Introduction

There is little the sleuthing historian likes better than a trail of bread-crumbs. And since you are probably just such a historian, my book starts with just such a trail. In fairy tales, the device allows one to lead one's pursuers from a familiar point of departure into unfamiliar terrain. In this case, the point of departure is German and symphonic, while the unfamiliar terrain is Italian, balletic, and theatrical: a stretch of abandoned ground that was once at the center of musical practice and aesthetic thought in the decades around 1800. Thus my first breadcrumb may be found at what is now one of musicology's best-tended landmarks: the last movement of Beethoven's Symphony no. 3 ("Eroica"). The movement is an Allegro molto in E-flat. It opens, though, with a very loud burst of frantic motion in the wrong key: the strings, playing *fortissimo* in unison or at the octave, trace a jagged course of sixteenth notes down a G-minor scale. This music gives the impression that we are about to hear a perpetuum mobile finale for a very different symphony—say, a more frenetic last movement for Mozart's Symphony no. 40. But soon a new key asserts itself—this time the right one—as the winds and timpani join in for an assault on its dominant. The music simultaneously slows down and gets louder: sixteenth notes give way to quarters, and when we reach a half note for full orchestra in measure 12—with added fermata—the initial burst of energy is already spent. Then, in the thirteenth measure, something different begins to emerge. Plucked strings sound a slow, shuddering theme, which soon gains exponentially in

momentum: there is just one pizzicato per measure at first, then two, and then four, then another hurried flourish—and then silence. The cycle begins again. The beats of rest outnumber the pitches (Roger Scruton has described this theme as a music of silence).[1]

Fluctuating thus between frenzy and near petrification, the music brings into question what I will call its animacy: it is a system in a state of unstable energy. This language might seem jarring now, as it would have in Beethoven's own day. After all, if theorists of the fine arts agreed on anything during this era, it was that music was always already animated, by virtue of the fact that it transformed within time. The very term "energy" is anachronistic in this context, evoking as it does later nineteenth-century notions of a material-systemic power to "work" by being in motion. Perhaps, then, this analysis (like the movement itself) has begun with a false start. But there are yet more clues along the trail to justify venturing out in this direction. For one, the rhythmic jerkiness is matched in the melody, which leaps between E-flat and B-flat in distinctly unmelodic fashion; having begun by neglecting its proper key, the movement now seems almost too disposed to cling to its tonic and dominant poles. This theme becomes the ground for variations of increasing rhythmic activity and textural complexity. Suddenly, a new melody emerges in oboe, clarinet, and bassoon playing *dolce* and sustained. This melody serves retroactively to make sense (at least musical sense) of what we heard at measure 13: it was a bass line all along.

This bass-line feint is well known. More important for our purposes—because it serves to lead us further toward the core terrain of this book—is the fact that Beethoven composed the melody that enters at the third variation not for this symphony but rather for one of his much less beloved pieces. It was first heard in Salvatore Viganò's pantomime dance *Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus* (1801). Today Viganò's name scarcely registers next to Beethoven's, but in 1801 Vienna the positions were reversed. The Italian choreographer—the latest in an illustrious family of dancers—was a celebrity, and his troupe was brought specially to the Burgtheater to entertain the Viennese court. At that time Beethoven was merely a well-liked concert pianist with some chamber music publications and a single symphony under his belt. Similarly, although today the German symphony is among the most respected of musical genres, at the turn of the nineteenth century the Italian-style pantomime dance was preeminent in Vienna, just as it was on the Italian peninsula; reports attest that audiences attended the dances much more avidly even than the opera. The "Eroica" vanished after its premiere (as, indeed, was typ-

ical for symphonies), to resurface in the symphonic canon only much later on. In contrast, Viganò's *Prometheus* was performed in Vienna a full twenty-eight times and revived to enormous acclaim at Milan's La Scala in 1813. In this book, I will suggest that this ballet, and several others with similar features, modeled a conspicuously aesthetic engagement that drew on the radical-empiricist tradition of Étienne Bonnot de Condillac. It was—I will argue—a strand of very late Enlightenment cultural activity that flourished in the vibrant capitals of the Italian peninsula, and particularly in Milan. Such modeling in fine-arts practice was recognized as important in the years around 1800 (I emphasize this importance again at the risk of repeating myself); we are the ones who have forgotten.

Back, then, to the trail of breadcrumbs. Beethoven scholars have welcomed this Prometheus reference as a signpost along the usual well-trodden path. What could be a more fitting conclusion to a "heroic" work than a nod to that suffering Titan, whose entrails were torn from him daily by an eagle's beak? What is more, this turn toward mythological heroism serves to overwrite that more historically local object and erstwhile dedicatee Napoleon in favor of a more "universal" message. A. Peter Brown wrote, for instance, that the symphony's "heroic content derives from Beethoven's ballet," and the structure as a whole "wells up from a common unifying concept of the heroic being, Prometheus transformed first into Bonaparte and then into a more abstract hero."[2] William Kinderman suggested that "Prometheus's agony comes to parallel the plight of the misunderstood artist." Brown, Kinderman, and Constantin Floros (along with countless teachers of music survey courses) have taken the quotation in the final movement of the symphony as encouragement to read the entire work as a retelling of the Prometheus myth—which Kinderman sums up as "struggle, rebirth, death, apotheosis"—and a tribute to "universal aspects of heroism."[3]

But there is a problem. Viganò's pantomime is not principally concerned with a hero in the familiar sense.[4] Prometheus figures in the title but not much in the drama; Viganò dispensed with the deity's famous punishment altogether. Rather, the drama begins with Prometheus bringing to life two human-shaped statues that he has made from clay. Viganò himself performed one of the statues, and the other was performed by his prima donna, Maria Casentini, while the role of Prometheus was given to a far less prestigious dancer (Filippo Cesari, who would have been familiar only to those spectators who habitually looked beyond the first row of the *corpo di ballo*). In what follows, the animated statues are

progressively rendered human as they pay attention to demonstrations from the various gods and muses. The quality of heroism figures, but only as one in a list of qualities and attributes taught to the statues over the course of the ballet through what Viganò's nineteenth-century biographer called "special music" and "special dance."[5] What the ballet is about, then, is not the suffering of a hero but rather the way that a statue, or person-shaped tabula rasa, becomes human by means of a sensory or aesthetic education—an education that makes heroism possible but also results in reason, reflection, emotion, and a love of beauty.

In quoting the music for this ballet, could the last movement of the "Eroica" be invoking such a process? It is not impossible: after all, the jerky opening theme of the symphony's finale is uncannily similar to the Poco Adagio in the ballet's first movement, which depicts the bringing to life of the two clay humans. Indeed, on the basis of these similarities, a few recent scholars have suggested that the fourth movement of the "Eroica" might actually represent something quite strange indeed: the animation of statues.[6]

Our trail of breadcrumbs has brought us into the clearing around a mighty ruin. Living sculptures now inhabit farce, campy science fiction and the streets around tourist attractions (domains that are, it hardly bears adding, seldom named alongside the symphonic absolute). I will suggest, though, that the animated statue was the representative image of those enormously influential projects in aesthetic thought and operatic and balletic practice, to which I alluded above. Viganò's *Prometheus* was the latest in an illustrious line of Italian pantomimes about the animated statue. Our trail of breadcrumbs can be followed from the Burgtheater of 1801 to La Scala in the 1790s, where Gasparo Angiolini's pro-French propaganda ballet *Deucalione e Pirra* premiered. The work was a prototype for Viganò's dance, as it also portrayed the birth of a race of humans made from rocks and their instruction by the gods and muses. From there, the trail stretches through Angiolini's "philosophical ballet" *La vendetta spiritosa, o La statua di Condilliac* [*sic*] (in which dancers ostensibly perform Étienne Bonnot de Condillac's famous *Traité des sensations*) and through the multiple versions of Ovid's Pygmalion myth in melodrama, pantomime, and opera. Throughout the period from about 1770 to 1830, the statue on the limn of consciousness and movement—traversing that limn or hesitating just behind it—was perceived by many as fundamentally an Italian trope. As a technique in the repertoire of the Italian dancer, the animated statue can be traced back to Gregorio Lambranzi's 1715 manual on a "new and curi-

ous" style of dance, and even further, to early Venetian opera.[7] But in the decades just before and after 1800, the figure gained a new prominence, not only in opera and dance but also in a variety of other cultural spheres. During the Napoleonic years, the image of the animated statue was even marshaled to represent a renascent Italy.

My goal is not simply to provide a chronicle of this phenomenon. Rather, I aim to demonstrate how musicians, choreographers, and performers engaged with a trope that also concerned scientists, philosophers, and aestheticians. This book considers how these diverse projects informed one another over the decades and wonders what may be learned about the places where these engagements took place; it asks what survived of these projects after the animated statue disappeared from stages and what traces remain with us now, if we can be brought to recognize them.

Let us look back over our shoulders at how far we have come. The development from angular foundation to smooth surface in the final Allegro molto of the "Eroica" aligns easily with that in the *Prometheus* ballet—both works begin with raw, jerking matter and end up with something recognizably human. But a story for the "Eroica" about the animation of matter seems, well, cartoonish—a point of reference that is surprisingly apt. In the Italian style of pantomime dance, bodily motions were precisely timed to music, and the musical gesture was coordinated to match the bodily gesture—it's a style we now call Mickey Mousing. The "Eroica" is supposed to throw down the gauntlet, marking a new, definitive phase in Beethoven's output and the beginning of his mythology. What do Italian dancers or rhythmically shuddering statues have to do with Beethovenian heroics? Perhaps not much, if we consider these heroics in their now-familiar form, with historical specifics forcibly cancelled out and elements of non-Germanic heritage redacted from the family tree.[8] If we revolt at the prospect of statues shuddering to life during the symphony's fourth movement, it only shows that we have forgotten how significant such figures could be—and, by extension, how much of the aesthetic terrain of the years around 1800 still remains obscured.

How, you may ask, could a major strand running between musical practice, science, philosophy, and aesthetic thought around 1800 be breaking news now? The answer is almost too simple to be believed. Italian culture between 1770 and 1830 has been the victim of a manifold blindness. Take music: in practice, Italian opera and dance remained preeminent across European capitals—from London and Lisbon through Vienna and all the way to St. Petersburg—throughout this period. This is

true at the beginning of the sixty years under consideration here, and it became even more so as time passed. Charles Burney found Italian opera everywhere except Paris when he made his famous musical tours in the early 1770s. Napoleon wanted to make sure that Paris did not remain the embarrassing holdout that Burney had found it, and as he traveled through foreign capitals, he made a point of poaching their best Italian musicians for his own court. The stakes are evident from the pressure Napoleon applied to Cherubini to compose for his court in the Italian style, like the preferred-but-absent Giovanni Paisiello and the deceased Piccinni might have done if Napoleon had been able to employ them instead; not by coincidence did Cherubini offer up a conciliatory (and by then decidedly old-fashioned) *Pimmalione* opera in 1809. These composers are hardly household names now—but they were among the most famous and successful composers of their day. Of composers in the current canon only Haydn came close, and the genres for which he was known still lacked the prestige of the *dramma per musica.* (Rarely were Christoph Willibald Gluck or Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart ranked above Galuppi, Jommelli, or Paisiello during their own lifetimes.) With theatrical dance the situation is similar: the continued fame of Georges Noverre's *Lettres sur la danse et sur les ballets* (1760) has led many historians to overestimate his importance in practice. Note, for instance, the eagerness to identify Salvatore Viganò as a disciple of Noverre rather than as a dancer and choreographer in the Italian style, which he certainly was.[9] As Kathleen Hansell has so usefully shown, Noverre was but one of several choreographers involved in the rise of freestanding pantomime ballet during the 1760s and through to the 1780s. And by 1800, the Italian style of theatrical dance had bested those of other nations almost entirely.[10]

The music of this operatic and pantomimic tradition long eluded study altogether; even now, it has mostly eluded the kind of contextual study that has so enriched our understanding of other traditions, as well as of Italian performers abroad and of Italian musical cultures of an earlier era (following the recent groundbreaking works of Elizabeth Le Guin and Martha Feldman).[11] Why is this? For one, very little of this music is well loved now. To admire it—especially in the absence of a rich repertoire of recordings—requires a leap of the imagination and a willingness to entertain very different ideals about what a composer does, what singers do, and how bodily gestures contribute to the meanings of a staged musical artwork. Italian operas composed between (say) 1790 and 1815 often require a style of singing that is closer to speech in its rhythms and melodic contours; it does not reward the kind

of enraptured, voice-focused listening that attends Lorraine Hunt Lie-
berson's Serse, or Maria Callas's Norma. What is more, this repertoire
often sought a close coordination of music and onstage movement, with
the musical contours mimicking—or Mickey-Mousing—physical ges-
tures in a fashion that has come to seem hackneyed and may even pro-
voke spontaneous laughter. These stylistic developments within opera
will be a primary focus of this book; as we will see, they were intimately
connected with the rise of melodrama and the search for alternate, non-
verbal sign systems. I will argue that the influence of these projects can
be heard in very well-known music from a later period. For instance, in
Gualtiero's stark declamation in Bellini's *Il Pirata,* we hear traces of the
voice of Giacomo Bursay, an itinerant actor and translator who moved
in the Vienna-Naples corridor during the early 1770s; and fragments of
what Angiolini called his "language" of gestural music may be found in
most of Donizetti's mature operas.

One barrier to the kind of contextual study I pursue here is political:
What does "Italy" mean before 1861? The Italy of my title had neither
a political existence nor (as we will see) much of a linguistic coherence.
This poses obvious dangers to this project of slipping into teleology—
that is, of assuming that the Italy that now sits on the map of Europe
was simply waiting to be born—or of defaulting toward essentialist
notions of nationality in which Italian words and names tacitly and
retrogressively speak for themselves. My response is straightforward:
the terms "Italy" and "Italian" were used during the period examined
in this book, and they were used because they were taken to mean
something. Some writers even specified what this something was: Italy
was the geographical area stretching from Calabria to the Alps, and an
Italian was native to this area. This is not to say that there were no
regional identities or that the political fragmentation and multiplicity of
what we now wrongly call dialects posed no challenge to the notion of
a unified Italy. Indeed, as we will see in chapter 1, these things were of
the utmost importance. This book generally focuses on particular
regions or cities, and the category of "Italy" is useful here only when it
was of interest to the protagonists of this book. However, and despite
the dangers of teleology, it would be misleading not to state that many
Italians did seek the unification of Italy, and the French invaders in the
1790s were welcomed for precisely that reason.

Another barrier is implied by the belief that the Italian peninsula was
a cultural backwater at this time, undisturbed by the important currents
in European thought. As much as the terms "Enlightenment" and

"Romanticism" have been complicated in recent decades, any localized study of the period 1770 to 1830 that engages with neither has circumscribed its own relevance. In this book, "Enlightenment" means something very specific, while "Romanticism" is allowed to remain relatively elusive. The Italian peninsula had rich and distinct Enlightenment cultures—the term *illuminismo* was frequently used by its proponents—and many of the key figures in the Italian Enlightenment also wrote extensively on music and the theater.[12] Identifying an Italian Romanticism is less straightforward, as others have asserted. To begin, it is worth noting that the terms *romanticismo* and *romantici*—unlike *illuminismo* and *illuministi*—do not appear in any of the primary objects of my study. Many scholars suggest that Romanticism as a literary movement came later to Italy than to Germany or France; Italian Romanticism is often said to have begun with the debates on translation in the late 1810s and early 1820s (which do not feature here). Some say an Italian Romanticism never happened at all.[13] Certainly most of the music discussed in this book has nothing to do with musical Romanticism, and most of the writers espoused the kind of impulse toward classical revival that much mainstream Romanticism defined itself against. In part for these reasons, the term is useful principally in chapter 3, which considers the role of Rome and its statues within auspiciously Romantic novels about Italian nationhood. I am hesitant to apply it in any broader sense, even when we arrive at the 1820s and 1830s; this is a matter of historiography to which this book will return in its final pages.

But there are still other reasons to call these schemes of periodization into question. In the years around 1800, great art became transcendent (or so the familiar narrative holds). This is Romantic historiography's first front. It claims ground for the musical absolute: those symphonies and string quartets still resting at the center of the canon, which turn toward the infinite by turning away from the phenomenal. In this progressive "disciplining" of music as an aesthetic object, musicologists have sought support from other disciplines, particularly philosophy, and traced parallel changes in the treatment of visual art, particularly its preservation and display in museums.[14] Jacques Rancière has recently suggested that modern aesthetics began with Johann Joachim Winckelmann's 1764 description, in his *History of Ancient Art,* of the Belvedere Torso—precisely with his celebration of the object's expressive incompleteness, its mode of turning away and doing something other than

what its claims to representation would require. But what about a statue, possessed of all its parts, that—brought to life by music of mysterious origin—stepped off its pedestal into the admiring beholder's arms? Does it tell a different story about aesthetic thought in these foundational decades? In the decades after Winckelmann described the torso, the plays, ballets, melodramas, and operas featuring animated (and often promiscuous) objets d'art numbered in the hundreds. These too had a philosophical pedigree. Many were modeled more or less explicitly on the central figure in Condillac's famous thought experiment of 1754, the *Traité des sensations*.[15] Put simply, I want to ask how our understanding of this period, still considered a cradle of modern aesthetics, can be complicated by the fact that the moving statue was one of its emblematic figures.

This question is a provocative one. In the heyday of New Historicist musicology, when this project was begun, the value of bringing forgotten historical objects and milieus to life again seemed self-evident—and it was all the more enhanced when such objects could shed new light on canonic repertoires and "destabilize standard narratives," as the saying inevitably went. Yet this impulse has recently been called into question, even among those who have been practicing cultural-contextual study in just this fashion. Scholars (including the present author, it bears admitting) have come to note the ease with which the curious forgotten objects of European cultural history—what have recently come to be called "quirk" objects—can seem to generate transformations in perspective. Mary Ann Smart and Nicholas Mathew recently lamented the tendency of historians to accumulate these objects within "a narrative that overwhelms and even supplants any larger critical goals."[16] James Davies has taken this critique further, comparing such historical methods—once ostensibly belonging to iconoclasts and scholarly enfants terribles—to "the anemic experience of shopping at Whole Foods" and finding the project of disrupting orthodoxies to be, ultimately, "the most orthodox, ubiquitous, and mundane form of scholarly reasoning there is."[17]

Two questions that emerge from this recent conversation bear most directly on my project. The first is whether there should be an imperative to relate what Smart and Mathew call "historical micro-narratives" to some kind of macro-narrative, whatever that might be. The second concern queries the speaking power of such odd and forgotten objects—which it has become the fashion to call "things," as a means of conjuring up a desirable resistance on the part of the object, its refusal despite all evidence to the contrary to comply with the historian's self-serving

aims.[18] Can such objects be thought to "tell" anything about history that does not sound identical to the "ingenuity and persuasive gifts of the writer"?[19] The culturally minded historian of music seems to confront two equally repellant methodologies. One such methodology instrumentalizes the historical object, coldly assimilating it into the scholar's self-aggrandizing project of rewriting history. The other, gentler, one—which can serve similar aims with identical efficiency—confers defiance or opacity on the object, often directing toward it quantities of that least compelling and most endlessly disclosed of covetous impulses: scholarly "desire." (Such rhetoric has an amusing precedent in these pages. The original Pygmalion, in Ovid's *Metamorphoses,* took his inanimate creation to bed with him, bedecked in beads and a brassiere. But his dignity, at least, was later restored by a godly intervention.) By this light, one must ask: why tell the history of forgotten music at all, or indeed that of any music?

This project is a paean to the occasional explanatory powers of forgotten music and forgotten ways of thinking about music, a paean to the ability of history recovered to shed new light on what have been central categories within musicology of the last twenty years: voice, language, gesture, body, nation, performance, and the musical work in its scope and status. I argue that from 1770 to 1830, the animated statue was not only a figure of spectatorial engagement—as an object shaped like a human body, inviting aesthetic attention from the human body, and cuing a corresponding animation within the human body—but also a means of understanding the relation of human senses to the self and to the very matters and materials of the fine arts. To grasp the significance of this figure we must acknowledge the interconnectedness of aesthetic thought with theatrical practice and fiction, and of these fields with domains, like medicine and biology, that were also concerned with perception and feeling. After all, "the body"—however much I have avoided this now-outdated formulation of nominative singular with definite article—is ultimately the subject of this book. My own study could not have been possible without the pioneering work of scholars such as LeGuin and Bruce Holsinger, who reminded musicologists that their object was an embodied activity, its meanings contingent on historical modes of embodiment.[20] Similarly, if formalists have long spoken of "gesture" as something that music does, Mary Ann Smart reminded us that staged genres such as opera, pantomime, and melodrama may grant insight into historical ways of understanding musical gesture as dramatically or narratively meaningful. Where Smart's

Mimomania notes a partial dissociation of music and onstage bodily movement following 1830, the present study traces the gradual, complex, and unstable fusion of these elements in the preceding decades.[21]

My project follows the recent turn within musicology toward sharing concerns with the history of science. This book attempts to continue in the vein of John Tresch's *The Romantic Machine,* which approaches Parisian scientific culture in the first half of the nineteenth century with a felicitous alertness to sympathies across fields.[22] I have gained from Davies a sense that bodies and anatomy are themselves formations of a discursive history, and from Emily Dolan a conviction that a history of sense-percepts is already in itself both an aesthetic and a scientific history.[23] My project is particularly indebted to two recent articles that appeared while it was underway: Stephen Rumph's virtuosic reading of tactile themes within Mozart's *Don Giovanni;* and Celine Frigau-Manning's study of electrification imagery within opera criticism, which forms part of a broad-ranging appraisal of mechanistic analogies applied to singers in the first half of the nineteenth century.[24]

Chapter 1, "Alignment, Absorption, Animation," examines the Milanese pantomimes of Gasparo Angiolini, in particular his ballet on the theme of Condillac's statue, *La vendetta spiritosa* (Milan, 1781; revived as *La vendetta ingegnosa, o la Statua di Condilliac*, Venice, 1791), and his project of creating a language of musical gestures that could be understood without training or acculturation. Inspired by Rousseau, Condillac, and Milanese writers such as the Verri brothers and Cesare Beccaria, Angiolini hoped that this "sign language" that could overcome linguistic and even political boundaries. The chapter situates this project within a new Lombard preoccupation with sensibility, aesthetic attention, and immediacy. This preoccupation resulted, at least in part, from the perceived failure of the traditional, literary Tuscan language: a failure represented by Lombard essayists with images of human paralysis, sensory congealment, and simulacra. These writers, publishing under the aegis of the Accademia dei Pugni (Academy of Fists), developed notions of "natural" syntax and a preference for the continual variation of prose over the predictable rhythms and *armonia* of poetry. I examine how this sound-based linguistics was ultimately extended into music theory, and thence into musical practice, by the members of the Academy of Fists and by Angiolini himself. One result was a new kind of through-composed or "miming" melody within scores for pantomime. Another was the increased sensitivity of pantomime music to dramatic unfolding. Though he had collaborated with C. W. Gluck earlier in his career, Angiolini came

to believe that suitable music for a pantomime dance could only come from the choreographer.

Having established these contexts, the chapter moves on to focus on Angiolini's "philosophical ballet," for which he choreographed the steps, designed the set, and composed the music. In Angiolini's ballets on the subject of Condillac's statue, the theme of bodily quickening came to represent wholesale Italian cultural and political reawakening, for which sensory stimuli such as music held the key. But according to Angiolini, a true animation could only be effected if the music and choreography were the work of one and the same composer. Through an examination of Angiolini's ballet scores and writings, I argue that this Italian choreographer introduced the principle of sustained gestural mimesis into Italian theatrical music.

In chapter 2, I demonstrate that this principle and its musical techniques were imported into vocal music and eventually opera through the Italian reception of Rousseau's *Pygmalion* (Lyon, 1770, with music by Rousseau and Horace Coignet). With this work, Rousseau invented the *scène lyrique,* later known as melodrama: a new genre of musical theater for actors and orchestra that alternated between declaimed prose and gestural interludes accompanied by descriptive music.[25] In recent years, important studies by Jacqueline Waeber, Thomas Bauman, and Matthew Head have brought to light the early reception of melodrama in France and Germany and the genre's influence on authors like Goethe and on composers such as W. A. Mozart, Beethoven, and Carl Maria von Weber.[26] Almost entirely unknown to Anglo-American musicology and its French and German cousins, though long familiar to musicologists in Italy, is the fact that Rousseauian melodrama had a vibrant life on the Italian peninsula during the last decades of the eighteenth century. During the 1770s and 1780s, *Pygmalion* accumulated at least thirty editions and an even higher number of performances.[27] What is more, though these editions usually featured Italian translations alongside the French original, *Pygmalion* was performed during these decades exclusively in its original language. I note that melodrama in Italy was, at least at first, considered to require the tones of spoken French—a position consistent with Rousseau's own notions of musical and unmusical languages.[28]

Chapter 2 argues that these decades also saw a renewed impetus for a revival of the ancient Greek and Roman speech-song—an impetus that can be found within Rousseau's musical writings and within the invention and reception of melodrama itself, though later exegetes of that genre have, by and large, resisted its neoclassical strain. The chapter situ-

ates melodrama within the context of related projects which attempted to revive or evoke the voice of the ancient bard: these include Joshua Steele's *Prosodia rationalis* and, in Italy, treatises on opera by Antonio Eximeno (*Dell'origine e delle regole della musica,* 1773) and Stefano Arteaga (*Rivoluzioni nel teatro musicale italiano,* 1785). All of these treatises described a kind of song that was built from the rhythms of the spoken word—and for the latter two, this speech-like song was the key to a reformed music theory (Eximeno) and operatic practice (Arteaga). *Pygmalion*, as the first melodrama, was of crucial importance in this project of opera reform; not only did it showcase the idiosyncrasies of its genre, but it also served as a means of thinking about the materials of the fine arts and their effectiveness. Indeed, Arteaga even used the Pygmalion myth to sketch out an entire theory of the fine arts as media. He suggested (as we will see) that of all the arts, only song contained the most perfect representations, because it itself was animated.

The "melodramatized" opera imagined by these reformers finally came into being in the 1790s. Adaptations of *Pygmalion* into a modified operatic language, by composers such as Giovanni Battista Cimador, Bonifazio Asioli, and Francesco Gnecco, drew on the theories of musical speech and gesture expounded by Rousseau and his Italian disciples. These composers used a single libretto, created by the Venetian playwright Antonio Sografi, which was exceptionally faithful to the form, lexicon, and even the syntax of the original while providing some opportunities for lyricism. The *Pimmalione* scenes shared a common set of "reform" characteristics: sustained musical mimicking of actors' motions; exclusive use of *recitativo accompagnato* rather than *secco;* an aversion to vocal display and, as a consequence, brief cavatinas rather than extended arias; syllabic declamation, and a radically restricted vocal range. The opera composers active in Venice in the 1790s—most notably Simon Mayr—were instrumental in importing the techniques of melodrama into opera proper. Ultimately, this chapter suggests that both Donizetti's techniques of gestural mirroring and the *canto filosofico* of Bellini's early operas are consequences of this melodramatization of Italian opera.

Chapter 3 takes us into the first years of the nineteenth century and south to Rome to consider the construction of an "Italy" within the emergent Romantic discourse of nations. By this time most of the peninsula was under Napoleon's rule, with north and south divided into two large kingdoms. An initial French invasion in 1798 had briefly made a Republic of Rome from the Papal States, and another one in 1808 would annex them to France. I begin the chapter by considering two novels—

Alessandro Verri's *Le notti romane* (1804), and Germaine de Staël's *Corinne, ou l'Italie* (1807)—that were centrally concerned with defining Italy and weighing its claims to nationhood. Taken together, these novels can be seen to develop a new and distinct model of the "Italian," building on the older principle of the spirit of languages, metastasizing this principle from mouths into bodies, and diffusing it onto the Italian landscape. Both novelists construct a single, complex archetype to represent the nation itself: the orator who looks like an animated statue and speaks with a melodious voice about the history and fate of Italy. Rome was a fitting locus for these fantasies, as it was often said to be populated by statues, and the musical voices of these orators resound against the city's famous cacophony of bells, the racket made by its carriages, and the braying of its wild dogs. What is more, Rome had recently become the seat of the Pio-Clementine Collection, the first great public museum of sculpture. Both novels feature extended scenes set in this museum, with characters moving along rows of statues that seem poised on the brink of life, and in both these contemplations provoke characters to describe Italy itself as a plastic being, awaiting its own animation.

In these works, then, the Pygmalion motive (broadly conceived) is displaced to the realm of persistent metaphor. And here we encounter the "plasticity" of my title. The term designates a double existence that is simultaneously marmoreal and fleshly, ancient and present. The chapter concludes by moving outward in two seemingly divergent directions: first toward idealist philosophy and second toward historical record. I argue that the notion of plasticity developed by these novels prefigured that espoused by Hegel in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) and in the lectures on aesthetics he gave between 1818 and 1829. Then I note that the kind of musical speech described in *Le notti romane* and *Corinne* was the subject of a first ethnomusicological study of "native" Italian song, and I consider an early attempt to manufacture a political anthem from these records. Diverse as they may seem, both of these directions attest nonetheless to the debts of "hard" and teleological models of history toward the speculative and the aesthetic.

Chapter 4 continues these considerations of the animated statue's political resonance during the Napoleonic years, but with a particular focus on the ways in which this model was deployed to represent socialization on the stage. First, the chapter will mark the final flourishing of the Pygmalion theme on Italian stages in the first years of the nineteenth century. During this period, the animated statue woman, the Galatea figure, waned in popularity and was eclipsed by the spectacle of an ani-

mated statue population. In this category, I consider Angiolini's *Deucalione e Pirra* and Viganò's two *Prometheus* ballets, mentioned above, as well as an 1814 adaptation by Troilo Malipiero of Viganò's Milan *Prometeo* into a spoken play with music. The libretti for these works carefully specified their allegorical nature, instructing the audience to understand the statues to represent the spectators themselves. What is more, in each case the creators claimed the continued influence of Condillac's *Traité des sensations* on their projects, either in footnotes or by implication—with the inclusion of animation scenes that meticulously adhere to the sequence of stimuli described in the treatise. Together, these ballets suggest a longer reach for Condillac's influence on aesthetic thought than has previously been assumed. I suggest that we take this late-game resurgence of empiricist philosophy within theatrical practice as an incitement to consider different forms of aesthetic value, even ones that are opposite to the familiar values of individuality and autonomy that have come to be associated with this period. The first section of this chapter concludes by interpreting Rossini's ensemble "Freddo ed immobile come una statua," at the end of act 1 of *Il barbiere di Siviglia,* as a parody of the harmonious statue population.

In the chapter's second section, in keeping with the theme of socialization, I trace the ways in which these fantasies of a plastic-human threshold were relocated to the biological body. Pygmalion narratives came to be applied not only to statues but also to living humans with nonfunctioning senses. (The material considered in this chapter constitutes something of a midpoint between eighteenth-century Pygmalion dramas and the allegorical version of George Bernard Shaw, first performed in 1913.) While deafness, muteness, and paralysis were popular topics within music-theatrical genres in the years around 1800, this section focuses primarily on blindness—a state for which Italian audiences seem to have developed a particular taste. I consider a number of dramas—in particular Camillo Federici's *Lo scultore ed il cieco* (1791) and *La cieca nata* (1799) and a forgotten opera by Spontini (1804) on the life of John Milton—that construe blindness as a state of inanimateness and culminate in animation scenes in which the missing sense is either substituted or restored. Furthermore, as we will see, these narratives gave rise to something like a theory of fine arts as compensatory media: those who lacked full access to the phenomenal world were able to communicate through these barriers by means of fine arts. In late eighteenth-century Italian optical science (which also followed Condillac), the blind were described as having a "mind's hands" rather than a mind's eye; they were considered

to excel in the tactile domains of sculpture and musical-instrument playing and were even thought to understand music in terms of shapes and textures. Our interest in sensory absence thus leads away from opera and pantomime toward art forms like instrumental music that were considered to traffic in unseen images, half-meanings, and incomplete signs. I consider the question of what alternate listening experiences might be inspired by these Italian projects, suggesting how one could listen to a piece of canonic instrumental music with a "mind's hands" rather than a mind's eye. Finally this chapter identifies these late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century discourses of sensory substitution and plastic organs as ancestors of the modern field of plasticity studies.

Chapter 5 traces the theme of human plasticity into Italian aesthetic discourse and opera of the 1820s and 1830s. The echoes of the musical statues of the late Enlightenment can be heard in the reception of performers of Ottocento opera, especially the women: figures like Maria Malibran and particularly Giuditta Pasta were construed as living statues or artificially animated interlopers from an ancient past. This quality of animatedness was described with a very new kind of imagery within music criticism, one that drew on well-known developments in the nascent scientific field later known as electrobiology. Northern Italy became the site of a scientific revolution after Luigi Galvani discovered that frogs' legs could be set into motion by means of electrical current. His experiments in "animal electricity," which he first described in print in 1791, were reproduced in salons and on stages across Europe, often enhanced with lighting effects and musical accompaniment. Music itself came to be described as an electrical force that could transmit charge from one body to another or redistribute the electrical currents within an individual without the need for metal conductors. One result of this analogy was an early form of music therapy: in his 1816 medical treatise, Angelo Colò suggested that epileptic seizures could be cured by means of musical accompaniment that would direct the patient's electrical current rhythmically away from the brain and into the limbs.

Another consequence was a new lexicon and theoretical apparatus for describing music's effects on the listener. Writers drew most frequently on metaphors of electrification in describing Italian operatic performance—and in particular the performance of women. This had some basis in the electric science of the time: women were believed to carry a negative charge, and thus the female singer could act as a lightning rod, drawing the positive charge in the atmosphere into her body (which would display the symptoms of shock) and transmitting it to

spectators through song. The earliest performer to be described consistently in such terms was Pasta, in writings by Stendhal, Chorley, Carlo Ritorni, and Cesare Cantù.

This chapter traces the complex intersections of electric animation, plastic acting, and archeology. Pasta's ability to electrify her audience was said to derive both from her mercurial voice and from her distinctive acting style: she was known for suddenly stiffening her body into poses that lasted two to three seconds, directly in time with musical events. François-Joseph Talma, one of her teachers, reportedly taught her that an action should precede its music in a flash, the way lightning precedes thunder. I argue that this rhetoric of electrification was cultivated in the operas of Simon Mayr and Bellini and in performances of them through a recycling of older Pygmalion tropes: these include the all-important pronouncement of *io* or "I" as an index of a statuary self and a distorted, jerky version of the earlier plastic acting.

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These chapters have been a decade in the making. The project was begun ten years ago, in the aftermath of the New Musicology, when the best thing a junior historical musicologist could do was to locate a dark corner of history and devote herself to bringing it to light. Such was the promise of historical musicology's particular brand of New Historicism: that within the quiet archive of overlooked music and musical practices, one might avoid the earlier movement's heated rhetoric, the prominent subject positions and brazen hermeneutic turns of its celebrities. By comparison, one might have believed, there was a generosity in "doing history," and doing so with a new interdisciplinarity, unencumbered—thanks to the work of the most recent generations—by concerns of canonicity and facing vistas upon vistas of attractive forgotten repertoires.

This generosity inhered, at least partly, in the usefulness of such discoveries for future scholars, in the sense that the historical data we unearthed could be adapted to other uses even after the fashion for making novel connections between neighboring fields of activity within a delimited culture had experienced its inevitable decline. Also attractive, it must be conceded, was the notion that in telling such histories, the junior scholar was being faintly political, giving voice to the losing parties in the race for aesthetic empire. While it has become increasingly impossible to ignore the fugitive and self-serving traits of musicology's New Historicist moment, and if (as noted above) such hitherto-unheard voices turn out to be none other than the scholar's own, thrown backward in elaborate acts

of ventriloquism, we should not assume that the history of European art music holds no more surprises. And while one may trace through this book my own increasing dissatisfaction with unadulterated historicism, there remain at its core a handful of beliefs that I have not set aside—that I do not find to be easily dismissed—about the value of even the strangest and most promiscuous of forgotten historical objects: that important insights about how culture worked may be gained from such beginnings; that an epistemology of the senses can multiply the uses we find for our own hands, eyes and ears and, in the process, furnish new ways of experiencing music that is familiar and beloved; and that some noncanonical music may be found to be interesting, beautiful, important, or revelatory.