

LAURA TUNBRIDGE

MUSIC ARRANGED AND DERANGED

Arrangement is a long-standing practice common to many genres of music and music-making. It can facilitate access to repertoire, enabling its transportation into different venues, genres or languages. Yet adapting music for other forces or contexts can also radically change the way in which it is perceived. Peter Szendy writes about arrangement as a kind of *écriture de l’écoute* or “writing of listening”, akin to the transformative process of translation. He notes how “lengthening, remix, trope, vocal redistribution … all these interventions of the arranger aim at facilitating the communication, that is to say the circulation, of the work in a foreign country.” Yet Szendy also observes, via the words of two great arrangers of the nineteenth century, Franz Liszt and Hector Berlioz, that *l’arrangement est derangement*—arrangement is derangement.¹ It is this doubleness of arrangement, its role as a (mis)translator of musical works, that is the focus of this special issue.

Derangement itself is a word that can be understood and translated in many different ways. The word deranged entered the English language in the early 1700s, borrowed from the French and accruing a range of meanings. In French, the word has associations with forced migration: *Le Grand Dérangement* refers to the eighteenth-century deportation of thousands of Acadians from Eastern Canada.² However,

Prof. LAURA TUNBRIDGE, University of Oxford, Faculty of Music; e-mail: laura.tunbridge@music.ox.ac.uk; ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2081-950X>.

¹ Peter Szendy, *Arrangements-Dérangements: La transcription musicale aujourd’hui* (Paris: IRCAM, 2000), 15. See also Szendy’s *Listen: A History of Our Ears*, trans. Charlotte Mandell (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 35–56.

² Meghan Forsyth, “Performing Acadie: Marketing Pan-Acadian Identity in the Music of Vishtèn,” *Journal of the Society for American Music* 6, no. 3 (2012): 349–75.

the French word *dérangement* is typically translated into English as disruption.³ The word derangement in English has often been associated with psychological disturbance: with “depression, mania, drugs, personality disorder”.⁴ The female protagonists of operatic “mad scenes” are described as “deranged”, from Donizetti’s *Lucia di Lammermoor* through to Arnold Schoenberg’s *Erwartung*.⁵

Some more recent composers have claimed derangement for political ends: Liza Lim refers to her work as responding to “the sensory and conceptual derangements of our time”.⁶ Michael Finnissy described his piano trio *In stiller Nacht* as an “arrangement (or quite possibly ‘derangement’) of an arrangement”.⁷ He uses Brahms’s folksong setting ‘In stiller Nacht, zur ersten Wacht’ as source material, transforming it into something that goes beyond parody or allusion. Instead, Edward Venn argues, Finnissy “offers a model of critical musical practice that interrogates the musical values, aesthetic ideologies, and compositional techniques of this [the Brahms-Schoenberg tradition] and its centrality in Western musical culture”.⁸ Derangement thus functions both as a historical commentary and as a musical process, evident in the non-alignment of voices within the piano trio, whose instruments “start together but continue independently”, each at a different tempo. “It is not essential that the parts finish together,” Finnissy explains in the score.⁹

In a thematic issue such as this, featuring international scholars writing on music and musicians from across Europe, from the seventeenth to the twenty-first centuries, the notion of translation as ar/derangement, or ar/derangement as translation, seems particularly pertinent. Zoey Cochran untangles the intertextual relationships between two operas about Caesar. The Venetian version, from 1677, was reworked in Naples just over twenty years later as a vehicle for getting past the censors a critique of the Spanish authorities then ruling the city. In this instance, the arrangement masked the subversive derangement. The multivalence of music’s power is illustrated by

³ See for example the use of the word *dérange* in composer Nicolas Bacri’s *Notes étrangères: et autres écrits sur la musique* (Paris: Editions L’Harmattan, 2020), *passim*.

⁴ William A. Frosch, “Moods, Madness, and Music. Major Affective Disease and Musical Creativity,” *Comprehensive Psychiatry* 28, no. 4 (1987): 315–22.

⁵ Enid Peschel and Richard Peschel, “Donizetti and the Music of Mental Derangement: Anna Bolen, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and the Composer’s Neurobiological Illness,” *The Yale Journal of Biology & Medicine* 65, no. 3 (1992): 189–200; and Arnold Whittall, *Schoenberg: “Night Music” – Verklärte Nacht and Erwartung* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 66.

⁶ Joseph Browning and Liza Lim, “Sonic Figurations of the Anthropocene: A Musical Bestiary in the Compositions of Liza Lim,” *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 148, no. 1 (2023): 1–34.

⁷ Michael Finnissy’s CD notes to *In stiller Nacht*, 7, quoted in Edward Venn, “Specters and ‘Derangements’,” in *Rethinking Brahms*, ed. Nicole Grimes and Reuben Phillips (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022), 400.

⁸ Venn, 410.

⁹ Venn, “Specters,” 400.

Ewa Hauptman-Fischer's unpicking of the use of adaptations of castrato arias for Cistercian monasteries in Silesia: by converting operatic material for use in the church, listeners found a new acoustic space in which to rearrange their emotional response to the music.

Jonathan Kregor, Nancy November, and Mark Everist, conceived their three papers together, as a conference panel that examined nineteenth-century musical adaptations of eighteenth-century repertoire. The function of such time-travelling arrangements was to "enhance their currency, and to project cultural artefacts into the future".¹⁰ However, as becomes clear from Kregor's discussion of travesties of Handel by French virtuoso Mortier de Fontaine, the kind of future into which earlier music was project was not necessarily to everybody's taste. On the other hand, Nancy November shows how important arrangements were for sharing Mozart's operas between friends, in versions for chamber ensembles. Reconfigured as music to play at home, the public became if not exactly private, then certainly a means to negotiate the divide between large- and small-scale social and musical worlds. Everist, meanwhile, compares national attitudes towards adaptations through time, detailing through the publication history of arrangements the different priorities of London, Vienna, and Paris as well as the way they were networked.

Arrangements could also provide a means for artists to come to terms with their own "derangements" in time and place, as is explored in Paweł Siechowicz's account of Lithuanian artist M. K. Čiurlionis' experience of living in Leipzig. The personal ways in which musicians can respond to and rearrange pieces from different eras, in different eras, is evident from Robert Kaczorowski's essay on reinterpretations of the *Dies irae* by French composer Eugène Diaz in the late nineteenth century and by Italian composer Carlotta Ferrari in the twenty-first century. On occasion, arrangements can diverge wildly from their original sources, as George Kennaway demonstrates through virtuosic "derangements" of Corelli's violin sonatas, almost two hundred years after they were written.

The role of performers in the arrangement and derangement of musical works is investigated further by Silvia Bruni, through a consideration of the attitudes towards piano pedagogy in relation to Chopin's reputation in nineteenth-century Italy. Anna Rusin analyses the only opera by Simon Laks —*L'Hirondelle inattendue*—focusing on the process of operatic adaptation, drawing on Iwona Puchalska's approach and reconstructing the origins of the work that is interestingly connected with the composer's biography. What is tangible in performance—the touch of the keyboard, the gestures of a singer—can transform the experience of a piece, Karolina

¹⁰ "Adapting the Eighteenth Century to the Nineteenth: Access, Authenticity, and Authority" (2025 American Musicological Society Annual Conference 14–17 November 2024, Chicago, IL).

Kolinek-Siechowicz argues in her study of Peter Sellars' adaptation of Orlando di Lasso's *Lagrime di San Pietro*. She refers to the production as a type of "cultural translation", across centuries and continents, that nonetheless remains faithful to the original intent of Lasso's piece—it arranges, not deranges. Peter Brooks takes a different approach, in Jeanne Zaepffel's account of his adaptations of Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, Bizet's *Carmen*, and Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*. The majority of directors take liberties with the libretto and staging of operas, but do not meddle with the music. Unusually, for Brooks the score is not sacrosanct, allowing for the "reversal" of the relationship between theatre and music.

While Brooks was working at the end of the twentieth century, Natasha Loges takes nineteenth-century programming practices as inspiration for her own musical experiment in the 2020s. The *Winterreise-Weltreise* project juxtaposes songs from Schubert's canonical song cycle with compositions by non-Western composers. By mixing the familiar with the unfamiliar, Loges both unsettles notions of the structural integrity of the musical work and asks provocative questions about which voices are and should be heard. Advocating for musicians and audiences to embrace a broader spectrum of music from across the globe, Loges interrogates her own derangement of the arranging process.

The political implications of arrangement are also the concern of Jakub Kaczyński's survey of audiovisual aesthetics via the ideological appropriations of vaporwave and synthwave in the digital age. It is centuries removed from the "derangement" of operas in seventeenth-century Italy with which this special issue began but perhaps is not so far away in terms of music being used, and reused, for new and often subversive purposes. Szendy might have thought of arrangement as a kind of written listening; derangement, perhaps, is a form of rewriting, the old being repurposed for the new to lend music-making its enduring power.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

"Adapting the Eighteenth Century to the Nineteenth: Access, Authenticity, and Authority." 2024 American Musicological Society Annual Conference, 14–17 November 2024, Chicago, IL.

Bacri, Nicolas. *Notes étrangères: et autres écrits sur la musique*. Paris: Editions L'Harmattan, 2020.

Browning, Joseph, and Liza Lim. "Sonic Figurations of the Anthropocene: A Musical Bestiary in the Compositions of Liza Lim." *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 148, no. 1 (2023): 1–34.

Forsyth, Meghan. "Performing Acadie: Marketing Pan-Acadian Identity in the Music of Vishtèn." *Journal of the Society for American Music* 6, no. 3 (2012): 349–75.

Frosch, William A. "Moods, Madness, and Music. Major Affective Disease and Musical Creativity." *Comprehensive Psychiatry* 28, no. 4 (1987): 315–22.

Peschel, Enid, and Richard Peschel. “Donizetti and the Music of Mental Derangement: Anna Bolena, Lucia di Lammermoor, and the Composer’s Neurobiological Illness.” *The Yale Journal of Biology & Medicine* 65, no. 3 (1992): 189–200.

Szendy, Peter. *Arrangements-Dérangements: La transcription musicale aujourd’hui*. Paris: IRCAM, 2000.

Szendy, Peter. *Listen: A History of Our Ears*. Translated by Charlotte Mandell. New York: Fordham University Press, 2008.

Venn, Edward. “Specters and ‘Derangements’.” In *Rethinking Brahms*, edited by Nicole Grimes and Reuben Phillips, 396–411. New York: Oxford University Press, 2022.

Whittall, Arnold. *Schoenberg: “Night Music” – Verklärte Nacht and Erwartung*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023.