A ‘theme with many variations’:
Gertrude Hudson, musical criticism, and turn-of-the-century periodical culture

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Gertrude Hudson was a female writer and editor active from the mid 1890s to the late 1900s. Her colourful writings for multi-disciplinary arts and general interest magazines as well as for specialist music journals deployed intensely subjective, dialogic, even confrontational modes of writing to challenge established modes of music criticism. Hudson’s writing explicitly connected music and the other arts exploring ways to enable readers to fine tune connections between musical experiences, poetry, visual arts and architecture, merging Walter Pater and Oscar Wilde’s notions of aesthetic criticism with her own distinctive voice. Hudson’s work is preoccupied with the nature of musical response by contemporary audiences and music’s presence in global culture. Her essays range from portraits of performers, composers and performances of musical works, location pieces about audiences and music-making from London venues, and her travels and unusual commentaries on animals. All these topics show an enthusiasm for combining observations of her world with musical evocations in a range of sites and contexts. Hudson’s writing offers unique subjective manifestations of topical debates, from the apparently passive position of a spectator and travelling consumer. Her reflections both witness the development of musical criticism as outsider and show us its reshaping as insider. As an observer specialising in celebrity culture in the ‘classical’ music world, she is both gossip and autoethnographer.

This chapter seeks to re-situate Hudson within literary and musical networks. In so doing, it continues the investigation from my earlier exploration of Hudson in *The Idea of Music in Victorian Fiction* (2004) looking now at her prose writing as critical theorisation and critical act. Examples of Hudson’s well-informed witty rhetoric around musical

preoccupations from the popular culture of her time demonstrate how the development of this unusually personal musical voice in conversation with other arts was stimulated initially by the journal format of *The Dome* for which she first produced essays. As Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker comment in the introduction to *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines*, such multi-disciplinary formats encouraged 'tentative, exploratory, and dynamic' forms of writing which often challenged 'settled assumptions' (2009: 3). The *Dome* is best known as a literary magazine of the late '90s, but articles on music were included reflecting its original subtitle: *A Quarterly Containing Examples of All the Arts,* and remained in its subsequent monthly subtitle: *An Illustrated Magazine and Review of Literature, Music, Architecture and the Graphic Arts.* Hudson's involvement with *The Artist* (July 1902) and *The Musician* consolidated her involvement with the arts and crafts movement. *The Acorn* (1905–6) deepened this interdisciplinarity in keeping with her enthusiasm for the Wagnerian ideal of the Total-work-of-art, and sustained an 'Arts and Crafts model of expressive creativity' into Early Modernism (Hart 2009: 129).

Musical Criticism and Periodical Culture

By the 1890s, the growing numbers of magazines, journals, and periodicals were able to support a diversification of critical response applied to music. 'Hundreds of articles and books on the theory and practice of musical criticism were published to regulate, reform and professionalize the industry and to lend musical criticism substance and authority,' according to Paul Watt (2018: 2). Musical criticism was welcomed not only in the daily press and the established specialist musical press, such as *The Monthly Musical Record*, *The Musical Standard*, *The Musician*, and *The Chord*, all of which Hudson wrote for, but also found an audience in other print media which covered arts and culture as a significant part of the growing leisure industry. There was an increase in educational literature supporting

appreciation which encouraged writing on music beyond technical treatises, history, and biography traversing into territories concerned with meaning. Jeremy Dibble and Julian Horton consider the wide realm of intellectual thought underpinning developments far beyond reviewing in their new edited collection. The literary and art magazines Hudson wrote for, such as the *Dome* and the *Artist*, offered a sphere for experimentation in the relationships between opinion and fact, and *The Outlook: In Politics, Life, Letters and the Arts*, welcomed her topical observations upon music in locations, which suited ephemeral weekly publication; they also extended the mindset of readers through armchair travel. Although her output was relatively small, Hudson was quite widely promoted as a writer of note. Reviews of, and references to, her writings appeared across the British and American press. Yet she now receives little recognition as a significant presence in turn-of-the-century culture.

The fact that Hudson has not yet found a place in the history of musical criticism is not helped by her denial of a critical role, the quixotic ways she expressed this, and her reputation for 'essays attacking critics generally' (*Daily Telegraph* 2 June 1899: 5). Hudson was not employed by any journal or newspaper in a critic's role, but commissioned to produce essays for enthusiasts. In her writing she clearly revels in being a 'virtuoso in passion,' an expression fitting both the performer she reports on and herself as writer witnessing impassioned performance and seeking to recreate it verbally (*Dome* Oct 1899: 227). Hudson enacted a caricature of a conventional male critic whilst constructing a different persona for herself as a creative-critical writer. In 'The Musical Critic (A Depreciation)' she confirms the 'weird fascination' she has always had for the critic, whom she yearns to be although typically critics are all similar: 'When you have read one of him you have read all of him … roughly speaking he is unanimous' (Hudson 1899: 228). Paradoxically, she then identifies him as 'also various': 'He is a theme with many variations.' Hudson goes on to

suggest she can compose and play within the range 'from the most fantastic foolery and the dullest sense' (Hudson 1899: 229), noting that 'many of them are very charming essayists, and write us pretty little rhapsodies and reveries on Wagner' although 'sometimes they drown themselves in a sea of words' (Hudson 1899:230). Furthermore, the 'hopelessly prosaic and incurably modern critic' 'really ought not to be permitted to criticise habitually'; when in need of rest 'for his overworked appreciative faculties' she 'should be delighted to take his place' being 'eminently suited for it, for I combine in one insufferable personality the savage brutality of the journalist and the cynical flippancy of the litterateur' (Hudson 1899: 232). This proposed role swap questions who is able to be a critic, who is not, as well as what sort of person would wish to be, confirming that there were different types of critics. In 'The Pianoforte Recital,' Hudson identified her 'extraordinarily supple genius' which she could 'but rarely restrain … from turning paradoxical somersaults' (Hudson 1899: 198). Stating that she does not wish to deploy this genius to explain music as a critic would, she confirms her ideal is to revel in the sound world, going beyond the fruitless task of the critic who 'burgeoning forth into passionate platitude' and sounding 'all the dictionary's deeps for the *mot juste'* ...'fail to find it' (Hudson 1899: 198). She prefers to criticise critics for what they leave out of consideration. It is creative people—performers, composers and conductors—whom she depicts in moments of release from conceptual understandings underpinning criticism. This is the type of true interpreter she aspires to be: 'One day my soul, sharpest with academic vinegar, was fed with lovely sugary art' (*Dome* July 1899: 107). Such a responder becomes a vision of 'critic as humbug'—the standpoint expressed in her appreciation of Henry Wood (*Dome* Aug 1899: 76). The 'ideal humbug, the ideal critic' is able to see 'what isn't there' and is a 'charming feminine person who is ever under the influence of someone else': 'but it needs a fine, oh, a delicate! sympathy to apprehend the

non-existent.' For example: 'Show him an October sunset dying redly behind a lattice of flaming, fantastic leaves, and he will see Tchaikowsky' (76).

It is not surprising that Hudson's pieces featured opinions on musical criticism nor that this exploration coincided with her attempts to define herself. Discussions of various camps, arguments over the meaning of terms such as review, appreciation, impression, analysis, and, of course, how best to effect critical judgment, appeared regularly in periodical literature. The *Chord* magazine's reprinting of reviews as part of its self-marketing strategy in the back of volume two (Sep 1899) summarises many key themes in the debate. From this lengthy and informative digest, it is interesting to extract what is praised, for example, 'very modern articles dealing with topics of the hour,' 'pages of vivacious musical criticism … far removed from the sober futilities of the outworn fashion,' and, 'no taste for reporting' (Sep 1899: 81–2). Hudson's impressionistic model of writing offered an alternative to the fact-based journalistic reporting assumed to be underpinned by educated judgment. Evidence that the position taken by the *Chord* was under attack can be found in Oldmeadow's defence 'As Others Don't See us' in volume three. Although he does recognise that Dr. Charles Maclean is not being 'unfriendly,' the author of this unsigned article (presumably John F. Runciman, the editor), rejects the 'mainly aesthetic essayism' tag, the meaning of which 'we can only vaguely guess at,' saying: 'we make bold to tell Mr. Maclean that the public has shown a marked preference for the kind of writing that appears in THE CHORD … to the fatuous, unimaginative, inartistic kind of writing which he appears to like' (Dec 1899: 56–7).

'Each school of critics has its battle-cries,' declared E. A. Baughan, as he reflected on the possibility of 'perfect criticism' (*Monthly Musical Record* 1 Mar 1901: 363). And a few months later in the same journal he queried 'a certain clever essayist' criticising critics for being jaded and over-tired of music—something he had claimed (Aug 1899: 172), which was likely Israfel's source for depreciating the critic—and went on to complain that 'We live in

days where subjectivity has gone mad' (Dec 1901: 266). In 1902 Baughan became vocal against 'poisonous appreciations' which he had located in some 'old magazines' (perhaps the *Dome*?) 'articles evidently meant for the musical amateur' (*Monthly Musical Record* May 1902: 84). He recounts himself sitting next to a comfortable matron listening to Tchaikowsky's Pathetic Symphony and then derides writers who hang 'decadent theories and invertebrate picturequesness of language' onto music, encouraging writing 'on a subject apart from music itself' (*Monthly Musical Record* May 1902: 85). A few years later J. H. G. Baughan, brother of Edward, attacked Miss A. E. Keeton, who published on music in *The Morning Post, The Musical Standard*, and *The Fortnightly Review* and this exposed how the literary nature of some writing on music continued to prompt its exclusion from the field of musical criticism proper: 'Musical people—we do not mean those literary people who have *acquired* a taste for music—are not interested in lengthy, padded-out criticism. What interests them is sound illuminating judgment conveyed in as few words as possible. They absolutely refuse to be humbugged by skilful language alone' (*Musical Standard* 22 Feb 1908: 115).

Hudson's Networks and Publishing Career

Hudson, who wrote under a pseudonym 'Israfel,' remains an elusive figure. However, she was embedded in a series of literary and publishing networks. In their exploration of *Modernism's Print Culture* Faye Hammill and Mark Hussey have commented how 'even small presses and magazines shared the vision of modernism as an international artistic community,' as did the groups frequenting literary salons (2016: 9). Hudson was a member of the Lyceum Club for ladies literary circle alongside Alice Meynell, and regular attender at her literary salons where she would have encountered Oscar Wilde through Ernest J. Oldmeadow (proprietor of 'At the Sign of the Unicorn' press, editor of the *Dome* and musical critic of the *Outlook* 1900–4), and also Arthur Symons. Indeed Hudson seems a potent

example of the type of creative critic praised in the latter's *Dramatis Personae* (1925) which echoes in T. S. Eliot's referencing of Symons' attitude in 'The Perfect Critic' (*Athenaeum* 9 and 23 July 1920). Hudson was also connected to the Bedford Park set surrounding the Yeats family. She published alongside WB Yeats (*Dome* Apr 1899), referred to his evocation of music in poetry in 'Ysaye (An Impertinence)' (*Dome* May 1900) and as editor included him in the *Acorn* which she produced with artists George and Hesba Webb at the Caradoc Press, Priory Gardens. Symons and Oldmeadow both had musical interests, and as editor Oldmeadow brought in two other writers on music: Vernon Blackburn, another friend of the Meynells who became his sub-editor on the weekly Catholic *Tablet*, wrote on music for the *Fortnightly Review* and was also music critic for *The Pall Mall Gazette*, and Runciman, music critic of the *Fortnightly Review* as well as editor of the *Chord*. As a frequenter of concerts and opera to inform her writing, Hudson would have had companions amongst audiences, and the Lyceum Club likely provided further contacts with other musical members. Ella D'Arcy of *The Yellow Book* coterie was also her advocate because correspondence exists with John Lane, in which she encourages him to support Hudson and 'to undertake the publication of *The Acorn'* (Windholz 1996: 129).

Intersecting with Hudson's journalistic career are seven books which navigate through established and niche companies. In 1897 the American New York City firm H. Henry and Co. run by prominent publisher Henry Holt issued her first book: the short story collection *Impossibilities: Fantasias*. Holbrook Jackson notes in his survey *The Eighteen Nineties* (1913) that Henry was one of the publishers associated with the 'new literary movement' which found expression in what he called the 'high journalism' of the decade (45). Then *Ivory Apes and Peacocks* (1899) appeared 'At The Sign of the Unicorn' in London, and simultaneously in a joint edition with M. P. Mansfield and A. Wessels in New York. This was at the same time as Hudson was most active at the *Dome*; two chapters were essentially

reprints, and others were original. Oldmeadow also published *A Little Beast Book* (1902) of animal appreciations from the *Dome*. Hudson also published in the American *Monthly Musical Record and Review* and articles were reprinted alongside essays from the *Dome,* the *Chord*, and the *Artist* (music supplement) in *Musical Fantasies* (1903). That came out using identical type-face to the Unicorn press with Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent and Co. Ltd., the largest wholesaler of books in England at mid century and then underwent further expansion in 1890–1. They also published *Travel Pictures* in 1904, a prose collection including essays from the *Outlook.* By 1908 she had moved to David Nutt, known for foreign book-selling, appropriate for *Lotus Leaves from Africa and Covent Garden*, a collection including essays from the *Acorn* and the *Musician*. The fact that many of Hudson's periodical essays were gathered into collections aids understanding now of her importance, because reviews of these books identify their contemporary appeal. And, as the *Outlook* commented, *Lotus Leaves* 'is another volume of collected pieces which may be said to deserve a more enduring form' (vol. 21, 29 Feb 1908: 869). Another aspect to Hudson's work was the re-issue of parts of *Musical Fantasias* within season programme books of The Boston Symphony Orchestra, for example, 'Dvorak' (1900) and 'Wagner: In a Liqueur Glass' (1901).

Israfel the Incredible: Performing Paradox

Hudson is not only significant as a writer on music, but notable for the content and style of her literary output. The 1903 collection—*Musical Fantasies*—was admired both for the 'remarkable … soundness' of its 'musical criticism' and as 'a marvel of words' and the author expressed high praise for 'the incredible Israfel' for exposing 'critical truth' (*Outlook* 14 Nov 1903: 425–6). The *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer* highlighted Hudson's self-

declared ‘verbal music’ (*Musical Fantasies*: 25) and recognised the collection as proposing something new in criticism:

> One would not recommend it as a text book for a young ladies’ boarding school, but it might have a refreshing effect upon the highly intellectual, non-emotional critic, who is too apt to regard a full score as he would a mathematical essay. (11 Nov 1903: 4)

Margaret Stetz has commented on Hudson’s ‘need to distance herself from the increasingly controversial and reviled figure of the New Woman’ (2004: 174). The beginning of Hudson’s literary career coincided with the vitriolic debates that followed the translation of Nordau’s *Degeneration*, and with Wilde’s trial and its repercussions. It is well-known that the latter inflamed prejudices towards independent artistic women. Nordau’s anti-Wagnerian views were also influential, and Hudson remained committed to Wagnerism through her writing career. Despite G. B. Shaw’s promotion of an alternative perspective in *The Perfect Wagnerite* (1898), which defended the heroines as role models, the prevalent view was that ‘Wagner’s female supporters and protagonists were characterized both as New Women and as *femmes fatales’* fundamentally negatively (Sutton 2002: 96). Perhaps Hudson was inspired by G. B. Shaw’s posing as a decadent in his music reviews of the 80s and 90s? Stetz’s view, that Hudson’s pseudonymous cloaking enabled her to ‘appropriate a gentleman’s freedom to be read and reviewed as a prose artist’ (2004: 174), which builds on Talia Schaffer’s search to determine the inter-relationships between all *fin-de-siècle* women writers and artists and variously defined propagandist sub-groups of ‘female aesthetes’ and ‘new women’ (2000: 11), supports Hudson’s survival in publication through this difficult period.

Hudson’s persona is an ambiguous construction. Assumed by most critics to be a man, due to ‘several overt phrases’ ‘set forth as masculine,’ what we are given is actually a masquerade (*Glasgow Herald* 22 Apr 1899: 9). Hudson’s exploration of femininities and

masculinities is contradictory and plays with her audience. In his discussion of Victorian sexual politics and their intersection with musical aesthetics Derek Scott argues that although a gendered vocabulary was consistently deployed to questions 'about the nature of music, its purpose, and whether it had a predominantly masculine or feminine character,' such terms were 'first used as metaphors in musical criticism, not as biological truths' (1994: 91, 95). Claims that 'Israfel' was a male voice in critical responses to Hudson's work and publishers decisions to quote these in advertisements draws attention to late Victorian belief that it was the male subject perceived to have words at his command, using verbal language to dominate music's feminine language. This is consistent with Scott's analysis which draws upon evidence of musical meanings constructed as representing threats to effeminise men. Hudson often references gentlemen and ladies within narratives, for example in 'Music and Literature,' the essay concluding *Ivory Apes and Peacocks,* where women are referred to as 'them' foregrounding the masculine voice: 'Indeed, the whole entertainment breathes a gracious air of femininity, which is humanising and elevating to our masculine flippancy' (273). Here, Hudson is able to stress the positive nature of feminine characteristics and engagement, whilst playing with gendered designations.

When discussing the Polish pianist Paderewski's appeal even when playing 'chestnuts' (a term for standard repertoire), Hudson literally waxes lyrical, comparing herself to the moon and finding an analogy between the pianist's touch and moonlight ('Chestnuts: A Study in Ivory' *The Dome* Mar 1899). This is an interesting allusion to Wilde's play *Salome* (1891) with its location of sexual desire in the moon. For Hudson: 'The moon is all temperament and personality, she puts her own ivory interpretation upon the world' (Mar 1899: 33). She connects the ivory keys played by the male performer to the 'silver sheen' of the moon who with 'her pale mystical glamour … in her own far-off divine way, is quite an egoist, and believes almost exclusively in subjective art' (Mar 1899: 32). Hudson becomes

political in drawing comparison to the sun. It is the moon that 'transcends the sun'; the sun 'has no personality at all' (ibid.). The description begins to sound like her view of the musical critic: 'he is deplorably deficient in personal hypnotism, he conceives of an "object as in itself it really is"' (Mar 1899: 33). In this passage, she also proposes that a 'mere musician (pardon me!) cannot appreciate' 'the complex luxuries' of Paderewski's playing, but 'the romantic hedonist who has had a liaison more or less with each of the Arts … can better understand this lyric loveliness' (Mar 1899: 32).

Hudson's conscious feminisation of music and musician in several of her portraits of composers, such as in 'Grieg: A Study in Silver' follows this moon analogy through. She imagines the 'kittenish' male Norwegian composer as 'Pierette' 'charmingly dressed … in silver' with 'pale gold hair' whose 'dainty little pieces always suggest a witty woman' on the surface seems merely satirical, but there is more going on (*Dome* Apr 1899: 54). It is in autobiographical moments that readers are presented with deliberately camp queering in Hudson's response to the music of favoured male composers, such as in the twist added to her *Musical Fantasies* reprint of 'Chopin' (Dome Oct 1899). Whilst commenting on 'his feminine love for musical embroidery' she expostulates, 'For the life of me, I cannot cease to decorate Chopin with little verbal satin bows of a pleasing cherry tint' (1899: 230/*MF*: 58 and 64). Elsewhere, Hudson refers to her pen as female declaring it 'ravished' ('The Pianoforte Recital,' in Hudson 1899: 197), and then writing of 'Dvorak' in *Musical Fantasies* notes how the intoxicated nature of his music is 'so contradictory and unexpected' as to 'throw any well-broken hack-pen clean out of her stride' (94). This is either suggestive of a role reversal, making the man the muse and the woman the interpreter, or it is proposing a doubling of the pen and music itself and the controller/disguiser of the pen as male. Since Hudson is emphasising subjective impression as reality, following her reliance on Paterian aesthetics,

the vision of the world she constructs seems to be a queered/feminised one, albeit written by a 'female' pen.

Whether this playful sub-textuality enabled Hudson to bypass external definitions and achieve success because she offered a unique alternative to male music critics, other female aesthetes and New Women writers in the marketplace becomes obscured by the very features which attracted her supporters: satire and flamboyance. Some contemporary critics seemed dazzled by the style of her work, unable to assess where, if anywhere, new insights lay in her responses to music. Analysing examples of Hudson's 'brilliant impressionistic extravaganzas … coruscating with wit' (*Birmingham Post* cited in *The Acorn* 'Advertisement' section 1905) underlines that her writerly performativity is her way of confronting the dilemma at the heart of music's ineffability. This was expressed in aims such as that embedded in 'A Richard Strauss Festival' 'to bridge the yawning gulf between tone and speech with a rainbow arch of verbal music' (*MF*: 25). As an example, in 'The Pianoforte recital' she compares the 'verbal virtuosity' stemming from her 'ravished pen' to 'the pyrotechnical tone-journalese displayed at the end of a recital' (Hudson 1899: 197–8). As critical response in words follows a musical event, Hudson's own form of display can be seen as attempting equivalence.

Combining Amateurism and Cosmopolitanism into Critical Acts

The lack of appreciation of a multi-disciplinary artistic perspective by the dominant voice of the male musical establishment led to literary critical approaches being undervalued as criticism professionalised and musicology developed as a discipline. In championing interpretation over judgement, Hudson's goal was to refine critical sensibility rather than master factual knowledge. A Hudson trait was to incite the reader/ordinary listener to find or make their own sense of 'critical truth.' Revisiting her comments on amateurs affords the opportunity to question how her creative-critical approach matched the needs and desires of

her non-specialist but musically-informed audience members and enthusiastic readers. Hudson shows her preference for the amateur over the critic, in her conclusion to Musical Fantasies (1903), based on a reprinted *Dome* essay 'The Amateur' (Mar 1899): 'The amateur … can enjoy art quite simply … he need not cast about in his mind to … show how clever he is—as a critic must. … he can really appreciate it. His mind is not blunted by Understanding or warped by Education' (Dome 1899: 258).

In reflecting upon the amateur essayist, Hudson suggests an insider perspective noting 'whole-hearted self-admiration': 'How he enjoys and insists on your enjoying his work!' (259). But is she genuinely self-deprecating, or merely playing with her readers, knowing that women were often allied with amateurs? Is she looking to something in what is regarded as amateur sensibility that she admires over so-called 'professional' established criticism? Commenting on Tchaikowsky, reprinted again in *Musical Fantasies*, initially published in the *Chord* (1 May 1899), she pits the critic with 'a trained judgment and a clear knowledge of the music and of the fitness of things,''a gentle and conventional soul' 'all out of tune with Tchaikowsky's,' against a vision of a 'savage and superficial listener, unblinded by Education' (*Chord*: 43). This untrained, by implication amateur enthusiast, has a cosmopolitan outlook and is much more appreciative. By the end of the essay, Israfel is using 'us' and 'we' to explain Tchaikowsky's appeal based on how 'his intimate confession of his inner self … moves us,' contrasting this unanimity with her assumed readers with her analysis of the complaints from critics refusing to deal with him (47).

Hudson is very explicit concerning those who were unable to appreciate the exotic dimension which saturated the contemporary music from Europe which was most popular. London was the key global centre hosting foreign performers and composers and the taste for novelties was very well-developed by the turn of the century. The world of contemporary music took its listeners beyond the borders of England. Her fascination for the exotic fits with

the sensory dimension of musical experience and in embracing 'escapist fantasy' in many of her essays she is opposing the actions of 'leading male figures' who were 'attempting to establish a national, masculine music' in the 'British Musical Renaissance' movement by 'upholding values of empire and eschewing associations linking music to ideas of the foreign and the feminine' (Fuller 2007: 7). The addition of cosmopolitanism as a literary characteristic connected to the theatricality embedded in her persona. Hudson did not inhabit international ideas and ideals of others, she rather absorbed impressions and reworked them in her own image. For example, Hudson desires to bring the world back to England, for example in 'A Wagner Fantasy,' the *Acorn* having first imagined Tristan lying on his couch in the courtyard of his castle in Brittany, she declares: 'I would like to ship Dieppe castle over to the coast opposite' because the 'romantic loneliness of the Sussex downs' is 'entrancing'; the scenery of Normandy and Sussex is 'the kind of scenery that should frame Tristan's castle in Brittany' (1905: 151). Rebecca Walkowitz's argument that: 'In the early twentieth century, the term "cosmopolitan" was attributed to artists who seemed to invent identities rather than inhabit them and to work that dramatized this process of invention' provides a useful explanation for Hudson's approach (2006: 22).

Locating Hudson as a *Fin-de-siècle* Lady Journalist

Over the period this volume is concerned with 'the profession of the critic or writer was in the ascendant'; yet, the 'increasingly versatile critic,' 'both a generalist and a specialist … rarely a woman' (Watt 2018: 111). Women were expected to inhabit roles that responded to the association of music with the feminine. For example a performing woman was considered reproductive which was considered natural. As the *Musical Standard* remarked in a column on 'Women and Originality': 'Very many question women's domain in music,' going on to advocate that the 'woman who chooses to inspire rather than write has chosen the better part'

(15 May 1902: 171). Yet, the *Musical Standard* (June 1895), actually gendered music criticism as female in an editorial responding to Runciman's 'Women as Musical Critics' (*Monthly Musical Record* 1 Mar 1895) likely by its editor E. A. Baughan (also the musical reviewer of the *London Daily News*). In the context of the task of recovery of the female critical voice it is fascinating that such gendering occurs in contemporary debate about what was lacking. Current criticism—referred to as a 'cloud of dust that obscures the real weakness of musical criticism as she is wrote'—was not presented by Baughan as in a good state (Watt 2018: 118). Watt's view is that Runciman had been inconsistent in his attitudes, on the one hand praising women producing 'genuine musical criticism—that is, literature with music as its subject-matter' for their 'crisp lightness and sparkling humour' suggesting that he often wished 'that ladies replaced some of the male critics,' but on the other hand complaining women were not showing they could discern music's qualities as well as men (1 Mar 1895: 49). Runciman was also reporting—on a lecture given to The Society of Women Journalists by Sidney Thomson, music critic of *The Star*, which had largely avoided discussing women even in a 'room full of ladies'—and observed simply 'whatever conclusions we may here reach' women will go in for musical criticism or not, as they, and not as I, will' (ibid.). Attempting to clarify what is necessary for women to succeed in theory, Runciman does allow the possibility for women to enter this domain in practice. He includes sensitivity to music and 'sanity of judgment' as necessary qualities, although he doubts women's capacity to discriminate is developed enough. He looks forward to their 'delightful, original and valuable literature about music' (1 Mar 1895: 50), but also warned: 'Lastly, and nearly but not quite chiefly, she must be mistress of her pen and "a style"' yet be careful not to build a style from 'affected tricks and mannerisms' (1 Mar 1895: 49). By 1904, however, writing on 'What is a Musical Critic?' Runciman falls back on the stereotype: 'What is wanted for a musical critic is, first, a thorough musician, a man who is educated, has read,

can write, has enough imagination, and dares to say bluntly what he has experienced. The criticism of such men is worth reading; but as for the other stuff the less we have of it the better' (*Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art* 2 Jan 1904*:* 11). Some women found a way around the limitations imposed by assumptions of male superiority. Fuller comments on the frequent use only of initials by women composers: 'Leaving one's gender ambiguous was a sensible move in a world where women's work was so automatically regarded as second-rate' (2002: 91). Stetz identifies anonymous and pseudonymous publishing as the key way women circumnavigated restrictions in the context of 'the burgeoning number of periodicals inspired by the aesthetic movement … eager to fill … issues' without worrying about identities (2004: 175). This analysis is consistent with Hudson's work for the *Dome*: she did not publish in the five quarterly issues (1897–8), but once it was monthly her work featured regularly and additionally to those of the regular male writers.

Linda Peterson's comment, in her exploration of genres emerging in the burgeoning nineteenth-century periodicals marketplace, that writings in the forms used by Hudson—essays, reviews and travelogues—enabled both 'the modern woman of letters and her new self-constructions,' helps understand Hudson's position and manoeuvres in publishing culture (2009: 4). Hudson adopted a Poe-inspired *nom-de-plume* 'Israfel' for her late nineteenth-century periodical articles in the *Dome* and the *Chord* and her collections. But for the *Acorn* 'quarterly' of which two volumes only were produced, she made a change and published as 'G. H.' (on music) alongside 'Israfel' (travel pictures). Her twentieth-century travel writing for the *Outlook* appeared under the pseudonym; her music writing appears to then cease. Hudson initially adopted a full name 'Israfel Mondego' in 1897 for her first book. This surname surely echoes Israel Zangwill's character of that name who appeared as a singing celebrity in his satirical story *The Bachelor's Club* (1891). It cannot be that Zangwill is cross-

referencing Hudson, since publications by her prior to 1891 have not been found. This borrowing is in keeping with Hudson's eclectic approach to contemporary culture, and also explains the masculine aura surrounding the androgynous first name. She briefly used a different surname 'Feist' for 'Jeypore' (*Dome* Dec 1898), identifying herself as one of the Maharajah's snappy little dogs. Her article 'Liszt: A Rhapsody' in the *Chord* (Mar 1900: 32–5) is published simply under 'I.'

In referencing Edgar Allen Poe's archangel of resurrection from his poem *Israfel* (1831), Hudson seems to propose retaining Romanticism in the aesthetic movement. In that poem, Poe expressed his ideal vision of the art of poetry through the image of an angel symbolising artistry. Israfel's singing bridges the real and the ideal by means of art, and thus the human artist aspires to the angel. Into Hudson's adoption of this spirit was bound huge admiration for Pater; her desire to mirror music in language references his terminology. For example, in 'Imaginary Portraits' she connects Pater's 'joys' 'ivory, apes and peacocks' to the name of the book collection the essay appears in and emulates his style as 'frozen music' (Hudson 1899: 264). She eulogises 'the music of Pater's thought,' his 'verbal symphonies' (Hudson 1899: 260), admiring his analysis of music's capacity for the 'absolute annihilation of fact, the infinity of expression' (Hudson 1899: 263). Hudson's 'ideal criticism' extended notions from Wilde and A. C. Swinburne in promoting literary approaches to all art forms and built on Pater's vision of music as a pre-condition of creativity. Furthermore, Hudson argues that because Pater's prose is at odds with journalism, hers is a literary as well as musical approach. In declaring Pater's diction 'a haven of rest from the fierce vitality of journalism,' she positions subjectivities against perceived objectivities, and herself resists definition as a 'lady journalist' (Hudson 1899: 253).

From her wide knowledge of women in music in this period, Sophie Fuller observes that 'Women were rarely part of the musical establishment and often stood far outside its

boundaries' and also notes how this position supported women's capacity for innovation: 'They had less to risk in their exploration of what had previously been regarded as the province of dry scholars or dangerous aesthetes or decadents' (2007: 255). Interpreting 'Israfel' now, knowing hers to be a veiled female voice, maps Hudson onto Fuller's thesis. But it is too simple to say that such gender concealment evades recognition of the woman's voice in the 'professional patterns and opportunities' of criticism and 'to undermine female authority,' as Meaghan Clarke discusses with respect to art critics (2005: 22). Potentially, it is rather Hudson's cross-dressing performativity that assists us reading her work so as to open up deeper explorations into emerging Modernisms. Could it be Hudson's queer perspective rather than assumed masculine voicing that attracted those positive responses to her work which relished its challenges? One example is the praise for 'Irresponsibilities III: Henry Wood' (Oct 1899) as the 'best thing' forthcoming in the magazines with quotation of her comments on the 'majestic impetus' Wood gives to music's 'splendid wave-like forces of hysteria' whilst noting provocatively his 'womanly' pathos and the 'dainty' touch of his art in responding to Tchaikowsky (*Outlook* 19 Aug 1899: 94).

Hudson was supported in her androgynous/queer critical persona by Oldmeadow. It can be assumed from the intersections between the two writers that he was promoting 'Israfel' through arranging or authoring favourable anonymous reviews. Perhaps Oldmeadow, who also wrote sometimes under a female pseudonym—was willing to risk betraying Hudson's disguise in referring to *Musical Fantasies* as a 'wanton volume,' using an adjective typically used of a woman (*Outlook* 14 Nov 1903: 426). Further evidence that this may be the case is enhanced by the lack of a personal pronoun. There is no 'he,' only 'Israfel' in inverted commas every time the name is used, and thus gender is avoided. Being taken usually for a gentleman helped Hudson avoid such extreme derision as had been directed against lady journalists at the start of her career. Paula Gillett has researched late

Victorian attitudes exhaustively and concluded that 'discussions of women's creative deficiencies continued into the pre-World War I era' (2000: 26). Even just after the end of the war in a context responding to women's rising emancipation, and after Hudson had ceased publishing, patriarchal attitudes persisted. J. Swinburne lectured to The Musical Association on 'Women and Music', an event recorded in its *Proceedings,* telling his well-educated audience that 'musical women often tell stories well, and have generally other masculine traits, which goes to show that music is a male faculty' (*Proceedings of the Musical Association*, 46th Sess. 1919–20: 33).

Other Women Writers on Music

In the 1903 issue of the *Outlook*, referred to earlier, the favourable review of *Musical Fantasies* juxtaposes comment on two other examples of 'Music in Print' that are defined to have 'strutted or gambolled or minced from the press.' Israfel is praised as the gamboller. Commentary on the third book *About Music and What it is Made Of* by composer Oliveria Prescott serves to draw attention to the existence of other women writers on music. The reviewer derides Prescott's grasp of history and criticism as 'astonishing.' There is also disapproval that she mistakenly allows personal experience to dominate critical work, which is surprising in the light of Hudson's tendency to do this (4 Nov 1903: 426).

F. Swinburne's declaration, from the lecture cited above, that 'There has never been a woman critic' showed that he had not done his research adequately and was choosing to be unaware of the quite large number of women active in publication (*PMA*: 28). Educational opportunities for women, changing attitudes from some editors, with growing involvement in editing, and the founding of feminist journals, mark this out as a period of significant change. Fionnuala Dillane has researched Hulda Friedrichs' 1890s interviews with music-hall performers for the *Pall Mall Gazette* in *Women and Journalism at the Fin de siècle* (Grey

2009). Friedrichs was a member of the Lyceum Club founded by Constance Smedley who contributed 'In defence of modernity' on the British Musical Renaissance to Hudson's *Acorn*. The fulsome career of another Lyceum member, Rosa Newmarch, has been evaluated by Philip Ross Bullock in several publications and in my own research discussing her fostering of listening. Little is known about Emily Frances Holland who reviewed 'the literature of music' in European languages for *Musical Opinion and Musical Trade Review* (1896–1900). Christina Struthers, Edinburgh University music graduate, wrote for the *Monthly Musical Record* and was cross-referenced in the *Musical Standard*. Marie Harrison, editor of the society supplement of *Vogue* until 1910 also wrote regularly in the *English Review* on 'Current Musical Topics.' Annie T. Weston wrote for *The Music Student*; Emily R. Daymond, Marjorie Kennedy-Fraser, and Annie Patterson also worked actively as music writers. Mrs. Franz (Louise) Liebich was commissioned by Newmarch for her 'Living Masters of Music' book series but her many articles for the *Musical Standard* are concealed through her husband's name.

Two women writing widely on the arts used male pseudonyms like Hudson. Vernon Lee (Violet Paget) wrote several articles and a book *Music and Its Lovers* (1920). Christopher St John (Christabel Marshall) wrote for *The Lady*, and her regular *Time and Tide* columns which included assessment of Ethel Smyth's operas are evaluated by Catherine Clay, and Amanda Harris deals with the dedicated promotion of women composers in that journal alongside new trends in European feminist criticism. Smyth wrote for the *Musical Standard* and the *English Review*, as well as for the *Contemporary Review*, *Country Life*, and the *New Statesman.* Another *Time and Tide* author, Velona Pilcher, who also contributed essays on performers to *Theatre Arts Monthly* and *The Island* including on the cellist Suggia who also attracted Virginia Woolf, is contextualised in my work on the avant-garde between the wars.

Emma Sutton and Adriana Varga consider Woolf's prose writings ranging from street music to Wagner.

Ursula Greville was the only female committee member of *Musical News and Herald*, contributor to *The Musical Quarterly* and *The Dominant* and edited *The Sackbut*, a magazine which promoted British contemporary music, from 1921–34. Katharine Eggar wrote regularly on 'Women's Doings in Chamber Music' for the *Music Student*, and co-founded with Marion Scott 'The Society of Women Musicians' (1911). Scott was a well-connected musician, active as a specialist writer into the 1930s on *Proceedings of the Musical Association*, the *Sackbut*, the British *Musical Times*, and the American daily *Christian Science Monitor*. In the 1920s Eva Mary Grew contributed her wide knowledge of historical topics to the *Sackbut*, *The Etude*, the *Contemporary Review*, *British Musician and Musical News*, and *The Musical Quarterly*, adding *Musical Mirror and Fanfare: Music, Radio and the Gramophone*, *The Musical Times*, *Music and Letters*, and *The Chesterian* from the 1930s to 1940s. The extensive critical work of so many women remains under-acknowledged in spite of the recent surge of publication about music criticism. The fields of music history, periodical, and literary studies could all benefit from a wider range of past women's voices being heard.

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