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Perspectives of music publishing in the twenty-first century: The death of the editor?

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ABSTRACT | The article begins with an exploration of recent technological advances, such as the evolution of hardware/software, the digitization of literary material and the booming expansion of the world-wide-web, investigating their impact on the editing, publishing, teaching and performance of music. Crucial questions are addressed regarding the pros and cons of implementing such technology in music publishing, identifying the current pitfalls as well as the promising perspectives of its application. Going on, the article attempts to provide a new, working definition of the roles of those affected by such changes in the field of music publishing: from the promoters of new technology to the publishers; from the music editors to contemporary users of all levels; from amateurs and students to teachers and academics. Ultimately, suggestions on how to make the best use of available online music resources are set forth, discussing how this new technology can be a promising tool for the promotion of research, knowledge and dialogue.

Keywords: music, publishing, editing, technology, digitization, perspectives

1. INTRODUCTION

Technology in the last decade has progressed with a speed that is incomparable with any of the advances that preceded it, affecting all aspects of our lives, including our education (Adams and Hamm, 2005). Consequently, these changes could not have left the field of music publishing unaffected: the booming availability of internet access and the possibility to scan and print documents in the comfort of one's household, has in turn affected 'traditional' music publishing to a great extent. Printed volumes are now facing serious competition by digital editions available online (Ching, Pan and McNaught, 2006): the internet not only offers free out-of-copyright editions which have entered the public domain (Boyle, 2008), but also relatively more recent editions - such as the 'Neue Mozart Ausgabe'- which have also been made available online free of charge. As we shall see further on, the internet even allows and encourages users to create, modify and upload their own texts, based on primary sources which have already been made available to them online.

This newfound multitude of sources, essentially free of charge, is not without its pitfalls: more and more users, taking advantage of the availability of free sheet music, are performing from downloaded out-of-copyright – and most likely out-of-date – editions, published in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century: editions which not only include several misinterpretations and inaccuracies but also present rather 'romanticized' readings of earlier works, having altered or 'enriched' the text with their own incorporated performance directions which, more often than not, went unacknowledged (Barth, 1995).

In turn, this changed equilibrium gives rise to a number of important questions, as to how present-day publishers are called to handle the demands for changes in format, content and pricing: to what extent is the editing of musical texts to be transformed, employing the newfound possibilities offered by digital media? In other words, what are the future perspectives of editing and how can they possibly affect the formation of the text and of music editions in general? Will the opportunity to produce and present a multitude of simultaneous readings and interpretations through digital media render editors unnecessary as mediators between composers and performers, signifying the much-dreaded 'death of the editor'? Ultimately, how can individual music users benefit the most from these newly available options?

2. RECENT ADVANCES IN PUBLISHING AND MUSIC PUBLISHING

Approximately five years prior to the new millennium, textual theorists set off to discuss the emerging potentials of a new editorial feature, the 'Hypertext' (Tanselle, 1995 and McGann, 1995), in which 'all variants in all states can be accessed electronically to produce any desired conflation or reconstruction of texts' (Greetham, 1999: 47). The idea behind the 'Hypertext' was soon joined by the concept of 'Metadata' (Hillman and Westbrooks, 2004), granting access to all complementary, explanatory or documentary media that is attached to a digital document. These concepts, along with the explosive technological increase, particularly in the attainability and availability of affordable computing, scanning and printing equipment during the first decade of the twenty-first century, have opened up entirely innovative streams in publishing as production and dissemination.

The new technological tools were initially employed for the creation of digital libraries (Andrews and Law, 2004) and encyclopaedias, dictionaries, journals, information networks and other online projects regarding literary works or works of fine art: the 'Whitman Archive' (1995-) was a pioneer in the area of electronic scholarship, representing one of the earliest and most influential examples, establishing standards for electronic editing, site construction, and digital reproduction, and serving as the model for subsequent projects. A year later, the 'William Blake Archive' (1996-) was constructed and three years after that, the 'Rosetti Archive' (2000-2008), one of the first large-scale academic initiatives, was also launched, providing access to Rosetti's entire body of work, encoded for structured search and analysis and transacted with a substantial body of editorial commentary, notes and glosses.

Despite its initial scepticism (McGann, 2001), Academia gradually employed the benefits of this new information technology for promoting research, dialogue and the exchange of knowledge, while its 'traditional' counterparts (ie. the dissemination of information through printed matter) were either combined with complementary material and discussion forums in digital form, or ran in parallel with

digital versions (Thompson, 2005). This has since been the practice of music journals, most of which now offer online databases and digitized copies of current, recent and formerly printed articles, sometimes dating from as early as the 1800s (such as the 'Retrospective Index to Music Periodicals 1800-1950'), thus forming an immensely rich, reliable and easily accessible database of information that would otherwise require lengthy and costly research in order to be located and explored.

Naturally, these technological advances have found their way in the publishing of music: nowadays, new, improved versions of typesetting software and printing hardware ensure that the publishing process for the production of 'traditional', hard-copy editions runs more quickly, more efficiently and more economically. At the same time, music publishing in the broader sense of the word (which spreads far beyond the circulation of printed music) has also evolved dramatically quickly, mostly due to the rapid technological advances in the field of computing, which have opened up vast opportunities in the digital transmission of musical texts (Sobel and Weissman, 2008). With the use of specifically designed, specialized equipment, such as music printers, scanners, music OCR readers and other music-related hardware and software (such as evolved MIDI interfaces, score-writing and score-reading software etc.), new routes in the publication and dissemination of sheet music, such as the 'Music Encoding Initiative' (2007), have opened up: virtual sheet music on the one hand, which is essentially a scanned facsimile of the hard-copy texts (usually transmitted in PDF or image formats), and digital sheet music on the other, which, having been processed by an OCR reader, allows for music files to be manipulated and altered in ways that their virtual and hard-copy counterparts never could (Duckworth, 2005). Digital music texts can be transposed, arranged and played back with virtual instruments through a MIDI interface or reworked and printed in hard-copy for live performance with real instruments (Chapman and Chapman, 2009). Last but not least, the explosive expansion of the world-wide-web during the past decade means that free downloadable and printable music scores have become widely available online: as already mentioned, people now own the equipment necessary to access, download and print sheet music.

Amongst the first specimens of the recently evolved 'race' of music publishing is the so-called 'Computerized Mensural Music Editing': an initiative 'to offer free online access to new, high-quality early music scores produced by today's leading experts' (Utrecht University, 1991). The project, which is constantly expanding, stands as one of the most comprehensive interfaces for accessing the material available, essentially generating an entirely new form of critical music editions, in which dynamically generated, user-configured and searchable formats are infinitely produced, enhanced by the application of multimedia, hyperlink structures and semantic data mark ups, offering a wide array of information concerning alternative readings, musical sources, as well as other historical and analytical material.

Another, more recent electronic project, is the 'Programme Ricercar' (Centre d' études supérieures de la Renaissance, 2010) which presents facsimiles, transcriptions, scholarly commentaries and other tools for researching sixteen sets of books crafted by the Parisian printer Nicolas du Chemin between 1549 and 1568. The project is constantly expanding through links to databases of the sixteenth-century chanson repertory, to a digital project devoted to the reconstruction of pieces with missing vocal parts, and to another devoted to the study and editing of the literary texts themselves.

In the last few years, the average computer user is also able to scan sheet music, or even prepare personalised 'editions' through a multitude of music-notation software, such as the open-source 'Lilypond' (n.d.), and upload them on online databases, such as 'ChoralWiki' (1998-). As far as the uploading of scanned/digitized versions of printed editions is concerned, the fact that this is controlled by copyright law means that the majority of editions available online is a collection of older, out-of-copyright editions, or of editions prepared by internet users themselves (Dougan, 2006). One of the most important online music libraries to date, apart from the 'Mutopia Project' and the 'Sheet Music Archive', freely accessible for downloading as well as for uploading user-generated material, is the 'International Music Score Library Project' (Petrucci Library Project 2006), which provides free access to tens of thousands of out-of-copyright scores searchable by title, composer and nationality, time period, genre and instrument. A large number of these scores originate from the nineteenth century and especially from Breitkopf and Härtel's series of composers' complete works – and since a number of them misleadingly claim to be Urtext editions, they immediately draw the amateur performer's attention as offering an accurate, addition-free text.

3. THE COME-BACK OF THE URTEXT

As a result, issues that had already been tackled with – at least in scholarly circles – in the twentieth century have resurfaced due to this 'return' to older editions, such as discussions concerning the urtext concept, which was the centre of musicological debate since the commercialization of the term after the Second World War. Less than a decade or so after their booming appearance, scholars already attacked editions advertised as urtext. For instance, the Danish musicologist Jens Peter Larsen (1958) formulated a list of 'fundamental problems of textual criticism', some of which had already been identified by the editors of early-twentieth-century monumental editions, and which were now seen under a new light: 'Is it not a deception to use the word urtext and lead buyers to think that one exists?' asked Badura-Skoda (1965: 308). Going on, Badura-Skoda observed that even editions advertised as Urtext were often produced without any reference to primary sources, while their Forewords were entirely misleading as to the actual nature of the respective edition, thus failing to comply with modern editorial standards (1962: 130).

Still, the proclamation by the scholarly community that a definitive text was unattainable and that Urtext Editions did not and could not live up to what they purported, only succeeded in temporarily suspending their appearance: the urtext proved such a powerful marketing tool that, even those publishers who had at first eliminated the word urtext from their editions, soon re-introduced it and continued to employ it throughout the twentieth century (and into the twenty-first) with considerable success. Aided by the original support of the 'authenticity movement', Urtext Editions attained such a high status in the first couple of decades after their appearance, that they became established as the most reliable editions in the marketplace.

It therefore comes as no surprise that, during our age of commercialization, the promotion of editions as Urtext remains extremely important to their marketability, since the average consumer entrusts such editions as reproducing a text that is closest (if not identical) to the composer's intentions. This is evident in numerous product reviews available online (nowadays perhaps the most popular

means of exchanging comments and opinions on products), which bring to light the views of 'average' consumers regarding the qualities of good editions (Saraband, 2009):

> You should…be asking just who wrote your favorite editions…unless of course you own Urtext Editions already (Urtext indicating that the edition in front of you is faithful to the original and any tampering made is marked as such.)

Another source describes Urtext Editions (VivaldiStudio, 2009) as providing

> …a score that respects the composer's original version and is without any of the arbitrary additions from other editors.

Having realized that the commerciality of the term has been reinforced by such reviews amongst the online community, most publishers have continued to advertise the alleged qualities of Urtext Editions on their websites. For instance, the website of Editions Peters (2007) states:

> Peters' Edition has developed beyond its historical and scholarly origins as a publishing venture and became a hallmark of quality in its own right, guaranteeing the user a fully authentic score. At the same time, care has been taken to ensure that, working within Urtext principles, the needs of the practical performer are properly and sympathetically addressed. The need for Urtext Editions is self-evident. At the same time, they set the standard of modern editorial practice.

Though seemingly reproducing the sort of advertisement that would be successful in the mid-twentieth century, the publishing companies' promotion of the urtext appears to have back-fired in the last few years: for, ironically, due to such misleading promotion, more and more online consumers use free out-of-copyright Urtext Editions, presuming that the text, having been advertised as an urtext, is not much different than that of more recent editions. Consequently, the wide and free availability of old editions online creates a serious pitfall: for, if used uncritically by the average music user, it is highly likely - if not inevitable – that several textual 'corruptions', formed according to nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century textual and stylistic perceptions and interpretations will be passed on and increasingly reproduced in contemporary (amateur) performance.

A significant response to this problem, of crucial importance to contemporary scholarship and performance, was a project initiated by the Mozarteum Foundation in 2001, providing late-twentieth-century Mozart editions, still under copyright, entirely free of charge: the 'Digital Mozart Edition' (Mozarteum, 2001) currently grants free online access to digital facsimiles of the complete series of the 'Neue Mozart-Ausgabe' (abbr. NMA, 1951-2007) including the full critical notes. Though the NMA is far from flawless (Eisen, 1991) and in many cases has been outdated after the rediscovery of a number of lost manuscripts, its online availability nevertheless offers considerable textual advantages compared to other, much older editions and overcomes previously considerable limitations of space, volume, cost and subject matter.

Along those lines, the project collaborators are continuously expanding this collection into an interactive presentation of a variety of historical source materials, representing different stages in the genesis of a work, along with images, text files, databases of available sources and reference lists. Another, smaller-scale sample of the usefulness of such interactive initiatives has been made available through the production of an interactive CD-ROM, featuring visual and audio representation of Mozart's 'Fantasia and Sonata in C minor' K475 and 457 respectively. The digital layout of this small

scale project was enough to reveal insights of the composer's 'compositional process and the performance practice of his time, exceeding the well-known musical text by far' (Mozarteum, 2006). This example alone was one of the first to indicate the inherent possibilities in the digitization of sources and of related materials, which was soon employed by a number of subsequent digital initiatives.

4. RECENT DIGITAL INITIATIVES

The dawn of the new millennium saw the development of a number of digital and online initiatives in the fields of music and musicology. In 2003, the 'Online Chopin Variorum Edition' (Andrew Mellon Foundation) project was launched, presenting and enhancing comparative analyses of disparate types of source material, while one of its cognate projects, 'Chopin's First Editions Online' (Arts and Humanities Research Council UK), initiated in 2004, provides a virtual collection of all first impressions of first editions of Chopin's works with commentary on particularly significant textual features and employs advanced imaging techniques allied with relevant open standards for metadata and interface design.

Various similar online projects are constantly under development and expansion, not only referring to editions of music but also cross-referencing to additional source materials, biographical studies and performance-related issues: one such project is 'European Mozart Ways', a multicultural, collaborative project, essentially functioning as an online analytical archive of Mozart's journeys through Europe, with reference to biographical evidence, excerpts from the family's correspondence, and other relevant information. This project is an excellent example of how technological development has opened up the possibilities for publication, cross-disciplinary exchange and transmission of information in ways that had never before been anticipated. Another project is 'Mozart in Italy' (University of Sheffield), released in early 2011 and providing a complete, four-language, annotated, searchable edition of the family's letters. Aside from the identification of people, places and works, the project's aim is 'to include links to a source catalogue, to recordings of Mozart's works and the works of others and a complete iconographical and documentary record of his life and times'.

Additionally, the 'Bach Digital Portal' (1990-), developed by the University of Leipzig and the Packard Humanities Institute, grants free access to digital libraries, source/works catalogues and digitized scans of Bach's autographs and original parts, thus providing valuable information to both scholars and music lovers. Another initiative on Bach's music is the 'Digital Bach Project' which, under the auspices of the Oregon Bach Festival, hosts 'interactive score studies': it features performances of some of Bach's most influential works, such as the Goldberg Variations and the Mass in B minor, synchronizing the sound with automated scrolling on the score and providing complementary information on the genesis and the characteristics of the selected works.

Alongside the continuous expansion of online archives of publications and source materials, the last few years also saw the production of the first digitized out-of-copyright editions in CD- or DVD-ROM format. According to the production notes of one of the firms, the digitized editions were selected through scholarly evaluation, while the scanned pages were processed so that the printed music would appear more clearly, noting that 'while some reorganization, retitling, and touch-up of staff lines is done, we do not proofread the music or fix any of the original errors' (CD Sheet Music 2009). Digitized editions, offered in extremely low cost compared to their printed counterparts, have

been warmly received, mostly by amateur musicians and students while, according to the company, the 'New York Times' called the series 'a convenient source of music that will not clutter up the piano bench'.

The total production output, which by 2008 already numbered more than sixty extended titles, features complete editions by composer, such as the 'Digital Bach Edition': a collection of four CD-ROMs (and later of one DVD ROM) which includes the complete forty-six volumes of the nineteenth-century Bach Edition, first published between 1851-1900. Apart from the (printable) scores, the collection features searchable indexes of volumes, BWV numbers and titles in German and English, while the publishing firm has also announced its collaboration with an online audio bank, through which the digital editions' users will be able to listen to recordings of selected works, read liner notes, composer biographies and other relevant information. Additionally, the 1911 Edition of 'Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians' appeared in 2005 in CD- and DVD-ROM format, reviving more than 4400 pages of the now historical collection in digitally searchable format, which may be outdated as reference material but which, nevertheless, offers a fascinating and valuable record of the early-twentieth-century and its perspective of older and contemporary music.

Despite the many evident dangers of misuse of this ever-expanding web of digital tools and information, it could be said that the fruits of this new digital era are the response to a general, growing demand for affordable scores and source materials. Most importantly, the correct and fair usage of these newly available materials can be benefiting to both the scholarly and the amateur community; for, these advances present users with unlimited opportunities compared to their traditional printed counterparts, allowing for new methodological, presentational and interpretative routes which had not been possible in the past: for instance, the employment of meta-data technology not only allows for search through the archives and texts with incredible ease, but also enhances the exploration of connections and alternatives between selected textual elements and other relevant information, in forms ranging from text to score, audio, image, video or a combination of media.

5. GOING DIGITAL – PERSPECTIVES FOR THE FUTURE

Having explored the first online initiatives related to source studies and sheet music and the vast array of digital technologies already available to the public today, it is hardly a game of guesswork to predict the up and coming digital transformation of music editions in the very near future. While printed editions will continue to be available, more and more publishers will pursue the parallel digitization of editions and their commercial availability either online or in the form of digital data stored on CD, DVD, Blu-ray discs or USB sticks, or even perhaps on portable devices/applications similar to the 'Kindle' or the 'iPad'. Provided that the necessary collaborations will be established between certain institutions, commercial organizations and manufacturers, it could be possible for music editions to become available to the public in digital form, along with all critical notes, alternative textual versions, complementary performance notes, composer biographies, work context, instrument details, performance recordings and, in short, all kinds of relevant information in the form of text, audio and video, and even scans of the primary sources themselves.

Of course, one could reasonably argue that the digitization and the combination of all this material can be a considerably costly and complicated process that requires highly specialized technicians, programmers and software developers to be set in action – meaning, consequently, that the majority of music-publishing houses will most likely not be able to realize such an ambitious project by themselves. However, an ideal solution to these reasonable problems could be that the digitization of all this material (both of existing as well as of future editions) is undertaken by a central scheme: an institution or organization that will create the appropriate software platform, offering interactive access to all information. Next, this central institution can form commercial collaborations with music publishers, so that it is assigned the digitization of their material. By doing so, music publishing houses will not only ensure that their invaluable musical archives will be preserved for years to come, but also that their editions will become more widely accessible and increasingly popular, as the new multimedia interfaces are continuously reaching more and more users. As an example, the new edition of the 'Köchel Catalogue', edited by Neal Zaslaw and expected to appear in 2013, will be simultaneously released in printed form and in digital form online, with the support of the Packard Humanities Institute.

At the finish line, everybody wins: the music publishers, and along with them the record labels and multimedia production labels which may be involved in the audio/video aspects of the project, will profit from the increased sales of their existing material and also considerably reduce manufacturing costs for upcoming products; the central organization will also profit from the percentage of revenues offered in return for the digitization and sales of the material; lastly but most importantly, humanity will profit from the wide availability and the preservation of all this material in a coherent, convenient, multi-faceted, cross-referenced and cost-effective form.

6. THE DEATH OF THE EDITOR?

But what could all these advances mean to the future of music editing? Does this newly available opportunity to store and display a multitude of information leave the need for editorship out of the equation, signifying the much-dreaded 'death of the editor'? In other words, have editors become an unnecessary part of the music publication chain, now that the material on which their scholarly work has been based on is available for anyone to view and decide upon? James Stephen Murphy (2008: 280-310), referring to some of the largest online archives of literature and art, accuses digital projects of having 'killed the editor', as he observes that more emphasis has been placed on the abundance of information presented, rather than on the provision of a usable reading text:

> If a user consults a site like the Rossetti Archive in the process of looking for 'The Blessed Damozel'[…] or the Whitman Archive looking for 'When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd'[…] he will find multiple versions of each poem and a wealth of textual and critical information, but he will find no guidance as to the version he's likely to be reading in class the next day. Neither site designates a base-text, and I am unaware of any electronic archive that presents a copy-text edited version[…] My point is not to fault the Blake Archive in particular or to condemn electronic archives in general. They are an amazing resource for literary study at all levels, providing unprecedented access and new ways of looking at historical texts[…] The problem is that, while we might be preserving texts to an unprecedented degree, if the only online options are electronic archives and transcriptions of outdated, flawed editions, we run the risk of losing something valuable as well: not just the editor, who has been turned

> into an archivist, but also an understanding of texts as objects of interpretation and argument, or the products of interpretation and argument.

Surely, Murphy has raised valid questions regarding the practicality of these digital projects and their apparent uselessness as a source of a 'reading text'. He also argues that the philological importance of the 'reading text' itself, as a product of interpretation and as an ignition of further interpretative dialogue, is at loss. As an extension of this last observation, Murphy has identified what he considers as the most important fault in the making of these digital archives, which in most instances appear to have reduced the work of the editor to that of a mere collector of information, rather to that of an interpreter.

Admittedly, it does seem that the creators of these first digital projects in the fields of literature and art did not escape the pitfalls involved in the preparation of such ambitious large-scale collections – in fact, an interesting parallel can be drawn between this contemporary initiative and the first efforts of the nineteenth century towards the creation of large-scale editions: just as those large editions were more concerned with completeness rather than with the quality, the usefulness and the accuracy of the text they offered (Samuel, 2003), so do these new ambitious first attempts in creating digital archives appear to have been more concerned with collecting material; eliminating, in a sense, the editor's role and handing over the text directly to the readers. Of course, though entrusting the reader with this abundance of information is not at all negative, what Murphy rightfully asserts is that it can be intimidating to non-specialized users, and that these digital archives have so far failed to fulfil the demand of the vast majority, who still wants to view a 'read-text', a critical edition; and by doing so, Murphy continues, these archives have brought on the 'death of the editor' as an advocate of the composer's text and intention.

Yet, despite Murphy's insightful observations, the situation is not necessarily as gloomy as he perceives: for, identifying the weaknesses of these initiatives does not necessarily mean that they should be dismissed, but rather, that there is still room for improvement. Constructive criticism is in fact the most vital element in the development of the ideal digital formula which will bring about a balance between matter and presentation. Primarily, the nature of these digital archives needs to be grasped and redefined: what is the role and the need that they have been created to fulfil? Are they essentially a database of information for scholarly use, or could they in fact be more widely useful, practical and ergonomic?

Fortunately, the implementation of these new technological tools means that, instead of sacrificing the scholarly attributes for the sake of the commercial attributes, both aspects can now co-exist, without eliminating each other's individual importance. In other words, these digital editions/archives can ideally offer both the 'raw data' (for scholarly use) as well as the 'critically assessed' data (for performance or less specialized use); in fact, there is no reason why any amount of raw data and metadata cannot be transformed into a comprehensive and user-friendly web of information, that informs and documents the editorial interpretation presented within the supplied critical edition(s) to date.

Thus, in essence, through the correct manipulation of the tools available to us today, the editor's role need not be reduced or eliminated at all; in fact, it is reinforced, since the digital technology allows

editors to supply the readers with any amount of information desired as evidence in support of an editorial decision (or the lack of one) without the previous limitations of space, volume or cost. In that light, the editor's task and the currently agreed editorial standards are in no way out of the equation, but rather, they have been elevated to a new, less limited sphere of existence: the editor is now supported by a team of specialists in the fields of programming and digital media, so that the desired editorial outcomes can be projected as clearly and effectively as possible. Admittedly, the demand for critically assessed 'performance' texts will always be high, and by no means could it be replaced by archival documents alone: therefore, what digital media can offer is the combination of a wealth of information that can exist both for its own sake and as complementary material to the 'read text'.

7. EPILOGUE – BENEFITING FROM ONLINE MUSIC RESOURCES

With this in mind, it is important that the users of online and digital resources are aware of both the strengths and the weaknesses of what is currently available. Though most current advances may appeal primarily to professional performers and academics, who are able to assess the information critically, particular care is required by the average user. Of primary importance, when searching for scores and editions for performance or personal study, is to always assess the material available online. Assessing the material entails much more than running a casual search in blogs for reviews by other users, since the internet, being a democratic tool, allows for everyone, be it connoisseurs or beginners, to express an opinion. Therefore, assessment of material must always be performed by consulting professional reviews that can be found in printed/online musicological journals and/or in musicological discussion forums available online.

In itself, assessing available editions benefits individuals, since they become more aware of the variety of texts in question and of the progress made in the fields of editing and research in a particular area. In some cases, if interested, an individual may even enjoy the experience of looking at the composer's autograph facsimile online, and gain valuable insight by looking at different editions, comparing them first-hand. If, due to time restrictions, assessing an edition is not an option, it is wise to seek the advice of a professional – an academic, a performer, or an experienced music teacher: after all, it is important to remember that asking questions and engaging in dialogue is undoubtedly beneficial for everyone involved. Finally, users of digital media must always be aware that, for the time being, the most recent and up-to-date printed editions may not be available online – but reviews of such editions will surely exist in digital form. Thus, an assessment is, once again, a feasible option. Undoubtedly, as digital and online resources, formats and systems will progress further, more and more options will become available to those with access to this technology and, ideally, they will further promote evolution, knowledge and unprecedented opportunities for those who make use of them critically and wisely.

Though the vast majority of current discussions regarding digital projects are largely concerned with literature rather than with music, it is nevertheless evident that the ongoing trials and errors in the process are paving the way towards the creation of large-scale digital music editions. Just as the process of producing the nineteenth century's monumental music editions was to a large extent based on the processes that had already been tried and tested in the production of monumental editions of

literature, philosophy and other disciplines, so can the production of the twenty-first century's large-scale music-related digital editions and archives be informed by the recent attempts with regards to literature- and art-related digital archives. For, the majority of problems faced during the production of the latter – such as issues of presentation, structure, organization, archiving and, of course, of editorial intervention – could and should be taken into account as directly relevant to any attempt in creating a digitally enhanced (or entirely digitally-based) edition of music. The outcome should not simply involve the preservation and the archiving of information and of the editions already available; rather, it should enhance and promote what has diachronically proven to be the most crucial element of editing and interpretation: the continuation of dialogue.

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