Hibberd, Sarah, and Richard Wrigley, eds. 2014. *Art, Theatre, and Opera in Paris, 1750-1850: Exchanges and Tensions*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate.

Reviewed by Julia Doe

The eleven essays in this volume were produced for an interdisciplinary conference, "*Correspondances*: Exchanges and Tensions between Art, Theatre, and Opera in France, c. 1750–1850," held at the National Gallery, London in the spring of 2010. This event coincided with an exhibition of the history paintings of Paul Delaroche. The artist's purportedly "theatrical" style, and longstanding engagement with the theater more broadly, serve as a fitting starting point for a series of explorations of the interplay between the visual arts and the Parisian stage during the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries.

That relationships between artistic media flourished during these years is a scholarly commonplace, as the editors of the collection, Sarah Hibberd and Richard Wrigley, readily admit. They insist, however, (and rightly so) that a framework for interrogating these networks of exchange remains critically underdeveloped. The tasks set forth for these essays, then, are both lofty and laudable: the authors aim to establish new models for examining the points of contact between artists and artistic forms and to more precisely identify "which ideas and images were crossing over, how this occurred, and to what effect" (9). In so doing, they are able to shed light on several larger themes relevant to the study of painting, music, and drama during this period. First, the collection provides fresh insight into persistent questions of genre—so crucial to the production and reception of the arts in France—examining how well (or how problematically) hierarchical divisions might be mapped across media, and probing how the subversion of these boundaries might be imbued with resonances of wider sociopolitical meaning. Moreover, through their generous topical and chronological scope, the contributions to this volume address issues of aesthetic continuity and rupture, seeking to untangle how and when different media were affected by the various institutional restructurings of the turbulent Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary years.

The authors of *Art, Theatre, and Opera in Paris* suggest a number of diverse and promising approaches to the study of interaction between artistic media. Most straightforward, perhaps, though nonetheless thought-provoking, are essays that pinpoint the material sites of this intersection and describe how specific agents forged relationships across disciplinary

fields. Olivia Voisin, for example, discusses the involvement of Romantic painters in the creation of stage dress for the Comédie-Française, demonstrating how the costume functioned as a "go-between" bridging the dramatic and the pictorial spheres. In his costume designs for the theater, Louis Boulanger made key contributions to broader aesthetic debates concerning historical accuracy and local color in painting; for Boulanger, the function of a costume—which would be widely seen and repeatedly reused in a repertory company—was to consolidate a system of iconography that might then be more broadly "recognized as standard through visual culture" (138). Mark Ledbury, along similar lines, assesses the association between a painter (the acclaimed Jacques-Louis David) and a set designer (Ignace Degotti, known primarily for his work at the Théatre Feydeau). Ledbury employs the concept of "facultative mutualism" to describe the relationship between David and Degotti, arguing that the creative dialogue between the two artists went beyond mere professional influence to encompass "a complex social, cultural and personal tale of multiple entanglements" (72). What is novel in this essay are the variety of sources analyzed (ranging from correspondence to provisional set designs to completed paintings) and the richly textured view of creative collaboration that emerges from this methodological scope.

If several chapters of this volume provide an updated take on recognized models of interplay between media, others place an emphasis on previously neglected loci of exchange. Particularly stimulating in this regard is a group of essays addressing instances of cross-fertilization at the level of critical discourse. What did it mean for musicians to adopt the vocabulary of art criticism (and vice versa)—and what is there to be gained from charting the modalities of this interaction? Mark Darlow explores the abundance of pictorial allusions in late eighteenth-century writings on opera, positing that critics adopted such rhetoric to describe effects for which "musical language had not evolved a terminology of its own" (47). He traces the musical application of *chiaroscuro* to interrogate issues of variety and contrast in lyric theater, providing fresh insight, especially, into the kinds of generic hybridity in play in the *drame lyrique*. Richard Wrigley, for his part, moves beyond a study of transfer in critical rhetoric to describe overlap in the activities of the critics themselves. Outlining the careers of journalists working in Restoration Paris—foremost among them the history painter-turned-commentator Étienne-Jean Delécluze—Wrigley demonstrates how these figures moved fluidly between salon and theater criticism, eschewing any explicitly media-exclusive outlook as they did so.

Forming a counterpart to these discussions of criticism are essays that investigate parallels in the relationships between artists and their audiences across a number of genres and forms. Patricia Smyth argues that the

"theatricality" so often identified in Delaroche's salon paintings stemmed not from commonalities of subject matter (between specific paintings and specific dramatic works) but rather from coinciding methods of interaction with the spectator. In this view, visual artists and playwrights grappled with analogous tensions, as each group negotiated the demands of two current—but foundationally contradictory—paradigms of spectatorship (one based on direct, emotional appeal and another rooted in detached, intellectual analysis). Céline Frigau Manning examines modes of audience engagement not with the autonomous work but with the techniques of the dramatic interpreter. She suggests that the acting of Maria Malibran (a star singer of the Théâtre Italien, known for her "excessively" expressive style) was situated at the interface of multiple, distinct theatrical traditions—and that it was this ambiguity that so forcefully commanded the attention of the spectator. This case study serves as a reminder that artistic hybridization might be enacted through the processes of both production and reception (in this particular instance, "both in the singer's performances and in the reactions of audiences" involved [14]).

A final, recurring theme of this volume is the rich tension between the diachronic and the synchronic—in attempts to collapse the boundaries between art forms that unfold in time and those that exist in space. Beth S. Wright posits that the "dramatic" quality of Delaroche's paintings stemmed from their ability to convey multiple temporal states simultaneously; the artist created a new rhetoric of expressive gesture in response to emerging trends in the composition of historiographic literature, utilizing "different visual languages to represent momentary action and enduring historical significance" (191). Stephen Bann underscores a related spirit of expansion in the output of Delaroche, proposing that his works were imbued with a quality of dynamism influenced by contemporary theater. More precisely, Delaroche drew inspiration from split-stage scenes and the interplay between on- and off-stage action to reconfigure the connection between the "in-frame" and the "out-of-frame" in his paintings, experimenting with new means of energizing pictorial space (154). In these examples, intriguingly, innovation was driven through an adoption of the very traits that a stated medium was not "supposed" to be able to appropriate.

The challenges of the interdisciplinary approach at the heart of *Art, Theatre, and Opera in Paris* are not insignificant, and the authors should be commended, collectively, for overcoming a set of difficulties both pragmatic and historiographic. On the one hand, many of the multimedia works worthy of investigation in this context suffer from a lack of extant sources, or confound reconstruction even when their sources are recoverable. In other words, the sites of overlap between the dramatic and the pictorial—

the costumes, sets, and scenographic plans of an opera, for example—often no longer exist in a complete state or offer only tantalizing glimpses as to how disparate elements of music and staging were actually coordinated in a given *tableaux*. Highly informative, especially for the musicologist, are essays that analyze little-studied lyric repertory in order to articulate how such material relationships functioned. David Charlton focuses on the musical evocation of imagistic topoi (landscapes and "sunrise" scenes) in the *opéra-comique* of the late eighteenth century, demonstrating that opera "aspire[d] to the condition of painting" not through facile descriptive gestures but through a shared aesthetic orientation with the visual sphere (23).

On the other hand, and more critically, the contributors to this volume must work to combat longstanding historiographic biases against certain forms of cross-media influence, which exist amongst critics, scholars, and practitioners in both the visual and musical disciplines. It is an irony worthy of note (and one underscored by the editors) that the term *théâtral* was far from complimentary when applied to the visual arts in France, a marker instead of decadence and deleterious artifice. And, as musicologists are well aware, an analogous suspicion of the visual realm (or, at least, a privileging of the strictly musical over the spectacular) has often haunted the production of lyric theater—as evidenced, for instance, by Wagner's influential disparagement of grand opera for its reliance on scenic effects. The authors must therefore overcome the prejudices of their individual fields before moving outwards to explore the productive links between them—an endeavor in which they make significant forward strides. For example, in his discussion of dramatic adaptations of the gothic novel *The Monk* (famous for its supernatural "Bleeding Nun"), Thomas Grey demonstrates how music might be integrated into the broader study of representational technology in opera. In scenes of spectral apparition, he argues, music plays a central "role in mediating between the material and the spiritual" (79), working seamlessly alongside—rather than at a privileged remove from—other elements of stagecraft (scrims, specialized lighting, and so forth). Sarah Hibberd provides a similar rehabilitation of the visual in her study of the *tableau vivant* and its transformations during the July Monarchy, detailing how scenes of climactic catastrophe depended closely upon the multi-sensorial engagement of the spectator; here, she suggests, "music and image offer alternatives that create meaning through their interplay," and must accordingly be assessed in tandem (118).

This collection, then, is a valuable resource: it provides innovative methodological models for conceptualizing the intersections between the visual, musical, and theatrical realms and for confronting the challenges, both practical and historiographic, inherent in this process. As befitting a

study with a strong emphasis on the visual arts, the volume benefits from the inclusion of a number of high-quality images, and it is well-produced overall. (There are but a few unfortunate inconsistencies of copyediting and orthography; within the span of just three pages, for instance, Luigi Cherubini's *Médée* is also given as *Médee* and *Medée*.) The only real hesitation of this reader concerns the organization of the volume. Even as the individual essays advocate convincingly for the adoption of an interdisciplinary perspective, the structure of the collection as a whole stymies, if only to a certain degree, the authors' stated goals. The chapters of *Art, Theatre, and Opera in Paris* are arranged roughly chronologically (or, at least, are clearly divided between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries), and one certainly cannot fault the editors for making this straightforward choice. But the effect of this arrangement is that, strictly by virtue of the authors and sub-specialties involved, the fields represented seem somewhat demarcated: the first half of the collection is dominated by the contributions of musicologists and scholars of lyric theater, while the second is focused mainly on the work of art historians. And, while the introduction to the volume provides a concise and compelling summation of the thematic links between the interior essays, these connections are not always so simple to discern from the essays in and of themselves. The result is that the keen insights of each chapter do not always translate into a vivid dialogue between these chapters and that certain portions of this specialized book will be more accessible than others, depending on the discipline of the reader. But this structural quibble—which is of course dependent, in the end, on the conference format from which the collection derives—should not detract from the utility of its broader frame and component parts. The volume offers an important addition to the body of scholarly work on the visual arts, music, and drama of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as well as a persuasive argument for further exploration of the rich and varied intersections between them.