manchester the domination of German music and musicians continued.

15. For more see Glenn Watkins, *Proof Through the Night: Music and the Great War* (Berkeley, 2003).
16. H. E. Krehbiel, "German Art, German Artists, and the Tribune's Creed," *New York Tribune*, 13 November 1921.
17. Ibid. *Musical America* noted that the war had made little difference to "The Concert Season" apart from a noticeable reduction in German songs in recitals; 28 (1918): 28.
18. Peter Conolly-Smith, *Translating America: An Ethnic Press and Popular Culture, 1890–1920* (Washington, DC, 2004). I have found no substantiation for the claim that the ban on this type of German repertoire came from the British Government, made in Meirion Hughes and Robert Stradling, *The English Musical Renaissance, 1840–1940: Constructing a National Music*, 2nd ed. (Manchester, UK, 2001), 85.
19. The early days of opera in English are narrated by Susie Gilbert, *Opera for Everybody: The Story of English National Opera* (London, 2009).
20. Akira Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism and World Order* (Baltimore, 2000).
21. James Parsons describes the lied as "the most private yet universalizing of art forms." See his "Introduction: Why the Lied?" in *The Cambridge Companion to the Lied*, ed. James Parsons (Cambridge, 2004), 3–11; here 3.
22. Gary Tomlinson, *The Singing of the New World: Indigenous Voice in the Era of European Contact* (Cambridge, 2007), 5.
23. The contentious boundaries between high-, middle-, and lowbrow cultural experiences, particularly with regard to new media, are discussed by, among others, David Savran, *Highbrow/Lowdown: Theater, Jazz, and the Making of the New Middle Class* (Ann Arbor, 2009); D. L. LeMahieu, *A Culture for Democracy: Mass Communication and the Cultivated Mind in Britain Between the Wars* (Oxford, 1988); and Erica Brown and Mary Grover, eds., *Middlebrow Literary Culture: The Battle of the Brows, 1920–1960* (London, 2011).
24. Hugo Wolf complained about the "epidemic" in Vienna in the late 1880s; see *The Musical Criticism of Hugo Wolf*, trans. Henry Pleasants (New York, 1978), 273. According to Edward F. Kravitt, between 1900 and 1914 twenty vocal recitals per week on average were offered in Berlin; see *The Lied: Mirror of Late Romanticism* (New Haven, 1996), 20.
25. "Elena Gerhardt," *Musical Times* 55 (1914): 9.
26. See William Weber, *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste: Concert Programming from Haydn to Brahms* (Cambridge, 2008).
27. Margaret Stewart, *English Singer: The Life of Steuart Wilson* (London, 1970), 46.
28. A similar list could be provided for other cities, including New York, whose venues ranged from the massive Hippodrome Theatre to Carnegie Hall, the Town Hall, various halls attached to piano showrooms, hotels offering musicales, and private homes in which salon soirées were held.
29. See Lewis Foreman and Susan Foreman, *London: A Musical Gazetteer* (New Haven, 2005), 12–13.
30. Concert agency Ibbs and Tillett recognized that a large percentage of concertgoers were of foreign birth. See Christopher Fifield, *Ibbs and Tillett: The Rise and Fall of a Musical Empire* (Aldershot, UK, 2005), 69.
31. J. B. Priestley, *Angel Pavement* (London, 1930), 281–82.
32. The Aeolian Hall was owned by the American Orchestrelle Company; during the Second World War it was taken over by the BBC. The Steinway Hall was renamed the Grotrian Hall in 1925; it closed in 1938 and, following wartime damage, was demolished.

33. The shift from participating in musical activities to its passive consumption through recordings and radio during this period has been recognized often. It is worth pointing out, though, that amateur performance did not disappear, even if it was staged differently. Whereas in the nineteenth century students might have given concerts to friends and family at home, they, or their teachers, now hired halls—often the same ones professionals used—to display their accomplishments.
34. The five-hundred-seat Grottrian Hall charged sixteen guineas. The flat rate charged by Ibbs and Tillett was seven pounds, seventeen shillings, and six pence. Tickets including tax were usually around seven shillings and programs typically sold for a shilling. Eighteen guineas today would be around £600 (although to hire the hall now costs around £1,500). According to Lawrence H. Officer, “What Were the UK Earnings and Prices Then? A Question-and-Answer Guide,” *MeasuringWorth.com*, <http://www.measuringworth.com/ukearnspi/>, the average annual nominal earnings in 1920 was £237.04.
35. “Notes of the Day,” *Monthly Musical Record* 70 (1940), 1–3; here 3. Gerald Moore gives an entertaining selection of critical responses to the worst recitals at the Wigmore in *Gerald Moore: Collected Memoirs* (London, 1986), 70.
36. In a long letter to the authorities he explained that not only had the firm paid “enormous sums in rents, rates and taxes” since its establishment in 1879; it had also given “employment to a very large staff of English assistants and work-people.” Indeed, out of the present hundred or so employees, according to Carl Bechstein, only five were German: “and of these five even, one has been settled in London for over forty years, and has two sons serving in the British Army.” A number of the employees were “either Reservists who have been called up, or are in the Territorial Force, or have joined Lord Kitchener’s Army, and payment is being made to their wives and families in their absence. . . . The remainder of the staff is being kept on at full time and full pay”; C. Bechstein to Sir Henry Marshall and Sons, 6 October 1914, in Bechstein Hall/Wigmore Hall, 32–40 Wigmore Street: accounts, diaries, letter books, and correspondence, 1906–1967=Acc 1475/51, City of Westminster Archives Centre.
37. The two Bechstein brothers served in the German army, leading the council to view their business as “an enemy concern”; “Our London Correspondence,” *Guardian*, 27 November 1915, 6.
38. “Our London Correspondence,” *Guardian*, 21 November 1916, 4.
39. “Music: A Sonata Recital,” *Guardian*, 21 January 1917, 5.
40. There was no particular pattern to which lieder were performed: Schubert and Brahms appeared about twice as often as Schumann and Wolf. With the striking exception of Schumann’s song cycle *Dichterliebe*, which made three appearances—once sung by Harry Plunket Greene, who had given the first complete performance of the cycle in England in 1895—and Brahms’s two songs with viola, only Schubert’s “Lachen und Weinen” was done more than twice.
41. Adolf Weissmann recalled, in “English and German musical life compared,” *Musical Times* 65 (1924): 137–40; 138: “The principal performers of German music were not allowed to appear, and managers had to content themselves with programmes which, from the political standpoint, were generally regarded as harmless.”
42. Ezra Pound [William Atheling, pseud.], “Music,” *New Age* (31 October 1918): 428–29. Reproduced in *Ezra Pound on Music: The Complete Criticism*, ed. R. Murray Schafer (London, 1978), 133–34.
43. *New Age* 26 (13 November 1919): 28–29.

44. The obvious reference to make here is Roland Barthes, "The Grain of the Voice" (1972) and "The Romantic Song" (1976), trans. Richard Howard, *The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation* (Berkeley, 1985), 267–77; 286–92. More recently, intimacy and song have been explored by Lawrence Kramer, "Beyond Words and Music: An Essay on Songfulness," *Musical Meaning: Toward a Critical History* (Berkeley, 2001), 51–67; and Benjamin Binder, *Intimacy, Introversion, and Schumann's Lieder* (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2006).
45. See *Schubert's Songs Translated* (Oxford, 1924) and *Schumann's Songs Translated: A Selection* (Oxford, 1929). One way Fox Strangways and Wilson hoped to encourage the use of their translations was that no fee was charged for using them in public concerts; artists were simply required to provide a credit in the program. Quotation from Frank Howes, "A. H. Fox Strangways," *Music and Letters* 50 (1969): 9–14.
46. Stuart Wilson, in Eric Blom et al., "A. H. Fox Strangways (1859–1948)," *Music and Letters* 24 (1948): 229–37; here 236.
47. A. H. Fox Strangways, "Song-Translation," *Music and Letters* 2 (1921): 211–24.
48. *Ibid.*, 218.
49. *Ibid.*, 211.
50. *Ibid.* The *Musical Times* praised the decision to replace Müller's "Lindenbaum" ("nothing much of a tree," it commented, obviously with little awareness of its significance in German romantic poetry) with an English elm; "C.," review of *Schubert's Songs Translated*, *Musical Times* 66 (1925): 131–34; here 133. However, not all were convinced by Fox Strangways's replacements: "gillyflowers" was thought a poor substitute for "Nachtviolen," "for surely they belong rather to trim cottage gardens than wanderers' under the velvet sky"; "Schubert's Songs Translated: Mr Stuart Wilson's Recital," *Times* (London), 10 March 1925, 12.
51. Fox Strangways, "Song-Translation," 212. Four of the numbers in *Schubert's Songs Translated* were translated into Scots by Alexander Gray because Scots was thought a closer acoustic cousin to German than English. For more on Gray see John Corbett, *Written in the Language of the Scottish Nation: A History of Literary Translation into Scots* (Clevedon, UK, 1999), 161–63.
52. M.-D. Calvocoressi, "The Practice of Song-Translation," *Music and Letters* 2 (1921): 314–22.
53. Ernest Newman had published translations of Wagner's libretti with Breitkopf and Härtel in 1912. His *Hugo Wolf* was published by Methuen in 1907; significantly, a German translation by Paul Franz Hermann von Hase appeared three years later. Newman's *Richard Strauss* was published by John Lane, Bodley Head, in 1908; a second edition was made in 1921.
54. For an overview see Linda Mugglestone, *"Talking Proper": The Rise of Accent as Social Symbol*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 2003), 258–88.
55. Henry Cecil Wyld, *The Best English: A Claim for the Superiority of Received Standard English* (Oxford, 1934), 605.
56. Ross McKibbin argues that the BBC overrated the power of radio and the susceptibility of its listeners, as well as the speed with which changes in language use could occur; *Classes and Cultures: England, 1918–1951* (Oxford, 1998), 510.
57. "D. A. W.," "Languages on the Gramophone," *Gramophone* (October 1925): 227. Pound described a Miss Barnes as possessing "a puzzling vowel quality. . . which would have engaged Henry James for a fortnight"; Mr Hubert Eidell had an "oh, very, very Twickenham manner. . . lily pronounced 'lee.' . . . Jocund pronounced 'jukk-und.' [It is the] sort of singing called 'English' by hostile nations";

- Ezra Pound [William Atheling, pseud.], "Music," *New Era* 25 (5 June 1919): 103; and (26 February 1920): 269.
57. Letter cited in Stewart, *English Singer*, 109.
 58. On listening to Ferrier see Ian Jack, "Klever Kaff," *Granta* 76 (2001): 87–136.
 59. Subsequently reissued in Decca's Ace of Clubs series as *Steuart Wilson's Song Recital, 1929–1930*, Decca Q ACL 303, 1968, 33 1/3 rpm.
 60. Jonathan Retzlaff, *Exploring Art Song Lyrics: Translation and Pronunciation of the Italian, German, and French Repertoire* (Oxford, 2012), 160. It is a sign of how much attitudes toward translations have changed that the volume includes IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) transcriptions by Cheri Montgomery.
 61. The significance of the rolled /R/ in American popular music is investigated in Jonathan Greenberg's *Singing Up Close: Voice, Language, and Race in American Popular Music, 1925–1935* (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2008).
 62. Wilson admitted to a friend that he was disappointed with his live Schubert recitals: "I know I was trying too hard to 'get it across,'" he explained; 1925 letter to Clive Carey cited in Stewart, *English Singer*, 109.
 63. Frank Howes, "Sir Steuart Wilson," *Musical Times* 92 (1951): 110–12; 112. The *Times* praised Wilson's diction as "the best part of his singing" at his recital of Schubert translations on 9 March 1925; the *Musical Times*, by contrast, thought him inferior to John Coates and the late Gervase Elwes, unlike the *Times* claiming that "the book of words was always necessary"; quoted in Stewart, *English Singer*, 104.
 64. M. A. Wheatleigh's letter was published in the section "What the Listener thinks" under the perhaps inflammatory title "Vocal Sins," *Radio Times*, 14 April 1933.
 65. The BBC had originally offered to publish a contrite explanation in the *Radio Times* but took umbrage at Wilson demanding £5,000 in damages. If going to court seems extreme, bear in mind that the singer's first foray into music criticism, with an undergraduate review of a recital by Harold Bauer, resulted in the *Cambridge Review* being threatened with a writ for libel from the piano makers; the matter was solved out of court with an apology and donation to charity; Stewart, *English Singer*, 38 and 150–51; and the preface to Fox Strangways's *Music Observed: The Selection Made by Steuart Wilson* (London, 1936), viii.
 66. Clive Carey brought as evidence an annotated score from his lessons with de Reszke; see his statement in the Edward Dent archive housed by King's College, Cambridge (GBR/0272/PP/EJD). A further English precedent for the "intrusive h" could have been found in Anselm Bayly's *A Practical Treatise on Singing and Playing with Just Expression and Real Elegance* (London, 1771), which advocates inserting an h into words for emphasis; see Susan Rutherford, "Bel canto and Cultural Exchange: Italian Vocal Techniques in London, 1790–1825," in *Umbruchzeiten in der italienischen Musikgeschichte. Deutsch-Italienische Round Table-Gespräche [Analecta musicologica, 50]*, ed. Christoph Flamm and Roland Pfeiffer (forthcoming).
 67. "Law Report, June 19. High Court of Justice, King's Bench Division. Singer's Libel Against the BBC. Wilson vs. British Broadcasting Corporation and Another," *Times*, 20 June 1934, 4.
 68. Singing teacher, and author of guides to voice production and song interpretation, William Sidney Drew admitted that the "intrusive H" was "not popular in England" but explained that "while it would not enhance the beauty of English to an English ear, it might enhance the value of music to the musical ear." "Law Report, June 19," *Times*, 20 June 1934, 4.

69. “Libel Suit against BBC. Musicians’ Evidence. Expert Opinion on Intrusive ‘H’. Is it a ‘Dramatic Gasp’?” *Manchester Guardian*, 21 June 1934, 6.
70. As a cautionary measure, Wilson asked his witnesses to provide their statements before the trial. They included Carey, Fox Strangways, *Daily Mail* turned *Daily Telegraph* critic Richard Capell, York Minster organist Sir Edward C. Bairstow (who had directed Wilson in the same role a week later and was a member of the BBC’s Music Advisory Committee), Major William M. C. Caillard (honorary treasurer of the Bach Choir), and Lady Agnes Harty (soprano Agnes Nicholls). Wheatleigh and the BBC called to the stand the conductor of the performance in question, Adrian Boult (who could not recall Wilson using the “intrusive H” but recognized it as a potentially serious and irritating fault; incidentally, Boult had taken the side of Wilson’s wife during their divorce in 1931 and married her two years later); conductors Landon Ronald and Malcolm Sargent; and professor of singing at Trinity College of Music, Maurice Vinden.
71. Hardly any newspapers reported that Wheatleigh’s background was musical: born Max Alfred (Leo Oscar) Liebich in England c. 1864, his father was Prussian-born composer Immanuel Liebich and his mother Agnes (née Mehlhorn) was a naturalized Briton who taught singing in Brighton. Max’s elder brother was pianist Franz (Frank) Liebich, who gave London premieres of Manuel de Falla and Béla Bartók and whose wife, Louisa, wrote and lectured on musical subjects (another brother, Rudolphe, also studied composition and piano). Max and his young family had moved to Berthierville, Quebec, in the mid-1880s, where he was a school principal praised for his devotion and enthusiasm. He and his wife returned to Britain in 1924 (they probably changed their surname during the war); he died in 1937 and was interred in Golders Green cemetery. See Foreman and Foreman, *London: A Musical Gazetteer*, 201 and 234; and the *Metropolitan*, 15 September 1894, 6.
72. Reported in “Notes and News,” *Musical Times* 75 (1934): 735–37; 736.
73. *Ibid.*
74. “Record of interview between the Chairman and Mr Steuart Wilson on the Subject of Wilson vs. the BBC (Wheatley [*sic*] letter in *Radio Times*),” 29 April 1934. In the BBC Written Archives R22/301/2, File 2A.
75. The BBC sent several experts to listen to Wilson in the run-up to the trial. Most noted technical limitations—he was said to have poor intonation and a “cold, dry, small voice” that was not suited to the microphone—but thought them overridden by the sincerity of his interpretations; BBC Written Archives, R22/301/2, File 1B. Wheatleigh’s wireless set, amplifier, and headphones (his preferred listening method) were also tested and found satisfactory.
76. “SINGER AWARDED DAMAGES. Letter in *Radio Times*. Lord Hewart on Criticism,” *Manchester Guardian*, 22 June 1934, 20.
77. Quoted in Stewart, *English Singer*, 150, which also mentions that on the third day of the trial, in the main corridor of the law courts, Wilson was approached by a man who told him he thought it was all going very well—who later proved to be a member of the jury.
78. Director General to Controller, 22 June 1934. An internal memo from Jardine Brown to the Director General, 29 June 1934, mentioned that the question of excessive damages loomed large in law courts at the time. Although damages were awarded against the BBC and Wheatleigh, given the latter’s impecunious state, the corporation agreed to cover the whole sum; BBC Written Archives R22/301/4.

79. The available listings are not always sufficiently detailed to give exact information, but it seems that very few lieder were programmed by the BBC during its first five years, and of the handful that were, almost all were sung in English by British performers.
80. "C.," review of *Schubert's Songs Translated*, *Musical Times* 66 (1975): 131–34; 131.
81. Ibid.
82. Ibid.
83. "'British' Song Recitals. Bad Programme Making. Mr Borwick's Schumann," *Times*, 25 November 1921, 8.
84. "Those who know the usual cold reception of the Lieder singer in Great Britain, will realise how popular this shows her to be," commented B. D. Wratten, in "A Gerhardt Recital," *Gramophone* 2 (1925): 394.
85. Although critics complained in 1926 that there were "vocal recitals galore, programmes filled to overflowing with the *bonne bouches* of the gigantic catalogue of Lieder," when soprano Elisabeth Schumann appeared for the first time at the Wigmore Hall on 25 January of that year, she was pretty much the first German singer to have done so since the war. "Review: Gramophone Notes," *Musical Times* 64 (1923): 410; Hermann Klein, "The Singer and the Gramophone," *Gramophone* 3 (1926): 400.
86. See "McCormack home, health restored: 'Good as gold,' says tenor, who is eager to prove to public he is all right," *New York Musical World*, 10 December 1922.
87. Herbert F. Peyser, "Some Observations on Translation," *Musical Quarterly* 8 (1922): 353–71; here 354.
88. Richard Capell, *Schubert's Songs* (London, 1928), 55–56. St. John's Wood held a particular place in English fiction of the 1920s, its inhabitants representing the more bohemian side of upper-middle-class society. It was the home of Bingo Little from P. G. Wodehouse's *Jeeves* stories and where Young Jolyon lived in the first installment of John Galsworthy's *Forsyte Saga* (set in the mid 1880s and first published in 1906, but the trilogy was completed in 1921 and published as a single volume the following year).
89. George Henschel, *Articulation in Singing: A Manual for Student and Teacher* (n.p., 1926), 3–4.
90. Ezra Pound [William Atheling, Pseud.], "Music," *New Era* 28 (11 November 1920): 21.
91. "Recitals of the Week. Mr. Robert Maitland's Schubert Songs," *Times*, 7 December 1923, 40.
92. Peyser, "Some Observations on Translation," 354. There were also numerous treatises issued on diction, one of the most popular guides being Arthur Edward Smith's translation of Berlin-based singing teacher Eva Wilcke's *German Diction in Singing* (New York, 1930).
93. Austrian tenor Richard Tauber's portrayal of the composer on film was much more schmaltzy than his concert renditions, as discussed in John Potter and Neil Sorrell, *A History of Singing* (Cambridge, 2012), 207–13.
94. Rupert Hazell and Elsie Day's *More Harmony!arity* show from 1935 can be sampled at British Pathé, Rupert Hazell and Elsie Day, 1935, <http://www.britishpathe.com/video/rupert-hazell-and-elsie-day/query/more+harmony!arity>. The politics of vaudeville performance is discussed in Eden Elizabeth Kainer, *Vocal Racial Crossover in the Song Performance of Three Iconic American Vocalists: Sophie Tucker (1884–1966), Elsie Janis (1889–1956), and Ella Fitzgerald (1917–1996)* (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2008).

95. *John McCormack: His Own Life Story* (Boston, 1918), 387.
96. Again, McCormack had worked in vaudeville in the early part of his career, though he complained about Irish stereotypes then and later refused to return to the vaudeville stage despite lucrative offers.
97. Ironically, apparently the Vice President for William Fox, Winfield Sheehan, decided on McCormack as the first opera singer to appear on the new sound film because of his fame, charm, and “ability to speak English without a foreign accent.” Likened by one contemporary to the “ringing tone” listened for in a telephone booth, the “nyaah” is taken by Greil Marcus as a precursor to “the yarragh” he hears in Van Morrison: a disruptive quality that is indelibly Irish; Perceval Graves, “A Few Recollections of John McCormack,” *Musical Times* 86 (1945): 299; and Greil Marcus, *Listening to Van Morrison* (London, 2010), 8.
98. Compton MacKenzie, “Gramophone Celebrities VI: John McCormack,” *Gramophone* 2 (1925): 151–55; and “Editorial,” *Gramophone* 12 (1935): 293.
99. L. A. G. Strong, *John McCormack: The Story of a Singer* (London, 1941), 198.
100. “McCormack Not Welcome,” *Musical America*, 30 September 1920. In New York Public Library clippings file (*L-CLP [McCormack, John]).
101. In 1915 he praised lieder translations by Alice Matullah, explaining that he was “obliged to sing Italian arias and songs in Italian because there are no good translations”; “Secret of McCormack’s hold on his audience,” *Musical America*, 27 February 1915. In New York Public Library clippings file (*L-CLP [McCormack, John]).
102. In 1918 the *New York Sun* reported: “It was hard to realize how superbly he sings the classic masters until he put the classicists to rout at the Beethoven Association recently.” In New York Public Library clippings file (*L-CLP [McCormack, John]).
103. Strong, *McCormack*, 199.
104. McCormack’s relationship to German-language repertoire was—and remained—complex. His long-term accompanist Edwin Schneider recalled that when they first met, the singer pretended to be ignorant of Brahms, asking if it was the name of a tooth-wash, but told an interviewer straight afterwards that his favorite song was “Die Mainacht”; Edwin Schneider, “Recollections and Incidents Pertaining to My Long Association with John McCormack, Famous Irish Tenor,” 1, John McCormack Society, Memoirs, <http://www.mccormack.society.co.uk/>.
105. McCormack’s HMV recording, made with Edwin Schneider, can be listened to through the website of CHARM (AHRC Research Centre for the History and Analysis of Recorded Music), http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/sound/sound_search.html, Catalogue Number 766, Matrix Number Cc-5059-1, Side Number 2-042022.
106. “Mr John McCormack’s Recital. A Scheme of Songs,” *Times*, 6 October 1924, 10.
107. Translation by Julia van Bose, taken from the most readily available score of the time: *Hugo Wolf Lieder nach Gedichten von Eduard Mörike für eine Singstimme und Klavier* (Leipzig, 1904), 21–25.
108. Strong, *McCormack*, 216.
109. As in concert, lieder were first recorded in translation; not until the success of imported labels such as Parlophone did original-language versions become common—and even then labels noted if they were in German, suggesting that translations were still the norm. Readers were encouraged to submit what they considered to be successful translations: “Back Matter: Notice,” *Music and Letters* 2 (1921): 188.

110. "Scrutator," "On Musical Appreciation," *Gramophone* 2 (1925): 72.
111. "D. A. W.," "Languages on the Gramophone," *Gramophone* 2 (1925): 22. The article was published in "The Forum," which selected unsolicited contributions from readers.
112. "The Swish of the Scythe: Deletions from the HMV 1929 Catalogue (Communicated)," *Gramophone* 7 (1930): 29.
113. Apart from McCormack, there were six Germans (Gerhardt, Herbert Janssen, Elisabeth Rethberg, Ria Ginster, Gerhard Hüsch, Tiana Lemnitz), one Austrian-Hungarian (Friedrich Schorr), one Russian (Alexander Kipnis), and one Greek (Alexandra Trianti).
114. It had previously been associated with religious experience, including, James H. Johnson might say, devotion in the nineteenth-century concert hall. Sophie Maisonneuve, "Between History and Commodity," *Poetics* 29 (2001): 89–108; 90n2. James Johnson, *Listening in Paris: A Cultural History* (Berkeley, 1995).
115. Letter to the editor, *Radio Times* 1 (19 October 1923): 126.
116. McKibbin points out that middle-class households tended to be more discriminating in their choice of program than those of the working classes: "The set was turned on for particular programmes and turned off when they ended"; *Classes and Cultures*, 458.
117. A 1925 letter to the editor of the *Gramophone*, from Gladys M. Collin of Macclesfield, observed: "I am in the habit of attending the International Celebrity Concerts in a neighbouring industrial centre, and have been struck by the preponderance of women, many of them poor, *all of them silent and attentive*, who have been drawn there simply to *listen* and certainly neither to *see* nor be *seen*."
118. The impact of recording on listening practices are explored further, from different perspectives, in Mark Katz, *Capturing Sound: How Technology Has Changed Music* (Berkeley, 2004); and Arved Ashby, *Absolute Music, Mechanical Reproduction* (Berkeley, 2010).
119. See for example Lionel Gilman's letter "Which Illusion?" *Gramophone* 2 (1925): 307.
120. Capell, *Schubert's Songs*, 35 and 39.
121. Ivor Novello, "My Gramophone," *Gramophone* [1924], reprinted in "70 Years of Recorded Classical Music Through the Ears of *Gramophone*," supplement to vol. 70 (1993): 2.
122. Rebecca West, "This Listening—Together with Some Remarks on Broadcasting," *Radio Times* 6 (20 December 1929): 863–64; 863.
123. Veit Erlmann goes so far as to call it a cliché: see his *Reason and Resonance: A History of Modern Aurality* (New York, 2010), 23.
124. Leon Bostein, *Music and Its Public: Habits of Listening and the Crisis of Musical Modernism in Vienna, 1870–1914* (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1985); Johnson, *Listening in Paris*; and Richard Leppert, *The Sight of Sound: Music, Representation, and the History of the Body* (Berkeley, 1995).
125. Elias Canetti, *Crowds and Power* (1960; reprint, New York, 1984). As Daniel Leech-Wilkinson has observed, Capell's writings, like those of many others from the time, were heavily influenced by the experience of recordings. Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, "Musicology and Performance," in *Music's Intellectual History: Founders, Followers, and Fads*, ed. Zdravko Blažeković (New York, 2009), 791–804.
126. By contrast, Priestley had come of age just before 1914, meaning "rightly or wrongly I am not afraid of the crowd"; J. B. Priestley, *Delight* (1949; reprint, Ickley, UK, 2009), 85.

127. Arnold Schoenberg is the most obvious example: see Leon Botstein, "Schoenberg and the Audience: Modernism, Music, and Politics in the Twentieth Century," in *Schoenberg and His World*, ed. Walter Frisch (Princeton, 1999), 19–54.
128. See also Herbert Hughes, "Protection for the British Musician," *Daily Telegraph* (London), 31 October 1931, quoted in Fifield, *Ibbs and Tillet*, 217.
129. Editorial, "Musicians and the Crisis," *Musical Times* 72 (1931): 1073–74; here 1074.
130. Statement quoted in Fifield, *Ibbs and Tillet*, 221.
131. *Walter Legge, 1906–1979: Words and Music*, ed. Alan Sanders (New York, 1998), 12.
132. David Patmore, "The Columbia Graphophone Company, 1923–31: Commercial Competition, Cultural Plurality and Beyond," *Musicae Scientiae* 14 (2010): 115–37.
133. *Walter Legge*, 12.
134. "Turn Table Talk," *Gramophone* 10 (1933): 29. The featured artists included familiar figures such as Gerhardt, and others making their London debut, such as Gerhard Hüsch.
135. Compton Mackenzie, "Editorial," *Gramophone* 9 (1931): 109–12; here 111; cited in Nick Morgan, "'A New Pleasure': Listening to National Gramophonic Society Records, 1924–31," *Musicae Scientiae* 14 (2010): 139–64; here 147.